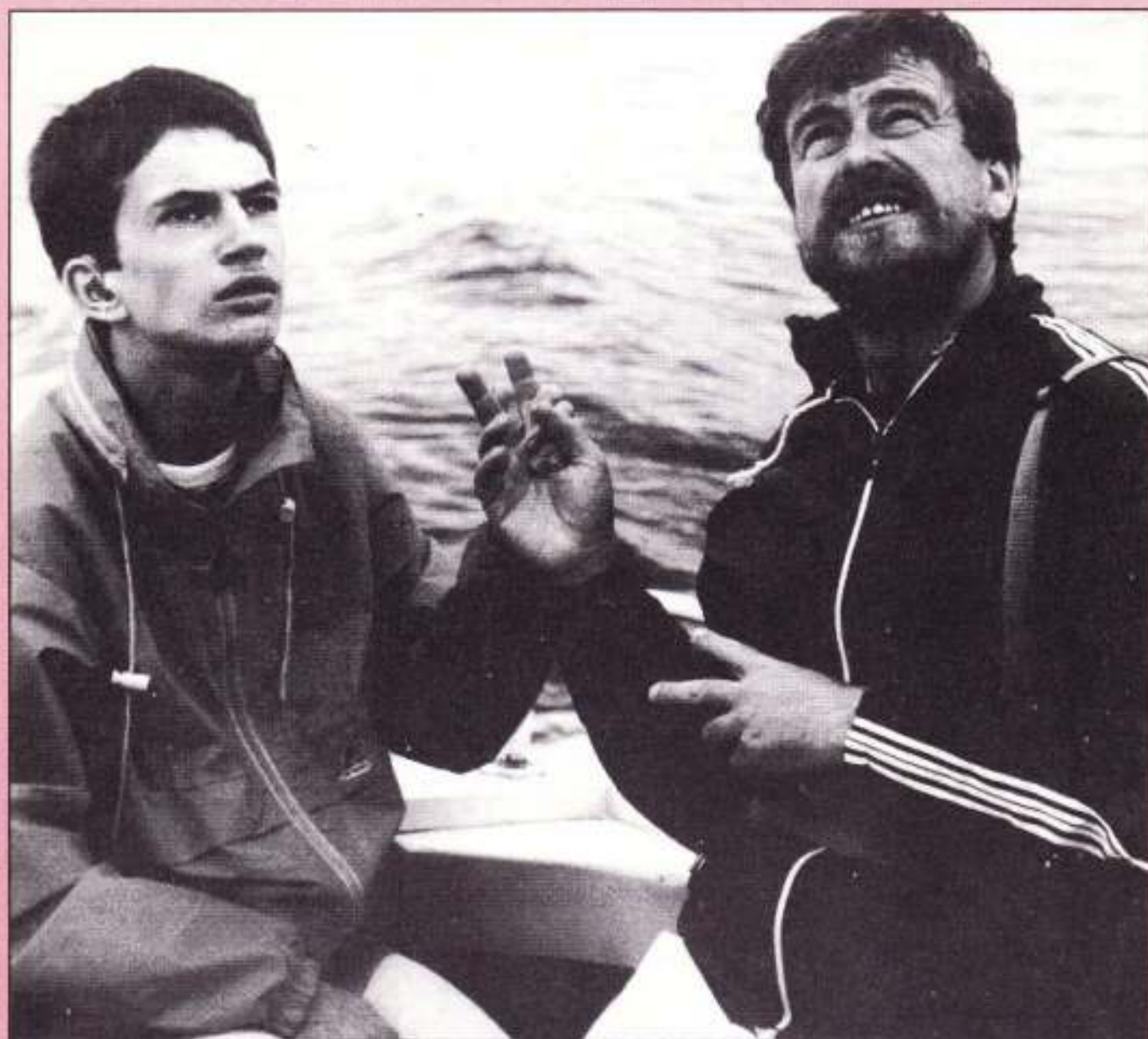


Deaf-Blind Education

THE JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF THE DEAF-BLIND

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Hands across the borders

**French deaf-blind students visit Italy
Teachers from the Soviet Union visit the UK
The two Germanies combine**

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

As this is one of my last official acts as chairman, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the executive and all members of the IAEDB for the privilege that you have extended to me during the last four years. Your support has been the driving force behind the ongoing evolution of the IAEDB from an organisation devoted to holding conferences every three to four years, to one whose mandate is focusing on the ongoing gathering and disseminating of information concerning all areas of support for deaf-blind people.

I would also like to take this opportunity to recognise specific individuals and organisations that have been particularly active and effective in our ongoing development. While it is impossible to recognise everyone who has made a contribution, there are four individuals who deserve special individual recognition.

Mr. Rodney Clark, our secretary-treasurer has put in countless hours to provide us with the administrative capabilities that are required by an international organisation. I have appreciated his support and guidance throughout my term as your chairman.

Mr. Kevin Lesard and Mr. Mike Collins of The Perkins School for the Blind have made ongoing contributions and given world

recognised support to the cause of deaf-blindness. While their support has, and does, go far beyond the boundaries of our organisation, it is important to recognise the part that they have played in our growth during the last four years.

Mr. Paul Ennals, our editor, has taken our publication and turned it into a magazine that has gained international recognition. His vision has been the catalyst that we required to reach this level. On behalf of all members of IAEDB, we wish him well in his new endeavours.

The unselfish efforts of members of our executive in general and committee chairman in particular, have led to a fully functioning executive that has met at least once each year. Such meetings were possible because the executive gave freely of their time, and arranged to have their expenses met by their national sponsors, or in some cases from their own pockets. There is no doubt that this precedent should be followed by future executives.

As you are reading this edition of Deaf-Blind Education, you have (no doubt) already finalised your plans for this coming summer. I hope that they include attendance at the IAEDB Conference in Sweden from August 5th to 9th.

Finally, I would like to thank the National Office of the Canadian

Deaf-Blind and Rubella Association for their support. The willingness of the national executive to assist with my expenses has enabled me to perform the duties of chairman.

Several people have told me that economic constraints mean they will be unable to attend the Örebro Conference. I believe that attending such a conference is most important at exactly these times.

Deaf-blindness is such a low incidence disability that there is always pressure to include it under the umbrella of Severely Multiple Handicapped, Visually Handicapped, Developmentally Handicapped and so on. This course of action has had all too negative results in the past.

Parents and professionals working with deaf-blind children often find little or no understanding or support in their own country. It is important that they do find it at Örebro in August. At a time when deaf-blindness is becoming ever more widely recognised as a separate handicap, we cannot let this recognition disappear.

Örebro means new ideas, new contacts, and a chance to learn from professionals and parents of deaf-blind children and adults.

I look forward to seeing you there.

John McInnes

EDITORIAL

In recent years we have seen a great increase in the amount of international contact within the deaf-blind world. The world has become a smaller place - it seems normal now to visit colleagues in other countries to discover what is happening.

It is already hard to remember the days when the Soviet Union was closed to the rest of the world. This year colleagues from the Soviet Union have attended conferences in Denmark, Scotland and Spain, and will be at Örebro in the summer. Groups of teachers have visited Zagorsk, with further trips planned. The opening of Eastern Europe is enriching the deaf-blind world.

Our conference at Örebro should also show us how far things have progressed in Africa, Asia and South America. Here also we see

contacts growing and friendships forming, and in the coming years perhaps IAEDB will help further advances to take place.

But there are risks involved in these international contacts - risks of misunderstanding, envy and disappointment. Not all ideas can be transferred to another country - the differences in culture, in expectations and in resources can be very great.

Recently I heard a speaker describing his residential school in great detail to parents of deaf-blind children from another country. He described the philosophy behind the approach, the training of the teachers, the research activities undertaken. At the end of his talk all the questions focussed on one area only - why are the children residential all the year round? What

support is given to families in their own home. The difference in culture between the two countries made it difficult to focus upon details of the teaching approach - one culture expected families to be the carers of their deaf-blind child, the other assumed that the school would take on the role of care-giver.

In Romania this year there are many training courses running for teachers of blind and deaf children. On one course, teachers saw a video of a school in England. The video was 20 years old, and was intended to illustrate some general teaching ideas. Yet the teachers would only stare in envy at the building - the size of the classroom, the clothes, the number of teachers. Romania's material poverty prevented them from learning easily from seeing a more prosperous country.

Update on the 10th IAEDB conference, Örebro, Sweden

This year's 10th IAEDB conference in Örebro, Sweden, promises to be a stimulating event. The last edition of Deaf-Blind Education reported that over 500 people had expressed an interest in attending. Six months on, the number has surely risen.

The conference organisers, in Örebro, would like to inform delegates of the following meetings:

1. The IAEDB will have a regular General Meeting in Örebro. The meeting will take place on Sunday 4th August, at 16.00 hours, in the theatre of the Conference Centre. All delegates are welcome (see right).
2. The European Sub-Committee on Staff Development invites delegates to a meeting on Monday 5th August, at 17.30 hours, in Room 3 at the Conference Centre.
3. The Sub-Committee for Acquired Deaf-Blindness in Adulthood will hold two meetings: Monday 5th August, 17.00 - 20.00 hours, Thursday 8th August, 12.00 - 20.00 hours.
4. All parents are invited to have lunch together in a separate room on Monday 5th August at 12.00 - 14.00 hours.

Please note: the dinner on Thursday evening at Ekoskolan will not be a traditional banquet, but will be served in large marquees in the school yard.

To all IAEDB members

Notice of General Meeting

The next General Meeting for members of the IAEDB will be held at the Bergsmannen Conference Centre, Örebro, Sweden on Sunday 4th August, 1991 at 16.00 hours. The agenda is given below.

By order of the Executive Committee

Rodney Clark, Secretary/Treasurer, 1st May 1991

Agenda

- 1 Apologies for absence
- 2 Chairman's report 1987 - 1991
- 3 Audited accounts for the period 1987 - 1991
- 4 A new Constitution for IAEDB. The text is published in pages 22 and 23 of this issue.
- 5 Results of elections to the Executive Committee held before the start of the Conference and identification of elections to be held during the Conference. Members of the Executive Committee holding elections prior to the conference are particularly requested to ensure that the results are notified to the Secretary/Treasurer before the meeting.
- 6 Resolutions. Members are requested to send any resolutions to the Secretary/Treasurer by Friday 19th July.
- 7 Items for discussion. Members are similarly requested to submit these by the above date.
- 8 Items to go forward to the first meeting of the new Executive Committee to take place on Thursday 8th August.
- 9 Any other business.

European members of the old Executive Committee are reminded that there will be a Planning Meeting for Potsdam 1993 on Tuesday 6th August at 13.00 hours.

Some friends from Africa recently visited some schools in Scandinavia. They were overwhelmed by the quality of the buildings. Scandinavian architecture is probably the best in the world, with beautiful design and endless space. It took them time to realise one important difference - climate. In Africa the outside world is the classroom, the weather allows you to spend time outdoors; in Scandinavia all the space that you need will be provided for indoors.

Each country has its own culture. Each country has different expectations of children, families and teachers. But also, each country has its own deaf-blind children. We cannot ever assume that deaf-blind children are the same the world over. In some deaf-blind classes you will see mainly rubella handicapped

children. In others you will see deaf children who have lost some of their sight. In others you will see profoundly multiply handicapped children. The world of deaf-blindness is small - variations in medical practice in different countries have a large effect on the population of deaf-blind children.

