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2000

The Way Forward

Foreword

It is my privilege to provide the foreword to this strategic plan which outlines the global direction of Rehabilitation International for the balance of the Twentieth Century.

Rehabilitation International has a proud history of achievement over many years as it has pursued its goals. Over time these have been amended to reflect changes in society. In 1988 it was decided to review the direction of the organization. President Fenmore Seton set up a Futures Committee led by David Cooney and with considerable input from the membership which includes people with disabilities, a strategic direction was developed. Dr. Arthur O'Reilly provided the editorial control in the final stages. The plan was finally approved at the World Assembly in Atlanta in October 1993.

It is essential in a rapidly changing world that Rehabilitation International is pursuing goals that are relevant. It was interesting to note that the Mission of Rehabilitation International did not change significantly from that previously established although it may be expressed in different words.

The goals selected were seen as the outcomes that would, when measured, show a demonstrable gain in the standing of rehabilitation on an international level. The goals and objectives will provide a reference when programs and services are being planned in the future. Having established the international goals and objectives the next step is to establish the regional and country goals and objectives. This is where the real progress will be achieved but it must be strategically planned to ensure that it is in line with the overall direction of Rehabilitation International and that scarce resources are utilized appropriately. Also the World Commissions will now be able to determine how they can contribute more effectively to the work of Rehabilitation International.

Having determined the future direction the real work now begins, in ensuring that the objectives are achieved. This will require input at all levels of the organization so that the work is not left to a few. Each year there will be an opportunity to review progress so that we all remain accountable for the ultimate achievement of the goals.

A great deal has been achieved to date but there is still much to be done if we are to achieve the United Nations goal of "A Society for All". Rehabilitation International has a significant part to play in the achievement of this worthy goal.

John W. Stott
President
April 1994

RI Mission Statement

RI is a worldwide network of people with disabilities, service providers and government agencies working to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities.

RI's mission is to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities throughout the world, through rehabilitation, the prevention of disability and the equalization of opportunities within society.

In carrying out its mission, RI will employ the resources of its diverse membership to

- identify needs and resources
- conduct programs of information, education, training, research and development
- encourage, assist and cooperate with national, regional and international organizations with similar or related goals
- provide international services and technical assistance

in order to empower and enable people with disabilities to achieve goals of their own choosing while participating fully in society.



Introduction

In 1980, the Assembly of Rehabilitation International approved a 'Charter for the 80s', a statement of consensus about international priorities for action during the decade 1980-1990. The four main aims contained in the Charter concerned disability prevention, the provision of rehabilitation services, equal participation and increasing public awareness. The Charter was not—and was not intended to be—a plan, with specific goals and objectives: by setting out four aims supported by statements of general principles and recommended actions, the Charter was designed to promote the goals of full participation and equality.

Progress has been made, in some countries more than others, in achieving these aims. But much remains to be done. RI 2000 sets out, clearly and simply, the major issues which RI intends to address over the remaining years of this century. Starting from where the world is now in terms of disability and rehabilitation, RI 2000 outlines RI's vision, RI's mission and the core values underlying RI's work in the future. It then sets out the major goals to be achieved and how it is intended to achieve them.

The Vision

More than five hundred million people in the world today are disabled. In most countries at least one person in ten is disabled by physical, intellectual, psychiatric or sensory impairment.

They share the rights of all humanity to grow and learn, to work and create, to love and be loved, but they live in societies that do not yet fully protect those rights of their citizens with disabilities. They are too often denied the opportunities and responsibilities which should be theirs.

More than three hundred and fifty million people with disabilities live without the help they need to enjoy a full life. They live in every nation, in every part of the world, but by far the greatest number live in areas at early stages of economic and social development. Here poverty joins with impairment to poison the hopes and diminish the lives of children, of adults and of families.

An estimated twenty-five percent of the members of any community are prevented by the existence of disability from the full expression of their capacities. This includes not only people who are disabled, but also their families and others who assist and support them.

