



Deafblind
International Dbl

1st Deafblind International Regional Conference in Asia 2025

POKHARA, NEPAL | MARCH 01-03, 2025

ABSTRACT
BOOK



Deafblind

International Dbl

Dear participants, organisers, sponsors and guests of honour,

It is with great joy and gratitude that I write this introduction to the programme of the first official regional conference of Deafblind International (Dbl) in Asia.

All over the world, people with deafblindness face incredible challenges. Their human rights are very often violated, a situation that begins at birth. The 2nd Global Report of the World Federation of the Deafblind WFDB(2023), with data from 36 countries around the globe, showed that only 49% of children with deafblindness aged 2 to 4 years were officially registered at birth, compared to 61% of children with other disabilities and 71% of children without an official disability.

Leaving a child behind means leaving the family behind. And unfortunately, it often continues that way. If the child does attend school at all, educators and teachers are often not adequately prepared or supported. The same is true in the workplace, if there are any employment opportunities at all. And the situation is not much better if deafblindness is acquired later in life or is part of the aging process.

Overall, there is an overwhelming need for change to ensure the rights of people with deafblindness, including specialised quality services and unwavering realisation of inclusion and participation.

Deafblind International Dbl is passionately working on this. We connect to act, to maximise positive impact with and for all those concerned and involved, in close partnership with the WFDB, the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI), many member organisations and individual members with and without lived experience.


Conferences are an excellent possibility for connecting and sharing to improve the capacity and energy to act of all participants, organisations and stakeholders involved. This is, of course, also the main purpose of this 1st Regional Dbl Conference in Asia. Beyond that, the conference focuses on innovative inclusion in main areas of life, on education, occupation and community engagement.

The fact that you are reading this introduction means that you are part of our network, that you are connecting to act. That is indeed wonderful and a great reason to thank you! I would also like to express my deep gratitude to all individuals, organisations and sponsors that made this conference possible. There is a lot of work, passion, commitment and expertise behind it.

In closing, I would like to welcome you all with the conviction that this 1st Regional Dbl Conference in Asia is another important milestone in our joint mission and that it will also be a conference characterised by the core values of Dbl:

- The Power of Social Connection: Sharing and fostering a community where people come first.
- Diversity: Promoting integrity and inclusion for each and everyone concerned and involved worldwide.
- Passion: People working together in a welcoming, open and helpful way.

On behalf of Dbl, a warm welcome !


Mirko Baur
Dbl President

LIST OF COMMITTEE

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

1. Mirko Baur – President, Deafblind International (DbI) – Chair
2. Santosh KC – President, National Federation of the Deaf Nepal (NDFN)
3. Pushpa Raj Rimal – President, Deafblind Association Nepal (DAN)
4. Sishir Khanal – President, Nepal Association of the Blind (NAB)
5. Lakhpa Nuru Sherpa – President, Society of Deafblind Parents (SDBP)
6. Akhil Paul – Founder Director, Sense International India
7. Uttam Kumar – Director, Sense International India

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

1. Khomraj Sharma – Chair (From Nepal Association of the Blind)
2. Bed Raj Acharya – Member (From Education Depart – DEAN TU)
3. Baburam Dhungana – Member (Inclusive Education Expert)
4. Meredith Prain – Member (From Deafblind International - DbI)
5. Sachin Rizal – Member (From Sense International India)
6. Shrutilata Singh – Member (From Sense International India)
7. Mohd Zulkarnain Abdul Wahab – Member (From SEAMEO SEN)

SECRETARIAT (NDFN)

1. Sanu Khimbaja – Organizing Committee
2. Shankar Singh Chaisir – Communication
3. Niroj Giri – Scientific Committee.



Welcome to Pokhara | The Official Tourism Capital of Nepal

Dear Participants, Presenters, Partners, and Supporters,

On behalf of the local organising team, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the 1st Deafblind International (DbI) Asian Conference 2025 in the beautiful city of Pokhara, Nepal. As we continue with the conference management and coordination, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all of you—our participants, presenters, partners, and supporters—for your enthusiasm and commitment to making this event a success.

A special thank you goes to our local organising team—the National Federation of the Deaf Nepal (NDFN), Nepal Association of the Blind (NAB), Society of Deafblind Parents (SDBP), Deafblind Association Nepal (DAN), and Sense International India (SII)—for their leadership and dedication. I am also deeply grateful to the Scientific Committee and all members of the organising team for their hard work in bringing together such a remarkable conference. With over 300 participants from more than 20 countries, this event reflects our shared vision of promoting inclusive education, employment opportunities, and community participation for individuals with deafblindness.

A heartfelt thank you to our keynote speakers, who bring exceptional knowledge, expertise, and inspiration to this conference. Your insights, drawn from extensive experience, provide us with valuable perspectives on deafblind inclusion and shape our collective efforts toward a more inclusive future.


We also extend our deep appreciation to all presenters, whose contributions enrich this conference by sharing knowledge, research, and best practices from Asia and beyond. Your presentations help bridge gaps in understanding and empower participants to implement innovative approaches in their own communities.

We sincerely appreciate the generous support of Inclusive Futures, Sense International, and Kétaketi Avenir, along with all other organisations and individuals who have contributed to making this conference possible. Our heartfelt thanks also go to Pokhara Metropolitan City, Gandaki Province, and the Centre for Education and Human Resource Development for their continued support.

A special appreciation to all Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), both national and local, for coming together to make this event a great success. The inspiring presentations and incredible work showcased from across Asia and beyond highlight the progress being made. Deafblindness is often overlooked and underrepresented, but events like this bring much-needed visibility and recognition to the community.

Most importantly, we extend our deepest gratitude to people with deafblindness and their families, who are at the heart of this conference. Thank you for sharing your experiences, challenges, and hopes with us. Your voices remind us why we must continue working towards a more inclusive society. We hope this conference will raise greater awareness and help build a brighter future for all.

Thank you for being part of this journey, and a warm welcome to Pokhara—the official tourism capital of Nepal!

With warm regards, 
Sanu Khimbaja – Contact Person
(On behalf of the Local Organising Team)

Keynote Speaker



Dr. Sanja Tarczay, Ph.D.

President, World Federation of the Deafblind

Dr. Sanja Tarczay is a distinguished advocate, educator, and leader in the field of Deafblind rights and inclusion. Since 2008, she has served as the practicum leader for a module on Deafblindness at the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Zagreb, where she earned her Ph.D. in 2014, becoming the first Deafblind person in Croatia to attain a doctoral degree. In addition to her academic contributions, she is a lecturer on Sign Language at the University of Applied Health Studies at the University of Zagreb and has delivered guest lectures at numerous universities worldwide.

Dr. Tarczay has made significant scholarly contributions through her expert and research papers, both as a sole contributor and co-author. Her leadership in the disability rights movement is extensive; from 2013 to 2022, she served as the president of the European Deafblind Union (EDbU) and was a member of the Grant-making Committee of the Disability Rights Fund (DRF). In October 2022, she assumed the presidency of the World Federation of the Deafblind (WFDB), further expanding her impact on global advocacy efforts. She is also an active member of the OPD Steering Group of the International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC), a participant in the OHCHR Community 2030 Initiative, and an executive board member of the International Disability Alliance (IDA). Through her leadership, academic work, and advocacy, Dr. Tarczay continues to champion the rights and visibility of the Deafblind community on a global scale.

Challenges of self-advocacy: How do Deafblind persons fit in?

Dr. Sanja Tarczay will highlight the critical role of self-advocacy in securing the rights of Deafblind persons. While individual efforts address personal challenges, Deafblind organizations provide a collective voice, ensuring a more holistic approach to national and global issues. These organizations strengthen advocacy, foster knowledge exchange, and promote the principle of "Nothing about Deafblind without Deafblind." Through their work, deafblindness gains recognition as a distinct disability, securing the community's rights within the broader disability framework.

Both national and international Deafblind organizations play a vital role not only for Deafblind individuals but also for professionals, families, and policymakers. They serve as key sources of information and support, working to eliminate barriers to participation in political, public, and social life. Despite international declarations advocating for inclusion, Deafblind individuals still face discrimination, sustainability challenges, and a lack of qualified Deafblind interpreters.

These issues are global, affecting regions like Asia, where stronger networks and collaboration are essential. WFDB actively supports establishing a regional Deafblind association in Asia to enhance cooperation, resource sharing, and advocacy strategies. Strengthening international ties will contribute to a more unified movement for Deafblind rights.

A significant initiative by WFDB, endorsed in 2009, is the recognition of June 27 as the International Day of Deafblindness. This effort gained momentum at the 17th CRPD Conference in 2024, urging the UN General Assembly to officially acknowledge this day. Such recognition will amplify the importance of Deafblind representation in decision-making at all levels.

Dr. Tarczay will share her journey from founding Croatia's national Deafblind association, leading the European Deafblind Union, and now heading the World Federation of the Deafblind, underscoring the need for sustained advocacy and inclusion.

Keynote Speaker



Krishnamaya Adhikari

President, Deafblind Association of Nepal, Morang

Krishnamaya Adhikari, 41, is a dedicated advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities, particularly the underrepresented deafblind community in Nepal. Born and raised in Morang, Nepal, she has faced immense challenges but has continuously worked to break barriers and uplift her community. As her vision worsened, she learned Braille in 2011 and later participated in a tactile sign language training in 2014. She also received training in Haptic Signals and mobility skills, which significantly improved her ability to navigate the world. She has worked at the grassroots level, supporting her local committee and helping other deafblind individuals access essential services. After connected with the International Disability Alliance (IDA), she completed the Bridge CRPD-SDGs Training for Trainers Module A and B and CRPD Article 11 training, further enhancing her knowledge. She has represented Nepal in Geneva, Switzerland, and Cairo, Egypt, for the training. She is also a Disability Coordination Committee member in Miklajung Rural Municipality, where she works on disability identification, issuing ID cards, and awareness programs. Despite personal sufferings, including the loss of both parents, Krishnamaya remains committed to ensuring CRPD and SDG implementation in Nepal, striving for an inclusive and accessible society for the deafblind community.

Title: Empowering inclusion: The story of Deafblind women in Nepal.

I am Krishna Maya Adhikari, born in 1983 in Morang, Nepal. At age seven, typhoid caused me to lose my hearing, creating significant communication challenges. Despite this, I completed higher education in a general school without sign language support. However, communication barriers eventually forced me to discontinue my studies. My life changed when I joined a sign language training program by the Koshi Association of the Deaf (KoAD). I became an active member, later serving as a board member and Vice President. With time, my vision deteriorated, and I became deafblind, facing new challenges in communication and mobility.

After losing my parents, life became increasingly difficult until I joined the Deafblind Association Nepal (DAN). There, I received training in tactile communication, haptic signals, and Braille, which empowered me to navigate my dual disabilities. My advocacy journey expanded internationally after participating in UNCRPD-SDG training by the International Disability Alliance (IDA).

I represented Nepal at the Bridge CRPD-SDG Module A in Geneva (2023) and Module B in Egypt (2024). Additionally, I spoke at the World Urban Forum 2024 Disability Roundtable. Today, as President of DAN's Morang Chapter, I advocate for inclusive policies, promote accessibility, and empower persons with disabilities to live with dignity and equality.

Keynote Speaker



Manju Devi Gurung

Deputy Mayor - Pokhara Metropolitan City

Manju Devi Gurung: Champion of Inclusive Development and Disability Rights Manju Devi Gurung is a dedicated leader and advocate for social justice, currently serving her second term as Deputy Mayor of Pokhara Metropolitan City. With a strong commitment to empowering marginalized communities, she has played a key role in promoting women's economic independence and inclusive education.

Born on December 1, 1961, in Syangja, Nepal, she began her political journey in 1993 through the All Nepal Women's Association (ANWA). Elected as Deputy Mayor in 2017 and re-elected in 2022, she has worked tirelessly to uplift disadvantaged groups, particularly women, persons with disabilities, and rural communities.

A passionate advocate for disability inclusion, she led the establishment of Pokhara's first Deafblind Resource Class in 2024, ensuring children with complex disabilities receive quality education. She is also expanding support for children with autism, cerebral palsy, and intellectual disabilities, promoting assistive technology, vocational training, and accessible learning environments.

Through her flagship "Women with Deputy Mayor" program, she empowers women—especially those with disabilities—by providing financial and entrepreneurial support. Her leadership reflects a deep dedication to equity, accessibility, and social transformation, making Pokhara a model city for inclusive development.

Inclusive Development and Disability Rights in Pokhara Metropolitan City

As Deputy Mayor of Pokhara Metropolitan City, I am committed to promoting inclusive development, gender equality, and the rights of marginalized communities, including persons with disabilities. My leadership focuses on strengthening public services, ensuring access to education, and creating economic opportunities for vulnerable groups.

Pokhara has taken significant steps toward disability inclusion, particularly in education. Through the "Access to Education for Children with Disabilities" initiative, we have established a resource class for children with deafblindness at Amar Singh Secondary School. This program, supported by the Deafblind Association Nepal, provides specialized learning materials, physiotherapy, and assistive services to ensure inclusive education.

Women's empowerment remains a key priority. The "Women's Program with the Deputy Mayor" fosters skill development, entrepreneurship, and financial independence, particularly for survivors of violence and women with disabilities. Additionally, our Judicial Committee provides legal aid, awareness programs, and support services to protect the rights of women and marginalized groups.

Looking forward, we plan to launch a "Learning and Earning" program, enabling parents of children with severe disabilities to engage in income-generating activities while supporting their children's education.

Pokhara Metropolitan City remains dedicated to fostering an inclusive society where every individual, regardless of ability, has the opportunity to thrive. I am honored to share our vision at the Deafblind Asian International Conference 2025 and look forward to meaningful collaborations.