So there are many reasons to be cautious before assuming we can learn lessons from other countries. We must be sensitive to the differences. Yet there is still much that we can learn. In this highly specialised field it will never be possible to seek all the expertise we need within one country. We rely upon ideas and techniques developed elsewhere, and we need the knowledge that others are tackling similar problems to our own.

In Örebro this summer there will be the chance to exchange ideas and solidarity. I hope we will avoid the temptation of trying to prove that we are doing it *right*, that *our* school is better than all others. I hope also we can fight the temptation to be envious of others, to seek fault in others.

This is my last issue of *Deaf-Blind Education*. I have enjoyed the friendships made, and I have learnt much about your activities throughout the world. I have benefited greatly from the help that Helen Matson has given me. I hand over to Malcolm Matthews, who works for Sense in London. Please keep on sending him letters and articles.

In friendship

Paul Ennals



Training of the first guide-interpreters in Spain

In April 1991 the IAEDB Executive Committee met in Madrid, Spain, as guest of Asunción Leyton. Asunción works for the Spanish Association for the Blind (ONCE), and is involved in promoting services for deaf-blind children and adults throughout Spain.

The Committee had the opportunity of seeing the deaf-blind unit in the School for the Blind. In a future issue we hope to report on developments for deaf-blind children throughout Spain. Asunción works alongside Daniel Alvarez, a deaf-blind man responsible for the development of adult services. Here David reports on the training of the first guide-interpreters in Spain.

When in November 1987 we created the Deaf-Blind Department within the Spanish National Organisation of the Blind, we were very much aware, among other things, of the importance of the role played by guide-interpreters in the promotion and social integration of deaf-blind persons, and in ensuring the effectiveness of any services that might be provided to meet the needs of this special group.

What is a guide-interpreter but a combination of the guide who is occasionally needed by the blind and the interpreter for the deaf?

Therefore, our first step was naturally to seek the cooperation of the National Confederation of

the Deaf (CNSE), the organisation that groups together the associations of Spanish deaf persons, and that was, moreover, the only institution organising Sign Language courses and training interpreters for the deaf.

Our idea was to organise, with the cooperation of the CNSE, the first training course for guide-interpreters, a course intended only for persons already having experience as interpreters for the deaf.

The course was an intensive one and the interpreters learnt the techniques of guiding and interpretation for the deaf-blind.

All the participants in this course had a good command of Sign Language. This enabled the course to be completed in a short period of time, something that would have been impossible had they not already been fluent in this system of communication. Sign Language is used by a large number of deaf-blind persons as their principal means of communication and is therefore an indispensable component of any training course for guide-interpreters.

Thanks to these factors, a substantial amount of time was saved and we were thus soon able to have available the first guide-interpreters in Spain.

These pioneers, a group of 12 interpreters for the deaf, were given an introduction to deaf-blindness and its features: the different groups of deaf-blind, their needs, systems of communication, patterns of behaviour, techniques of guiding and mobility, and so on, supplemented by practical lessons for which a number of deaf-blind persons enthusiastically offered their cooperation to help 'train' the interpreters.

The practical exercises include the use of all the customary systems of communication, outdoor activities, and so on, while at the end of the course an excursion to Aranjuez, in the province of Madrid, was organised, during which, for the first time in their lives, the deaf-blind were accompanied by a guide-interpreter for the entire duration of the activity.

Thanks to these initial guide-interpreters and to those trained subsequently, the deaf-blind were able to undertake their first activities, both locally and nationally, while at the same time they were also able to benefit from the same services as were available for deaf citizens from the only interpreter service then existing in Madrid, a service which

The National Organisation for the Blind, in Spain (ONCE) opened a department for the deaf-blind in November 1987, with the aim of developing and coordinating services for the deaf-blind people affiliated to our organisation.

The unit is at the Educational Centre for the Blind, in Madrid. One of the first steps it took was to improve and increase educational programmes for deaf-blind children. From a deaf-blind educational unit with only one classroom, we progressed to two classrooms in 1988, and today we have four.

There is one teacher for each class, with a maximum of four children. There are also instructors and carers for out of class programmes.

ONCE has five other Educational Centres for the Blind, and several education units around Spain. Professionals in the deaf-blind field are based in some of these centres, working on early and pre-school education programmes, or supporting programmes in other specialist centres where deaf-blind

is now also available in other regional communities, in which we hope to include guide-interpreters in the near future.

We are currently continuing to maintain close cooperation with the CNSE, and every year we train a group of people who have completed the CNSE Sign Language course.

Moreover, together with the CNSE we initiated contacts with the Ministry of Education in 1989, with a view to according professional status to the career of Sign Language Interpreter and achieving official recognition of the diploma throughout the country.

Our Department, the CNSE and the technical staff of the Ministry are now working on the preparation of the curriculum for this career, involving a two-year course of studies, upon completion of which the students will be qualified to work as interpreters for the deaf and deaf-blind.

When this plan is approved, it will be possible to study the profession not only in Madrid but also in two other major Spanish cities: Barcelona and Seville.

ONCE

Asunción Leyton Gomez is the coordinator of the deaf-blind programme at the Organización Nacional de Ciegos (ONCE) in Spain. In this report, she describes the work of the organisation's deaf-blind department.



children are educated.

We develop our programmes using the schemes and philosophy of Dr Jan Van Dijk.

In the deaf-blind department, we offer individual assessments, and

advice on our programmes, and also other programmes in educational centres for the deaf, or other special schools.

We have around five hundred deaf-blind people on our register; one hundred and twenty of which are school age. We estimate that the total deaf-blind population of Spain is around 3,000.

There is still a great need for more placements for deaf-blind children in schools, and for trained

professionals to educate and rehabilitate them.

We are making efforts to improve this situation by arranging training courses for our own teachers, and for teachers of the deaf in various education centres in Spain. These courses are prepared every year, with the collaboration of the Perkins School for the Blind.



PORTUGAL



Antonio Rebelo, of the Instituto Jacob R. Pereira, in Portugal, describes the educational programmes that have been devised for six deaf-blind children in the country, and reports on an exciting new development for the future of deaf-blind education in Portugal.

We have been developing a programme for the education of deaf-blind children since October

1989 here in Portugal.

This programme was started under the supervision of Dr Jan van Dijk, and with the support of the Institut voor Doven, in Holland.

The first programmes were devised for two children of eleven and sixteen. The following year, two more children entered the programme: a nine year old boy, who had been affected by Blue Rubber syndrome, and an eighteen month old girl, handicapped by CMV.

We devised an early education programme for this little girl. She attends kindergarten, where she participates in activities together with deaf and non-disabled children.

Our main priorities for the Blue Rubber child are to maintain and improve his verbal communication, and to establish the first stages of an alternative communication method.

This year, we received two more children, who are rubella handicapped.

All our activities are developed in the Instituto Jacob R. Pereira, in a department granted to us to develop these children's education. It's a very small department, and it cannot cope



with more than these six children.

To meet the needs of the 45 children who are waiting for our programmes, Casa Pia de Lisboa is building a new school designed for the education of deaf-blind children.

The staff in our department comprise two teachers, who were trained in Holland, another teacher trained here and three carers.

Two of our children are boarders, but they visit their families every other week, and are looked after by their carers at night, and at the weekend.

The school will cater for around 40 boarders, which seems to be adequate for the deaf-blind educational needs in this country.

New deaf-blind centre in USSR

A new school building for deaf-blind children has been opened in Zagorsk, seventy kilometres from Moscow. It represents the completion of a ten year development programme, and will enable the school to increase its population from fifty to one hundred children.

The school building was first designed ten years ago, by the Project Agency in Moscow specialising in designing schools. Special criteria for this school were identified by the staff of the Laboratory of Deaf-Blind Education at the Institute of Defectology. Currently the country is going through a very difficult economic situation, but thanks to Perestroika many social problems are being addressed. The Ministry of Social Welfare has given money for meeting the needs of disabled people, and during the last two years the Centre building has progressed much faster.

Alexander Fedorov, Director of the Centre, has shown great energy and enthusiasm, and the staff of the Centre have rolled up their sleeves and set to work to help the builders - working as cleaners, wall painters, paper hangers, carpenters and so on. The voluntary youth club "The Rainbow" also assisted.

The new school consists of several blocks: one for very young deaf-blind children, one for primary aged children, and a third for secondary aged students. School administration also have their own facilities. Now all the children will have access to play rooms, classrooms, bedrooms, a large library, a swimming pool, specially equipped rooms for individual auditory training classes, domestic science and other workshops.

Until now deaf-blind children have had to queue up to be accepted for the school in Zagorsk. Often families had to wait for two to three years before their children could receive schooling, which had a negative effect on their child's development. The old school building could only take fifty children, while the Centre knew of many more. Now there are eighty deaf-blind children in the Centre, with twenty vacant places. There is a new opportunity to accept children who have higher levels of auditory and visual acuity.



Rainbow

Rainbow was founded in the spring of 1980 as an alternative movement to help the Zagorsk Home for Deaf-Blind Children. It is a non-profit organisation, with over 10,000 volunteers helping with different parts of the programme that it offers.

As part of the Deaf-Blind programme, Rainbow organises holiday tours for Deaf-Blind children from Zagorsk to different cities of the USSR. They encourage the teaching of English to deaf-blind children; organise summer holidays for children and parents; encourage the use of computers with deaf-blind people, and stimulate contact with foreign specialists in the field of social rehabilitation for deaf-blind people - especially those from England, Finland, Sweden and the USA.

Rainbow is an active member of the Family Clubs movement of the USSR. It also organises a range of other activities for children and young people of all sorts, with a wide variety of social problems. They can be contacted at:

USSR, 103045, Moscow, Rogdestvensky B-R 21, Str 1

In the last edition of Deaf-Blind Education, Irene Salomatina, of Rainbow, in Moscow, wrote on the work of Nataly Krylatova, and Jury Krylatov with deaf-blind children at Zagorsk.

Mr and Mrs Krylatov would like to point out that this letter contained a few factual errors. The Foundation for Social Innovations does not teach foreign languages to deaf-blind children, as stated, nor are the Krylatovs members of this foundation.

Instead, the Krylatovs represent a different organisation, called the Reabilitology Institute, which is finding new methods to increase the potential of people who are deaf, blind or mute. If any readers would like to know more about the Krylatov's work, they should write to:

Yury Krylatov, Didactist; Natalia Krylatova, Psychologist ul.; Streletskaya 6, Moscow 18, USSR. Telegraph address: Braille 18, Moscow, USSR.



A delegation of teachers and researchers from Moscow recently visited the UK. Here they are seen at Sense East Further Education Centre for Deaf-Blind Students

The genesis of deaf-blind children's play

For any child, play is an important way to learn. But do deaf-blind children play in different ways? Are there any methods of helping them to learn through play?

Tatiana Basilova, Senior Scholar at the Laboratory of Deaf-Blind Education of the Institute of Defectology in Moscow, Russia, reports on recent work.

Soviet psychology has traditionally attached great significance to play activities as a factor in the child's general psychological development. In the research conducted by L.S. Vigotsky, A.N. Leontiev and D.B. Elkonin, play is viewed as an activity closely associated with the child's needs. Primary social orientation occurs in the child as he plays – he feels the need to be grown up.