Any society which fails to respond effectively to these problems accepts not only a huge loss of human resources but a cruel waste of human potential.

Throughout history, humanity has erected barriers both physical and social which exclude from full participation in its communities those judged to be different because of physical or mental variation.

Buildings and transportation are mostly inaccessible to many people with disabilities. Information and beauty do not reach those whose sight or hearing or comprehension is impaired. The warmth of human association is withheld from children and adults whose physical or mental capacities are different from those of the majority. Education, productive employment, public service, recreation and other human activities are denied to many or permitted only in segregation. For people with the most severe disabilities, who are unlikely ever to be capable of independent activity, there is often total neglect, or insufficient effort to assist their personal development and improve the quality of their lives.

The knowledge and skills now exist to enable each country to remove barriers which exclude people with disabilities from the life of its communities. It is possible for every nation to open all of its institutions and systems to all of its people. What is too often lacking is the political will to proclaim and translate into action the policies necessary to bring this about. A nation failing to respond to this challenge fails to realize its true worth.

It is more than a matter of equity. It is a matter of rights—the human rights of people with disabilities.

RI dedicates itself to strive for the creation of a world in which people with disabilities have the opportunity and the right

- *to influence and shape relevant public policy at all levels*
- *to develop and fully use their abilities, talents and skills*
- *to work, both for pay and voluntarily, in environments appropriate to their needs*
- *to make full use of technology and personal assistance to support their independent living*
- *to enjoy equality and full participation*
- *to make informed choices on issues*
- *to participate in, and receive support from, national and international organizations which effectively represent their interests*
- *to have a system of support sufficient to ensure a reasonable level of life in their local community.*



RI Values

RI's values are the particular qualities or beliefs which the organization emphasizes in its work.

There are many values which RI members wish to have reflected in what RI does. Chief among them are

- equal participation
- member commitment
- financial stability
- achievement of results

Equal Participation

People with disabilities have rights equal to those of all other people in their societies, including the right to participate in and contribute to all aspects of economic, social and political life.¹ Removing barriers to equal participation applies not only to the physical environment, housing and transportation but also to educational, training and work opportunities, cultural and social life.

Of particular importance is the right of people with disabilities to participate in those decisions which concern their own lives, including their own rehabilitation and rehabilitation policies by governmental authorities and other organizations.

In a growing number of countries, people with disabilities are channelling their efforts to improve their life situations through organizations of people with disabilities. RI welcomed and encouraged this movement in Charter for the 80s, and would like to see a growing partnership between such organizations and itself as a way of achieving goals which are common to all.

All services of RI will be examined to see how they might be more effectively developed and delivered to promote and achieve equal participation.

Member Commitment

RI derives its authority from its members. A shared vision, a shared mission and shared values are strengthened by the diverse cultures and languages, knowledge, skills and experience of the world membership from which they come. And it is to the needs, goals and objectives of these members and people with disabilities in their respective countries that RI must address itself.

This process is two-way. Commitment to members requires commitment from members. Member organizations will need, and if necessary be assisted, to identify, prioritize and articulate how best to contribute to and be assisted by RI. RI itself—the Assembly, Commissions, Executive Committee, Secretariat and regional structures—will work to develop, plan and deliver programs which address key needs coherently, effectively and efficiently.

Financial Stability

Every organization is required to pay its way: RI is no exception.

RI goals, objectives, programs, projects and other activities agreed by the Assembly will, in future, have their respective resource requirements determined so that meaningful plans can be drawn up, priorities assigned and budgets established.

RI activity is dependent on its income. To the extent that members wish RI to develop and implement additional activity, additional resources will require to be generated. Avenues for raising such additional funding will need to be explored as a matter of some urgency.

The basis on which membership dues are determined, and the process of dues collection, will be reviewed as a matter of priority. Particular attention will be given to difficulties experienced by developing countries and to under-resourced organizations in areas such as Central and Eastern Europe.

