



ICI INSTITUTE *on* COMMUNITY INTEGRATION

Ensuring that all people with disabilities have the opportunity to be participating members in their communities of choice

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FEATURE STORIES

Coast to Coast, Continent to Continent: ICI is Driven to Discover the Future

Autism screening in Minnesota's culturally diverse communities. Inclusive education in classrooms around the globe. Student engagement for at-risk youth in U.S. schools. Training of direct support professionals to support community living for people with disabilities. These are just some of the areas of ICI's work highlighted in the newly-released [ICI Annual Report](#). The online report illustrates ICI's ongoing commitment to using its resources and knowledge to help remove barriers to the full participation of people with disabilities, and those at-risk, in all areas of community life.



"As we continue to be Driven to Discover the Future, it is vital that we envision new ways in which we can connect policymakers, professionals, and individuals with disabilities and their families with our work," says ICI Director [David R. Johnson](#). "To accomplish this, we have re-envisioned the ways in which our research, training, and outreach address the needs of individuals with disabilities and their families from early to later in life."

ICI's work this past year built on a 30+ year history in the disability field, and a forward-looking vision that is Driven to Discover the Future in five program areas:

[Early Intervention and Autism Spectrum Disorder](#)

[Educational Assessment and Intervention](#)

[Educational Systems Improvement](#)

Transition

Community Living

Whether training leaders in health care, education, and human services; conducting ground-breaking research on autism prevalence; or providing national leadership in the inclusion of students with disabilities in standards-based education, ICI's work continues to be made possible by its vital partnerships with over 170 community collaborators from across the globe, and with the support of over 75 valued funders. All its partnerships enrich ICI's mission-driven work and make it even more accessible to individuals and communities.

RTC-CL Project Promotes Disability Rights and Inclusion in Africa

Last month, [Amy Hewitt](#) (second from right), [MacDonald Metzger](#) (right), and [Amos Hewitt-Perry](#) (third from right) of ICI's Research and Training Center on Community Living (RTC-CL) traveled to Zambia, where they collaborated with longtime



Zambian colleagues Bishop Patrick Chisanga, Mikala Mukonglawa (left) from the Bauleni project, as well as advocate Sandy Beddor and her brother Bill, to conduct training on community inclusion and disability rights and awareness. Since 2008 the RTC-CL has worked with Mukonglawa, Chisanga, Beddor, and other partners in the U.S. and Zambia to improve the quality of services provided to children with disabilities and their families. "On this visit we trained over 300 people and were able to follow-up with several of the children who receive support through the home-based education program that was started a few years ago," Hewitt said. "It was fantastic to see the progress children made."

The work is carried out through the RTC-CL's project, [Twin Cities and Zambia Disability Connection](#), and it's expanding this year to include piloting the use of [DirectCourse](#) as a tool to support home-based educators and special education teachers throughout Zambia. "We met with officials from the University of Zambia and ZAMESIE [a special education training college] and remain hopeful that DirectCourse will be used to train their special education students."

Metzger continued on to the west African country of Liberia to promote training and inclusion. In Liberia, Metzger met with the Minister of Education; the Minister of Gender, Children, and Social Protection; the Catholic archbishop in the capital; and a bishop out in the provinces. Metzger gave a DirectCourse training for the staff of a nonprofit organization that provides community-based mental health services to people with intellectual disabilities across the country. Although many Liberians cannot afford Internet access and people with disabilities there are often stigmatized, he found that the government, the Catholic church, large nonprofit organizations, and many community-based organizations are eager to make Liberia a more inclusive society. They see the home-based education program that Mukonglawa and others have built with community volunteers and parents in Zambia and want to replicate it in

Liberia. "The Catholic church in Liberia is ready to partner with us and other community-based organizations are already doing work on the ground," Metzger said.

NCEO Joins New National Deaf Center



ICI's [National Center on Educational Outcomes \(NCEO\)](#) is joining with the Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk (MCPER) and the University of Texas (UT) in the newly-established [National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes](#). UT and MCPER are the lead organizations for the new center and NCEO will serve as the Task Force lead for the Assessment Task Force and the State Education Agency Task Force. This five-year project launched on January 1, 2017 and is funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs.

A primary goal of the new center is to increase the number of deaf individuals who are admitted to, persist in, and complete postsecondary education or training - without requiring remedial coursework. Other goals include improving collaborations between community organizations, institutions, and state-level agencies; increasing institutional capacity to implement evidence-based practices and strategies; increasing knowledge on how to use technology to promote access and provide accommodations; and disseminating lessons learned.

The center will provide professional development opportunities, intensive training, live chat support, dissemination of promising models, and community engagement activities. It will support the mobilization of local resources, as well as national task forces and state collaboratives. Further, it will produce national data reports and support research-to-practice activities. "NCEO is excited to be working with the National Deaf Center on assessment issues in postsecondary education that face students who are deaf," says NCEO director [Martha Thurlow](#).