In order to ascertain the real place that play activities occupy in the life of deaf-blind children we have attempted to describe just how it appears in their activities, according to their age and general development. We were interested to see, above all, how they themselves behave with objects, that is, when they are left to themselves and act spontaneously without the intervention of grown-ups. We conducted these observations over a period of years in conditions of the family and in special schools for the deaf-blind.

In addition to observing the spontaneous behaviour of these children in conditions familiar to them, we observed them in special experimental conditions when all the external conditions for independent play activities were created for them. We wanted to see, above all, to what extent the children are self-dependent in their actions with playthings and just how specific these actions are.

These observations revealed several stages in the development of the children's actions with toys and objects.

First stage

This is characteristic of deaf-blind children who have not received special pedagogical aid. So-called spontaneous behaviour was almost completely absent in the majority of them. They could not act independently with toys or ordinary objects, or their actions were of the same type – non-specific. That is, they manipulated all these objects in the same way, without taking into account the physical nature of the objects. It may be said that they handled objects somewhat differently

from the way normal children handle objects at an early age.

Both the non-handicapped and the partially-sighted deaf-blind children were attracted to brightly painted, glittering or shining toys and objects. Both behaved in the same way with these materials. But, whereas in the act of shaking, throwing or knowing, the non-handicapped child realised his need for motor action and performed these acts in a very brief period of time, in the case of the deaf-blind children under observation, these actions had the precise objective of self-stimulation: shaking the object before their eyes, knocking it on their heads and such actions became characteristic of the child throughout his activities.

We were seldom able to observe in children at this stage of development any so-called specific manipulations with objects – actions based on the child's understanding of the physical properties of the object, such as opening and closing a closet door or the door of a room, choosing coloured rags from other materials, or looking at an object through a hole. Their actions were most often stereotypical and mostly motivated, as before, by the need for self-stimulation.

Still less often were we able to observe deaf-blind children using objects for their functional purpose – such as when the child licks an empty spoon or drinks from an empty cup when they come into his hands, or opens a purse and takes something out of it.

The restricted, one-type spontaneous behaviour of the deaf-blind child in the early stages of development is due to the fact that their self-help skills were formed at a low level, hence the low level of their ability to handle ordinary objects.

Second stage

At this stage of development the children have already learned more self-help skills and have a certain degree of experience in handling ordinary objects. They handle these objects as they should do: they can feed themselves, dress themselves

with a little help from grown-ups, wash themselves, comb their hair and so on. In most of these children we could observe the beginnings of play activities. These activities were not logically linked with objects or toys, such as when combing the doll's hair with a comb, or feeding the doll with a spoon from a plate.

Starting as an action determined by the object, it became a communicative action – a natural gesture with whose help the child only imitated action with the object, as though demonstrating to the adult that he knows how to use that object, at the same time receiving encouragement from the adult. If he met with no response, the child would repeat these actions over and over again for himself.

One specific feature of the actions of most deaf-blind children at this level of development was their use of toys in the capacity of a real object, when putting the doll to sleep in a toy bed the child would try to lie down there himself. The act of feeding the doll gradually turned into the child himself licking the spoon and drinking from the cup. As a rule, children at this stage of development only occasionally used a specific plaything, such as a doll, to produce an educational situation spontaneously. The doll had not yet been included in the game, it had not become a substitute for a human and the children exhibited no emotion towards it.

Third stage

This is characteristic of pupils in the first two or three grades of schools for deaf-blind children. At this stage of development we may speak of the beginnings of role-playing. The elements of group playing have appeared (i.e. two children pretend that they are preparing dinner: one of them pretends to cut up the imaginary vegetables on a table, puts them in a pot and stirs them while cooking; the other feeds the doll with this dinner). The children tried to come to an agreement as to who should have what role. The children did the same thing over and over again, (going to the store, preparing the

food, feeding and again going to the store, preparing the food and so on). One characteristic feature of this kind of game was the total absence of substitute objects. The children used imaginary objects in place of those lacking, depicting actions with them with the aid of figurative gestures.

In order to identify the possibilities deaf-blind children have of renaming objects we made a special study of how the process of renaming develops while playing.

We know that in the course of the game the use of substitutes plays a big part, that is, using some objects in the function of others. This is closely linked with their renaming, based on the attainment of a definite level of speech. In this period the relationship between play and speech becomes extremely intricate.

Experiments

In order to determine these relationships, we employed a modification of D.B. Elkonin's method in our experiment with deaf-blind children. (Elkonin 1978). The experiment was conducted with each separately and consisted of two series. Fifteen children from 7 to 14 years of age with finger-spelling and writing took part in these tests.

They were required to use familiar objects renamed by the experimenter in a new function of play. For example, in the first series it was proposed to call a ball by the name of apple, and a square by the name of dog and then feed the apple to the dog. In the second series they had to cut with a pen and write with a knife.

The results of the experiment with deaf-blind children were compared with the results obtained by D. Elkonin with normal children and also with data obtained by G. Vigodsky in his experiments with deaf pre-school children.

The data thus obtained showed that all deaf-blind children thus tested accepted the fact of renaming objects. But they experienced great difficulty in utilizing one object in the function of another if the other object was present. Only one child was able to do it at once and without mistakes. Nearly all the children used the objects formally and not in the form of a game. To a lesser degree than in normally developed children this game of renaming determined the method and the nature of the activity with objects, although the deaf-blind children were much older than the non-handicapped ones. At the same time, the deaf-blind children's activities with the renamed objects were much like those of deaf school children. Both the deaf and the deaf-

blind children obeyed the spoken demands of the adult. However, both groups proved unprepared for the substitution of the objects.

The above enabled us to identify the presence of a general tendency to develop object and object-play activities, (i.e. the development comes from similar manipulations with all the objects towards activities determining the physical properties of the objects and their functional use) as well as to pinpoint several essential features in the deaf-blind child's development of object-play activities:

- retarded development tempo – the process of transition from manipulation to activities taking into account the functional use of the object does not occur in the early pre-school age: it is a lengthy process and proves to be incomplete with the ages investigated by us: the deaf-blind child's activities in the early developmental stages of the game look like play activities but strictly speaking they are not.

- whereas in the case of the non-handicapped child toys soon become a substitute for real objects, in the case of the deaf-blind child we found attempts to utilize play objects as real objects in their real function. For a long period of development the doll did not become a substitute for humans to most deaf-blind children; activities with the doll proved formal, even inadequate. While formally accepting the renaming of objects, the deaf-blind child of school age only imitated the renaming activities dictated to him. The renaming of objects by adults did not alter the play situation and did not make the renamed object a substitute object. These facts indicate that the symbolic functions have not been formed in the deaf-blind child in either the pre-school or school age.

New ways

In our attempt to reduce this enormous lag in the deaf-blind child's development of the symbolic and literal aspects of speech we looked for new ways and means of teaching them to play. Three particular experiences in teaching several deaf-blind children proved useful in this search.

1. The child was already able to interact with adults when we started to teach him. He was also familiar with the functional use of several objects (he could feed himself and use the toilet independently). Communication with adults came about through joint activities within the framework of very familiar situations and were mainly directed

to satisfying his organic needs. In the course of our experimental teaching we found that knowledge of the functional use of objects, even the performance with adults of several activities connected with objects involving self help skills did not lead to the child learning specific operations within the framework of the activity. It turned out that at this stage of development the child cannot grasp the meaning of the gestures. It also proved impossible to use a doll. The teaching session started with us organising his behaviour in successive situations of a daily character and a play character. He interacted with adults in each of these situations. Each situation was then developed in a chain of joint actions, with the adult trying to teach the child to perform these actions independently. This, for example, is how the situation was divided up:

- 1) bring the swing;
- 2) bring a chair;
- 3) climb up onto the chair;
- 4) hang up the swing;
- 5) climb down from the chair;
- 6) take away the chair; now swing yourself.

And so on. These actions were easily indicated by gestures which at this level of development began to perform the role of signs.

A scientific level of development of the action proved necessary both for the appearance of the gesture and for the appearance of the elements of the game. The introduction of a doll into a situation with which the child was already familiar evoked favourable emotional relationships with this toy. The boy took pleasure in swinging the doll on the swing and took it to bed with him.

2. In addition to the formation of activities with objects conducted as described above, special activities with toys were devised.

Two teaching methods were used. The first consisted of teaching the child actions with a toy (a bear) by reproducing situations with which the child was familiar. The teacher together with the child fed the bear, put it to bed, dressed and washed it, uniting these actions into a single subject. In the second method all the elements of the subject were played out by the teacher together with the child not with toys, but using another adult or a child. A comparison of the results showed that attempts to directly teach activities with toys did not lead to the development of the game, but even hindered such development. The deaf-blind child began to treat the toy as a real being and subsequently lost all

interest in the toy (a deaf-blind girl of eight tried to push a real apple into the mouth of a toy bear, or put the bear on the potty and sat beside it for a long time, putting her hand in the potty every now and then in expectation of 'results'). This had an adverse effect on the development of the child's activities with objects.

On the other hand, playing out separate actions and specific situations on another person revealed in the deaf-blind child an unusually high degree of activity with objects and a positive emotional relationship towards these activities. Attempts to demonstrate, by means available to the deaf-blind child, actions on another person rather than 'activities' with toys enabled the child to grasp these actions adequately.

This actively broadened the child's experience in activities with ordinary objects and provided the conditions in which to imitate these actions. The child later transferred these activities to a game, reproducing the actions of the adult or another person only after he himself had the opportunity to participate in the activities of the other person.

Symbolic functions are developed in the course of play activities, as well as in construction and graphic activities. At this stage of development words can become more generalized. L.S. Vigodsky wrote that from signals to action words become a means of generalization. The word breaks away from the concrete object and becomes a sign. It is precisely in the course of play activities that words are separated from action through the object, i.e. the play substitutes for the real thing and then through renaming the object in a play situation.

3. The experiment was conducted with teaching materials from a social orientation course for deaf-blind children. The creation of play situations revealed, above all, the child's concept of various areas in the life of human beings. For example, the game - 'playing house' which was conducted with the model of an apartment and dolls to represent members of the family - helped us to learn how much the children knew about the family and inter-relationships of people in ordinary situations. In the course of the play we were able to determine the deaf-blind child's real level of social orientation and map out ways to further broaden this orientation. As a rule, the children's understanding of the activities and functions of members of the family was little and primitive. An important contribution to this pedagogic process was the fact that

in the course of the game we were able to organise an active exchange of experiences between the children themselves and transmission of experiences from adults to the children. Sign language and finger spelling were added as a means of communication and improved in the course of the game. The children communicated with one another in the course of the game and told one another what they were doing. Subsequently, after their lessons they began to tell one another what they had been doing; that is, they told about the game and later, about their impressions of real life. This imparted fresh stimulus to speech development and gave rise to new motives for speech communication. The next step was to include in the game situations previously unknown to the children, for example, extreme situations like they 'got lost', 'was late', and so on. The inclusion of these situations made it possible to acquaint the children with the rules of behaviour and the difficulties which they may encounter in the course of their lives.

