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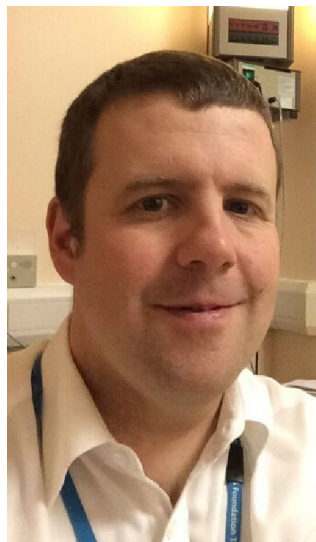
## Letter from the editor

What a great conference! I hope that you all arrived back home from The Hague feeling energised and motivated after learning and sharing information at the meeting, and relaxed following your visit to the Netherlands.

This 4th issue of ISLRRview is largely devoted to the Vision2017 meeting: you can read summaries and impressions of the conference from all corners of the world.

My memories of the meeting will be of hearing world-class presentations to rooms packed full of people, engaging in stimulating debate with colleagues and renewing old friendships. I even got a chance to visit the Peace Palace, which was a real treat.

As ever I feel that there were fascinating sessions I could not attend and people I didn't get chance to catch up with, but this demonstrates how many informative and interesting sessions were scheduled, and how many people attended the meeting.



On a personal note, it was very pleasing to hear how well received ISLRRview has been. Please continue to support the newsletter by submitting your letters, news, photos, and opinions to [islrview@gmail.com](mailto:islrview@gmail.com)

Michael Crossland  
London, UK



Dear colleagues and friends,

From the 25<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> of June, the 12th international conference of the International Society for Low Vision Research and Rehabilitation took place in The Hague, the Netherlands.

For the first time, the conference was organized in cooperation with the European Society for Low Vision Research and Rehabilitation. To give an impression of the size of the conference over 1200 people participated, more than 500 papers and 100 posters were presented, and 27 symposia and several workshops took place.

An overview:

Sunday the 25<sup>th</sup>, after registration many attendees joined the opening reception. Monday the 26<sup>th</sup>, the conference started with 7 parallel sessions. After a break, in a plenary session organized by the Dutch Vision 2020 charter, the official opening took place. To make sure the voices of those who represent the persons with visual impairment and know the challenges themselves were heard, two invited speakers gave key presentations: Mrs Harting, president of the World Blind Union and Gordon Legge. The third speaker was Hans Limburg who addressed the epidemiology of visual impairment worldwide. During the whole conference, our mystery jury was active, to nominate best young speakers and posters.

Tuesday the 27<sup>th</sup>, the conference was at full speed. Many day delegates of the Dutch rehabilitation centers were present. The sponsors were pleased by the attention for the exhibitions which were located in the coffee break and lunch area. Wednesday the 28<sup>th</sup>, the program was co-organized with the Daisy consortium so the floor was even more crowded. The robot Pepper showed us the future, self-driving electric cars, more intelligent software more accessible for all including those who have less sight will change the world soon. The same evening, after a barbeque, Vision 2017 rocked on the beach of Scheveningen. Thursday the 29<sup>th</sup>, still fresh, after a last parallel program, in the plenary closing session, the delegates witnessed Krister Inde received the ISLRR award for his lifetime research and learnt from the last WHO report. After closing the conference, over 100 delegates used the opportunity to visit one of the Dutch rehabilitation centers.

As organizers, we learned even more. We witnessed 3 bankruptcies of our congress organizers and convention hall and became experts in this field, we learnt about the pitfalls of the VAT secrets nationally and internationally. We realized that the conference app, available only 2 days before the opening, should have been better and learnt that the signing of toilet locations was insufficient. However, we will remember the hundreds of compliments and look back on a splendid and excellent congress.

We wish the Dublin organizers good luck with Vision 2020 and thank all those who contributed or participated during Vision 2017.

Ruth van Nispen, Bart Melis  
Danker and Ger van Rens



## **Dr. Krister Inde from Sweden receives ISLRR award!**

***Bart Melis-Dankers, The Netherlands, E-mail: [bartmelis@visio.org](mailto:bartmelis@visio.org)***



Once every three years during the Vision conference the ISLRR award is rewarded to a person who made a large contribution to the field of Low Vision Research and Rehabilitation. Somebody who really made a change.

The award is a special designed medal with the picture of ancient Greek prophet Tiresias and the inscription of the name of the winner. The medal is made by the famous Dutch sculptors Jean and Marianne Bremers (see: [www.jeanmariannebremers.nl](http://www.jeanmariannebremers.nl)) .