Keynote Speaker



Akhil Paul

Founder Director - Sense International India

Akhil has played a pivotal role in making deafblind people a known entity in the region. Equipped with degrees in Science, Law, Social Work and Diploma in Multiple Disabilities from USA, Akhil has been in the sector for over 35 years and took up the challenge when not even handful of people knew what deafblindness was. He nurtured the movement to the extent that today, from one service in 1997 to 60 services in 24 states of India and also in neighbouring countries.

Akhil has succeeded in creating a dedicated team to ensure that deafblind people are 'seen & heard'.

- 2nd Vice-President of International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI)
- Board Member of Deafblind International (DbI)
- Founder Board Member of the National Trust for welfare of People with Autism, cerebral palsy, mental retardation and multiple disabilities, Government of India.
- Member of the Drafting Committee to draft the new "Rights of People with Disabilities-Act 2016"

Keynote

Advancing Education, Empowering Lives: The 1st Deafblind International Regional Conference in Asia 2025

Distinguished guests, educators, researchers, practitioners, advocates, and most importantly, individuals with deafblindness and their families. Welcome to the 1st Deafblind International Regional Conference in Asia 2025!

Together, we are writing a new chapter in creating a more inclusive and equitable society. The challenges faced by individuals with deafblindness are multifaceted and profound. From barriers to communication and education to limited access to healthcare and employment, their journey often requires immense resilience and perseverance. For many in Asia, these challenges are compounded by cultural and systemic obstacles.

However, it is precisely within these challenges that we find opportunities. Opportunities to innovate, to reimagine education, to design technologies that empower, and to create policies that reflect the dignity and rights of every individual.

As educators, researchers, and advocates, we carry a profound responsibility. We are not just participants in this conference; we are architects of change. Every paper presented, every discussion held, and every connection made has the potential to transform lives.

Let us remember that education is not merely the transmission of knowledge but the unlocking of potential. For individuals with deafblindness, access to quality education is the key to independence, self-expression, and participation in society.

Let's celebrate the progress that has been made and embark on a new journey together over the course of this conference.

Thank you, and I wish you all a transformative and inspiring conference ahead!

Keynote Speaker



Dr. Meredith Prain

Vice President of Deafblind International

Meredith has worked with people with deafblindness of all ages as a speech pathologist, researcher, project manager and advocate since 1995. She has a strong commitment to contributing to the evidence-base of good practice in working with people with deafblindness and sharing information about good practice widely. Her particular areas of interest are high quality interaction and communication, video interaction guidance, and staff development. Meredith is a current board member of Deafblind Australia and Vice President of Deafblind International. She is a keen yogi and music lover.

Feeling two-way connection: integrating past and present research to increase reciprocities in the tactile mode

Sighted, hearing communication partners of people with deafblindness experience numerous challenges communicating in the tactile mode. Unconscious audio visual biases persist even when communicating in the tactile mode.

The need for reciprocity emerges as a key theme from research of the Deafblind International Communication Network drawing on infant development theory, research into protactile language and translanguaging in Augmentative and Alternative Communication. Yet, genuinely reciprocal interactions remain elusive for people with deafblindness and there remains considerable need for the skill development of communication partners to learn to interact with reciprocity in the tactile mode. These communication partners include parents and other family members, paid support staff, allied health and medical professionals and researchers.

In this session we will explore in a practical way, a range of features of high quality interactions and how these feel when they are reciprocated in the tactile mode.

In considering reciprocity, we must consider privilege and power. We will explore how best results in learning and development of all individuals, including those with deafblindness are achieved when privilege and power are shared more equally between learner and teacher, or when indeed, the teacher becomes the learner.

Keynote Speaker



Sampada Shevde

Director, Perkins School for the Blind India Foundation

Sampada is an experienced Professional in the field of disability development with more than 27 years of experience. She has contributed to programme development and provided technical support to organizations throughout India, Philippines, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Indonesia, Uganda and Australia.

Sampada has been working with Perkins School for the Blind India Foundation (PSBIF) since 2011. PSBIF works for children with Multiple Disabilities and Visual Impairment including deafblindness (MDVI) throughout India.

She has successfully initiated collaborations with government organizations. Shevde has also authored and contributed to various publications and training materials. She has presented papers at several national and international conferences.

She is a graduate of Perkins International, USA's Educational Leadership Program. She holds a master's degree in education from SNDT Women's University in Mumbai.

She is a recipient of the Anne Sullivan Macy Medal from Perkins School for the Blind in 2019 and the award for Best Alumnus by SNDT women's University, Mumbai in 2019.

Weaving strong connections in the community to ensure access to education

This keynote address will focus on the process of actively creating a network of support and collaboration within a community to ensure access to education and health for individuals with deafblindness, based on personal experiences in the rural communities in India. Some of the crucial components in this process the keynote would focus on are the involvement of families, educators, healthcare professionals, ASHA and Anganwadi workers, local level organizations, and community members to provide sustainable support for children with deafblindness and their families.

The most important first step is creating awareness in the community about deafblindness, its unique challenges, communication methods, and need based educational intervention to foster empathy and understanding. The key to sustainable intervention in the community is strong partnerships with families of children with deafblindness, and ensuring they have adequate support, training, and opportunities to actively participate in their child's education. Along with this, creating spaces and organized groups of families of children with deafblindness to connect, share experiences, and advocate for their children's needs. At the same time, building the capacity of community based rehabilitation workers and educators, and other professionals to understand and implement best practices for teaching students with deafblindness, to ensure each child receives need based intervention followed by small community centers to create inclusive environments for children with deafblindness. Partnering with different organizations like schools, healthcare facilities, and different government agencies to coordinate services for children with deafblindness goes hand in hand to ensure the services are sustainable and ingrained in the culture of the community.

Keynote Speaker



Kavita Prasad

Director - of Sense International

Kavita is responsible for its strategic direction and operations globally. Sense International is a UK based international charity that works to support people with deafblindness in eight countries across the world. Previously, Kavita was CEO of DeafKidz International and Sound Seekers, organisations dedicated to supporting deaf children and adults in low and middle income countries in areas of protection, health and education. Prior to that, Kavita was seconded to the UN Palestine Refugee Agency (UNRWA) as Disability Advisor responsible for steering and supporting disability inclusion across UNRWA's programmes, services and operations. She has extensive experience in disability-inclusive international development and is passionate about disability equality and inclusion, having worked in various levels executive, technical, policy and programme roles for organisations working with and for persons with disabilities. Kavita sits on the board of the International Disability and Development Consortium.

Inclusive Futures for People with Deafblindness

Keynote Presentation by Kavita Prasad, Director of Sense International

Summary

People with deafblindness are being left behind in international development programmes and services. Up to 2% of the world's population are people with deafblindness. Despite people with disabilities particularly those with deafblindness being more likely to live in poverty and face barriers to education, health care, and employment, development programmes and services are still not disability-inclusive.

The UK FCDO's (Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office) flagship disability inclusion programme, Inclusive Futures, was set up to tackle these issues. Sense International has been part of this consortium programmesince its launch in 2018 working in four countries Nepal, Bangladesh, Kenya and Tanzania.

The programmebrings together NGOs, research partners, Organisations of People with Disabilities (OPDs), as well as mainstream development organisations to improve access to education, health care and livelihoods for people with disabilities including those with deafblindness and reduce negative stereotyping, stigma and discrimination.

The Six Principles for Inclusive Development are a major product of the learning and research from the programme.If widely adopted by development organisations and donors, it could help bring about meaningful change for millions of people with disabilities living in the global south.

Using the Six Principles framework, the keynote will share reflections and perspectives from Sense International's work globally in supporting people with deafblindness and promoting and advancing their rights, particularly in the areas of education and livelihoods. The presentation will discuss practical learning about what has worked, what hasn't, to address gaps in evidence and practice about how to include people with deafblindness in development.

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THEME

EDUCATION



1. Efficiently and independently produce braille reading materials with Index Braille Embossers

Name : Mdm Anna Lau (Malaysia)

Organization : Managing Director - Index Braille Technology Sys

Sub Theme : Produce braille reading material with Index Braille Embossers

Abstract:

How equip with sufficient knowledge on operating, maintaining and even servicing the Index braille embossers can help visually impaired persons, teachers, educators, NGOs, braille printing houses and schools produce braille reading materials efficiently and independently. We observed and understood that users of Index Braille embossers in Nepal such as NAWB, NAB, BYAN, special education schools and private users are desperately needed technical support, service and repair of their existing embossers. These much needed services were not available to them for many years due to some unforeseen circumstances. This session will provide much needed opportunities for visually impaired persons, braille editors, teachers, braille production team to hands on learn and ask questions about their embossers and how to produce braille reading materials with Index Braille embossers model Basic, Everest, Braille Box and also Fanfold (versin 3, versin 4 and versin 5) efficiently.

2. Tribhuvan University's Commitment to Inclusive Education: Developing Skilled Human Resources in Nepal

Name : Assoc. Prof. Rabindra Shiwakoti, Ph. D. (Nepal)

Organization : Director - Graduate School of Education, T.U.

Sub Theme : Early Intervention Services

Abstract:

Nepal has a relatively short history of special education. Although some efforts were made during the Panchayat era to establish special and integrated schools, formal government-led disability education began with the National Education System Plan (1971–1976). Over the years, Nepal has introduced policies to promote inclusive education, culminating in the National Education Policy (2019), which emphasizes the adaptation of curriculum and learning materials to meet the needs of children with disabilities.

Tribhuvan University (TU), Nepal's oldest and largest government-led university, plays a pivotal role in fostering inclusive education and developing skilled professionals in this field. TU offers inclusive and special education programs from the bachelor's to the PhD level, equipping future educators with the necessary knowledge and skills. Within the Faculty of Education, the Inclusive and Special Education program addresses diverse learning needs and prepares graduates to work in inclusive settings. TU provides scholarships for students at all levels, encouraging broader participation in the field.

Notably, TU has integrated deafblindness into its master's curriculum, ensuring that students understand early identification and intervention strategies for children with deafblindness. This initiative is crucial, as graduates will serve as future educators, policymakers, and advocates for inclusive education. By expanding academic programs and aligning with national policies, TU significantly contributes to the advancement of inclusive education in Nepal, bridging the gap between policy implementation and professional development.

3. Assessment of visual functions and educational audiology in children with complex impairments such as congenital deaf-blindness/hearing-visual impairment

Name : Ms. Anke Hennig-Schumann (Germany)
Organization : Schulbereich für Taubblinde und Hörsehgeschädigte, Oberlinschule Potsdam, Germany (Special Education Teacher)
Sub Theme : Early Intervention Services

Abstract:

"It is often difficult to receive a good diagnoses in the existing healthcare system for children with complex impairments, particularly if two distant senses are impacted.

However, it is precisely this assessment that determines whether residual vision and hearing can be utilised appropriately and whether suitable aids can be adapted. In the 'Vision Plus' project, which will be presented here, methods are being developed to optimise the assessment of the functional visual capacities of these children.

In the field of educational audiology, this is already being very succesfully practised after years of experience. The collaberation between the two specialisms is particularly valuable and opens up completely new development potentials for people with deafblindness/visual impairment.

4. Strategic Process Documentation on Home-based Education to Establish HBE as a Model Education System for the Children with Severe and Multiple Disabilities

Name : Mr. MD SAZZD KABIR (Bangladesh)
Organization : Center for Disability in Development, Development Manager
Sub Theme : Inclusive Education Strategies

Abstract:

Home-Based Education (HBE) provides a transformative solution for educating Children with Severe and Multiple Disabilities (CwSMD) by addressing barriers like physical inaccessibility and the lack of specialized support in traditional school settings. Under the "ShikboSobai" ("Education for All") project, the Centre for Disability in Development (CDD), in partnership with Sense International (SI) and Sense International India (SII), introduced a comprehensive HBE strategy in 2022 to ensure individualized, inclusive, and accessible learning opportunities within communities.

This documentation explores the implementation of the HBE initiative, focusing on successes, challenges, and best practices to refine the model. The study utilized surveys with 140 caregivers and conducted 19 qualitative sessions with key stakeholders, including educators, community leaders, and caregivers. Insights from the research underscore the program's impact on caregiver involvement, learner development, and the overall inclusivity of education.

By examining the factors influencing program outcomes, this documentation provides a blueprint for scaling HBE, addressing policy gaps, and fostering long-term sustainability. It highlights the potential of HBE as a sustainable approach to inclusive education for CwSMD in Bangladesh, offering valuable lessons for similar contexts globally and advancing the goal of education for all.

5. Empowering Caregivers for Inclusive Education: Evaluating the Impact of Home-Based Education and Caregiver Group Participation on Learners with Disabilities

Name : Mr. Alif Shish Islam (Bangladesh)

Organization : CDD, MEAL Officer

Sub Theme : Inclusive Education Strategies

Abstract:

"Home-Based Education (HBE) is a transformative approach that provides foundational educational support to learners with disabilities in their homes, facilitating their eventual integration into formal schools under the Inclusive Education project. To promote sustainability and enhance caregiver engagement, 13 caregiver groups were formed, involving 160 caregivers actively participating. Positive changes have been notably observed among caregivers engaged in group activities, reflecting enhanced understanding and involvement in their children's education.

This study investigates the factors driving these changes and their impact on learners' educational outcomes. It compares caregivers who actively participate in group meetings with those who do not, examining correlating factors such as education level, employment status, and socioeconomic conditions. Additionally, it draws on baseline and midline Knowledge, Attitudes, and Skills (KAS) assessments conducted with caregivers to assess their understanding of the HBE model and its objectives.

The findings highlight that active participation in caregiver groups significantly enhances caregivers' engagement and knowledge, resulting in improved outcomes for their children with disabilities. The study underscores the effectiveness of group formation in fostering a supportive network for caregivers and advancing HBE initiatives. It also identifies best practices and enabling factors critical for scaling sustainable and inclusive education for children with disabilities.