Intellectual problems

During game situations which the children accepted emotionally we were able to introduce intellectual problems, for instance, the possibility of foretelling events. After a visit from former pupils to the group of deaf-blind children, we organised a game about the children's own future. Equally

important was our inclusion of moral problems in the game, of being able to imagine themselves in other people's situations.

When we specially taught them games with subjects and roles, we found a far greater potential of developing these activities than was evident before then. Whereas we were compelled to state (from our observations of free behaviour) that even at the age of 13 an attitude to dolls as a substitute for humans has not been formed, we observed during the experiment that a different attitude to dolls was taking shape. Real interest in dolls and an emotionally positive attitude to them arises in the child's seventh year, after two years of teaching. The child begins to desire communication with dolls. The same may be said about the introduction of other substitute objects in the game. The child himself begins to introduce them, using a variety of objects fairly steadily.

The deaf-blind child greatly increases the variety of objects and events in his play activities, i.e. the products of construction and objects used in teaching. The content of the games also changes. The child stops ceaselessly repeating the same situations, play activities take place in the framework of time and they begin to play 'doctor' and 'teacher'.

Hence it may be said that it is possible to devise many games for the deaf-blind child provided the proper corrective and educational methods are used.

A Letter from Russia

Irene Salomatina, a regular contributor to Deaf-Blind Education, writes on the recent activities of the deaf-blind children at Zagorsk.

This March, we organised a trip with deaf-blind children to a Russian city, called Rostov-on-Don. Twelve pupils from Zagorsk Home for Deaf-Blind children took part in this tour.

Rostov-on-Don is a southern city with nearly a million people living in it. It stands on the bank of the Don river and it is located not far from an ancient Greek settlement called Tanaice.

Our group stayed in an hotel, which was a good experience for those who had never done so before. We saw the old city of Rostov, visited different museums and places of interest, watched a circus performance and visited archaeologists in Tanaice. We also got acquainted with a lot of good people who helped us to learn everything about Rostov-on-Don.

Usually, there are more people in our group of guide-interpreters than the teachers from Zagorsk Home for Deaf-

Blind Children. We think that it is important for teenagers from the Rainbow club to participate in such activities. So, six teenagers from Odessa and six from Moscow were also volunteer guide-interpreters. It seems to us that this kind of communication experience with people their own age is useful for both deaf-blind children, and teenagers alike.

Now we are busy preparing a new trip to a city in the north, Petrozavodsk, which was founded by the Russian tsar Peter the Great at the end of the 18th century. It stands on the banks of a very beautiful lake, called Onego. Two small rivers - Lososinka and Neglinka cross the city.

Our children will visit wonderful museums, parks and other places of interest. We will also take a boat trip and visit some small islands, where the children will be able to fish.

Learning through real experience

Marian McLarty is Headteacher of Carnbooth School. Carnbooth is a school for twelve deaf-blind children, situated just outside Glasgow in Scotland, UK. It was opened by Sister Ailish Massie, and is funded by the Scottish Education Department. Marian delivered this talk at the Sense in Scotland Conference, held in July 1991, where 120 parents and professionals gathered for the weekend to share experience and ideas concerning deaf-blind children

What exactly do we in Carnbooth School mean by learning through experience? Why do we consider it to be so important in the education of our deaf-blind children?

In answering these questions I would first like to give you a brief reminder of the problems encountered by a child who is born with a significant visual and auditory impairment. These children are often of average or above average cognitive ability but perform at a much lower level because of lack of stimulation of communication with the world.

During the first weeks of life these children will operate much as an able-bodied child in that they will operate through the near senses – those of touch, taste and smell. All babies at this stage are sensitive to rocking, cuddling, feeding, pain and discomfort. Pleasure comes through touch and movement, taste and perhaps smell. Sensations are extensions of the baby's own body and are not perceived as being caused by outside factors.

However, at the end of the second week of life, the "global crying" of the sighted/hearing child is giving way to a more definite "discomfort cry" and here already is the beginnings of communication with the outside world. The sighted/hearing baby becomes aware that crying produces results, mother appears to lift and cuddle or feed and change him. Very soon the baby is able to watch the mother, first in close situations like feeding and then as she moves through the normal tasks of the day within sight of the child. In this way, the sequence of everyday actions are passed on and the child is forming basic concepts about the world without anyone actually noticing or deliberately teaching. Familiar sounds become signals for regular events and the baby becomes aware of the effect that his sounds have on others. It can be seen that these 'distance senses' of sight and hearing are vital for the basis of development. Through them we

relate to the world, they create our concepts of the world we live in and they are vital to our relationships. The deaf-blind baby begins life by developing in the same way, living in the world of the near senses, the world of physical sensations. But, at the point when the distance senses should be developing the deaf-blind baby meets with distress and confusion. They are unable to organise or identify the many sense impressions they receive, they have no way of making sense of the world, of discovering structure. Objects and people have meaning only in so far as – they appeal to the tactile sense of the child and fit into their pleasure world in essence they are extensions of his own body. On a cognitive level the baby has no way of organising, structuring or communicating with the outside world.

The deaf-blind baby becomes stunted in areas of physical development. Without motivation movement is restricted and muscles are not developed.

On the emotional side, relationships cannot go beyond the stage of the very young baby ie at the stage of physical contact and, in addition to this, incorrect handling and management can damage this basic contact and build up fear and resistance. Indeed, we have one pupil in school at the moment, who, for the first two years of their life spent a great deal of time in hospital. Much of the physical contact which the child encountered there, involved discomfort and the result was that the child rejected all physical contact and screamed when touched, even by the parents. This, as you can imagine, was extremely distressing for all concerned. This then is a type of child who is likely to be admitted to Carnbooth School. Those who are locked into themselves, engaging in stereotyped behaviour and intolerant of external attempts to interact with them.

It would be wrong of me to give the impression that all children who arrive at Carnbooth have such

extreme difficulties as those I have been describing but a good proportion of them do. All of them to a greater or lesser extent suffer from a confusion about and an inability to process fully all the information which is available to them in the form in which it is available to them. For these reasons we see the process of learning through real experience as being basic to our methods in helping our pupils to deal with the surrounding environment. So, what do we mean by real experience? – Surely all experience which we go through is REAL or are some experiences more real than others?

Let us take an example of a specific skill, and consider how it might be introduced. Using your fingers in a pincer movement is an important skill, for picking things up, for manipulating objects and for many everyday activities. It can either be taught as an isolated skill, or it can be taught through the exercise of pinning up clothes onto the washing line. A good strong pincer grip is a good skill to acquire and indeed, in some very good establishments is regularly taught in isolation by a method of reward training. In this method, the pupil is asked to perform the isolated, splinter skill and rewarded for doing so. This is likely to be repeated a number of times in a daily session until the skill has been mastered. The theory is that the skill will then be practised in the normal course of the day in a variety of activities and so will eventually be generalised. This is a generally accepted methodology which has shown great success with large numbers of children with very extreme learning difficulties and it is not my intention today to cast doubt on this method or enter into a debate as to the merits or otherwise of different methodologies. What I am saying is that, in our work at Carnbooth, dealing with children who are already struggling or perhaps have given up the struggle to make sense of their confusing



movement it is immediately resumed by the adult. In this way the child comes to realise that this person who works with them is able to understand them and that the child now has some control over their environment. From this very small beginning comes the understanding of communication, from experiencing what it means to communicate just one simple wish the child can be motivated to learn the more formal communication which will allow them to deal with an increasing number of people in the world around them. Many of the pupils in Carnbooth have such a severe visual and auditory loss that they have not had the opportunity to learn about the everyday tasks which everyone must do and which sighted-hearing children learn incidentally. The small child who washes a doll and brushes its hair is practising, in a representational play situation, the real skills which they will require as independent adult. The deaf-blind child must be helped to experience these activities but helped in a way that makes maximum sense to them and helps to dispel the confusion about the world which they are experiencing. To allow us to do this most meaningfully, the residential aspect of Carnbooth is vital as it allows that learning can be carried on as the child moves through the normal routine of the day. The children learn to recognise activities by moving through them co-actively with the adult. This involves the adult being very close to the child, positioned behind them and moving the child's limbs through the correct movements for each activity eg. with the adult's hand on top, moving a child's hand to rest on a door handle and then to turn it. This co-active movement would carry on until the adult is able to distance themselves slightly as the child begins to perform each task independently. This sort of activity would happen in the normal course of moving about the school and would never be carried out in a repetitive or non-purposeful manner. In this way the child learns the movements required by basic self help skills (face-washing, lifting a spoon etc) without the need to set up special - but artificial - programmes to teach these.

This may seem fairly self-evident - of course the best way to learn practical skills is by doing them and if it is possible to do them appropriately and at the same time of day as they would be done in "real life" then all the better. But what of the more abstract learning which we wish the children to acquire, does our philosophy of learning through real

environment then the teaching of these splinter skills in isolation would, we feel, compound rather than solve their problems. So, when we talk of learning by real experience we mean that every task and action which is encountered in the normal daily routine of living is a learning opportunity, one where both the practical skill and the accompanying language may be learned together.

This is the main reason why most of the pupils at Carnbooth are residential, this gives the opportunity for a waking-to-sleeping education. One in which all the activities of the day provide the opportunity for learning. Children at Carnbooth learn to operate a variety of door knobs as their daily routine necessitates them moving from room to room, opening cupboards and containers as the need arises rather than sitting, as I have seen other children doing, in front of a rather attractive board containing six little doors each with a different type of catch which they are required to master before progressing to a different activity. To a child already confused by the world this type of exercise would be, at best, a rather aimless way of refining their fine motor skills and

at worst a frustrating exercise designed to set up antagonism and refusal to cooperate. I would like now to turn to some examples of how this theory of learning through real experience is put into practice in Carnbooth.

First I would like to tell you about how close relationship movement can be used to give a young pre-lingually deaf-blind child the first real experience of communicating with another person and knowing beyond doubt that this communication has been understood.

When a child first enters Carnbooth they work with just one member of staff so that each comes to know the other well and a strong relationship is formed. One activity which they will take part in each day will be movement. During this session the small child will generally sit on the adult's knee, close to them and the adult will introduce a variety of movements, rocking, bouncing etc which they know from their own observation are pleasurable for the child.

During the course of one of the movements, the adult will halt, watching closely for the slightest movement from the child. When the child moves to continue the

experience extend to this? The simple answer is 'yes'.

Obviously, one of the main aspects of the work in Carnbooth – if not the main aspect – is the need to equip the children with as efficient a communication system as possible. To do this we believe it is vital to ground this language acquisition in the real experience of the day. The earliest gestures learned by the child will be those linked with basic needs, food, drink, toilet, which will be used co-actively with the child on every appropriate occasion. As these gestures begin to be linked to the activity by the child then they will get immediate reinforcement of the relevance of these gestures in that their first independent requests for food or drink will be responded to immediately whatever the time of day or activity going on at the time. It is vital to the child's understanding of communication for them to know that it has a real purpose. Needless to say, one of the first abstract signs which we find ourselves introducing is "afters" otherwise we could spend a lot of time in eating and drinking!

As we begin to teach the names of objects we begin with natural gestures for the children's clothes and these can be practised in a structured but real experience during dressing and undressing programmes in the morning or at night or at other times such as swimming sessions.