This year the prize was won by Dr. Krister Inde from Sweden. The proposal was unanimously accepted by the executive board of ISLRR.

Krister has low vision himself and has dedicated his life to help people with low vision and is involved in many patient-related approaches of low vision services.

He was a pioneer in the area of eccentric viewing training and that his work has influenced the training of vision rehabilitation professionals throughout the world. He has written many publications on low vision and rehabilitation which he made freely available to the general public in many languages. His book *See Bad, Feel Good* is a must-read for everybody with or without low vision.

Krister has set up a Low Vision centre in Jordan. He was recognized for his efforts and became honorable doctor of the University of Kalmar in Sweden in 2015.

His efforts have meant a huge amount for the rehabilitation of blind and partially sighted people in Europe and many developing world countries.

Krister really deserves this award!



## ANNOUNCEMENT

### Low Vision Research Award

Applications are now open for the Research to Prevent Blindness/Reader's Digest Partners for Sight Foundation and the Research to Prevent Blindness/Consumer Technology Association Foundation *Innovations in Technology Low Vision Research Award*. This award, open to U.S.-based researchers at academic medical institutions (and their collaborators), provides support for the development of assistive devices for persons with low vision, with a focus on mobile and/or wearable innovations. Two awards of up to \$150,000 each are available; applications due October 16.

Details available at: <https://bit.ly/ITLVA2017>.

## ISLRR travel fellowship winners at Vision 2017!



From left to right:

Ger H.M.B. van Rens (Organising Committee, Netherlands), Kyebagadha Binasali (Uganda), Deepak Kumar Bagga (India), Vijaya K Gothwal (India), Olga Overbury (ISLRR President), Kenchi Joseph Ngong (Cameroon), Mahesh Kumar Dev (Nepal), Deiva Krishnasamy (India), Ruth M.A. van Nispen (Organising Committee, Netherlands)





## Personal experience at the Vision 2017 conference, The Hague

***Kyebagadha Binasali, Master Student in Special Needs Education, Kyambogo University Uganda. Email:Kyebagadha@gmail.com***

Thank you to the International Society for Low vision Research and Rehabilitation for your very generous ISLRR Travel Fellowships that enabled me to attend vision 2017 conference.

The conference was a place of healing for many broken hearts of persons with low vision, those without sight, parents and professionals working with them, both literally and figuratively.

While at Conference, I had the opportunity to interact with many people from different backgrounds. Different kinds of people fascinated me and I was curious to know who they were, and how people with low vision were being treated and copying mechanisms they employed.

The conference has sharpened my ability to present information effectively to students with low vision, teachers, parents and the general public in Uganda on the needs of people with low vision, available assistive devices, and their rights in all aspects of life. I also gained valuable communication skills and new strategies of teaching ICT to students with low vision at the university. However, there is need for assistive technology manufactures to cut down costs in order to make assistive devices affordable to persons with low vision especially in developing countries.



## My Experience

***Optometrist, Meera and L B Deshpande Centre for Sight Enhancement, Institute for Vision Rehabilitation, LV Prasad Eye Institute (LVPEI), Kallam Anji Reddy Campus, L V Prasad Marg, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad – 500 034, India***

Attending the 12<sup>th</sup> International Conference organized by the International Society for Low Vision Research and Rehabilitation (ISLRR): Vision 2017 at The Hague, the most beautiful city of Holland, was indeed a wonderful experience!

The science committee had done a commendable job of putting together a knowledge feast encompassing epidemiology, low vision standards, service delivery models, psychometrics, parenting, novel diagnostic tools in LVR, reading rehabilitation, orientation and mobility, exciting technology, challenges in participation, assessment and management of patients with special needs and much more.

I participated as a panel participant in an interactive clinical case presentation symposium chaired by Dr. Mary Lou Jackson and discussed various approaches to manage different clinical case scenarios.

I received some valuable feedback on my oral presentation on the topic: “Environmental and personal contextual factors influencing participation of children with vision impairment” from both the chairs of the session Dr. Gislin Dagnelie and Dr. Ruth M. A. van Nispen. I also got an opportunity to network and learn from Ms. Ellen B. M. Elsmann about her research.