6. Challenges Faced by Deafblind Children in the Use of Assistive Technology for Communication: A Comparative Analysis of Children in Rural Setup and Urban Setup In India.

Name : Mr. Srijan Singh (India)

Organization : Sense International India

Sub Theme : Early Intervention Services

Abstract:

Assistive technology helps Children with deafblind (CwDb) for communication; however, its effective use is often hindered by a range of barriers. The study is based on the indepth interviews with ten special educators working children with deafblindness. The study highlights that access to and use of technology/assistive devices for communication has been greatly affected by geographical and demographic factors. Students with deafblindness in the urban areas are more likely to get the advantage of assistive technology as compared to those in rural areas. This is likely due to education and more awareness among the parents and special educators, easy availability of assistive technology in the urban areas than in rural areas. The study suggests that a multi-prong strategy is required to ensure that children across geographical regions get the benefit of assistive devices for communication.

7. Sustaining Inclusive Education through OPD Engagement: Lessons from Capacity Development in Bangladesh

Name : Ms. Sanjana Zaman
Organization : Centre for Disability in Development (CDD), Position- PAN Disability Inclusion Training Officer
Country : Bangladesh
Sub Theme : Inclusive Education Strategies

Abstract:

This study examines the capacity development of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) within the framework of the Inclusive Education project, focusing on sustainability through targeted training and support provided under the Home-Based Education (HBE) initiative. Baseline and midline assessments, complemented by pre- and post-training evaluations, were conducted to analyze the progress in OPD members' knowledge, skills, and overall capacity to promote and sustain inclusive education practices.

The findings highlight the effectiveness of the HBE initiative in equipping OPD members with essential tools and strategies to support children with severe and multiple disabilities (CwSMDs). Key improvements were identified in advocacy skills, understanding of inclusive education frameworks, and the ability to support caregivers and learners effectively. A comparison of baseline and midline assessments revealed significant capacity enhancement, while pre- and post-training evaluations demonstrated the positive impact of structured interventions.

This study underscores the evolving roles of OPD members in sustaining inclusive education and provides practical recommendations to further strengthen their engagement. The insights gained hold broader implications for advancing inclusive education practices in Bangladesh and other similar contexts, emphasizing the critical role of capacity-building initiatives in achieving long-term educational inclusivity. "

8. Breaking Barriers: The Journey of a Girl with Deafblindness

Name : Ms. Dina Pandey (Nepal)
Sub Theme : Lifelong learning and transition

Abstract:

"Life often takes unexpected turns, and mine was no different. Born in 2000, I grew up in a rural environment with no signs of disability. My early academic life was vibrant, filled with recognition from teachers and support from friends. However, as I transitioned to adolescence, I began losing my vision. Later, during my school years, I faced hearing loss as well. These challenges were emotionally taxing and tested my resilience.

With support from a dedicated teacher and accessible resources, I adapted to Braille and rediscovered my passion for learning. My determination led me to complete higher education, earn a teaching certification, and secure a position as a primary-level teacher. Overcoming societal biases and infrastructural challenges, I gradually gained acceptance and respect.

Today, I am a self-reliant educator, embracing my role with pride and contributing to creating an inclusive and equitable environment for my students. My journey is a testament to the power of perseverance, community support, and self-belief. By sharing my story, I hope to inspire others to see deafblindness not as limitations but as opportunities for growth, empowerment, and transformation.

9. Learning Challenges of Children with Deafblindness in Deaf Special Schools

Name : Mr. Shanker Singh Chaisir (Nepal)

Organization : NDFN, Project Coordinator

Sub Theme : Inclusive Education Strategies

Abstract:

"Deafness is a well-recognized disability worldwide, yet the communication challenges faced by deaf individuals remain poorly understood. Despite the era of inclusion, many individuals with deafness experience social isolation, primarily due to a lack of understanding of their communication modes. Imagine being unable to hear and losing your eyesight—how would you communicate, access information, or pursue education?

In Nepal, there are 24 special schools and 174 resource classes for the deaf, serving approximately 15,000 deaf students (NDFN, 2024). Many students face varying degrees of vision impairment, ranging from mild to profound. Three deaf-special schools were visited for class observations, interviews with students with vision challenges, and focus group discussions with teachers to explore this issue.

A teacher at Bal Bahira School in Bhairahawa highlighted mobility difficulties, challenges in interpreting signs, and problems reading books. These obstacles result in poor academic performance and dropout rates. Similarly, a teacher from Birat Deaf School reported a lack of training on strategies, materials, and communication methods to support students with deafblindness.

The study recommends comprehensive teacher training, peer support, support teachers, and the development of Teaching Learning Materials to foster inclusive education for children with deafblindness.

10. ECCE (Early Childhood Care & Education) of Students with Deaf-Blindness with Reference to NEP 2020

Name : Prof. Yogendra Pandey (India)

Organization : Faculty of Education, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi & Course Coordinator

Sub Theme : Early Intervention Services

Abstract:

"The first eight years of a child's life are truly critical and lay the foundation for lifelong well-being, and overall growth and development across all dimensions - physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional (NCF-2022). Early Childhood Care and Education envisages as the Care and Education of children from birth to eight years. The Early Childhood Care and Education is also defined as "holistic development of a child's social, emotional, cognitive and physical needs in order to build a solid and broad foundation for lifelong learning and wellbeing." (UNESCO, 2012)

The NEP 2020 also focuses on universalisation of access to ensure the inclusivity of all types of children in our education system as from ECCE to Secondary level. Keeping in view, I would like to draw the attention towards Students with deaf-blindness among other children.

In reference to Students with deaf-blindness and ECCE, this paper will try to find out and elaborate the recent development and trends in ECCE for Students with deaf-blindness in context to NEP 2020. This paper will also try to focus on feasible solutions and suggestions to facilitate the students with deaf-blindness to implement the ECCE as suggested and recommended in NEP2020 and NCF 2022 during the presentation."

11. Unlocking Tactile Potential: The Tactile Working Memory Scale (TWMS) Framework from Assessment to Intervention n Practice

Name : Mr. Vikram Choudhary (Germany)
Organization : DeutschesTaubblindenwerk (German Deafblind Centre)
Special Needs Teacher & Certified TWMS Supervisor
Co Presenter : Mr. Christian Haass
Sub Theme : Inclusive Education Strategies

Abstract:

The Tactile Working Memory Scale (TWMS) is a tool designed to assess and support tactile cognition and communication, specifically for individuals who rely on touch-based modalities. Tactile working memory refers to the ability to retain and manipulate information through the sense of touch, which is essential for individuals with visual impairments, neurological disorders, or those using tactile communication systems like Braille. This paper explores the TWMS framework, focusing on its role in evaluating tactile memory through tasks such as pattern recognition, spatial awareness, and sequential recall. It also presents strategies to enhance tactile cognition, including chunking, repetition, tactile mapping, and the use of assistive technologies like haptic feedback systems. Emphasis is placed on the importance of personalized interventions, with adaptations based on the individual's tactile memory strengths and needs. The paper further discusses how continuous assessment and strategy adjustment can foster cognitive development and improve communication. By integrating assessment with tailored support, the TWMS provides a comprehensive approach for enhancing tactile memory, promoting accessibility, and empowering individuals to navigate their environments and communicate more effectively. This approach has broad applications in educational, therapeutic, and technological contexts, contributing to the inclusion and independence of individuals with tactile learning preferences.

12. Vocational Curriculum Adaptation - Pathway to Livelihood

Name : Mr. Srinivasan Prasannan (India)
Organization : Sense International India - Master Trainer-Capacity Building
Sub Theme : Curriculum Development and adaption

Abstract:

"Life is full of transition so as for persons with deafblindness (PwDb) too but, it requires a lot of planning in advance. Moving to the stage of vocation is a vital stage in the life of PwDb. There is fewer or no recognized vocational training opportunities for PwDb in the industry sectors. Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has started the skill initiative for persons with disabilities but, which is not covered for PwDb. Sense International India has made efforts to adapt the vocational training modules for PwDb.

The presentation explains the current scenario of vocational training and adaptation of vocational training modules for PwDb in India.

13. Building an Inclusive Future: Transforming Education for Children with Disabilities in India

Name : Ms. Archana Rao (India)
Organization : Perkins India – Senior Program Coordinator
Co Presenter : Ms. Poonam Pardesi
Sub Theme : Inclusive Education Strategies

Abstract:

"In India, over 75% of eight million children with disabilities are excluded from school and opportunities for growth. For those who do attend, most educational programs lack the necessary resources and quality to meet their unique needs. While local governments and schools acknowledge the importance of inclusive education, they often lack the expertise and resources to support the children effectively.

Children with disabilities have immense potential and the ability to learn. Perkins India is committed to unlocking this potential by transforming schools into innovative, sustainable, and scalable Model Programs for inclusive education, incorporating children's needs and global best practices.

The Model Program Approach strengthens educational systems through a comprehensive Quality Improvement process. It equips educators, families, school administrators, and communities to develop and sustain high-quality inclusive models. This ensures schools are equipped to address diverse learning needs, engages families and communities, and empowers administrators to create environments where every child can thrive.

Aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – SDG 4 (inclusive education), SDG 10 (reducing inequalities), and SDG 17 (building partnerships) – Perkins India advances its mission of a world where no child is left behind, fostering an inclusive society for all.

14. Access of Public Employment for Persons with Disabilities in Nepal: Legal Framework, Policy, and Barriers

Name : Ms. Nisha Pradhananga (Nepal)
Organization : Graduate School of Education, Tribhuvan University
Sub Theme : Inclusive Education Strategies

Abstract:

This paper explores the challenges and opportunities related to access of public employment for persons with disabilities (PWD) in Nepal, focusing on the country's legal framework, policies, and the barriers that prevent full inclusion. The Constitution of Nepal (2015) and the Act Relating to the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2017) provide crucial provisions such as job quotas, vocational training, and reasonable accommodations, all aimed at promoting equal opportunities for PWD in public sector employment. Despite these legal commitments, the study finds that practical implementation is lacking, with PWD still facing significant barriers. These include inaccessible physical infrastructure, negative societal attitudes, and a general lack of awareness and training among public sector employers. Furthermore, there are marked disparities between urban and rural areas, with rural regions being less equipped to support the inclusion of PWD. The article calls for stronger enforcement of legal provisions, improvements in accessibility, and increased education and training on disability issues to create a more inclusive public sector workforce in Nepal. Concepts are included, to approach their surroundings and most importantly to approach their own bodies and their possible peer groups.

15. Inclusive Education in a Community School: Overcoming Challenges in Supporting Children with Deafblindness and Other Disabilities

Name : Mr. Indra Bahadur Chauhan (Nepal)
Organization : Vice Principal and Inclusive Education Coordinator at
Adarsha Secondary School, Biratnagar, Nepal
Sub Theme : Inclusive Education Strategies

Abstract:

"Inclusive education is a transformative approach to ensuring every child, regardless of ability, has access to education. However, implementing this vision in community schools with limited resources presents unique challenges. This presentation explores the journey of a resource-constrained public school of eastern Nepal (i.e. Adarsha Secondary School, Biratnagar) providing inclusive education, with a particular focus on children with disabilities, including those with deafblindness.

The school's commitment to inclusion stems from the belief that education is a right, not a privilege. We strive to create an environment where children with deafblindness can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. This requires significant adaptation of teaching methods, development of tailored learning materials, and fostering collaboration among teachers, families, and specialists.

Despite these efforts, challenges persist, including resource constraints, limited access to specialized training for staff, and the need for accessible infrastructure. By sharing our experiences, successes, and lessons learned, this session aims to inspire other educators and stakeholders to overcome similar obstacles.

Attendees will gain insights into practical strategies for inclusive education in resource-limited settings, highlighting the importance of creativity, partnerships, and unwavering commitment to equity. Together, we can build a future where every child's potential is realized, regardless of their circumstances or abilities

16. "Das Basale Band": enabling students, with multiple disabilities in the db field, to participate in social life, to educate themselves and finding their peers

Name : Mrs. Inez Aschenbrenner (Germany)
Organization : Bildungszentrum Hören Sehen Kommunikation
Sub Theme : Inclusive Education Strategies

Abstract:

"I want to show, how we support and enable students in our school, that have to deal with multiple disabilities on top of being visually impaired and with impaired hearing. How we prepare the lessons, what materials we use, what concepts are included, to approach their surroundings and most importantly to approach their own bodies and their possible peer groups.

17. Accessible TLMs Enhance Learning Competencies

Name : Mr. Durga Datt Joshi (Nepal)
Organization : National Federation of the Deaf Nepal
Sub Theme : Accessible teaching learning materials

Abstract:

"Teaching and learning materials are tools used in the educational process to make learning activities practical, meaningful, effective, and purposeful. These materials should be developed by teachers to align with the subject matter and meet the needs of learners. Effective teaching materials should be engaging, interactive, and interesting to motivate students and enhance their learning experiences.

Such materials play a crucial role in fostering sustainable and effective learning for children with deafblindness and complex disabilities. They should be accessible, portable, affordable, locally available, or even cost-free. Teaching materials can range from low-cost items found in the community to high-value specialized resources. These tools strengthen the quality of learning and ensure consistency in student outcomes.

When designed based on principles of accessibility, these materials facilitate equitable participation and inclusive education for children with disabilities. They support the development of fine and gross motor skills, orientation and mobility, sensory perceptions, personal care, dressing, hygiene, safety, independent living, social skills, sex education, behavioral skills, recreational activities, pre-vocational skills, receptive and expressive communication, language skills, reading, and mathematics.

Developing specialized teaching materials for children with disabilities is essential to engage them in the educational process, simplify learning, and encourage their overall development. These materials were created with the aim of aligning with the universal design for learning (UDL). Experiences and practices from this field will be shared at the conference, providing an opportunity for exchange and collaboration.