Many of the pupils at Carnbooth have the ability to progress to the use of the written word or Braille and although, as these skills progress, there is obviously the need for formal drilling of the skills, still their use and justification are rooted in real experience and the communication surrounding it. Two weeks ago, the children of Carnbooth spent a week at Faskally Outdoor Centre in Pitlochry where both staff and pupils spent an exhilarating week on activities like canoeing, forest walks, swimming, and lots more. During many of these activities you would have seen some of the pupils and staff making regular use of pen and paper on a clipboard. In this way, the activity being experienced was made that much more valuable and the formal skills of written and signed language were being advanced through this immediate linking with the real experience. But what of the other skills which are more normally associated with the classroom, pre-number and number work, mathematical skills and so on. Again these are firmly rooted in the child's experience, a child can and does learn one-to-one



correspondence by activities like setting the table for himself and his friends. Matching and sorting come easily when you collect clean washing from the laundry room and pick out matching socks and then separate those form underwear, pyjamas and so on.

The understanding of time comes first through the appreciation of the Day Rhythm and then becomes finer and more exact through the increasing detail of personal timetables and diaries. It is always thrilling for staff when 'the penny drops' and a child suddenly shows an obvious understanding of a concept which has been worked on for some time and this happened just a few weeks ago with one of our pupils. For quite some time, as the child moved through the day's work, the teacher working with her had been drawing her attention to 'light' and 'heavy' objects which they were handling. The child was going for her session in the music room and was carrying a 'light' bag containing two beaters for the xylophone. Having finished her session and being asked to pick up her 'light' bag in preparation for leaving the room, this little girl, who has very little sight and who uses fingerspelling, began to giggle happily and to pile all the beaters she could lay hands on into the bag before finger-spelling "heavy" to her teacher. She then left the room almost dragging her "heavy" bag, laughing all the way back to her room upstairs. Learning by real experience would seem to be, not only more effective and relevant but also more fun!!

Another area in which we stress the importance of real experience is that of personal independence and here I would like to tell you a little about the children's shopping

experience and its importance. Most pre-school and infant children in mainstream schools take part in "shopping activities" in the classroom or nursery, some of these activities being structured than others but all involving the concepts of exchanging money for goods, some understanding of money value, perhaps matching, sorting, weighing and so on. All these concepts and skills are important and we would hope that at least some of them will be mastered by our pupils. However, these are not, to my mind the most important aspects of this activity for our children and even if they master none of the skills I have mentioned they will all, I hope, achieve what is a much more basic but highly important concept. The idea of commodities being used up, and then replaced and how this happens. When I tell people about our shopping and food preparation activities in school I always think about a conversation I had about ten years ago with a young man of 17 called Tommy. Tommy lived in a long stay hospital for the mentally handicapped which is, happily, long since closed. He could see and hear perfectly well and was able to dress, wash and care for his own personal hygiene. Indeed, I would presume that by now he is probably living somewhere in the community. We were doing a simple exercise about where certain everyday types of foods came from and Tommy was mystified. "It just comes up from the kitchen, Marion" he said. Tommy had lived in that hospital so long that he had been totally deprived of 'real experience' and simply knew that food came "up from the kitchen" just as other necessities, soap, toothpaste etc simply renewed themselves as they ran out. He was institutionalised.

Our children are not so cut off from real life as Tommy was but neither do they have sight and hearing to pick up information as he I think would have been able to had he been given the chance. And so here again, real experience is vital. From a fairly early stage it can be seen that there is at least one commodity which a child is particularly fond of. It might be a food – peanut butter is a special favourite at Carnbooth – or a special talcum powder or bubble bath. When it is finished we draw the child's attention to this and a lot of work is done before going on the shopping trip to prepare them for the idea that they will need to buy a new one. At the shop, the old empty container can be matched with a new full one and then money handed over to buy it. On return to

school the empty container can be disposed of, the child having taken a real part in the process of replacing it. Regular experience of this type should guarantee that, although a young person might never be fully independent with money, neither will they experience the deprivation of understanding that young men like Tommy suffered.

At a much more advanced level than this we have had older pupils at Carnbooth who were living semi-independently in a bed-sit in the school. These two girls had progressed in their shopping and cooking skills to a stage where they had everything necessary to be able to cater for themselves. However, in one of the first days in the bed-sit, most of Monday passed with neither girl realising that fridge and larder were both almost bare. As dinner

time arrived they suddenly realised, for themselves, that there was no food and they could not prepare dinner. At that point, staff intervened in so far as they joined in the discussion as to what was to be done. Eventually a shopping trip took place, dinner was prepared and finally eaten at a little after ten o'clock in the evening. But both had learned by the real experience of the need for planning and preparation. Also with the older pupils we have on occasion, set up a slightly artificial 'real experience' where a pupil has experienced what might have been an upsetting but common problem while there was someone in the background to cope if the upset was too much. For example, a member of staff made an arrangement to meet one of our pupils in the centre of Glasgow. The

teacher arrived on time but stood far enough away not to be noticed by the pupil. After 15 minutes when she might be expected to be getting rather anxious the girl approached a policeman and, using a paper and pencil, explained her situation adding that she was deaf-blind. The policeman who obviously had not had as many good opportunities to learn by real experience as had the young lady rather chickened out and wrote down instructions for her to wait another 15 minutes and if her friend had still not arrived, to ask another policeman!

This paper has only examined one aspect of the work of Carnbooth School. I hope, however, that it has emphasised how important it is for deaf-blind children to be given the opportunity to learn through REAL experiences.

Educating multi-sensory impaired children

The Birmingham University course in the education of multi-sensory impaired children is now in its third year. The course, run by the School of Education and Westhill College, trains experienced teachers, already working in special education and usually with some experience of deaf-blind pupils. A year's full-time study followed by the writing of a dissertation or project gains teachers a B.Phil.(Ed.) or Diploma in the education of multi-sensory impaired children. The Department of Education and Science recognises the course as meeting requirements for the mandatory qualification for teachers of deaf-blind children.

Heather Murdoch, Lecturer in Birmingham University's School of Education, reports.

The course involves lectures, seminars and practical workshops, emphasising observation and video analysis, and simulation work using blindfolds and earplugs or Walkmans. There are visits to specialist centres in the United Kingdom and Europe, with a total of eight weeks over the year spent in schools. Project work in schools supports information from lectures and seminars, with a focus on assessment approaches. A four-week teaching placement at a specialist unit allows students to observe and work with a range of deaf-blind pupils, and to explore the facilities available from a specialist centre.

The course content emphasises six areas, considering assessment and intervention approaches for each area:

1. Aspects of child development (particularly conceptual development, movement and mobility).
2. Sensory impairment (considering the cumulative implications of dual sensory impairment, and the development of residual senses).

3. Communication (from pre-intentional communication to reading and writing using print, braille or Moon).
4. Curriculum and teaching (especially the implications of the National Curriculum for learning environments).
5. Population and provision (including the range of provision required to meet the varied needs of multi-sensory impaired children, and visits to existing services).

An important part of the course is the completion of a dissertation (12,000 words) or project (5,000 words). This must consider one aspect of the education of deaf-blind children, and allows students to develop their particular interests. They need to plan, carry out and analyse some original work on their chosen topic, setting this in the context of previous research.

The low incidence of deaf-blindness often means that the information available to students from literature is relatively sparse, and liaison with people studying similar topics would be of great interest. Planned dissertation topics

for this year include:

- functional hearing assessment of multi-sensory impaired children.
- integration of multi-sensory impaired children within a special school.
- intervention: the role of intervenors working with children.
- provision for young multi-sensory impaired children (in a particular geographical area).
- use of music to promote communication in multi-sensory impaired children.
- use of sensory rooms across the curriculum.
- emotional development in MSI children.

If you are studying any of these topics, and would like to exchange information, please contact:

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Twenty years of deaf-blind education

For deaf-blind people to be heard, a national organisation of their own is essential. The Finnish Deaf-Blind Association was founded in 1971, but only during the last ten years has outstanding progress been made: a rehabilitation system has been set up, and we have discovered greater opportunities for learning and communicating. This is the way forward towards greater independence.

This year, the Association celebrates twenty years of work. The main events in our Jubilee year take place in the autumn. On the 12th and 13th August, an Usher symposium will take place in Helsinki, with talks by lecturers in otology, ophthalmology, treatment and rehabilitation.

The Association's official anniversary is on 15th December, when deaf-blind people in our country meet to attend the autumn assembly, and to join in the celebrations.

Covering the whole country

The Finnish Deaf-Blind Association is a service-providing organisation, and an interest group for deaf-blind people. The country has been divided into rehabilitation centres for children and adults. The Rehabilitation Centre for Deaf-Blind Children in Jyväskylä is for children, and ten regional secretaries across the country look after adult rehabilitation. At present, the organisation employs 40 people.

The Association's activities are based on the Declaration of Human Rights for the Deaf-Blind,

which was passed by the UN general assembly on 23rd July, 1980.

The main organisational decisions are made at two assemblies, in the spring and autumn. The autumn assembly elects the executive committee, with a chairman and ten members. Seven of these are deaf-blind, and there are also experts on various subjects on the committee.

The spring assembly looks at the Association's annual report and accounts.

Cooperation gives strength

At the moment, there are approximately 600 deaf-blind people in Finland: children and young people under 18 years old account for 100 of these.

The wishes and needs of the

deaf-blind people of Finland are considered when planning the Association's activities. The Association works in close cooperation with the many organisations for the disabled in our country. Common interests include campaigning to bring laws on services for deaf-blind people into effect, and preserving the use of clear, easily understandable Finnish in all publications.

The Association believes that collaboration with deaf-blind organisations in other countries is very important. Our work with the Scandinavians is very intensive indeed.

Another important working partner has been the Nordic Staff Training Centre for Deaf-Blind Services in Denmark. It collects and gives out the latest international data, which will later be adapted to suit the situation in Finland.

Fathers' report

Åke Rosengren, the father of a deaf-blind boy in Sweden, attends a group for fathers of deaf-blind children. In this short article, he reports on the group's activities.

The idea of discussion groups for fathers came about at a family meeting in autumn 1989. A father in the group had realised that mothers and fathers needed to talk separately. He thought that mothers and fathers held different opinions, and gave priorities to different issues.

The result was that the fathers met separately for the first time at the end of March 1990. Together with a drama teacher, we practised acting in a relaxed and natural way in front of each other. We also talked about our own childhoods and our relationships with our parents, especially our fathers.

In addition to the hours we had together with the drama teacher, we also spent time together eating tasty food and having saunas.

In April 1991, we had a meeting on an island in the Gothenburg archipelago in a summer cottage. This time we met without the drama teachers, but that does not mean we were lazy.

At that meeting we discussed economic questions and the importance of having a guardian/administrator for the group.

One morning we went by boat to a lighthouse called Vinga, and we visited the house where the Swedish composer Everf Taube



grew up.

We also talked about the course for the following year. One of the proposals was a weekend, including sailing and a particular subject for discussion.

As our jobs, ages and backgrounds are different, we might not have met if it was not for the common factor - our disabled children. However, this is not the only point of discussion; we also talk about sport, politics, work and family relations, at the same time as eating good food and enjoying outdoor activities.

We plan to meet annually to exchange thoughts and ideas about the role of the father in relation to the disabled child. We have gained much from the meetings in terms of companionship and shared experiences, and we would like others to join us.