I got hands-on experience in using various accessibility features in I-pad in the workshop by Apple and learned about the latest products available in the low vision industry. The conference also provided an excellent opportunity to interact with global leaders and experts in low vision rehabilitation. It was a privilege to learn from my personal interaction with Dr. Ian L Bailey, Dr. A Jonathan Jackson, Dr. Michael Crossland, Dr. Mary Lou Jackson, Dr. Cornelis A. Verezen, Dr. Jorgen Gustafsson, Dr. Henry A Greene, Dr. Florine Pilon-Kamsteeg, Dr. Sara Heidari and Ms. Petra Wijen.

My visits to multidisciplinary low vision rehabilitation services at Royal Dutch Visio and Bartimeus were eye openers. It provided me with an opportunity to observe the best practices in both these places.

I am trying to apply the new learning from Vision 2017 in my low vision practice. Most of the free paper sessions, symposium, hands-on workshops, interactions with experts and site visits were very beneficial. This was my first visit to Europe and I am thankful for the hospitality received.

All this wouldn't have been possible without the ISLRR travel fellowship and I am extremely thankful to them. It was almost like a dream come true! I would strongly recommend all low vision rehabilitation practitioners to register with ISLRR and participate in next conference Vision 2020, in Dublin.

Deepak Kumar Bagga,  
PhD student,  
School of Optometry and Vision Science,  
University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia



## Amazing experience at Vision 2017

***Vijaya K Gothwal, PhD, L V Prasad Eye Institute, Hyderabad, India***

I was pleased to go to the 12<sup>th</sup> International conference, Vision 2017 (25-29 June, 2017), organized by the International Society for Low Vision Research and Rehabilitation (ISLRR), at The Hague, Netherlands, especially by a travel grant from ISLRR.

It was an amazing experience attending this conference as one of the presenters and co-chairs of a parallel session and it was a great chance to meet peers, exchange ideas, share resources, and develop friendships with people from all over the world. Personally I think this conference was very well organized and very successful. It was an enriching experience and many congratulations to the organizers for arranging such a successful event. I fully enjoyed the 4-day event with so many interesting and impressive plenary sessions and symposia on cutting-edge topics in low vision rehabilitation.

Of course it was an arduous task to pick and choose the session that I wanted to attend given that each of them was so interesting and informative. I enjoyed the social events very much including the opening one and the closing ceremony. The food was fantastic and had several options for the vegetarians (like me) too. The boat cruise with dinner on the last day that was coupled with visit to Visio was thoroughly enjoyable and memorable. I returned to my organization armed with new knowledge and skills to help me be a better practitioner and researcher.

This is a must attend conference and for anyone who has never attended this International Conference on Low Vision (next one is in Dublin, Ireland in 2020) I hope I have convinced you to attend!

Thank you to ISLRR for providing me this opportunity and wonderful experience.





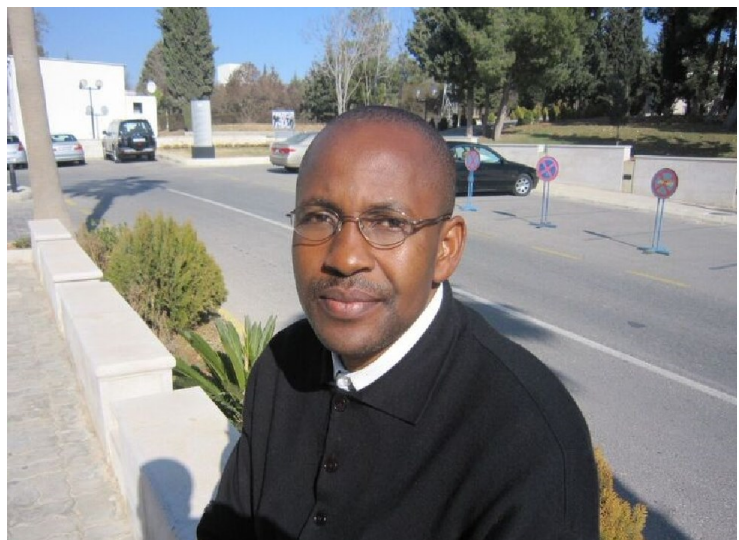
## My Experience at the vision 2017 conference

***By Kenchi Joseph Ngong,  
Cameroon***

I saw the opportunity to participate in the vision 2017 Conference in the Hague Netherlands as a great learning opportunity from a group of experts in vision rehabilitation. It was also an opportunity to exchange contacts with professionals and promote collaboration, knowledge sharing and improve knowledge. The idea to organize vision conferences is good, it promotes social learning and gives room to foster good practices and improve quality for services provide to people who are blind and visually impaired.