18. Universal Design for Accessibility (UDL)

Name : Ms. Manisha Maharjan (Nepal)
Organization : Handicap International
Co Presenter : Sanju Nepali
Sub Theme : Inclusive Education Strategies

Abstract:

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is one of the teaching approaches that applied in Inclusive Education (IE) project under Disability Inclusive Development (DID) initiatives. This learning product aims to document the project's focus on inclusive education for children with disabilities, with insights into Nepal's UDL practices. It outlines the principles of UDL, their inclusion in the Teacher Professional Development (TPD) framework, and their relevance in educational policies. Key lessons from the project, including challenges in diverse educational settings, are highlighted to inform advocacy and policy recommendations.

This learning product was developed to disseminate through multiple formats to ensure accessibility and broad engagement: a detailed report, executive summary, infographics, PowerPoint presentations, social media posts, and video presentations.

Engagement with Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) and the DID consortium ensured the meaningful involvement and validation of findings. Stakeholders such as government bodies, donors, NGOs, and INGOs will receive tailored insights through workshops, conferences, and publications. This learning initiative aims to enhance national advocacy and promote scalable, inclusive education practices. This learning product is focused on dissemination of UDL practices, localization of UDL principles and reflection of these principles in classroom.

19. Experience as Home-Based Educator: Supporting the Learning of Children with Complex Disabilities

Name : Ms. Rashmi Chaudhary (Nepal)
Organization : NDFN (Home-based Educator)
Co Presenter : Ashna Sapkota
Sub Theme : Inclusive Education Strategies

Abstract:

This presentation explores the implementation of home-based education for children with complex disabilities, focusing on the preparation and execution phases of a comprehensive, family-centered intervention. The process began with data collection in coordination with local governments, including functional assessments, medical treatments, and the provision of assistive devices to ensure each child's needs were met. A thorough screening camp and the use of the Washington Group Questionnaire (WGQ) helped identify specific needs and areas of support for the children.

During the execution phase, educators and physiotherapists (PT) conducted home visits to build rapport with the children and their families. Through these visits, detailed Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) were developed in collaboration with parents, addressing academic, motor, and mobility goals. Tailored teaching materials were created to align with these goals, while assistive devices like walkers, wheelchairs, and adapted furniture were provided to support mobility.

In addition to educational services, parents were guided by social protection benefits, such as health insurance and allowances. Training and counseling were provided to both staff and parents to ensure effective implementation. The success of this initiative is reflected in the enrollment of children in resource and mainstream schools, demonstrating the positive impact of home-based education for children with disabilities.

20. Education from a teacher's point of view

Name : Mr. Anders Martin Rundh (Denmark)
Organization : Center for Sansenedsættelse
Sub Theme : Inclusive Education Strategies

Abstract:

"Every individual is different, we are not alike, and we differ just a little bit from the individual next to us.

When it comes to life itself, we are not alike, we all have different experiences. That is the beauty of our existence on this wonderful planet. We shall work together, to keep this planet and life wonderful.

When it comes to education, every individual is different, no one is alike, everyone has a different level of experience and we have to work together to make this certain period of time (education) a wonderful thing. Education reflects life.

In this workshop, I would like to give my point of view as a schoolteacher, on the term education.

In this workshop, I would like to give my point of view as the founder and network leader of the DEAFBLIND EDUCATION NETWORK, DEN. I will bring education to a national and international level and put forward a few keywords.

This workshop will have time to share experiences and ask questions about "education". I will be present during the whole conference.

21. Teaching Sexuality Education to People with Deafblindness

Name : Ms.Bhavika Shah (India)

Organization : Sense International India - Senior Trainer, CapacityBuilding

Sub Theme : Lifelong learning and transition

Abstract:

This paper explores the critical need for inclusive and accessible sexuality education tailored to individuals with deafblindness. People with combined visual and hearing impairments face unique challenges in understanding their bodies, physiological changes, and personal safety, often leading to gaps in knowledge and empowerment.

The paper highlights innovative methodologies, such as tactile models for anatomy exploration, to facilitate effective learning. It addresses the multifaceted aspects of sexuality education, covering stages from birth to adulthood, and considers the cultural and social sensitivities necessary when engaging this population. Practical strategies for educators, caregivers, and family members are discussed to ensure that complex concepts are communicated effectively.

Through case studies and evidence-based approaches, the paper demonstrates how comprehensive sexuality education can enhance autonomy, self-awareness, and safety for individuals with deafblindness. It advocates for collaborative efforts among educators, policymakers, and the deafblind community to establish inclusive frameworks that uphold dignity and rights.

This paper aims to contribute to a broader understanding of how tailored educational interventions can empower individuals with deafblindness, fostering informed decision-making, independence, and a better quality of life.

22. Peer Support: Collaborative Learning Strategy for the Student with Deafblindness

Name : Dr. Babu Ram Dhungana (Nepal)

Organization : KUSOED, Faculty

Sub Theme : Inclusive Education Strategies

Abstract:

"Executive Summary

The term 'peer' is defined as a person who is the same age, has the same social position, or possesses the same abilities as others in a group. To enhance interaction in the classroom pairing and peer supports for the students with diverse learners have increased the efficiency in teaching. Peer support aims to provide an environment where students will feel safe and at ease when discussing concerns with their peers. The purpose of this writing is to share the benefits of peer support as a strategy for teaching deafblind students, based on practices in both regular and special classrooms in community schools. This study was derived from the lessons learned in two community schools – Bahira Baal Secondary School and Shanti Namuna Secondary School, Rupandehi. Before starting peer support program for the students with deafblind, a deaf student was provided as a supporter with an orientation. Teacher workshop was conducted to identify the problems, areas of support, ways of conduction, reporting and coming into conclusion. It was concluded that peer support practice to the students with deafblind is crucial to enhance their learning making supporter student confident. It is also helpful for the teachers as well. There should be the frequent monitoring to identify the direction of the practice informing families.

Key Words: deafblind, peer support, collaboration, interactive classroom

23. Thinking in Dialogue. Strategies for enhancing cognitive skills in children and adolescents with congenital deafblindness.

Name : Prof. Saskia Damen (The Netherlands)

Organization : Royal Kentalis, Senior Researcher

Sub Theme : Inclusive Education Strategies

Abstract:

"Introduction. Children and adolescents with CDB often show delays in their cognitive development. This study investigated the effects of an intervention for educators (parents, professional caregivers, and teachers) in supporting the cognitive skills of children and adolescents with CDB. The aim was to investigate whether the educators would more often apply specific strategies to support cognitive development, as a result of the intervention. We also investigated if the children/adolescents showed a clinically significant improvement in one or more targeted cognitive skills during the intervention.

Methods. The intervention consisted of three educational group sessions, six individual video feedback sessions, and six coaching on-the-job sessions for the educators (parents, professional caregivers, and teachers). Nine children/adolescents with CDB and one of their educators participated in the study. Weekly video recordings during the baseline phase, intervention phase, and follow-up phase, and an assessment before and after the intervention were used to measure the effectiveness of the intervention.

Results. Most of the educators used more support strategies during the intervention period, compared with the baseline period. Most of the participating children and youth developed targeted cognitive skills during the intervention period.

Conclusion. Educators play an important role in fostering the cognitive development of individuals with CDB. This study revealed the importance of supporting educators. It appeared beneficial to determine beforehand for each individual with CDB and together with the educators, which intervention goals would be appropriate and how these goals could be stimulated and assessed.

24. Approaches to Accessible IEC Materials for CSE and SRHR for Persons with Disabilities

Name : Ms. Nilu Maharjan (Nepal)

Organization : Blind Youth Association Nepal, Project Coordinator

Co Presenter : Nir Bahadur Shrestha

Sub Theme : Lifelong learning and transition

Abstract:

Blind Youth Association Nepal (BYAN), established in 2012, is an organization dedicated to advocating for persons with disabilities, focusing on both immediate needs and long-term goals. One of our core areas of work involves the development of Accessible Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials, in collaboration with government entities like the National Health Education Information Communication Center. BYAN produces IEC materials on Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) and Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) that are accessible to all types of disabilities, including audio-visual, tactile, pictorial, easy-to-read versions, and real material demonstrations. As one of the few OPDs in South Asia producing such accessible IEC materials, BYAN advocates for the rights of persons with disabilities to receive education on CSE and SRHR. Despite the deeply ingrained stereotypes that individuals with disabilities do not need knowledge about these topics, BYAN has been leading efforts to break these barriers, ensuring that persons with disabilities have the right and opportunity to access critical sexual and reproductive health education.

25. Unheard and unseen: The double vulnerability of students with disabilities in early childhood settings

Name : Mr.Ram Tiwari (Nepal)

Organization : Kathmandu University

Sub Theme : Violence against students with disabilities

Abstract:

"Studies have shown that a significant majority of students (66%) children in school suffer from violence (UNICEF, 2014) and the pressing concern is that such incidents go unreported and often underreported. Considering this prevalence of violence in school, the Government of Nepal came up with the Complaint Response Mechanism (CRM) Guidelines in 2016, the aim of which has been to address grievances that come from students in the education settings. Although this is an important step, the Guidelines presupposes all children can express their grievances and such grievances are handled in the way they are addressed. However, this process of registering complaints and handling them are not easy when it comes to students with disabilities and especially those in the primary and pre-primary levels. Many children with physical, sensory or intellectual disabilities face barriers in expressing their grievances due to communication limitations, fear or lack of support. Moreover, the infrastructure and human resources in many schools are not equipped to handle complaints from such section of students.

In my presentation, I will explore these gaps in the CRM Guidelines, drawing from the research findings and case studies. I will also propose some practical and inclusive strategies to ensure that the Guidelines can adequately address the needs of students with disabilities so that a safer and inclusive schools are created.

26. Early Intervention for Inclusive Education and Independence in Children with Deafblindness

Name : Ms.Noorsaba (India)

Organization : Sense International India/ Trainer- Capacity Building

Sub Theme : Early Intervention Services

Abstract:

Deafblindness, a combination of vision and hearing impairments, poses unique challenges in communication, learning, and social participation. Children with deafblindness often face significant barriers in accessing information and developing essential life skills, limiting their opportunities for inclusion in education and society. Despite growing awareness, the gap in early identification and intervention remains a significant hurdle, preventing many children from reaching their full potential.

Early intervention plays a critical role in shaping the developmental stages of children with Deafblindness, especially in the crucial early years when foundational skills like communication, mobility, and socialisation are established. By providing appropriate support and resources during this period, early intervention can improve sensory development, cognitive abilities, motor skills, and social-emotional growth. These interventions not only address immediate developmental needs but also lay the groundwork for inclusive education, enabling children with deafblindness to thrive in academic and social settings.

This presentation highlights the transformative power of early intervention in fostering lifelong independence and inclusion for children with deafblindness. It explores how targeted support in the early years can enhance communication abilities, sensory stimulation, and cognitive resources, while also ensuring that children develop the skills needed for full participation in society.

27. A sensory approach to differentiate the days of the week

Name : Mrs.Inez Aschenbrenner (Germany)
Organization : BildungszentrumHörenSehenKommunikation
Co Presenter : Vikram Choudhary
Sub Theme : Inclusive Education Strategies

Abstract:

"The olfactory sense is underrated and can be used to enhance the memory of certain situations and locations in people. I believe everyone remembers the special fragrance, that brings back memories of home or holidays like Christmas.

I am using the olfactory system to create lasting memories for my students.

With a holistically approach we connect tactile and visual memories with scent. Also, the fragrance in combination with the tactile approach is connected to a certain day of the week. Every morning, the students meet in a group session and ""talk"" about who is there and which day of the week it is.

They get an object for that day, which is visually and tactilely discernibly and has also different scent, that is connected to this certain day of the week. The object depends on the tactile ability of the student. It can differ from a concrete to an abstract object and in future up to a pre-reading system with braille.

28. Overcoming Barriers: My Journey as a Deafblind Learner

Name : Mr.Dipak Kahar (Nepal)
Organization :
Sub Theme : Lifelong learning and transition

Abstract:

"Hello! I am Dipak Kahar, born deaf. I studied in a special school for the deaf up to Grade 3. While I was in Grade 4, I started losing my vision. Despite treatment efforts, I became completely blind, which made communication extremely difficult.

With support from the National Federation of the Deaf Nepal and Sense International, I could pursue my education. I was enrolled in a deafblind resource class, where I learned sign language, tactile communication, Braille, palm writing, and how to use Braille reader devices. I can now use a white cane for mobility and confidently navigate my surroundings.

Currently, I am transitioning from the resource class to a regular class. Using modern technology and learning alongside new friends, I actively participate in the classroom. My support teacher through Sense International's support, teaches me innovative concepts daily.

Travelling by bus with friends and communicating with them gives me immense joy. I use palm writing and assistive communication to connect with classmates and learn new things. I study Nepali, English, and math in Braille, and I practice at home what my teacher helps me understand at school.

I now feel confident and happy with my learning journey and am deeply thankful to everyone who has supported and empowered me to reach this stage.

29. Education for all disabilities

Name : Mr. Laxmi Kanta Ghimire (Nepal)

Organization : NDFN Home Based Educator

Sub Theme : Inclusive Education Strategies

Abstract:

Education is the fundamental right which promote inclusive education for ensuring that everyone, regardless of physical, intellectual or development abilities. exclusive education means integrating student with disabilities into general education for providing equal access to education, addressing the specific needs are students with disabilities .the student needs or support by providing accessible material accessible accommodation, ,sign language interpreters , special education teacher, physiotherapist to help with student in their education challenges to teach disabilities that is between staff assertive technology to support in accessible school speciality there is no Ramp no restroom, no screen readers no Braille Materials , no behavioral emotional support, not collaborating with families. To teach the students we have to make the IEP first according to the condition of the student. It is very challenging to enroll all the child in a same class. Different type of disabilities needs a special care and special teaching materials, which can develop their Learning language, learning activities and activities for daily leaving(ADL). Due to political condition and the awareness about the disability The parents are not taking their child in the school and not focusing or caring properly even in home.

