**Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AERBVI)**

**Division 18 - International Services & Global Issues**

**Newsletter - May/June 2023**

Welcome to the May/June edition of the AER International Services and Global Issues Division newsletter. For those in the U.S., I hope that your school year is wrapping up smoothly and that you’re able to enjoy time off this summer!

Of note, our annual scholarship application will be released in early June, with a submission deadline in mid-July. There are also many opportunities for professional development this spring and summer, and I hope you’re able to take advantage of at least some of these. We’re also planning a book club and meeting for this September.

We always welcome suggestions for improving the division. Please email us with your thoughts, comments, and questions at aer.global.division@gmail.com.

Cheers,

Katie Ericson, Chair, TSVI/COMS

**Upcoming Division Events**

We will be publishing our annual scholarship application in early June, with a submission deadline in mid-July. If you are interested in helping review scholarship applications, please reach out to Katie Ericson at katherine.e.ericson@gmail.com or the division email at aer.global.division@gmail.com. Thank you!

Be on the lookout for an invitation to our inaugural division Sip ‘n’ Read, taking place virtually on 19 September! We’ll be reading and discussing Oliver Sacks’ The Island of the Colorblind. The book is available on [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com/Island-Colorblind-Oliver-Sacks/dp/0375700730/ref%3Dsr_1_2?keywords=island+of+the+colorbind&qid=1682972216&sr=8-2) and on [Bookshare](https://www.bookshare.org/search?keyword=island+of+the+colorblind). If you would need support to purchase the book, please reach out to Callie at callie.brusegaard@umb.edu.

**Other Important Dates**

* The International Mobility Conference (IMC18) will be held in Warsaw, Poland 22-26 May 2023. More information can be found at [www.imc18poland.com](http://www.imc18poland.com). (The division’s founder, Dr. Kevin McCormack, will be presenting virtually on Thursday, 25 May.)
* The International Symposium on Physical Activity and Individuals with Visual Impairments or Deafblindness (PAIVI) will be held 8-11 June 2023 in Parma, Italy. For more information, please visit the conference website at <https://sportrealeyes.it/ISPAVIParma2023>
* The Council for Exceptional Children’s (CEC) Division on International Special Education & Services (DISES) will be hosting an International Roundtable in partnership with Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) Network in Bangalore, India from 12-14 July 2023. More information can be found at <https://dises-cec.org/>
* The International CHARGE Syndrome Conference will be held 20-23 July 2023 in Orlando, FL, USA. Learn more at their [website](https://www.chargesyndrome.org/for-families/conferences/).
* The Deafblind International World Conference will be 22-28 July 2023 in a hybrid format in Ottawa, Canada and online. Conference website: <https://www.deafblindnetworkontario.com/18th-deafblind-international-world-conference-2023/>
* The International Society for Low Vision Research and Rehabilitation’s 14th International Conference on Low Vision Rehabilitation will be held 24-27 July 2023 in Denver, CO, USA. More information can be found at the [conference website](https://www.vision2023denver.com/Home). (Current chair Katie Ericson will be presenting on distance consultation on Monday, 24 July.)
* The International Paralympic Committee’s VISTA Conference will be held in Cairo, Egypt from 31 October to 3 November, 2023. Read more on the conference [website](https://www.paralympic.org/vista-2023).
* The Getting in Touch with Literacy Conference will be held from 29 November - December 2, 2023 in St. Pete Beach, Florida, USA. More information on the conference [website](https://www.gettingintouchwithliteracy.org/).

**Job Postings**

* Orientation & Mobility Specialist for Vision Australia. There are a total of five vacancies in the areas of New South Wales, Queensland, and Australian Capital Territory. For further details, please refer to their [Vision Australia website](https://vision-australia.applynow.net.au/).
* Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments for the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA), based in Okinawa, Japan. For further details and to apply, please visit [USAJobs](https://www.usajobs.gov/job/722469900).

**Other Opportunities**

Applications for the 2024-2025 Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program are now open. The program provides opportunities for U.S. citizens to teach, conduct research, and implement other professional projects abroad. Find more information on their [website](https://fulbrightscholars.org/). Deadline for applications is 15 September 2023.

**A Brief History of Chinese Braille**

*From the World Blind Union’s East Wind, No. 34*

*Editor’s Note*: Crystal is a blind musician who, over several years, has divided her

time between her homeland and Sweden. She is now the Chair of the Human Rights

Committee of the WBU Asia Pacific Region and serves on the Board and Policy

Council of this region.

Jing Crystal Wu writes:

Hill Murray Institute for the Blind, China’s first school for the blind and visually

impaired was founded in Beijing in 1874 by British missionary William Hill Murray

(1843-1911). He introduced to China the six-dot Braille system created by Louis

Braille of France.

Later, with the help of some foreign missionaries, a Chinese teacher for the blind

(whose name I’ve not been able to verify) worked out a Beijing dialect-based

Chinese Braille with a total of 408 syllables. This version drew on the Braille letters in

the English language and used the phonetic sequence adopted by Kangxi Dictionary

(a 42-volume Chinese dictionary compiled during the reign of Kangxi in the Qing

Dynasty). Hence, this earliest version of Chinese Braille was called Kangxi Chinese

Braille, or Beijing Chinese Braille, or “408” for short.