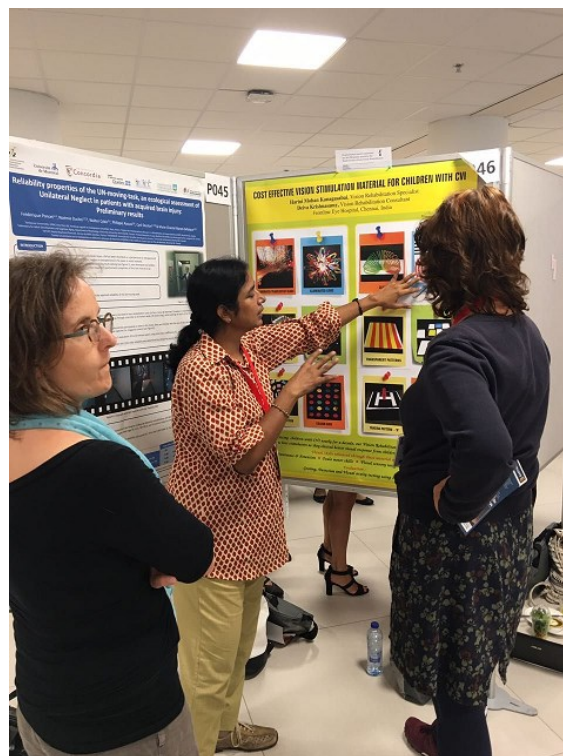
I learnt of how hard professionals are working to promote Low vision Rehabilitation services around the globe. The development of new technologies to facilitate participation of persons with visual impairment in development by different organization is laudable.

It was a great honor for me to be a winner of the ISLRR Travel Award it gave me the opportunity to part of this great event, also to share what we are doing in Cameroon through our organization the Cameroon Baptist Convention Health Services - Banso Baptist Hospital to improve in the lives of people with Low vision. I acknowledge with thanks the award of 1,500 US Dollars.



## Vision 2017!

**Deiva Krishnasamy, Vision Rehabilitation Consultant, Fronline Eye Hospital, Chennai, India**



My dream came true by ISLRR's travel grant. The paper presentations were highly informative and I missed a few in the parallel sessions. My brain needed more time to process the volume of information gathered in a short while and hence the posters were photographed for homework. The venue became the hub of contacts to establish connections to work together in the field of vision rehabilitation.

The award winning science presentations turned out to be the tools to measure ourselves in the international scale. The exhibitors amazed the participants with technological advancement. Bartiméus, Royal Dutch Visio & Robbert Coppes Foundation's booth was really interesting as they deal with children with CVI and multiple disabilities. A few practices can be readily implemented to improve the quality of service delivery.

Our Vision Rehabilitation Centre at Frontline Eye Hospital, Chennai, India wishes for research collaboration & professional exchange programs with organisations of similar interest as our country is thickly populated and we see many children with CVI and multiple disabilities.

The conference was well organised. I loved The Hague for its weather, flowers & canals filled with peace and serenity. I wished to stay there for a while!

## Deafblindness research at Vision 2017

*Walter Wittich, Montreal, Canada*

### Congenital Deafblindness: Current and Future Priorities



From left to right:

Jude Nicholas (Norway), Susan Bashinski (MO, USA), Susan Bruce (MA, USA),  
Mijkje Worm (Netherlands), Walter Wittich (Canada, back),  
Saskia Damen (Netherlands), Marleen Janssen (Netherlands)

Pediatric vision rehabilitation service delivery is often complicated by the presence of comorbidities such as hearing loss. Given the low incidence of congenital deafblindness, the number of researchers in this subspecialty is extremely sparse and we were excited to have six specialists in this domain assembled to discuss current issues in congenital deafblindness research and its rehabilitation. This panel was made possible through partial funding by Deafblind International to promote the DBI Research Network (<http://research.deafblindinternational.org/>). Given the profound impact of early sensory loss on human development, the complexity of care and the challenge of communication were at the core of the panel topics. The panel opened with Jude Nicholas (Norway), describing the difficulties encountered in “Understanding the complexity of congenital deafblindness”. Since service delivery with this vulnerable population should be based on evidence-based practice, Susan Bruce (USA) then examined “Effective Instruction of Students who are Deafblind: What is the State of Our Evidence?”. One major preoccupation when working with deafblind children is communication. Therefore, Marleen Janssen (Netherlands) presented recent development on “Intersubjective communication: A model for guiding high quality communication interventions in people with deafblindness”, with specific implications on service delivery. Thereafter, Susan Bashinski (USA) “Identified Effective Strategies for Teaching Communication, Language and Literacy Skills, with Learners with Congenital Deafblindness” which tied nicely into the continuing priority of communication research, leading to the presentation by Mijkje Worm (Netherlands), discussing “Communicative engagement of a person with congenital deafblindness in narrative and multiparty conversational practices”. The theme of communication then concluded with the final presentation by Saskia Damen (Netherlands), who presented approaches of “Scaffolding Communication in People with Congenital Deafblindness: An Analysis of Sequential Interaction Patterns”.