30. Inclusive CSE: Addressing the Unique Needs of Deaf-Blind Individuals

Name : Mr. Nir Shrestha (Nepal)

Organization : Blind Youth Association Nepal, Director

Sub Theme : Lifelong learning and transition

Abstract:

"Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) is an age-appropriate, culturally relevant, and scientifically accurate curriculum designed to equip individuals with the knowledge, attitudes, skills, and values needed to make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health. It extends beyond biology to address relationships, emotions, gender equality, consent, body autonomy, and rights, empowering individuals to respect their own and others' boundaries.

Deaf-blind individuals are among the most marginalized groups, often excluded from accessing their sexual and reproductive health and rights. Lacking awareness of bodily autonomy, choices, and rights, they face numerous barriers, including violence, neglect, and mental health challenges.

This interactive workshop aims to explore and address the unique needs of deaf-blind individuals related to their sexuality, promoting inclusive CSE. The session will begin with a brief presentation on inclusive CSE, followed by a discussion where participants will share lived experiences and perspectives. The discussion will focus on bodily autonomy, privacy, self-respect, sexual and reproductive health issues, learning opportunities, etc. Finally, key strategies to advance inclusive CSE tailored to the needs of deaf-blind individuals will be prioritized through consultation with participants. These strategies will be incorporated into the final declaration of the conference to ensure meaningful and actionable outcomes.

THEME

OCCUPATION



1. In Business: A support programme for micro-entrepreneurs with deafblindness and other complex disabilities

Name : Ms. Daniel Musango (Kenya)

Organization : Sense International - Kenya / Country Programm Lead

Sub Theme : Employment opportunities and career pathways

Abstract:

The Disability Inclusive Development Inclusive Futures programme matches existing micro-entrepreneurs who live with deafblindness or other complex disabilities with mentors -Business Development Service Providers (BDS providers). These mentors support business growth and connect the micro-entrepreneurs to other enterprises. Sense International has adapted existing training methods used by its partners to meet the complex needs of the micro-entrepreneurs. This includes language adaptation, simplified record-keeping tools, and specific training for BDS providers to understand their needs. Additionally, small grants are provided, enabling the micro-entrepreneurs to focus on business growth. To qualify for the programme, micro-entrepreneurs and their families must already be running a business. This approach leverages the strengths of micro-entrepreneurs, helping them gain confidence in managing successful businesses. BDS providers monitor their progress to ensure growth. Between 2021 and 2024, 36 micro-entrepreneurs have been supported and linked to 32 public and private institutions, and 60 per cent of the first cohort have doubled their sales. As a result of this initiative, 28 of the 36 micro-entrepreneurs have achieved a more independent and fulfilling life, no longer relying on family members and others for support. During this presentation we will share the learning about the model Sense International has adopted.

2. Access of Public Employment for Persons with Disabilities in Nepal: Legal Framework, Policy, and Barriers

Name : Ms.Nisha Pradhananga (Nepal)

Organization : Graduate School of Education, Tribhuvan University

Sub Theme : Inclusive Education Strategies

Abstract:

This paper explores the challenges and opportunities related to access of public employment for persons with disabilities (PWD) in Nepal, focusing on the country's legal framework, policies, and the barriers that prevent full inclusion. The Constitution of Nepal (2015) and the Act Relating to the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2017) provide crucial provisions such as job quotas, vocational training, and reasonable accommodations, all aimed at promoting equal opportunities for PWD in public sector employment. Despite these legal commitments, the study finds that practical implementation is lacking, with PWD still facing significant barriers. These include inaccessible physical infrastructure, negative societal attitudes, and a general lack of awareness and training among public sector employers. Furthermore, there are marked disparities between urban and rural areas, with rural regions being less equipped to support the inclusion of PWD. The article calls for stronger enforcement of legal provisions, improvements in accessibility, and increased education and training on disability issues to create a more inclusive public sector workforce in Nepal.

3. Together we can! Supporting people with deafblindness living independently: Evaluation of a community-based support program in the Netherlands

Name : Dr.Eline Heppe (The Netherlands)

Organization : Royal Kentalis, Senior Researcher

Sub Theme : Transition planning and independent living

Abstract:

"Background People with deafblindness (DB) who live independently face significant challenges in daily activities. This study evaluated the National Support Services Deafblindness (SSDB) program, aiming to gain insight into how it supports the participation and autonomy of people with DB and whether the support provided is need-supportive. The SSDB provides one-on-one, community-based assistance through personal support workers (PSWs) to people with DB. PSWs offer accessible, practical support without requiring a healthcare background or formal training as care professional.

Methods A mixed-methods design was employed, incorporating observations, questionnaires, and interviews with 21 people with DB and their PSWs. Observations provided insights into the activities performed and how PSWs provided support. Questionnaires assessed autonomy, participation, and relationship quality. Interviews explored the experiences and perceptions of participants regarding the SSDB program.

Results The observations revealed a diverse range of activities, most of which occurred outside the home. PSWs often created a supportive environment but occasionally took over too many tasks, reducing the autonomy of people with DB. The questionnaire findings indicated strong relationships between people with DB and their PSWs. Interviews showed that people with DB were generally highly satisfied with the support they received and considered it essential for performing daily activities. While communication was generally positive, some participants highlighted the need for PSWs to receive more training, especially in (tactile) sign language.

Conclusions This study highlights that one-on-one, accessible, and practical support is crucial for people with DB living independently, enabling them to carry out daily activities and participate in society.



THEME

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



1. Up Deafblind Youth!

Name : Mr. Pere Cantenys Gomez (Spain)

Organization : WFDB Youth Committee Leader

Sub Theme : Building social connections and reducing isolation

Abstract:

We have created a new WFDB youth team. our goal is to create an space for deafblind youth in the world step by step and with your collaboration can to improve the quality, safety and rights of deafblind youth.

2. Organization of People with Disabilities Engagement to Ensure Disability Inclusive Development

Name : Ramesh Baral (Nepal)

Organization : Handicapped International, Nepal

Co Presenter : Ms. Pramila Neupane

Sub Theme : Family and Community Engagement

Abstract:

People with disabilities continue to be excluded from development initiatives despite global commitments like the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Inclusive Futures, disability inclusion program, seeks to change this by implementing projects that improve access, equity, and outcomes in education, healthcare, and employment while challenging stigma and discrimination.

Between 2019-2023, Inclusive Futures delivered 12 projects across Bangladesh, Kenya, Nepal, Nigeria, and Tanzania, reaching over three million people with disabilities. This paper distills six principles derived from practical lessons learned during these projects, offering a roadmap for disability-inclusive development. These principles provide actionable insights for leaders and practitioners across development and humanitarian sectors to ensure no one is left behind.

The learning summary is based on a mixed-methods review, including a desk review of 62 project documents, key informant interviews with consortium and program managers, and internal and external reviews conducted from late 2023 to mid-2024.

Inclusive Futures has demonstrated that disability inclusion is not only possible but effective. Scaling these efforts requires global development professionals to adopt and implement these principles, fostering transformative change for the up to 16% of the world's population with disabilities.

3. Supporting Partnerships with Families of Children with Deafblindness

Name : Ms. Rina Wigati
Organization : Asia Pacific Region, Perkins School for the Blind
Co Presenter : Siriporn Tantaopas & Dr. Celia Garcia
Sub Theme : Family and Community Engagement

Abstract:

Inclusion of families as partners is the most sustainable approach for bringing a holistic perspective when considering the life experience of a child with deafblindness. Families serve as the first teachers, caregivers, advocates, and connectors to the world around these children. Our presentation explores strategies for fostering and strengthening partnerships with families of children with deafblindness, drawing on best practices and lessons learned from the Asia Pacific region.

Families of children with deafblindness encounter significant challenges, including lack of skills, inadequate support, and isolation. Establishing partnerships with families helps bridge these gaps, equipping families with knowledge, skills, and confidence while creating a foundation for mutual learning.

This presentation is an opportunity to hear stories of success in building the capacity of parents to interact confidently and skillfully with their child with deafblindness. It will also highlight the importance of building meaningful participation between parents and professionals, ensuring that parents are equal contributors to their child's development, leading to improved outcomes for children. This presentation will share stories of empowered parents who become leaders in their communities, advocating for their child's rights and influencing policy change in their country.

4. The Role of NGOs in Strengthening the Deafblind Movement by Engaging with Families and Community

Name : Ms. Richa Bhutani (India)
Organization : Sense International India
Sub Theme : Family and Community Engagement

Abstract:

INGOS and NGOs have been instrumental in shaping social movements both in Global North and South. The deafblind movement in India which emerged during mid 1990s is no exception. NGOs like Sense International India, Hellen Keller Institute and like-minded organizations have been instrumental in sensitizing and bringing about attitudinal change among various stakeholders—children and persons with deaf-blindness, their families and community. This paper based on historical and descriptive approach is an attempt to highlight the role played by these organizations in strengthening the deafblind movement in India. Using in-depth interviews with the heads of eight organizations working in the area of deafblindness and special educators, this paper tries to elucidate some of the persisting and new challenges they have been encountering. The impact of neoliberal globalization, and the changing dynamic of funding have acted both as facilitators and obturators have also been discussed. It further details the innovative and unique strategies like direct-indirect interventions, building partnerships among the stakeholders and their capacities, facilitating network building and creating space for dialogues. These strategies have been inducing voices to the persons with deafblindness, empowering them to demand their rights and making the society more inclusive for them.

5. Building Bridges: The Vital Relationship Between Deaf Interpreters and Deafblind People for Empowerment, Accessibility and Inclusive

Name : Mr.Bishwamitra Bhitrakoti (Nepal)
Organization : National Federation of the Deaf Nepal/Communication Officer
Sub Theme : Building social connections and reducing isolation
Communication

Abstract:

"The relationship between Deaf interpreters and Deafblind people is important for effective communication and reducing social isolation. Deaf interpreters use their skills in sign language and tactile communication to ensure Deafblind individuals can understand and share information. They adapt to the specific communication needs of each person, such as haptic, hands-on signing, tactile signing, or Pro-Tactile communication.

This presentation focuses on how this partnership helps Deafblind people connect with their communities, access essential services, and participate in education, work, and social activities. It shows how Deaf interpreters work in healthcare, education, and other areas to empower Deafblind individuals and support their independence.

Challenges like limited trained interpreters and diverse communication needs are discussed, along with solutions such as better training and the use of assistive technologies. Real-life examples will illustrate how Deaf interpreters help reduce isolation and build social connections for Deafblind individuals.

The presentation highlights the importance of this relationship in creating inclusive communities. It calls for greater awareness and support to strengthen the bond between Deaf interpreters and Deafblind individuals, ensuring they are not left behind in society.

6. Bridging a gap between participation and isolation

Name : Ms. Helle Buelund Selling (Denmark)
Organization : Development Consultant M.Sc.
Co Presenter : Rasmus Hougaard Pedersen
Sub Theme : Building social connections and reducing isolation

Abstract:

It is a fundamental condition for humans to relate to one another. We have a natural orientation toward others, and through others we understand ourselves.

This universal human need also applies to individuals with deafblindness, but deafblindness often creates a gap between the individual and the surrounding society, leading to isolation. Professionals play a crucial role in supporting people with deafblindness to participate in social communities in various arenas on equal terms with others. This task requires reflection and awareness of one's own perspective and position in the world.

In this workshop we invite the participants to discuss and reflect with us on the specific role professionals take when bridging these gaps, enabling persons with deafblindness to engage in meaningful social connections and communities. We will explore how professionals can support the person in joining communities with their own interests and ideas, ensuring the community sees the individual, not a part of a "pair".

7. Helping imagine the unimaginable 1: Unveiling the secrets of national heritage sites for (deaf)blind visitors

Name : Prof. Boguslaw 'Bob' MAREK (Poland)

Organization : Fundacja HUNGRY FINGERS

Co Presenter : 1. Chhitup lama 2. Khom Raj Sharma

Sub Theme : Building social connections and reducing isolation

Abstract:

The approaching tenth anniversary of the 2015 earthquake, which turned many architectural treasures of Kathmandu Valley into piles of rubble, creates an opportunity to fill the huge gap in access to historic sites for persons for whom the sense of touch is the main source of information about the world. Although many temples have been rebuilt, they remain just as inaccessible to blind and deafblind persons as they were before the earthquake.

It would seem that 3-D models and tactile drawings of historic buildings may solve the problem. Unfortunately, creating a mental image of real objects on the basis of models and tactile illustrations requires understanding of a wide range of spatial concepts and training.

The workshop presents practical tips and resources which can help teachers and museum staff prepare people born blind for a meaningful contact with works of art. A set of teaching aids taking participants from 3D models through 2 and ½ D reliefs to tactile diagrams, and several technologies for producing tactile graphics will be presented in the form of an instructional video. Video clips from accessible art workshops, city tours with tactile guidebooks, and plans for similar initiatives in Nepal will close the presentation.

8. Unlocking Potential: Adapted Sports for the Development and Inclusion of Persons with Deafblindness

Name : Mr. Sachin Rizal (India)

Organization : Sense International India/ Head- Capacity Building

Sub Theme : Building social connections and reducing isolation

Abstract:

"Sports, often overlooked as a core intervention for persons with deafblindness, hold transformative potential for their holistic development. This unique disability affects communication, mobility, and overall growth, creating barriers that limit participation in sports and recreational activities. However, evidence suggests that adapted sports can significantly enhance motor skills, communication, orientation, socialization, and emotional well-being, empowering individuals with deafblindness to lead more fulfilling lives.