Exchanging ideas

Collaboration at a European level between centres for deaf-blind education is very important to the people in charge of developing programmes nationally. The following report describes how Italy and France have been working together over the last two years on exchange visits.

Participants from Nostra Casa, at the Lega del Filo d'Oro, Italy, CESSA, Larnay and Foyer de la Varenne, Poitiers, France met to discuss ways in which their organisations could share expertise. Following these meetings, the Lega del Filo D'Oro and CESSA decided to organise an exchange of both staff and students. This programme included:

- A visit of nine French professionals to Osimo in May 1989
- A visit of nine Italian professionals to Poitiers in June 1989
- A visit of four French deaf-blind students to Osimo in May 1990
- A visit of three Italian blind, or deaf-blind students to Poitiers in June 1990

French delegation visits Osimo

Jacques Souriau, Director of CESSA, reports.

The programme was very well structured, thanks to the centre's managers, and their staff. All the visitors appreciated how easy it was to visit the institution. For example, a French educator was able to spend a whole morning with a young deaf-blind girl and her teacher. This was hands-on experience, dealing directly with the relevant professional, instead of via reports or videos. It needs a lot of mutual respect, but it is very productive. Our French professional noticed how every gesture the student made was seen as an opportunity to communicate.

The French visitors were impressed with a number of practices at Nostra Casa. It seemed that everything was geared towards giving the adolescents the possibility of independence. The theory behind their approaches was combined with a friendly attitude. Many activities were well adapted to furthering cognitive development through self-care skills.

The role of the sociologist seemed to be very important, particularly in the following areas:

- Running holidays every summer for adults;
- Taking care of isolated deaf-blind adults;
- Organising activities with volunteers, for deaf-blind people living in institutions, in addition to those living on their own.
- The organisation of staff training is one of the most carefully planned we know. We were particularly impressed with the way the centre collaborated with universities for training and research.

Parents were given the



opportunity to stay in the centre for several days to observe the work being done by the professionals. There was also the opportunity to take part in long observation sessions, lasting several weeks, aimed at designing a programme for use in everyday settings.

All these points do not describe the whole programme carried out in Osimo, but they reflect the way the French professionals were spurred on to review their own way of

working.

Such an experience is a good way for professionals to understand the value of their jobs. In many ways, by looking at the way other people work, professionals can better understand what they do, what they can change and why. That makes the connection between theory and practice more effective.

Thanks to all the staff at the Lega del Filo D'Oro, for making this visit possible.



French students visit Osimo

In 1990, a group of five deaf-blind teenagers from Larnay planned to go to Osimo, where other deaf-blind young people are educated. This project formed the basis of their school work for a whole term. Robert Aguirre, teacher, and Jean-Marie Besson, Educator at CESSA detail the preparation for the trip, and share its success.

Preparing to go

We decided to make the group work together, instead of on a one to one basis, every time we needed to evaluate what had been done, and what was still to do. This was the best way to find out what each of them knew, to make them exchange information and stimulate one another to think.

The first obvious question was; "Yes, we are going to Italy, but how much will it cost?" We then asked; "What will each of us have to pay for it?" The first student meeting was to discuss the main areas to be budgeted for, which were: transportation, food, accommodation and activities.

Transportation

We first had to find out how far it was, so we looked at the map. We asked; "What is a country? What are France and Italy? Where do we leave from, and where do we arrive? Which big cities are on the way? Are there any mountains, or seas? What are the borders? What route shall we take?"

Then we looked at arithmetic. We asked; "How many kilometres will we have to travel? The trip seems to be very long. Maybe it would be better to make it in two days. How many kilometres shall we cover on the first day? How many on the second?"

As it was a two-day trip, we had to book rooms in a hotel. We found the address of a cheap one, and we wrote off to book rooms. Once we had answered all these questions, we arrived at a rough estimate for the cost of transportation.

Food

We knew that we would be invited to dinner by an old friend living in Osimo, because he had once worked as a counsellor in our centre. We also knew that we would be having picnics with the Italian deaf-blind students.

So, after meeting, we decided to



go to a restaurant every night, and to have a picnic every lunch time, when we would be on the move.

We asked; "How much does a picnic cost? Or a meal at a restaurant?" This was a good opportunity to learn about everyday skills.

Accommodation

At our first meeting on this subject, we decided that the group would sleep in the centre at Osimo, and on a camping site in Venice. However, we still needed to draw up a precise plan for the trip.

Daily plan

This gave us the opportunity to work on the concept of time. We asked; "How many days shall we spend there? At what time shall we set off in the morning? If our travelling speed is 70 kilometres an hour, how long will the trip last?"

What shall we do in Italy?

We decided to visit the sea, the mountains, caves and old churches. We looked at the leaflets we had been sent. We asked what Venice was, and what method of transport they used.

Last minute preparation

A few days before the trip, the students considered the things that still needed to be done. Three dimensional and braille maps were made, addresses and telephone numbers were given to parents and pocket money was changed.

Throughout their work together, the students were encouraged to work within their personal limitations. Some of them were able to anticipate and to think over what was going to happen without any mistakes. Others were not able to follow this kind of logic. Some could perform arithmetic; others not.

All of them were enthusiastic, and worked tirelessly. They each felt very responsible for the success of the project.

Some of them had no concept of foreign people and places. Some were afraid because they felt it was far away, or because the language would be different. On the other hand, one of the students was very interested in speaking Italian. Some of the students were worried when they realised that the adults in the group did not understand Italian. It made them laugh, because for the first time, they felt equal with the adults, who usually knew more than them.

After the trip

Each of the students wrote up a report. Then a meeting with the group's parents was held, during which the students talked about their trip. First, they had to describe a part of their trip to their parents, and help to prepare a photo exhibition in the centre. Then, everything was put together during a meeting, with the support of a video.

Impressions

Our students spent a lot of time with a group of Italian deaf-blind students. They visited their day centre, their workplace and went on a lot of trips to caves, public gardens and the sea. They went sailing and had meals together.

They exchanged ideas about the differences in language, especially in fingerspelling.

We tried to involve the students as much as possible in their trip, from the preparation to the journey back. The commitment they showed to its organisation, and their attention throughout are indications of its success. We think we succeeded in giving them one of the most impressive experiences of their lives.



UNSER DORF

Since its foundation in 1972, the Deutsches Taubblindenwerk (German Institute for the Deaf-Blind) Hanover, has earned itself a reputation throughout the world for its work with the deaf-blind. Within its walls, deaf-blind people are offered a home, education and training.

In 1990, the Deutsches Taubblindenwerk opened a further establishment specifically for deaf-blind and blind people with additional learning difficulties, in a place called Fischbeck near Hessisch Oldendorf.

On the outskirts of Fischbeck, a small village for handicapped people was constructed – architecturally designed with extreme care to fit into the overall perspective and to blend into its surroundings.

The plot, which is some 56,000 square metres in area, contains ten houses suitable for a larger than average family, plus plenty of pleasant open space for the inhabitants. At the same time, the site provides residents with a secure and supportive, self-contained community.

In each house, seven handicapped people live in a family group.

All the inhabitants have their own rooms in which they are responsible for themselves and their possessions. However, they can get together as a 'family' in the house's communal area.

Giving meaning to existence

Stimulating work can boost the self-esteem of even the most disabled person. In recognition of this fact, we have a workshop for the handicapped, in which every inhabitant is offered a suitable occupation, depending on the severity of his/her handicap. In

Our village

This is the place to live

many cases, what is offered is based on the education and facilities offered at the School for the Deaf-Blind in Hanover.

In Fischbeck, staff in the home work closely with those in the workshop. This close cooperation is proving to be very successful. In this way, we hope to release our residents from the isolation and loneliness which so many deaf-blind people feel.

The daily routine of the residents is planned and structured on an individual basis through:

- Help with domestic chores and washing
- Help with gardening and keeping the whole area tidy



- Handicrafts and industrial contract work in the workshop
- Special activities to prepare for appropriate employment
- Special activities to improve movement and use of free time, mobility training
- Participation in Church services, so that spiritual welfare is not neglected.



After re-unification: provision for deaf- blind people

The education of the deaf-blind in Germany began on 14th January 1887. On that day the first deaf-blind girl was accepted into Oberlin-Haus in Potsdam-Babelsberg.

After the second world war Oberlin-Haus was no longer accessible to deaf-blind people from West Germany.

After many years of sustained effort on behalf of Karl-Heinz Baask, the Deutsches Taubblindenwerk was founded in 1967 as a non profit making, private organisation for blind people, with the specific task of being responsible for the interests of all deaf-blind people in the Bundesrepublik of Germany (West Germany).

The position of the Deutsches Taubblindenwerk was changed after the reunification of Germany in October 1990. New federal states were added to the Bundesrepublik. A great deal of good work had been going on on behalf of deaf-blind people in the intervening years in a variety of places, in different institutions.

We have all had an excellent working relationship for many years. Deutsches Taubblindenwerk has contributed to vocational training courses in the German Democratic Republic on a regular basis.

In December 1990 and in February 1991 all the institutions concerned with the deaf-blind throughout the whole of Germany came together to plan future co-operation. These institutions were:

The Services for Religious and Social Welfare of the Deaf-Blind, Dresden

- Oberlin-Haus, Potsdam-Babelsberg
- The School for the Deaf, Halberstadt
- The Institute for the Blind, Wurzburg
- The Jobst and Anna Wiechern Institute, Tenssbuttel
- Deutsches Taubblindenwerk GmbH, Hanover

The collective goal of all these institutions is the establishment of an umbrella organisation to protect the interests of deaf-blind people in Germany and to guarantee support for them.

The following areas of organisation are deemed to be of paramount importance:

- Support in the early years for all deaf-blind children
- Responsibility with regard to the provision of educational facilities
- Vocational education and training
- Continued responsibility for the welfare of school leavers
- The vocational and social rehabilitation of adults who have lost hearing and sight later in life
- The counselling and support of deaf-blind adults
- Organisation of work for the deaf-blind (general)
- Organisation of work for the deaf-blind within individual institutions (recommendations, guidelines)
- The training of educators, teachers and other support service personnel
- The continued education of ancillary workers
- Basic and continued research into hearing and visual impairment, educational methods for deaf-blind people.

Dietrich Bunk,
Headmaster
Bildungszentrum
Deutsches Taubblindenwerk
Hanover

STAFF DEVELOPMENT: THE IAEDB SUB-COMMITTEE

William Green, of the IEADB's sub-committee on Staff Development, updates readers on its activities.

This committee has of January 1991 had two meetings: one meeting with all participants, held in May 1990 during the European Conference on Staff Development in Services to Deaf-Blind People, at Osimo, Italy, and a small meeting held in September 1990 during the UK Weekend Away, organised by Sense.

The committee has undertaken two main areas of work, one being the creation of "working groups", starting immediately, to investigate the current situation and start discussions on:

- Visual assessment
- Auditory assessment
- Functional assessment, and
- Communication and language development

Within these main themes, we set up seven areas of investigation, each with a co-ordinator responsible for creating a plan of action to further our knowledge, and for distributing this information.

Secondly, a research project is being prepared, to investigate the possibility of establishing a European Resource Service. This project will include an analysis of needs, aims and outcome, methodology and timing, eventual location, staffing and funding.