52 participants attended the session.

## Acquired Deafblindness: Rehabilitation Challenges with Older Adults



From left to right:

Bernadette Gavouyère (Canada), Eric van Heuvelen (Netherlands, back), Christine Holweg (Netherlands), Peter Simcock (UK), Walter Wittich (Canada), Ton Roelofs (Netherlands), Karen Keyes (Canada)

With the changing demographic profiles in many countries around the globe, low vision rehabilitation has seen an increase in more complex cases, whereby many working-age and older adults with visual impairment also present with comorbidities such as age-related or noise-induced hearing loss. The rehabilitation of these adult clients requires quite different approaches than the traditionally more established congenitally deafblind rehabilitation clientele. The upsurge in this population has increased research efforts, some of which were presented by members of this international panel. Bernadette Gavouyère (Canada) set the initial tone by presenting “How to develop best practices in rehabilitation: The birth of a community of practice in deafblindness”, a presentation that introduced a new tool towards improved evidence-based practice. She was followed by Karen Keyes (Canada) who provided a life-span perspective, examining “Intervenor services for adults with congenital deafblindness in Ontario, Canada - how far have we come?”. “The importance of combined visual and auditory functions for the visual rehabilitation of clients with dual sensory loss” was examined by Ton Roelofs (Netherlands), which then leads into a presentation by Peter Simcock (UK) who provided a global view of “The UN Principles on Aging - A perspective on Deafblind Seniors”, which specifically examined aging with either congenital or acquired combined vision and hearing loss. Walter Wittich (Canada) continued the session with an overview of three studies that examine “The stigma of assistive devices as experienced by older adults with combined vision and hearing loss”. Finally, Eric van Heuvelen & Christine Holweg (Netherlands) concluded the session, presenting their progress on technology development for the deafblind in collaboration with device users, “Deafblind people dreaming about an accessible life”. Overall, the purpose of the session was to give an overview of key current topics in the domain of deafblindness, as they relate to aging across the lifespan.

65 participants attended the session.

## Life with Low Vision: Venice at 100

**GF Mueden , Rhode Island, USA**

Some of you will remember GF Mueden's article about accessibility Autumn 2016 issue of ISLRRview. I am delighted to announce that George is now 100 years old! Here is an account of his birthday trip from New York to Venice, alone and with low vision.

At age 100, I went, I saw and was conquered by Venice. My legs and eyes were not up to the tasks I had in mind and if I go again I will stay near an "all points" vaporetto stop. The small wheels on my walker were not suited to the rough pavements. However, I saw the "Treasures" at the Dogana, the Correr, the Viale, had a look at S Marco, and had pleasant visits with friends.

Transfer from the airport to the hotel was not in a wheelchair, but reclining in a wheel barrow with legs strapped to the handles throughout the trip, unable to see anything! Never again, no way.

How is Vienna for someone with low vision? Unlike New York, Venice lacks signs of identity and directions. Museum exhibits need them too. At the "Treasures..." I was not told that audio was available. Stores with big display windows have no name shown at eye level. The vaporetto ticket window hides around the corner and the validation devices don't stand out in contrast to the surroundings, nor do exit signs in the museums.

By the way, somewhere I have seen a painting of the Viale done when the trees were a third of their present height and ladies in finery, done by a man known for street scenes. Who could it have been? Where did I see it?

Twice I boarded the wrong vaporetto and was lucky to have good help getting me back to a restarting point. While waiting on the dock, there are lots of willing helpers - all from out of town and unreliable. Announcements are needed on the dock and on the boat.

The civic museum websites are elderly unfriendly in that when enlarged the heading takes up most of the screen and does not scroll up out of the way. Venitian websites, official and unofficial, do not ask for feedback and go on thinking they are perfect. I would recommend that to be listed as Elderly Friendly, hotels must be really near a vaporetto stop, have a handrail at all steps, and toilet seat height at least 44 cm.

I would like to go again, but finding an elderly friendly hotel may be a problem.

GF Mueden

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