A major drive to expand membership to strengthen and broaden RI's representative capacity would also create the potential for a more equitable sharing of the financial burden.

Effective financial planning, procurement and control is an essential precondition to the fulfillment of RI 2000.

Achievement of Results

RI will succeed only to the extent to which it achieves its mission, and to which the key values agreed by members are reflected in that process.

The strategic planning exercise, to which so many members actively contributed, shows that members are not unrealistic in what they expect and hope for from RI. They recognize that a greater commitment to RI will be necessary if the mission they have given to the organization is to be achieved.

In return for that commitment they expect, and are entitled to, clear and consistent policies, meaningful and well-planned programs and activities, effective and efficient management, and regular information on pre-determined and measurable results.

Key Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Reflecting the main values, members have identified seven key goals towards achievement of the Mission:

- global networking
- international cooperation
- disability prevention policy
- membership expansion
- leadership in rehabilitation
- financial stability
- equalization of opportunities.

Objectives and strategies at an international level have been established in respect to each of these goals.

Each RI Region will determine for itself specific regional objectives and strategies which are appropriate to its own regional membership and circumstances in achieving these key common goals.

Similarly, within each Region, each Member Country will develop objectives and strategies which take account of their respective national and local situation.

RI Commissions have been asked to take account of agreed key goals, objectives and strategies in determining their programs of activity. Closer liaison between Commissions and possible joint approaches will be valuable when addressing cross-Commission issues such as the training of rehabilitation professionals and rehabilitation research and development.

As progress is made and as circumstances change, goals and objectives may be added and/or modified. The Assembly will each year review this plan and amend it where necessary so that it continually reflects the priority needs and wishes of members.

RI's mission is to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities throughout the world through rehabilitation, the prevention of disability and the equalization of opportunities within society. Through RI 2000, members have committed themselves to work individually and collectively to achieve this common essential purpose.

1. United Nations General Assembly Resolution 3447 (XXX) 'Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons', adopted 9 December 1975.

Goal 1 Global Networking

Specific Objectives to Help Achieve this Goal

	International
1993-1996	Provide members with regular information on rehabilitation developments throughout the world
1997-2000	Examine possibility of planning and establishing clearing houses/information centers on regional basis

- Strategy**
- Consider feasibility of establishing a communications/networking group in each region
 - Review current RI publications/newsletters to assess usage and value to members
 - Explore suitability, appropriateness and cost-effectiveness of various information exchange mechanisms
 - Consider sharing/partnership arrangements with other organizations
 - Consider development of expertise databank
 - Use Commissions more effectively to help improve global networking

Goal 2 International Cooperation

Specific Objectives to Help Achieve this Goal

	International
1993-1996	Develop and implement priority cooperation programs (training periods, study visits, visiting experts, study scholarships, etc.) Set up RI liaison links with other international organizations
1997-2000	Review cooperation effectiveness and intensify/improve activity where necessary

Strategy

- Review exchange programs currently available from international and other agencies
- Investigate how best to coordinate international programs and activities in the interests of people with disabilities
- Review funding possibilities for international cooperation
- Consider RI international cooperation newsletter
- Commissions to be used to contribute towards meeting this goal
- Monitor implementation of international conventions
- Assign higher priority to cooperation and liaison and report on specifically at Assembly meetings
- Develop liaison machinery with other relevant international organizations including consumer organizations
- Review role of international members
- Examine possibility of program for extended visits of experts to countries with particular needs

Goal 3 Policy on Prevention of Disability

Specific Objectives to Help Achieve this Goal

	International
1993-1996	Develop clear RI policy on prevention and establish activity plan to implement that policy
1997-2000	

Strategy (To be considered in the light of RI policy)

- Consider establishment of Commission on Disability Prevention/Health Promotion
- Include prevention as priority topic in all major RI Conferences
- Develop media plan to create and maintain public awareness
- Consider RI fellowships to train/exchange personnel to work on prevention
- Cooperate with other international organizations working positively in this field