In the South Asian context, where disability-inclusive sports are still in nascent stages, sports for persons with deafblindness are rarely prioritized. Rehabilitation efforts predominantly focus on education and vocational training, sidelining the developmental benefits that sports can offer. This paper highlights the strategic role of sports as a developmental tool and a means to foster inclusion and equity.

The paper proposes sports for development strategies, including tailored training programs, collaborative efforts with disability organizations, inclusive policies, and investment in accessible infrastructure. By drawing on global best practices and the guiding principles of Article 30.5 of the UNCRPD, it advocates for mainstreaming adapted sports as an integral part of interventions for persons with deafblindness.

Through a focus on sports, this paper aims to inspire South Asian stakeholders to unlock the potential of this intervention, reshaping lives and promoting societal change.

9. Making sure that books with tactile illustrations are a source of enjoyment and a learning experience for (deaf)blind children and not of frustration.

Name : Prof. Boguslaw 'Bob' MAREK (Poland)

Organization : Fundacja HUNGRY FINGERS

Co Presenter : 1. Chhitup lama 2. Khom Raj Sharma

Sub Theme : Building social connections and reducing isolation

Abstract:

The role of such books, with collage type or raised lines drawings, is the same as that played by illustrated books for sighted children: they raise interest in reading, provide entertainment and expand children's knowledge of the world. The difference is, that while sighted children can choose from thousands of books, shortage of books with tactile illustrations is a global problem.

The poster will acquaint participants with examples of tactile books and with basic principles of creating accessible illustrations - both simple, hand-made, as well as books produced with more advanced technologies. A set of teaching aids for explaining difficult concepts needed for understanding tactile illustrations will also be presented, to make sure that they are a source of entertainment and not of frustration.

It is hoped that the workshop will encourage parents, teachers and 'artistically minded' persons to create tactile illustrated books. The poster will provide links to websites helping with creating books with accessible illustrations. It is hoped that, because of this presentation, Nepal and other countries in the region will soon join Typhlo&Tactus - an international tactile books competition.

challenges and solutions in introducing young children with total blindness or (deaf) blindness to 'tactile graphics' - one of the most difficult areas in education of children with a visual impairment. The term covers a wide range of images, drawings, diagrams, maps etc. adapted for tactual exploration.

For young children with a visual impairment, collage type illustrations using small 3-D objects make the most popular type of accessible books. Books with 2 and ½ objects and raised line drawings take children to a higher level of more abstract illustrations.

The common assumption that blind and deafblind children's sensitive fingertips are enough to ensure understanding of tactile illustrations cannot, unfortunately, be confirmed. While 'sensitive fingertips' will feel the different lines and textures, interpreting them requires understanding of a wide range of concepts, including the concept of a drawing.

The presentation will acquaint participants with examples of books with tactile illustrations and with guidelines for creating such books - both simple, hand-made, and books produced with more advanced technologies. Challenges and solutions connected with helping children make the most of such books will also be addressed.

It is hoped that the presentation will encourage parents, teachers and 'artistically minded' persons to create simple tactile illustrated books, and that it will result in inviting Nepal and other countries in the region to join the Typhlo & Tactus (www.tactus.org) group - countries participating in international tactile books competitions.

THEME

CROSS CUTTING



1. Finding the possibility of life through assistive technology

Name : Mr. Chhabi Aale (Nepal)

Organization : General Secretary of NAB Gandaki

Sub Theme : Assistive Technologies and Communication Tools

Abstract:

Technology stands as the greatest blessings of our era which transform human lives by enhancing efficiency and convenience. It is a powerful tool that has revolutionized how we work, communicate, and navigate the world. While technology simplifies life for the people, for individuals with disabilities, it holds an even greater significance—it makes life possible. Assistive technology has become a lifeline, breaking barriers that once seemed impossible.

From different form of assistive technology according to the necessity of disability diversity, it empowers individuals with disabilities to achieve independence, mobility, and inclusivity. These tools enable tasks that were once impossible, such as accessing education, securing employment, or simply engaging in everyday activities like shopping or communicating with loved ones. They not only remove physical and social barriers but also foster confidence and self-reliance. Moreover, the development and accessibility of assistive technologies continue to grow, becoming more affordable and user-friendly. Innovations like artificial intelligence, smart devices, and wearable technology promise even greater possibilities, ensuring no one is left behind. In essence, technology isn't just about convenience; for many, it's the bridge to realizing their full potential and living a dignified life. The future of assistive technology holds endless possibilities, making inclusion a reality.

2. Enhancing Quality of Life: Lived Experiences as a Physiotherapist in Home-Based Educational Interventions for Children with Deafblindness and Complex Disabilities

Name : Ms. Nisha Rana (Nepal)

Organization : NDFN

Co Presenter : Sahasha Khanal

Sub Theme : Enhancing Quality of Life through therapy service

Abstract:

In Nepal, children with deafblindness and complex disabilities face significant barriers to education and development, often compounded by limited access to tailored interventions. As a physiotherapist, I have worked in a home-based educational setup, integrating therapeutic practices with inclusive teaching strategies to enhance the learning and quality of life for these children.

This presentation shares insights from my professional journey, highlighting case studies of children who have made remarkable progress despite their challenges. Using an interdisciplinary approach, I collaborated with families, educators, and other professionals to develop individualized education plans (IEP) that blend physiotherapy techniques with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles. The interventions included sensory stimulation, mobility support, communication development, and adaptive strategies for daily activities.

I will discuss challenges such as resource constraints, societal attitudes, and the need for capacity building among caregivers and educators. Additionally, I will present success stories that underscore the transformative impact of personalized, holistic support.

My experiences provide a compelling case for expanding home-based educational models in Nepal, advocating for policy-level support to address the unique needs of this population. The session aims to inspire participants to innovate and collaborate, driving inclusive practices for children with deafblindness and complex disabilities.

3. Innovating Adaptive Tools to Enhance Life Skills of Children with Deafblindness

Name : Ms. Tuti Hendrawati (Indonesia)
Organization : Project Manager, Indonesia, Perkins
Sub Theme : Assistive Technologies and Communication Tools

Abstract:

With decades of experience teaching children with deafblindness, Perkins believes that all children can learn, including children with deafblindness. Through years of providing technical support in the Asia region, we have worked with local partners to identify strategies and innovations to reduce the obstacles that restrict participation in daily activities and the improvement of their life skills.

Children with deafblindness face significant challenges participating in daily routines. Due to persistent environmental and social obstacles, the rights of deafblind individuals are restricted in their everyday activities. This leads to diminished independence and a loss of chances for meaningful engagement in daily life. Lack of access to appropriate tools and technology for deafblind children may lead to a rise of inappropriate behavior, stemming from the frustration of unfulfilled engagement or the weight of boredom.

Teachers from the Philippines and Indonesia have created and facilitated modified tools tailored to each child's unique needs and abilities for active engagement in daily living activities. These endeavors have allowed deafblind children to embrace greater independence, leading to the acquisition of positive behaviors that encourage both parents and teachers to foster children's autonomy. This transformation establishes a foundation for a successful future of children with deafblindness.

4. If Time isn't Always on your Side

Name : Dr. Eric van Heuvelen (The Netherlands)
Organization : Bartimeus, assistive technology specialist, co-founder
Deafblind international technology network
Sub Theme : Assistive Technologies and Communication Tools

Abstract:

People with (cognitive) deafblindness face challenges with time perception, often struggling with disrupted day-night rhythms and long waits for assistance to start and complete their daily activities. This lack of clarity leads to uncertainty and stress, as they cannot anticipate daily activities like going to day care or bedtime. A clear overview of daily events is crucial for their sense of safety and stability, as confusion about time-related questions often results in frustration or negative attention-seeking behaviors.

Traditional tools like pictograms, photos, or audio aids are insufficient for individuals with severe visual or hearing impairments, as even tactile time-timers can be too abstract for those who don't grasp the concept of a clock.

This presentation highlights innovative solutions developed by Bartiméus FabLab, designed to address these challenges. These low-tech tools make concepts like the passage of time, diminishing time, day-night rhythm, and "waiting" more comprehensible for individuals with (cognitive) deafblindness.

The FabLab's approach prioritizes user-centered design, relying on feedback from both clients and caregivers. These solutions have been successfully implemented in residential and educational settings, demonstrating how tailored, practical low-tech technologies can enhance the quality of life for individuals with complex needs. The presentation provides insight into these solutions.

5. INF's aspiration to community based inclusive development of persons with disabilities

Name : Mr. Lekhnath K.C. (Nepal)
Organization : International Nepal Fellowship- Nepal (INF-Nepal)
Co Presenter : Mr. Dipak Neupane
Sub Theme : Disability Inclusion

Abstract:

INF Nepal has a long history of working in Nepal since 1952 AD, focusing on the improvement of health and quality of life of the people of Nepal. Since its formation, INF Nepal was heavily focused on health services for more than 30 years. But in 1985, given the poor socioeconomic indicators of the country it also acknowledged the need for Community Health Program (CHP) which later turned into Community Health and Development (CHD) Program. In 1986, INF Nepal started its CHP from Burtibang of Baglung District. Since then, INF Nepal has been continuing CHD work in remote and needy districts of western Nepal. INF Nepal's community programmes have consistently focused on the poorest and the most vulnerable communities of Western Nepal, particularly poor and underprivileged individuals who are marginalized and socially discriminated against on the ground of gender, age, ethnicity, disease/physical illness, or other similar factors.

INF Nepal has always focused on serving the poorest and the most vulnerable communities across Nepal with the vision of bringing to them "Life in all its fullness." As such, transformation of communities is at the heart of INF Nepal's vision. Community Health and Development activities form key part of the strategy towards this vision. The CHD projects aim to bring changes in the lives of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people of Nepal by empowering them to take collective actions for their development, improving the livelihood and health status sustainably, and enabling them to better cope with disaster stress and shocks. INF Nepal is currently working in 11 districts of Gandaki, Lumbini, Karnali, and Sudurpaschim provinces of Nepal. The following table shows existing INF Nepal's working areas and their duration.

6. Important role of awareness and advocacy on policy for Deafblindness

Name : Mr. Lhakpa Nuru Sherpa (Nepal)
Organization : Society of Deafblind Parents, President
Co Presenter : Shine Sherpa
Sub Theme : Awareness, Policy and advocacy and policy for the rights of people with deafblindness

Abstract:

This presentation will explore the current situation of rights and inclusion for people with Deafblindness in Nepal. The presentation will critically analyze existing policies and their effectiveness in addressing the specific needs of individuals with Deafblindness. It will highlight the activities which were done to create awareness about Deafblindness related with their education, health, employment and independent living. It will feature important role of awareness campaigns, community-based rehabilitation program and effective advocacy efforts in empowering people with Deafblindness and promoting their full and equal participation in Society.

7. Therapeutic Strategies for Enhancing Well-Being in Deafblind Individuals: Insights From 'My World' activity

Name : Ms. Mahek Swadia (India)
Organization : Sense India & Psychologist
Sub Theme : Mental Health and Well-being

Abstract:

Deafblindness presents unique communication challenges due to dual sensory loss, resulting in difficulties with emotional expression, understanding social cues, and navigating meaningful interpersonal relationships. As a result, individuals with deafblindness are at an increased risk of mental health challenges. Addressing these issues requires innovative approaches tailored to their unique needs. This study examines a sample size of 20 case stories of individuals aged 10–24 to explore the potential of therapeutic interventions in mitigating these challenges. This study explores the effectiveness of the "My World" activity, a therapeutic intervention based on narrative therapy principles, in enhancing emotional and social dimensions for individuals with deafblindness. Using qualitative methods, it examines how this activity promotes self-expression, awareness, and identity formation. Participants construct and share personal narratives through tactile and visual aids, fostering relational understanding. Findings suggest that the activity helps translate abstract thoughts and emotions into tangible expressions, enabling participants to explore their emotions, relationships, and surroundings. Comparing baseline and end-line results, a shift in the severity of issues from moderate to mild was observed, reflecting improved well-being. This activity indicates enhanced self-awareness, understanding of one's environment, and emotional experiences, underscoring the value of narrative-based therapeutic interventions in promoting mental health well-being.

8. Maternal Mental Health and Its Role in the Care of Individuals with Deafblindness/Multiple Disabilities

Name : Ms. Niharika Gurung (India)
Organization : Sense International India, Psychologist
Co Presenter : Ritu Trivedi
Sub Theme : Mental Health and Well-being

Abstract:

This case study decisively investigates the impact of maternal mental health on the overall well-being of individuals with Deafblindness or Multiple Disabilities (PwDb/MD). Through thematic analysis, the study clearly establishes how a mother's psychological well-being directly influences emotional health, familial dynamics and adaptive skills in children facing severe sensory and communication impairments. It involves 10 mother-child pairs with children diagnosed with Db/MD, conducted across diverse regions in India.

The findings explicitly demonstrate a strong correlation between maternal mental health and developmental outcomes for PwDb/MD. Mothers who maintain positive mental health significantly enhance their children's responsiveness, emotional expression, sensory-motor integration, and communication skills.

These results assert the critical importance of family-centered interventions & approaches in improving psychological well-being for this population. Holistic support systems are vital for effectively addressing the challenges these families encounter. This study provides essential insights for policymakers, healthcare practitioners, and researchers dedicated to elevating the quality of life for individuals with Db/MD and their caregivers.

9. Redefining Inclusion: The Power of Lived Experience in Shaping an Accessible World

Name : Ms. Poonam Pardesi (India)

Organization : Perkins India - Program Coordinator

Co Presenter : Ms. Archana Rao

Sub Theme : Identity and belonging (through Lived Experience)

Abstract:

(The abstract is based on the life of Ms. Poonam Pardesi (Disability: Visual Impairment)
Lived experience is a powerful tool to understand realities of every human, especially those who are marginalized. Social norms and identities on the other hand are always defined through a majoritarian lens.

I am a blind woman from India and I come from a low – middle income, non-urban background. These are the identity labels that have shaped my understanding of the social structures that often exclude us.