In 1897, Yue Aimei, a female missionary whose nationality was not known set up a

school for the visually handicapped in Fuzhou. To facilitate the teaching, she adopted

Pin Yin (the Chinese phonetic alphabet) to make up a Fuzhou dialect-based Braille--

Fuzhou Chinese Braille. This version was finalized in 1920 which comprises 53 dot

scripts and 7 tone marks, as well as some forms of abbreviation. An abbreviation is

highlighted by a blank cell to both its left and right in writing, which was how Chinese

Braille worked in the earliest days whenever separated Chinese characters need to

come together to show a semantic meaning.

In 1900, British female missionary Miss Ganland figured out, on the basis of Chinese

Pin Yin, a version of Braille for writing down Nanjing dialect, widely known as “Xin Mu

Ke Ming”. Shanghai School for the Blind, founded in 1911, used this version for

teaching and printing the textbooks for primary education. Later, schools for the blind

in other places followed suit. In the late 1920s, Dr. Wang Xiangyuan, a teacher for

the blind in Shanghai, improved Xin Mu Ke Ming with tone marking adopted by

Kangxi Chinese Braille to create the two-cell format, which was well received for a

while among the blind population in Shanghai.

Before 1949, there has been a variety of dialect-based Brailles used in different

regions across China, including Cantonese Braille, Hakka Braille, the one based on

five-cell vowels and the ones mentioned above. These versions with exclusive ways

of spelling were usually confined to certain regions and hard to be extended

nationwide. As a result, research on Chinese Braille has started since the founding

of the People’s Republic of China in 1949 in a bid to standardize the use of Braille for

the blind and visually impaired in China. With the concerted effort by Huang Nai and

his colleagues at Department for Educating the Blind of Chinese Ministry of

Education, the New Scheme on Chinese Braille was drafted in 1952. The Scheme

proposes a 52-letter Braille system modeled on Xin Mu Ke Ming, which, based on

the language used in northern China, adopts the pronunciation of Beijing dialect,

abbreviations for groups of semantic meaning, and tone marks for homophones and

uncommonly used words. After the Scheme had been approved by the national

authorities by the end of 1953, the blind and visually impaired in the Chinese

mainland finally had their unified written language.

To date, the New Scheme on Chinese Braille, or popular Chinese Braille as it is

called, has been prevailing in the Chinese mainland for more than 70 years. Yet the

blind population in Taiwan, Hong Kong SAR and Macao SAR are still using dialect-

based Brailles. For example, Cantonese Braille is widely used in Hong Kong and

Macao, while a slightly revised version of Xin Mu Ke Ming is commonly used in

Taiwan. As Hong Kong SAR government is promoting the use of Mandarin Chinese,

the visually handicapped there are encouraged to learn the popular Chinese Braille.

At the moment, a new version of General Chinese Braille stands ready for trial use.

This version features strict rules on tones, tone marks and abbreviations. Every

Chinese character is given a tone mark, thus the long-standing problem of shortage

of tones in Chinese Braille that leads to inaccurate pronunciation has been fixed. The

General Chinese Braille represents the core interest for the Chinese blind population

in their language usage. It will be the fundamental language tool in education of the

visually handicapped in China.

**Articles of Note**

*Articles authored by division members or of potential interest to division members*

Deverell, L., Bhowmik, J., Al Mahmud, A., Lau, B. T., Islam, F. M. A., Sukunesan, S., McCarthy, C., & Meyer, D. (2023). Self-reported use of technology by orientation and mobility clients in Australia and Malaysia before the COVID-19 pandemic. *British Journal of Visual Impairment*, 41(1), 33–48. https://doi-org.libproxy.unl.edu/10.1177/02646196211019070

Halpern, N., Rickly, J. M., Hansen, M., & Fellenor, J. (2023). COVID-19 and vision impairment: Constraints negotiation, participation, and well-being during lockdown in the United Kingdom. *British Journal of Visual Impairment*, 41(1), 3–19. <https://doi-org.libproxy.unl.edu/10.1177/02646196211009931>

Jaiswal, A., Santhakumaran, S., Walker, S., Sukhai, M. A., Packer, T., & Kessler, D. (2023). A scoping review of vision rehabilitation services in Canada. *British Journal of Visual Impairment*, 41(1), 66–95. https://doi-org.libproxy.unl.edu/10.1177/02646196211029344

Lieberman, L. J., Ericson, K., Perreault, M., Beach, P., & Williams, K. (2023). “You feel a sense of accomplishment”: Outdoor adventure experiences of youths with visual impairments during a one-week sports camp. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 20*(8), 5584. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20085584>

Pandya, N., Gupta, N., & Nagpal, D. (2023). Low vision: Knowledge, attitude, and practice among optometrists in India. *British Journal of Visual Impairment*, 41(1), 56–65. <https://doi-org.libproxy.unl.edu/10.1177/02646196211019071>

**Miscellanea**

Lynda Crouch, CLVT/ATP, and Linda Steed, PT (former colleagues of current chair Katie Ericson) will be part of a team traveling to Rwanda and Kenya at the end of July 2023 to provide special education training and support. With the help of local Lions Clubs, they will be sharing information on vision screenings/assessments and potential interventions and supports. They will also be bringing resources with them. Local teachers and administrators have asked specifically for resources specific to CVI (e.g., black construction paper for background, high contrast materials, small reading lights, etc.); however, any and all vision-related materials in good condition are welcomed. Please send donations to Lynda Crouch and/or Linda Steed, c/o Little Light House, 5120 E. 36th St., Tulsa, OK, USA 74135.

**Next newsletter deadline: July 5, 2023 – submissions are welcome at any time!**