A proposition concerning the above was made at the meeting in Birmingham, UK, and was the basis for discussion at the next committee meeting, held at the Nordic Centre, Dronninglund, in May 1991.

A report on the projects' progress will be presented at the World Conference in Orebro, in August 1991.

If you need any further information, or have any questions or comments for the committee, contact the Secretary, William Green, Lega del Filo D'Oro, Osimo, Italy, or any other committee members, who are:

- Jacques Souriau (F)
Chairperson
- Tony Best (UK)
- Marlene Daelman (B)
- Marajanna Suosalmi (DK)
- Luigi Giacco (I)
- Anke Grauel (D)
- Anton van Hagen (NDL)
- Anne Nafsted (N)

New graduate research programme from Hilton/Perkins

The Hilton/Perkins International Programme has announced the setting up of a Graduate Research Grants Programme.

This new initiative, a component of the international programme at Perkins School for the Blind, in Massachusetts, is designed to promote field-based research on education of blind and blind multiply handicapped individuals and their families in the Asia/Pacific, Africa and Latin America/Caribbean regions.

The following gives full details of the programme:

Priority topics:

- multiple disabilities including deaf-blindness
- Assessment (educational and clinical)
- Curricular issues
- Vocational training
- Transition to adult services
- Education in rural areas

Early Intervention Services (birth to school-age)

- Parent involvement in early intervention
- Development of curriculum
- Assessment
- Transition to school

Services to Parents and Families

- Support models for parents
- Parent training models
- Parent/professional collaboration
- Home-based training

Funding: Applicants compete for financial awards which usually range from \$500-\$1500.

Application requirements

Please send the following documents:

- Completed application form
- A copy of your research proposal approved by an Academic Advisor
- Approval of the research proposal by the University Ethics Committee*
- Detailed budget (in U.S. dollars)
- Detailed timeline for completion of the project

Application deadline: Researchers who apply by September 1, 1991 will receive notification by December 1, 1991.

* This applies to applicants attending universities where this is procedural for graduate level research involving human subjects.

Send all application materials to your Regional Representative:

Asia/Pacific region:

Kirk Horton,
Foundation for the
Blind,
420 Rajavithi Road,
Bangkok 10400,
Thailand.

Africa and other regions:

Jeri F. Traub, Ph.D.
Educational Leadership Program,
Perkins School for the Blind,
175 North Beacon Street,
Watertown, MA 02172, USA.
(617) 924-3434, Ext. 512

Latin America/ Caribbean region:

Graciela Ferioli,
Instituto Helen Keller,

Helen Keller National Center appoints new Director

The Helen Keller National Center, in New York, for deaf-blind youths and adults, has a new Director. Joseph J. McNulty has been promoted from Assistant Director to take on his new role.

Mr McNulty began his career as a mobility instructor at Helen Keller Services for the Blind, teaching orientation and mobility skills to adults. As Director, he hopes to carry on the aims of the Center, explaining: "Our goal is constant: expanded opportunities for people who are deaf-blind to live and work in the community."

Did you celebrate with Helen Keller?

Did you celebrate Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week in June? The week, which ran from 23rd to 29th June, focussed on parents who want the same opportunities for their child as Helen Keller had: the right to live as an active member of the community, to get a job, to find a place to live and to have a group of friends.

Agencies around the world were invited to organise celebrations for Helen Keller week, to raise awareness of deaf-blindness, and the issues surrounding it. If you took part in any events organised during the week, why not write in to Deaf-Blind Education, and let other readers know?

9th WORLD CONGRESS INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF MENTAL DEFICIENCY GOLD COAST, AUSTRALIA

5th - 9th AUGUST, 1992

For registration information,
contact:

1992 IASSMD Congress
Organisers, GPO Box 2069,
Brisbane, Q. 4001, Australia
(Facsimile 61-7-371 5107)

For programme and presentation
information, contact:

Dr Terrence Dolan,
Waisman Centre,
University of Wisconsin-
Madison, Madison, WI.
53705-2280, USA
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Becoming a Teacher

Vasile Adamescu is deaf and blind. This has not stopped his ambitions, and he is now a teacher in the school for blind children in Cluj, Romania. In this article he talks about his early life, his systems of communication and how he has gained the skills to pass on his own knowledge to blind and deaf students.

A blind and deaf person afflicted in his early childhood but having a healthy brain, unaffected biologically, certainly stands the chance of developing his psychic and intellectual functions to the highest degree. Thus he may become active and useful in various fields: sciences, arts, and even teaching. What he needs is a thorough and multilateral training, like all other members of the society, so that he can constantly enrich his general and professional knowledge under the guidance of skilled and passionate teachers. After having received this necessary help, he will in the end return 'with profit' this educational investment and will contribute to the progress of the society in which he lives. I am in this situation. Society has helped me to successfully overcome the handicap of my loss of sight and hearing, and to develop my personality. I have also received a good training in the field of psychopedagogy. As for me, I have endeavoured to work steadily for the benefit of my people and country.

I am convinced that the road that I have taken, although very difficult, can be walked successfully by any other handicapped person. As a teacher, I have always tried to help my fellow colleagues so that they should accumulate, with the help of adequate means and procedures, the largest amount of social expertise possible, the skills and abilities prescribed by our school programmes, in order to develop their personalities and become useful people for our society.

In the following lines I want to refer to some of the most significant moments in my life, which I have experienced either directly – a first-hand experience – or through the mediation of my consciousness. Some have been told to me by relatives, teachers, fellow colleagues and friends.

I was born a healthy person; that is, without any physical or psychic infirmity, on September 5, 1944, into a poor family. At the age of two and a half I was struck by a great misfortune: I lost my sight and hearing as a result of meningo-encephalitis. After this unfortunate disease I lived in total isolation – darkness, silence, and ignorance for a long period of time. Until the age

of 11, I was taken care of by my grandmother, when I was brought to the Special School for the Blind in Cluj, Romania.

I knew nothing at that time, I lacked even the most fundamental knowledge, and my possibilities of communicating with the people around were extremely poor. Today I realize that I have had an extraordinary opportunity. My brain was not damaged by the disease, so it continued to grow normally.

On an autumn day in 1955, I met Miss Florica Sandu, my first teacher, who is celebrating her 80th birthday this year. An energetic and open-hearted woman, she began to see to my education and training. She helped me form my skills, 'invented' various techniques (signs) in order to communicate with me. At last she 'demutized' me. Simultaneously she helped me acquire the basic knowledge about the objects and phenomena in the world around.

In 1962 (when Miss Sandu retired), I began to work with other teachers from whom I have learned many things. I am so grateful to them for everything they have done for me.

I must mention that the Ministry of Education gave special approval for a class with a single pupil – myself – who was to be trained by a group of teachers for various subjects (in fact, the only class of the kind in our country).

With the help of my teachers I began to broaden my contacts with the natural and social milieu. I began to perceive more exactly objects and phenomena from reality, to understand more clearly that I was living among people, and that I was expected to behave like them. I became more and more independent in my relationship with the world (regarding for example, my spatial and temporal sense of orientation, my use and manipulation of things and objects, my behaviour towards the other people – teachers, fellow colleagues, foreigners). My thinking and language also developed as I was studying Romanian language and literature, history, geography, mathematics, physics and chemistry. I learned how to work in the school workshop and printing press.

In the process of communicating with the people, I use various means of reception and emission of verbal signals (graphic, sound, finger-spelling). I make use of the sensitivity of my hands. The people around me write on the palm of my right hand with capital letters or in Braille at a proper speed. I can register and decipher fairly well whatever is being communicated to me. With some people I use the dactylic language. I usually perceive the movements of the speaker's fingers on my right hand. I can perceive written texts (in Braille or letters in relief) quite easily, like any blind man.

When I am in direct communication with hearers, I speak and I usually make myself understood pretty well. I even succeed in speaking on the telephone, being able to send various messages to my acquaintances (without, however, being able to hear their replies), and I have spoken on the radio. With deaf and blind people I communicate either by writing on their palms or by using dactylic signs. In school, I have studied four systems of writing: Braille, Klein, Hebold and ordinary typewriting (of course, on a typewriter adapted for the blind).

I have not acquired the gestural language largely used by the deaf because in the social milieu in which I grew up (the special school), I could do without that means of communication. Nevertheless, I have acquired a number of gestures much later as a student and even as a teacher.

I have learned all these forms of language step-by-step and with a lot of perseverance. They allow me to constantly broaden my knowledge about the objective world – the natural and social environments.

I have communicated with many friends, either sighted or not, from my country or from abroad. By reading I have been able to discover many secrets of nature (I have been reading systematically books and magazines printed in Braille from my school library and at the library of the Blind People's Association in our town).

In 1973 I graduated from high school and took my degree paper

ROMANIA



with good qualifications. With the help of the teaching staff I made up my mind to sit the entrance examination for the Faculty of Psycho-pedagogy of the University of Cluj. It was a difficult exam, but I took it (with the special approval of the Ministry of Education).

I attended the courses for four years together with sighted students. I must confess that I continuously received help from my colleagues. They helped to transcribe the courses and seminars into Braille, helped me from home to the University, wrote on my palm so I could follow the lecturer's explanations as well as the discussions during the seminars. The teaching staff, too, helped me by giving me consultations on various subjects. I had a particular interest in the practical courses and activities on the psychology of deafness and blindness in order to better understand my own condition.

In the last two years of my student period, I worked hard on my diploma paper which was entitled 'Particularities of Reality Perception in the Absence of Seeing and Hearing' under the scientific supervision of Professor Valer Mare. To this end, I consulted my older diaries and I used the rich material that I had gathered while a schoolboy on various trips, journeys and visits throughout Romania and Yugoslavia.

In 1977, after graduating, I successfully took a BA on special psycho-pedagogy. Consequently, I received a job as a teacher at the Special School for the Blind in Cluj, where I began my work in September, 1977, with the class for the blind and deaf together with my former teacher, Georgeta Damian.

This kind of work seemed to me very difficult at the beginning, but gradually I got used to it. Professor Damian's help was salutary above

Since the Revolution in December 1989, the attention of the world has been drawn to the needs of disabled children within Romania. A concentrated programme of aid and support focused first upon the orphanages, and on the institutions where severely disabled children were living in terrible conditions.

Eighteen months later, a clearer picture is beginning to emerge of the education that blind, deaf and deaf-blind children are now receiving within Romania.

The schools for blind children were surveyed by Wolf Stein on behalf of the International Council for the Education of the Visually Handicapped (ICEVH). His survey highlighted the need for special training courses for the teachers in the schools, and more educational equipment to be made available. This year a programme of special courses for teachers in all the schools has begun, and work is in progress to reform the curriculum being offered in the blind schools. Many of the children in these enormous, poorly equipped schools have other handicaps including hearing loss. The facilities for testing their hearing, and the opportunities for developing teaching skills to work with these children, are still not available.

The schools for the deaf have also been surveyed, by David Bond and Peter Watkins from the United Kingdom, who reported on a situation where there is no effective assessment of hearing loss, no facilities for producing and fitting hearing aids, and a significant lack of teaching resources. Currently there is no evidence of organised teaching of deaf-blind children within these schools.

It can be expected that most of the deaf-blind children are still to be found in the institutions for severely handicapped children. In the next few years, as new expertise and new resources are applied to the many thousands of disabled children of Romania, perhaps we can hope for a new growth of specialist support to deaf-blind children.