Society designs spaces, policies and norms based on ableist assumptions, without factoring in principles of reasonable accommodation and universal design. Often what is deemed beneficial or possible for people like us is decided without involving us, leading to greater exclusion. My lived experiences have always questioned this ableist, majoritarian view of People with Disabilities.

Therefore, lived experience is an important contributor to understanding how to live, love, work and play. In my paper presentation, I will share what identity and belonging have meant to me as a PwD. I will also present strategies and efforts as a part of my organization which works towards including PwDs from early childhood. Through this, I advocate for an inclusive world built on lived experiences, where nothing is designed for us, without us.

10. Connection: Modes of communication with Deafblind Individuals

Name : Miss Karuna Maharjan

Organization : Society Of Deafblind Parents, Special Educator

Co Presenter : Shailu Kharel

Sub Theme : Promoting Different Mode of Communication

Abstract:

Effective communication is one of the most important parts of each and everyone. This presentation will explore about the definition of communication and its importance. It will include the benefits of communication and different modes of communication for us and also will include the diverse modes of communication for person with Deafblindness. We will discuss the benefits and impacts of various modes of communication for Deafblindness which will includes sign language, print on palm, object cues, braille, haptic sign. This presentation will highlight the strategies to improve communication skills to build strong relationship with person with Deafblindness.

11. Understanding the Psychosocial wellbeing impacts on Adaptive Livelihood among Persons with Deafblindness and Multiple Disabilities (MD)

Name : Mr. Uttam Kumar (India)
Organization : Sense International India
Sub Theme : Mental Health and Well-being

Abstract:

Individuals with deaf-blindness encounter distinct challenges that can significantly affect their mental health. The World Health Organization estimates a substantial burden of mental health issues in India, with 2443 disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) per 100,000 population. Research by Honey, Emerson, and Llewellyn (2011) indicates that individuals with disabilities often experience worse mental health outcomes, financial difficulties, and lower social support compared to others. Focusing on the mental health of young adults (ages 19-24) with deaf-blindness—a unique combination of hearing and visual impairments—this study utilized a structured checklist to assess behavioral, emotional, social, cognitive, and physiological regulation. A purposive selection process was employed to evaluate the effects of an intervention on this demographic. Data were collected from 425 deaf-blind individuals and their caregivers, with particular attention given to 37 key stakeholders who are either self-employed or working in the private sector. Findings revealed a positive impact of the intervention on various psychosocial dimensions, showing significant improvements in behavior ($p=.003$), emotional well-being ($p=.009$), and social aspects ($p=.001$). Furthermore, 12 young adults secured employment following the intervention, underscoring its beneficial effects on their overall well-being and employment readiness.

12. The Intersection of Caregiving and Mental Health: Elevating Siblings' Roles in Db/MD Caregiving

Name : Ms. Nagma Thakor (India)
Organization : Sense International India
Sub Theme : Mental Health and Well-being

Abstract:

"Mental health awareness is crucial for families caring for individuals with Deafblindness (Db) or multiple disabilities (MD), particularly regarding the often-overlooked role of siblings. Siblings can play a vital part in the caregiving dynamic, and their emotional well-being greatly affects their ability to support their siblings. This study explores the intersection of mental health awareness and the responsibilities siblings undertake in caregiving while balancing their own personal development and family expectations.

The research utilized pre-test and post-test questionnaires and focus group discussions to capture participants' perceptions about mental health. It highlights the importance of emotional expression in improving interpersonal relationships and reducing isolation and stress among siblings. Additionally, positive family dynamics—characterized by equitable caregiving roles and emotional validation—are essential for nurturing mental health outcomes.

Findings indicate a 60% increase in siblings' knowledge about mental health through education, counselling, and peer support. These initiatives foster support systems that address both social and psychological challenges. By promoting an inclusive family environment that recognizes the importance of siblings, we can enhance the quality of life for individuals with Db and MD, advocate for their needs, and bridge gaps in support and awareness."

13. Mobility for Individuals with Deafblindness

Name : Mr. Puspa Raj Rimal (Nepal)
Organization : Deafblind Association Nepal's President
Sub Theme : Sensory and Mobility Support

Abstract:

Background: Deafblindness is a complex condition causing severe hearing and vision impairments, affecting social, educational, and daily activities. According to WHO, 0.2% to 2% of the global population is affected. In Nepal, the 2021 census reported 10,187 individuals with deafblindness, though the actual number might be higher.

What is Mobility?

Mobility is the development of the ability to navigate physical, social, and environmental spaces independently. It ensures autonomy, safety, and social participation for individuals with deafblindness.

Key Aspects:

1. **Independence:** Ability to reach destinations without assistance.
2. **Safety:** Assurance of no accidents or harm during travel.
3. **Efficiency:** Reaching destinations quickly and with minimal effort.

Mobility is not just about travel skills but involves developing confidence, physical accessibility, and the use of assistive devices.

Importance: Mobility helps enhance the quality of life for those with deafblindness by promoting independence, social participation, safety, and access to educational and employment opportunities.

Special Cases: For those with congenital deafblindness, tactile communication, tactile markers, and trained guides are essential. For those with varying degrees of hearing and vision impairments, specialized techniques like haptic signals, tactile maps, hands-free devices, visual signals, and combined tactile and sound signals are used.

Implementation: Effective mobility can be ensured through education and training programs, assistive devices, practice, community support, and smart technology like GPS and mobile apps.

Conclusion: Mobility is crucial for individuals with deafblindness to lead safe, independent, and inclusive lives. Effective implementation of mobility programs can enhance their rights, dignity, and quality of life.

14. Journey of acceptance and rebuilding trust of a parent

Name : Ms. Keerthi Uthappa (India)
Organization : Sense International India, Head - Corporate Engagement
Sub Theme : Identity and belonging (through Lived Experience)

Abstract:

"In a world that increasingly values inclusion and diversity, the journey of parenting a child with deafblindness brings unique challenges and transformative experiences. Accepting this is often difficult process, marked by fear, guilt, uncertainty, particularly for mothers. Emotional toll can lead to delayed intervention, mistrust in rehabilitation systems, feelings of isolation for both child and the family.

Narrative explores the lived experiences of parents navigating these challenges, focusing on critical role of acceptance in fostering progress. It highlights the turning points that include receiving counselling, rebuilding trust and finding emotional balance. Parents often struggle to identify appropriate services, advocate for their children, and balance personal aspirations with caregiving responsibilities.

Paper also sheds light on unique struggles faced by mothers, who often bear the emotional weight of their child's condition while grappling with societal expectations and self-doubt. Courage required to confront these challenges and seek help is essential for creating opportunities for children with disabilities.

Ultimately, this narrative underscores the need for holistic interventions, community support, and greater sensitivity towards families of children with deafblindness. It aims to inspire and empower parents, particularly mothers, to embrace their journeys with hope, determination, and resilience, ensuring inclusive and independent future for their children.

15. Exploring Resources for Deafblind Individuals in Nepal: Insights and Recommendations

Name : Mr. Sagar Prasai (Nepal)
Organization : Diverse Patterns, Director
Sub Theme : Assistive Technologies and Communication Tools

Abstract:

"Deafblindness, a combination of hearing and vision loss, significantly impacts individuals' ability to access information, communicate, and participate in daily life. In Nepal, this group faces unique challenges due to limited resources, inadequate recognition, and societal stigma. Although the government recognized deafblindness as a distinct disability in 2006, there remains a pressing need to improve access to tailored resources and information.

This presentation highlights findings from a scoping review conducted to support Sense International's Global Resource Hub initiative. The research involved interviews with key stakeholders and a review of existing accessible resources in Nepal. Key findings reveal gaps in digital accessibility, the unavailability of dedicated resources for the deafblind community, and limited awareness of the Global Resource Hub.

To address these challenges, the presentation provides short, mid, and long-term recommendations, including developing localized content in Nepali, increasing access to assistive technologies, and fostering awareness through strategic partnerships. By adopting these measures, the Global Resource Hub can better serve the deafblind community, promoting their independence and inclusion. This work underscores the importance of collaborative efforts in creating accessible environments and ensuring equal opportunities for all individuals, regardless of their disabilities."

16. Teachers' Lived Experience: Communication Barriers in Teaching Students with Deafblindness in Nepal

Name : Ms. Anita Bindu (Nepal)
Organization : Tribhuvan University, Ph.D. Scholar
Co Presenter : Krishna Thapa
Sub Theme : Promoting Different Mode of Communication

Abstract:

"Communication is critical for effective classroom instruction, especially for teaching students with deafblindness. It facilitates learning for students with diverse needs. However, in Nepal, teachers lack the skills and experience required to teach students with deafblindness. Communication barriers, particularly in tactile and sign language communication—still in its infancy in Nepal—remain largely unexplored.

This study investigates these barriers through a phenomenological research design. Data were collected via in-depth interviews with two teachers selected through purposive sampling. The interviews, recorded in audio format, were analyzed thematically. Key themes included message development, medium (teaching materials and language), students' backgrounds and motivation, and feedback.

Teachers reported difficulties in creating sensory-appropriate content and course materials suited to students' learning levels. Instructional resources, such as textbooks and tactile materials, were limited. Proficiency in tactile communication was identified as a significant barrier to effectively conveying information. Teachers also noted challenges in maintaining students' motivation and addressing low self-esteem, which impeded learning. Additionally, feedback processes were challenging for both teachers and students.

The study concluded that multiple barriers hinder teaching students with deafblindness in special schools. Recommendations include enhancing teachers' tactile communication skills, developing tactile instructional materials, and reforming policies to ensure inclusive education and upholding every child's rights.

17. Identity for Young People with Usher syndrome – learning from Firsthand Experiences

Name : Mr. Rasmus Hougaard Pedersen (Denmark)
Organization : Psychologist
Sub Theme : Identity and belonging (through Lived Experience)

Abstract:

This workshop will focus on the shift in the professionals' understanding of the needs of people with Usher syndrome and the process of developing an identity and growing up while living with a progressive disorder. This shift has been guided by projects in Denmark by the Specialist Consultancy for the Deafblind and CFD on how young people with Usher syndrome and relatives experience youth growing up with Usher syndrome. These insights are also enriched by theoretical perspectives such as psychological rehabilitation.

In developing these projects, central questions have emerged: How can professionals support young people with Usher syndrome in their own personal processes of navigating a life with a progressive sensory impairment? And how do environmental factors positively and negatively influence these processes?

Perspectives on these critical questions will be central in this workshop, encouraging the participants to reflect on the different viewpoints and positions between the professionals and the persons with Usher syndrome. These different positions cause challenges but also serve as a starting point for more tailored and inclusive support.

18. Reasonable Accommodation: Bridging Gaps in Inclusive Education for Remote Areas

Name : Mr. Gyanendra Praja (Nepal)
Organization : Educator
Co Presenter : Saurav Chepang
Sub Theme : Support systems and accommodations

Abstract:

Every human being is born with the natural right to live freely and equally, including individuals with disabilities. Disability, however, is often perceived as a complication, but it is the societal mindset and systemic barriers that create challenges. Rights are frequently denied to individuals with disabilities under the pretext of their perceived limitations.

Providing equal rights and opportunities for persons with disabilities can create a more inclusive and equitable society. The inclusive education project holds the potential to bridge the current gaps, ensuring that every individual, regardless of ability, has access to quality education.

The word "accessible" should not remain a mere term but rather a shared responsibility for all citizens. By fostering an adaptive mindset and embracing reasonable accommodations, particularly in remote areas like Chitwan's Kalika Municipality, we can empower people with disabilities to thrive.

Promoting inclusive practices, where learning adapts to diverse needs, exemplifies how similar individuals can achieve together. With the right efforts, disability will no longer be seen as a limitation but as an opportunity to innovate and build a truly inclusive world.

19. Experiencing Dialogical Behavior through Multiparty Conversations

Name : Ms. Tanja Pfletschinger (Germany)
Organization : Stiftung St. Franziskus - Specialized Service for Hearing Impairment and Deafblindness
Sub Theme : Promoting Different Mode of Communication

Abstract:

This presentation focuses on the communicative learning processes of a 50-year-old man named Marvin with congenital deafblindness. Marvin's communication skills consist of a primarily receptive vocabulary. In most situations, he experiences communication as demanding and anticipatory. However, communication can be so much more, such as expressing needs and wants, asking questions, talking about the past or simply engaging in small talk.

Recently, the staff who assist Marvin have been introducing him to new perspectives on communication. The Overhearing Method is allowing Marvin to experience communication as a "listener". The assistants help Marvin participate in multiparty conversations by guiding his hands to rest on those of the two conversation partners. Through this, Marvin learns from a linguistic model, much like people without deaf-blindness naturally do by watching and listening.

The Overhearing Method allows Marvin to participate in conversations with multiple partners without requiring an active role on his part. He is able to observe how a dialogue is conducted in mutual exchange. This presentation reports on the initial steps that Marvin and the team are taking in this process.

20. Hand-under-hand touch - More than a technique

Name : Ms. Wanda Frederiks (The Netherlands)

Organization : Consultant for Bartiméus Expertise Centre on Deafblindness

Sub Theme : Promoting Different Mode of Communication

Abstract:

In the workshop "Hand-under-hand touch - More than a technique", participants will explore the hand-under-hand touch method designed for individuals with congenital deafblindness. These individuals rely on touch and to access information and communication, making this technique crucial in their daily lives. The method, initially described by Barbara Miles in 2003, was adapted and detailed by Bartiméus for Dutch-speaking caregivers. To ensure effective implementation, a structured, step-by-step guide was created, along with specialized training for care professionals.

Hand-under-hand touch goes beyond tactile sign language, supporting communication, exploration, and learning new skills. The technique is used not only for signing but also during everyday activities, helping individuals interact with their environment and develop independence.

