



ELSEVIER

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Introduction

There is little argument that the world is a smaller place than it used to be. With electronic mail, many of us keep in contact on a daily basis almost instantaneously and at relative low cost. The current 'Asian' economic crisis has moved across borders influencing many lives beyond the point of origin; and so it is with disability issues and rehabilitation as well. As a *Newsweek* reporter (Elliot, 1997) suggested, 'globalization' has become 'the standard multisyllabic description of what shapes the world as the century ends'. Globalization is occurring whether we like it or not. Of most concern to the readers of the *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation* is what this all means for those of us involved with rehabilitation and for individuals with disabilities. This issue was put together with several objectives in mind. First, I want to call attention to the fact that rehabilitation is going on in many countries and is a global issue. Often those of us who are Americans forget that fact. Second, I want to emphasize the diversity of these efforts. What is being done is not the same world wide nor should it be. Often it is not a matter of what is right but of what fits. Third, I hope to create dialogue and discussion. People who are involved either as service providers, researchers, or who have disabilities no longer have the luxury to work only within national boundaries but must connect with others beyond. Finally, I hope that there will be a greater commitment especially from more developed countries to assist and work with less developed nations as **equal** partners able to learn from one another.

A range of articles appears in this issue in more

ways than one. Though at first glance there appears to be an emphasis on the Asia Pacific region, there is a sampling related to Africa, Southern Europe, and Mexico. The range also includes fairly developed countries by Western standards, such as New Zealand and Japan to countries with fewer resources, such as the Philippines and Mexico. There is also a range from basic description of an approach to others on developing and implementing research. While the *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation* is an international publication, the medium for communication is English. In some cases, these articles are written by individuals whose first language is not English. Editing has occurred and there may be instances where the English may not express well the original intent. As guest editor, I take full responsibility for these errors.

I believe that this issue is a rich one and provides a broad array of what is happening in our world with regard to rehabilitation. The description from Biggs et al. of the New Zealand vocational rehabilitation programs appears to mirror that of the United States with increasing attention to reforms that include consultation with consumers and persons with disabilities. At the same time, it is quite interesting to see how familiar approaches have developed in the different context of New Zealand. Devleiger provides a socio-historical analysis of rehabilitation in Zimbabwe that is significant in looking at the development of rehabilitation within the context of colonialization and liberation. Most of us know

little about the African continent other than its animals and perhaps the strife or famine that dominates the headlines. There is an obvious need to better understand the socio-political context in which rehabilitation occurs. Valdez brings a different non-academic perspective as the head of a community based rehabilitation program in the Philippines relating the use of self-employment as a major focus for rehabilitation. Community based rehabilitation has been embraced as a model for rehabilitation at an international level and while implementation may seem to be less sophisticated by North American standards, the outcome is significant. Yaeda changes the focus to a well developed and well resourced nation of Japan coping with a different set of value orientations. With an emphasis not unlike the United States, there is a movement toward a fully integrated approach to human service delivery. Marshall et al. points to a partnership approach to research and the relationships that most occur in attempting to advance rehabilitation research. Their process is an excellent example of what participatory action research is all about. Lee discusses some of the issues related to developing appropriate staff for rehabilitation in Korea. Korea has tried to cope with issues that have been decades developing in the United States but in a span of time which is much shorter. Saito et al. present findings of a specific study of persons who are hearing impaired and the relationship between communication at the workplace and vocational satisfaction. Their results suggest a need for education and training for persons with hearing impairments and employers. Mank et al. describe a new demonstration of the capabilities of people with severe disabilities in the workplace. The key features could be replicated in the ongoing implementation of supported employment.

The diversity of these articles is readily apparent. What is perhaps less obvious is that these authors point often to the lack of a systemic

approach and correspondingly to the need to change perceptions that are often centuries old. In addition, successful outcomes regardless of whether they be programs or research requires partnerships and respect. Rehabilitation values are often easy to name but much more difficult to implement. The issues are global and the response must be global as well. None of us can work in isolation and we must cooperate if any of us are to succeed.

Dr Paul Leung
Guest Editor

References

Elliot, M., 1997. Newsweek 129, 16-17.

A Thought Provoking Summary

If we could shrink the Earth's population to a village of precisely 100 people, with all human ratios remaining the same, it would look like this:

There would be 57 Asians, 21 Europeans, 14 from the Western Hemisphere (north and south) and eight Africans.

51 would be female; 49 would be male.

70 would be non-white; 30 would be white.

70 would be non-Christian; 30 would be Christian.

50% of the entire world's wealth would be in the hands of only six people and all six would be citizens of the United States.

80 would live in substandard housing.

70 would be unable to read.

50 would suffer from malnutrition.

One would be near death. One would be near birth.

Only one would have a college education.

No one would own a computer.