PAUL ENNALS

all. I was collaborating with Professor Valer Mare on a mutual project: we have been gathering material about the way in which I perceive, know, and understand the surrounding world. We have worked together on some experiments regarding spatial orientation with the blind and deaf. I have constantly taken my students to the lab in order to improve the phonetic aspect of their speech with the help of some special technical devices (for example, the 'polycompensator' - an apparatus devised by the Department of the University - which sets in a simultaneous activity the hearing, seeing and vibro-tactile senses in the perception of verbal signals develops the polysensorial control of verbal emission).

In communicating with my students I use all the forms of language I have mentioned above (oral language to the extent that the students possess some auditory resources; written language in Braille and the ordinary one, Dactylic; and in addition we sometimes use gestures in order to facilitate mutual understanding).

Taking into account the fact that the perception components play a very important role in the

intellectual activity of the blind and deaf students, I use in my lessons a rich didactic material (concrete objects, drawings and diagrams in relief). I also try to teach them how to perform practical activities: to measure and calculate surfaces, volumes, the weight of certain objects; to orientate themselves in time and space by measuring distances or drawing the position of objects; to model and project in space and volume (the projective drawing in relief) the form, dimensions (natural or scaled down) and spatial relations among real or imaginary objects. On this basis I try to develop in my students the capacity of doing mental operations. It is an appropriate way, I think, of developing their abstract thinking and imagination.

I must say that I still encounter many difficulties regarding the methodical part of my work. We lack special books in Braille (from Romanian or foreign books).

I sometimes receive some specialist materials translated from other languages (by Professor Valer Mare and other colleagues), but I would like to get more accessible information. My wife sometimes helps me by reading some texts to me (and writing on my palm).

IAEDB Constitution

In the July to December 1990 edition of *Deaf-Blind Education* the IAEDB published a draft for its new constitution. Comments were invited, and this revised constitution is the result. As many readers are aware, the organisation has undergone some changes recently, and it is hoped that the new constitution reflects this. Those readers going to Örebro will have the opportunity to voice their opinions.

Name

1. The name of the organisation (hereinafter called "the Association") is "The International Association for the Education of Deaf-Blind People."

Office

2. The office of the Association shall be based in that country where the Secretariat is located. By decision of the Executive Committee, the Association may seek formal recognition as, for example, a charity, corporate body, voluntary organisation etc. in the host country or in any other country, if such registration will be to the Association's advantage.

Objects

3. The objects of the Association as established are as follows:

3.1. To promote the recognition of deaf-blindness as a unique disability throughout the world.

3.2. To promote the education and development of deaf-blind people throughout the world in accordance with the educational and administrative requirements and with the socio-economic circumstances of individual countries, states and authorities. The phrase "deaf-blind people" is intended to encompass all age ranges, from childhood to old age, and all conditions of deaf-blindness, whether acquired congenitally or adventitiously.

3.3. To guard and strengthen the civil rights of deaf-blind people and to ensure their equality of opportunity with other citizens.

3.4. To promote continuing and life-long education and development for deaf-blind people.

3.5. To promote and make known the variety and diversity of social support systems for deaf-blind people throughout the world.

3.6. To promote interaction within the community of deaf-blind people.

3.7. To promote interaction between deaf-blind people, their families, professionals and the wider community.

3.8. To gather and disseminate information on research, staff development and programme methods.

3.9. To promote research.

Powers

4. In furtherance of its objects, the Association is hereby empowered to take any positive action as conforms to international law for all international activities and to the laws of any member country for any particular Association action within that country. In addition, the Association will act only in accordance with the powers in its national constitution where it has been granted formal recognition in any country.

Expenditure

5. The income of the Association shall be applied solely in promoting its objects and no portion thereof shall be paid or transferred to members of the Association. No member of the Executive Committee shall be appointed to any office of the Association paid by salary or fees, or receive any financial benefit from the Association.

6. The Association may make payment to any member, officer or servant of the Association for any services rendered to the Association.

7. The Association may make payment to any member of its Executive Committee for out-of-pocket expenses.

8. If upon the dissolution of the Association there remains, after the satisfaction of all its debts and liabilities, any property whatsoever, the same shall not be paid to the members of the Association, but shall be given to some other organisation having objects similar to the objects of the Association.

Membership

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

10. Individual membership is available to any applicant and every applicant shall sign a written consent to become a member. Applications are approved by the Executive Committee through such a process as it may determine from time to time, and membership may not be unreasonably refused. All individual memberships will continue until the next General Meeting of the Association, after which members will be invited to reapply. The Executive Committee may from time to time prescribe an annual subscription fee to be paid by individual members.

11. Corporate membership is available to any school, association, institution, society or any similar organisation and

every such applicant shall sign a written consent to become a member. Applications are approved by the Executive Committee through such a process as it may determine from time to time and membership may not be unreasonably refused. All Corporate memberships will be on an annual basis. The Executive Committee may from time to time prescribe an annual subscription fee to be paid by Corporate members.

General meetings

12. The Association shall hold a General Meeting during the World Conference. This will be normally once every four years, but may vary should there be any variation in the timings of World Conferences. However, the time between the General Meetings shall not be less than 3 years nor more than 5 years.

13. All other full meetings of Members of the Association shall be called Extraordinary General Meetings.

14. No General Meetings will be held at times other than at World Conferences, except in extreme circumstances. On such occasions, all members will be given at least 28 days notice of such a meeting.

15. The General Meeting shall receive:

A report from the Executive Committee for the period from the previous General Meeting.

Audited Accounts for the period from the previous General Meeting.

The results of elections to the Executive Committee.

Resolutions to amend the Constitution or undertake any other actions.

Items of discussion put forward by members.

Additionally, the General Meeting shall:

Undertake any other necessary business.

16. Every member, whether individual or corporate, shall have one vote, except for the Chairman who will not have a vote. All decisions will be determined by a simple majority. Where there is an equality of votes, the Chairman of the meeting will have a casting vote. Members unable to be present at meetings will be permitted to vote by proxy.

Executive committee

17. The Association and its affairs shall be under the control and management of the Executive Committee. It shall have the following powers:

17.1 To consider and decide all matters relating to the effective pursuit of the Association's objects.

17.2 To authorize the expenditure of the funds of the Association in such manner as it shall consider most beneficial for the objects of the Association.

17.3 To delegate powers to any other committee of the Association provided that all actions and proceedings of the committee shall be reported back as soon as possible to the Executive Committee.

17.4 To appoint the Chairman of the Association at its first meeting after the General Meeting, to hold office until the next General Meeting (see paragraph 26 below).

Membership of the executive committee

18. There will be no minimum or maximum numbers for membership of the committee. Both individual and corporate members will be represented on the Executive Committee.

19. Individual members. Each country shall have a representative on the Executive Committee for every 20 national members up to a maximum of 3 representatives.

20. Corporate members. All corporate members are permitted one representative each on the Executive Committee. This representative must be identified on the application in the first instance.

21. All members of the Executive Committee, whether representatives of individual or corporate members, must themselves be members of the Association.

22. The Executive Committee may vary the membership of the committee between World Conferences, for example:

- Where an existing representative resigns.
- When the number of members in one country changes, thereby requiring a change in the number of representatives.
- When a new member is accepted from a country not previously having any members.
- When a new corporate member is accepted.
- The Executive Committee may also co-opt persons onto the committee as it thinks appropriate.

23. All past chairmen of the Association are automatically full members of the Executive Committee.

24. Membership of the Executive Committee continues until the next General Meeting when all members retire. The representatives of the individual members in each country are responsible for arranging the elections for the new representatives. Elections may be held prior to or during the World Conference, as best befits each country, but must have taken place by the time of the General Meeting. All members are entitled to vote for the number of representatives permitted their country, and national representatives organising the elections must endeavour to ensure that no member is denied the

opportunity of voting, whether or not present at the World Conference.

25. The Executive Committee shall meet at least once in each calendar year. Voting procedure will be as at General Meetings.

Chairman and Vice-chairman

26. The chairman of the Association will be appointed by the first meeting of the Executive Committee after the General Meeting, to hold office for a period of 4 years, or until the next General Meeting, so long as it is no less than 3 years, nor more than 5 years. The retiring chairman may stand for re-appointment for a second consecutive term, but not for a third consecutive term.

27. A vice-chairman will be appointed by the Executive Committee on the same basis and with the same provisos as the chairman. A second vice-chairman may be appointed if deemed appropriate, to manage the next World Conference.

Secretary/Treasurer

28. The posts of Secretary and Treasurer will be conducted as a joint post and this appointment will be made by the Executive Committee. The Association's Secretariat will normally be based in the country of the postholder. Retirement will take place at the first Executive Committee meeting following the General Meeting.

Sub-committees

29. The Executive Committee is empowered to set up Sub-committees of specialist groups. They will operate at international or regional level only, not at national level.

30. Members of sub-committees need not be members of the Executive Committee, but will be appointed by it. Members will be appointed for a period of 3 years and may be considered for re-election. Members will elect their own officers (chairman, secretary etc.).

31. Expenses for sub-committee activities will be the responsibility of the sub-committee. The Executive Committee must be informed of budgets and fund-raising proposals for activities.

32. Sub-committees must also inform the Executive Committee of proposals for all their activities and must report back at regular intervals and when requested.

Accounts

33. The Executive Committee shall cause accounting records to be kept and these shall be open to the inspection of officers of the Association at any time, and to the inspection of members of the Association as determined by the Executive Committee.

34. The Executive Committee shall cause to be prepared and laid before the Association in General Meeting income

and expenditure accounts, balance sheets and accompanying explanatory reports.

35. Interim accounts shall also be provided for each meeting of the Executive Committee.

Audit

36. Before every General Meeting, the accounts of the Association for the period from the previous General Meeting shall be examined and the correctness of the income and expenditure account and balance sheet ascertained by one (or more) properly qualified Auditor(s).

Bankers and cheque signatories

37. The Executive Committee shall appoint bankers and shall determine the mandate of such bankers, including authorised cheque signatories, from time to time.

World Conference

38. A World Conference will be held every 4 years or at such other intervals as the Executive shall direct, although these should be no less than 3 years nor more than 5 years. Members will be encouraged to hold interim conferences on regional or special interest bases.

Distinguished service award

39. At each World Conference, an award will be made to an individual/individuals who has/have manifested distinguished service in the education of deaf-blind people on a national and international level.

40. A specific sub-committee will be set up prior to each Conference for this purpose. Its composition will be determined by the Executive Committee but will include chairman, secretary, all past chairmen and all previous recipients.

The sub-committee will have the power to create criteria as it deems necessary. If any member of the sub-committee is put forward as a recipient, that person shall withdraw from the sub-committee.

Bye-laws

41. There will be no bye-laws as such, as it is intended that all formal statutes of the Association will be included in this Constitution. The Executive Committee may set regulations from time to time for the execution of a particular action.

Affiliations

42. The Executive Committee, in order to promote the work and interests of the Association, may affiliate with other World bodies it considers appropriate.

Deaf-Blind Education

Deaf-Blind Education will appear twice yearly, the two editions will be dated January-June and July-December.

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

All written material should normally be in the English language and may be edited before publication. It should be sent for publication to arrive by mid-January and mid-July for the first and second annual editions.

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

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