The goal of the workshop is to introduce participants to this method and its practical applications. The session will include video demonstrations, real-life examples, and hands-on practice to ensure participants can experience the technique firsthand. By the end of the workshop, attendees will have a clear understanding of how to use hand-under-hand touch effectively, empowering individuals with congenital deafblindness to engage with the world and communicate more easily.

21. Introduction to Social Haptic Communication: tactile messages on the body

Name : Ms. Ingrid Korenstra (The Netherlands)

Organization : Consultant for the Bartiméus Expertise Centre on Deafblindness

Sub Theme : Promoting Different Mode of Communication

Abstract:

Social Haptic Communication (SHC) is known as a complementary communication method for people with deafblindness. SHC primarily focuses on translating non-verbal information into clear tactile messages that can be felt on the body. In this way, SHC enriches and supports the existing communication methods of people with deafblindness.

In the Netherlands, based on the work of Russ Palmer and Riitta Lathinen, a training course was first developed (2017) for people with acquired deafblindness, with the aim to integrate social environmental information into daily communication with people who are deafblind through tactile messages on the body.

In addition to SHC for people with acquired deafblindness, an adapted SHC course has been developed for people with congenital deafblindness.

This adapted training for people with congenital deafblindness focuses more on their own experience of the world, rather than the social environment.

This workshop is intended as an introduction to SHC and the possibilities of tactile messages on the body.

We will cover the basic principles of SHC and use various exercises and video material. Participants will have the opportunity to experience firsthand how tactile messages on the body can be applied to both people with congenital and acquired deafblindness.

22. Assistive Technology for Deafblind People in India

Name : Mr. Zameer Dhale (India)

Organization : Society for the Empowerment of the Deafblind

Sub Theme : Assistive Technologies and Communication Tools

Abstract:

The Society for the Empowerment of the Deaf-Blind (SEDB) India is a pioneering organization, recognized as the first in the country to be run by individuals with deafblindness. Founded by Mr. Zamir Dhale, a person with deafblindness, SEDB's mission is to empower deafblind individuals through education, training, assistive technology, and employment opportunities, while advocating for their rights against all forms of discrimination. Assistive technology plays a crucial role in the lives of deafblind people in India, providing them with the tools necessary for independence and inclusion. Mr. Dhale's advocacy journey began in 1999 when he recognized the absence of technology tailored for deafblind users in India. This led to the establishment of a computer training center at the Helen Keller Institute for the Deaf and Deafblind (HKIDB) in Mumbai, where he began teaching deafblind students in 2000. The Government of India has not recognized deafblindness as a separate disability under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act 2016. This lack of recognition results in limited accessibility to government websites and services, particularly due to the introduction of CAPTCHA and other interface changes that are not compatible with Braille devices. Furthermore, the inability of Braille devices to interpret videos, photos, and certain online interfaces (e.g., emojis, GIFs, and stickers) continues to hinder full access to information and communication for the deafblind community. In conclusion, assistive technology is vital for breaking down barriers and empowering deafblind people in India. Continued advocacy and innovation are necessary to address the challenges and ensure equal access to opportunities and rights for all deafblind individuals. Zamir is a part of the World Federation of the Deafblind (WFDB) as their Asian representative.

23. Psychological Counseling in Adults with Deafblindness during Rehabilitation Program

Name : Irina Moiseeva (Russia)

Organization : Deafblind Support Resource Center Yaseneva Polyana

Sub Theme : Mental Health and Well Being

Abstract:

For a short period of 3 to 4 weeks, people with deafblindness from various regions of Russia participate in a rehabilitation program at the House for Deafblind, located in the countryside near Moscow.

During this time, they may have between one to four sessions with a psychologist, depending on their individual needs.

The most common topics that people with deafblindness discuss include their fears of losing sight and hearing, lack of activities, challenges in communication, struggles with friendships, dependence on others, and issues related to low self-esteem.

A tactile self-assessment scale is used during consultations to assess participants' self-perception regarding their health, independence in daily living skills, communication, calmness, and happiness. This approach helps to explore participants' thoughts and feelings about their current circumstances and their future.

24. The Power of Observation: Using the Tactile Working Memory Scale Tool to Uncover Hidden Potential in Congenital Deafblind Individuals

Name : Mr. Vikram Choudhary (Germany)

Organization : Deutsches Taubblindenwerk (German Deafblind Centre);
TWMS Supervisor and Special Education Teacher

Co Presenter : Mr. Christain Haass

Sub Theme : Mental Health and Well-being

Abstract:

Video analysis has emerged as a pivotal tool in understanding the nuanced behaviours and interactions of individuals with congenital deafblindness, a condition marked by profound sensory isolation. This unique population often experiences challenges in communication, environmental engagement, and social interaction, which can contribute to heightened isolation and negatively impact mental health. However, video-based observational methods can reveal hidden potential in tactile working memory and cognitive abilities, offering a pathway to building meaningful social connections and fostering emotional resilience. By analyzing video recordings of tactile interactions, gestures, and environmental engagement, researchers can uncover patterns of behavior and latent skills that are otherwise difficult to detect in real-time. This methodology also enables longitudinal studies, offering insights into developmental trajectories and the efficacy of intervention strategies.

The findings underscore the critical role of tailored interventions that leverage tactile working memory to foster meaningful connections and reduce isolation. Furthermore, video analysis provides an avenue for caregivers and educators to better understand the unique communication methods employed by individuals with congenital deafblindness. TWMS serves as a powerful lens to unlock hidden potential and create opportunities for meaningful engagement that enhance the quality of life, reduce isolation, promote mental well-being by fostering a sense of connection.

25. Communication and Independence Through Assistive Technology: The Story of the Braille Note Taker

Name : Ms. Jihee Shin (Republic of Korea)

Organization : Siloam Deafblind Support Center / Team Member

Sub Theme : Assistive Technologies and Communication Tools

Abstract:

The Siloam Center has been providing technology education for individuals with deafblindness, focusing on Braille Display like Braille Sense. This program enhances communication and social participation by teaching essential skills such as document creation, internet browsing, and social media use. Graduates of the program have reported significant improvements in independence, enabling them to communicate without interpreters and access digital resources. Additionally, the center trains qualified users as instructors, fostering peer education. To promote engagement, a travel program using Braille Sense was introduced, allowing participants to plan trips, navigate, and communicate in real time. This initiative has empowered individuals with deafblindness, bridging the digital divide and expanding their opportunities for independence.

26. First formal qualification for assistants for people with deafblindness in Austria – Building Bridges Bridges between the deafblind person and the people and world around them

Name : Ms. Barbara Latzelsberger (Austria)

Organization : ÖHTB- Counselling Centre for people with deafblindness and hearing and visual impairment - Leader

Sub Theme : Inclusion & Improving services & Quality of life

Abstract:

The world is huge and often beyond the reach of an outstretched arm. For people with deaf-blindness or hearing and vision impairments, this represents a particular challenge when it comes to finding their way around and using the possibilities of this wide world or to the fullest enjoy. Therefore, personal, individual support from competent partners is essential to promote inclusion and participation.

In collaboration with the non-profit organization "Licht ins Dunkel", the advice center for people with deaf-blindness and people with hearing and visual impairments launched the "Building Bridges" project. This initiative aims to train individuals to be key connectors so that they, these bridges, can be for people living with deafblindness. Deafblind assistants are intended to support those affected in having experiences that would otherwise be unattainable.

The qualification program started in October 2024 with 17 participants from different regions of Austria. Its goals include providing comprehensive training that combines theoretical knowledge with practical skills, building a nationwide support network and ensuring fair remuneration for assistants in all nine Austrian federal states. This project not only improves the skills of participants, but also strengthens the community and promotes a more inclusive environment for people with sensory impairments.

27. Feasibility Study on Supporting Deafblind Individuals in Malaysia: Challenges, Opportunities, & Policy Recommendations

Name : Dr. Mohd Azlis Sani Md Jalil (Malaysia)

Organization : SEAMEO SEN, Deputy Director

Co Presenter : Mohd Anis Abdul Razak

Sub Theme : Awareness, Policy and advocacy and policy for the rights of people with deafblindness

Abstract:

This study explores the feasibility of developing targeted programs and policies to support individuals with deafblind in Malaysia, a population often neglected within national disability frameworks. Deafblind, characterized by the simultaneous loss of hearing and vision, poses complex challenges requiring specialized interventions in healthcare, education, and social inclusion. The findings reveal critical gaps in awareness, accessibility, and resources for this community, compounded by limited prevalence data and cultural stigmas surrounding disability. Current support services are predominantly NGO-driven, with minimal government involvement, highlighting the need for systemic reform. Key opportunities include harnessing assistive technologies, strengthening inter-agency collaboration, and aligning national strategies with international frameworks like the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The study emphasizes the importance of data-driven planning, capacity building, and sustainable funding to establish an inclusive ecosystem that fosters empowerment and equity for the deafblind population in Malaysia.

28. Developing a Textbook on Deafblind Pedagogics: Going from Tacit Knowledge to a Coherent Pedagogical Approach for Professionals in the Field of Congenital Deafblindness

Name : Mr. Rasmus Hougaard Pedersen (Denmark)

Organization : Psychologist

Sub Theme : Support systems and accommodations

Abstract:

Supporting individuals with congenital deafblindness requires not only understanding the impact of combined vision and hearing impairment on social life, communication, access to information, and orientation, but also having the pedagogical knowledge needed to co-create supportive environments, that foster participation and learning.

A new textbook on deafblind pedagogics aims to meet this need by combining established pedagogical theories with knowledge and the understanding of congenital deafblindness. This result in a framework that systematizes the pedagogical approach to working with people with congenital deafblindness. The book explores key themes such as agency, vitality, learning, identity, self-determination, social participation, among others.

The textbook is the result of collaboration with experts in pedagogical theory as well as experts with extensive practical experience – both within and outside the field of deafblindness.

Both new employees and pedagogical staff would benefit from having a coherent approach to turn towards in improving the quality of life for individuals with congenital deafblindness. The poster outlines the development process, the content of the book, and invites the participants to reflect on how to support the deafblind field moving forward.

29. Tactile Language as a First Language

Name : Ms. Helle Buelund Selling (Denmark)

Organization : Development Consultant M.Sc.

Sub Theme : Promoting Different Mode of Communication

Abstract:

Article 2 in the UNCRPD states that language includes spoken and signed languages and other forms of non-spoken languages. It is well known that low readability challenges people with congenital deafblindness (CDB) as their communicative expressions for an untrained eye can be difficult to read. Thus, they face the risk of experiencing isolation, and often they are labelled as non-language users. The Nordic Network on Tactile Language has addressed this challenge which resulted in the publication of *If You Can See It, You Can Support It: A Book on Tactile Language* (Creutz et al., 2019).

People with CDB use their bodily enactment as the basis for understanding the surrounding world and this will shape the structure of their bodily-tactile language use as the first natural language. If communication partners learn to recognise the bodily-tactile expressions as language, we contribute to develop communication and thus minimise the risk of experiencing isolation.

This workshop invites the participants to “put on their language glasses” and together we explore, how we can recognise the potential of tactile expressions as authentic, meaningful language and reflect on how this knowledge can improve the deafblind service.



Mobile Teachers as Change Agents: Supporting Children with Severe Disabilities through Home-Based Education in Nepal

National Federation of the Deaf Nepal/ Sense International

Abstract:

This study examines an innovative mobile teacher model implemented in Nepal's Kalika Municipality and Bharatpur Metropolitan City, focusing on educational support for children with severe disabilities. Through a qualitative research approach incorporating in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, case studies, and consultative workshops with stakeholders, the study explores how mobile teachers facilitate inclusive education through individualized home-based support. The findings reveal that mobile teachers serve as crucial bridges between homes and schools, enabling children with severe disabilities to progress from complete dependency to varying levels of independence in daily activities and, where possible, integration into mainstream education. They provide personalized support through Individual Education Plans, develop locally-sourced teaching materials, and work closely with families to create supportive home environments. The model shows particular strength in empowering families through disability awareness, livelihood support, and advocacy for social security provisions. While demonstrating promising results in improving both educational outcomes and life skills, the model faces challenges including geographical barriers, cultural stigma, and sustainability concerns. The study highlights opportunities for scaling this approach across Nepal through enhanced local government ownership, community engagement, and systematic capacity building. These findings offer valuable insights for policymakers and practitioners working to support children with severe disabilities in resource-limited settings.

Keywords: severe disabilities, mobile teachers, home-based education, Nepal, inclusive education.

Universal Design for Accessibility (UDL)

Handicap International

Abstract:

The Inclusive Education Project under the Disability Inclusive Development program in Bharatpur and Kalika Municipalities, Chitwan, addresses gaps in inclusive education through Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles. The project aims to enhance access, participation, and outcomes for children with disabilities through infrastructural upgrades, ICT integration, and teacher capacity building.

A mixed-methods study was conducted in 50 schools representing both intensive and lighter interventions. Data were collected from 111 UDL-trained teachers via surveys, along with 14 key informant interviews, 6 focus group discussions, 6 classroom observations, and 4 home-based teaching visits to evaluate practices and challenges comprehensively.

Findings indicate that 99.1% of teachers reported familiarity with UDL, with 100% having received training. Significant improvements were noted in lesson planning (91%), material selection (87%), and instructional methods (83%). However, regional disparities emerged: 76.3% of teachers in one region demonstrated a clear understanding of UDL compared to only 8.6% in another. Additionally, while 74% perceived classrooms as accessible, 26% identified barriers—primarily related to learning materials (17%) and furniture (15%). Assistive technology integration (65%) and differentiated instruction (71%) require further support.

The study concludes that although the project advances inclusive education, scaling up requires stronger policy support, enhanced professional development, and improved resource allocation. This model offers a replicable framework for UDL in Nepal and contributes to the global agenda of inclusive education.



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