Goal 4 Membership Expansion

Specific Objectives to Help Achieve this Goal

	International
1993-1996	Determine specific action needed to ensure more representative membership and set targets/timetable for such action
1997-2000	Review membership

- Strategy**
- Develop plans for structured and representative expansion
 - Review constitutional provisions on membership to see whether any changes might be required to expand and broaden membership base

Goal 5 Leadership in Rehabilitation

Specific Objectives to Help Achieve this Goal

	International
1993-1996	Explore how RI might adopt a more proactive role in influencing policy and practice
1997-2000	Evaluate RI effectiveness in influencing policy and practice

- Strategy**
- RI to make better use of national and international media in implementing policy and achieving goals
 - Consider how to contribute more actively to international organizations in which RI is represented
 - Review RI public relations policy and practice
 - Consider ways in which RI membership and activity would be more valued and publicized

Goal 6 Financial Stability

Specific Objectives to Help Achieve this Goal

	International
1993-1996	Establish and maintain a 5-year budget cycle reviewed at one-year intervals Create an annual financial plan tied to an annual activity plan Review the dues assessment process and collection policy Consider the possible use of entrepreneurial activity as an additional funding source Give fund raising special priority while respecting the integrity of people with disabilities Give expansion of membership special priority Review cost effectiveness of all Secretariat functions
1997-2000	Review financial policies and practice

- Strategy:**
- Appoint Planning and Finance sub-committee(s) to assist Executive Committee
 - Set Targets and timetables for membership growth in conjunction with Goal 4
 - Develop policy on fund raising
 - Consider feasibility of member assistance to Secretariat through means such as staff secondment or sponsorship

Goal 7 Equalization of Opportunities

Specific Objectives to Help Achieve this Goal

	International
1993-1996	Enable the full participation and equal opportunity of people with disabilities in activities on the basis of merit and ability Promote the UN Standard Rules on Equalization of Opportunity for people with disabilities Promote the Human Rights of people with disabilities
1997-2000	Review progress

Strategy

- Develop partnerships with other International Disability Organizations
- Develop closer working relationship with the UN and the Disabled Persons Unit
- Utilize World Assemblies as forums for discussion on the rights of people with disabilities
- Utilize the Executive Committee to review policies and procedures and report to the World Assembly
- Encourage Member Countries to increase the numbers of people with disabilities attending Assemblies
- Ensure a balance between concerns of service providers and consumers when developing RI sponsored or supported conferences
- Promote programs to break down the barriers of prejudice and ignorance against people with disabilities

Rehabilitation International

in brief

- RI is a worldwide network of people with disabilities, service providers and government agencies working to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities.
- To ensure that disability issues are a priority on the agenda of United Nations agencies, RI maintains consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council, UNICEF, the International Labor Organization, the World Health Organization and UNESCO. Similarly, RI has official relations with the Organization of American States, the European Union, the Council of Europe, and UN regional bodies in Asia/Pacific, Africa, Latin America and the Arab States.
- Founded in 1922, RI has a long history of achievements including: created the International Symbol of Access and first international standards of environmental accessibility for people with disabilities; wrote and promoted worldwide the "Charter for the 80s", the first consensus statement of global priorities for disability prevention, rehabilitation and full participation of people with disabilities in their societies; founded with UNICEF a technical support program to activate childhood disability services in more than 35 developing countries; organizes state-of-the-art world congresses and conferences on disability and rehabilitation policies and practices; and publishes the world's most comprehensive collection of disability periodicals, comparative studies and conference reports.
- RI policies, programs and budget are determined by annual Assemblies of its member organizations. The RI Executive Committee, composed of disabled and non-disabled leaders from throughout the world, is elected by the Assembly. RI programs are administered by a Secretary General (appointed by the Executive Committee) who oversees a small staff at the New York headquarters. Seven technical and scientific Commissions advise RI on matters within their respective areas of expertise.



Rehabilitation International

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