ICI at 2017 Disability Policy Seminar in Washington, D.C. in March

Nine ICI staff will participate in the 2017 Disability Policy Seminar in Washington, D.C. on March 20-22, an opportunity to "cultivate champions on Capitol Hill and advance the grassroots movement for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities." [David R. Johnson](#) (pictured during the 2016 Disability Policy Seminar with Kim Musheno, AUCD's



Director of Public Policy), [Amy Hewitt](#), [Barb Kleist](#), [Kelly Nye-Lengerman](#), [Jerry Smith](#), and LEND Fellows [Fatima Molas](#), [Jack Reagan](#), [Liliana Torres](#), and [James Whitt](#) will attend this annual event, which is sponsored by the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, The Arc, the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD), the National Association of Councils on

Developmental Disabilities, Self Advocates Becoming Empowered, and United Cerebral Palsy.

"I am excited that so many of our staff and [LEND Fellows](#) are attending the event this year," says Hewitt. "It is clearly a time of significant change and the disability policy seminar will help us build strategies together that address key policy issues that promote education and community living and participation for all people with disabilities." For 40 years, the seminar has provided information and training about current policy issues and prepared advocates, self-advocates, and other professionals in the field to speak to their legislators about these pressing issues that affect people with disabilities and their families, such as protecting civil rights, Medicaid, and access to health care and community living supports. "It's an opportunity to connect with advocates nationwide to collectively advocate for public policies that support integration," says Nye-Lengerman. "It is an important opportunity to learn about policy issues on Capitol Hill and to share ICI's research in ways that help make the case for community living. Our research supports and drives many of the policy discussions and priorities."

Abery and Tichá Address Conference in India

[Brian Abery](#) and [Renáta Tichá](#) spoke at "Inclusion - Means or End?," a summit held in Coimbatore, India, on January 4-5. The summit was hosted by Avinashilingam University for Women and co-organized by ICI as part of the ongoing joint project titled, [Obama-Singh 21st Century Knowledge Initiative Award 2013: A Sustainable Response to Intervention Model for Successful Inclusion of Children with Disabilities](#). The project is funded by the United States - India Educational Foundation, and focuses on implementing Response to Intervention (RtI) in Indian model schools.



The field of special education and rehabilitation has grown rapidly in India in the last two decades and the country welcomes perspectives from abroad. Abery and Tichá, who joined the January summit online, traced U.S. perspectives and legislation on inclusive education, emphasizing the essential ingredient of equity. They also discussed their experience implementing Response to Intervention (RtI) in India through the project. The [Indian media covered the event](#). About 200 delegates attended the summit, including teachers, educators, professionals from nongovernmental organizations, teacher trainees, and pre-service teachers.

Over the past three years, Tichá (pictured right with Indian and American colleagues at a June 2016 conference in Coimbatore) and Abery (left) have visited India and Indian delegations have visited Minnesota and other parts of the U.S. as part of the project's work. On January 16-20, Drs. [G. Victoria Naomi](#) (Professor of Special Education) and [Premavathy Vijayan](#) (Vice Chancellor) from Avinashilingam made a final visit to the University of Minnesota to conclude the project. While in Minnesota, they met with Abery and Tichá to discuss the project results, publications, and to design a joint online course on RtI scheduled to begin in India in June 2017. "The international collaboration between the University of Minnesota and Avinashilingam University does not end with the completion of the project," says Tichá

says. "The project partners have built a sustainable university-to-university collaboration that will continue through co-teaching an online certificate course on RtI, contributing to common publications, and by further exchange of different approaches to inclusive education, both virtually and in-person."

NEW RELEASES



NCEO Newsletter: February 2017

Editor: [Martha Thurlow](#)

This [NCEO Newsletter](#) highlights activities and recent products from ICI's [National Center on Educational Outcomes \(NCEO\)](#). This issue covers NCEO's collaboration with the Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk and the University of Texas on the new National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes, with ACHIEVE on a report about diplomas for

students with disabilities, and with the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition in its work on the state-defined alternate diploma. A new NCEO report provides baseline information on how states address the exit of English learners (ELs) with disabilities from EL services. The issue closes with some updates on NCEO's DIAMOND project activities. NCEO provides national leadership in designing and building educational assessments and accountability systems that appropriately monitor educational results for all students, including students with disabilities and students who are ELs. NCEO receives funding from the federal government, states, and other organizations.

Manual Published

School and Classroom Disabilities Inclusion Guide for Low- and Middle-Income Countries (2017) was written by Jennae Bulat, Anne M. Hayes, Wykia Macon, [Renáta Tichá](#), and [Brian H. Abery](#). Published in January by RTI Press.

EVENTS

DIAMOND Project at NABE and CEC Conferences

February 25: National Association on Bilingual Education, Dallas

April 22: Council for Exceptional Children, Boston



NCEO's [DIAMOND](#) project will be represented at two conferences this winter and spring. The first presentation will be at the National Association on Bilingual Education (NABE) conference on February 25 in Dallas, Texas. The session, "DIAMOND Project: Making Optimal Accessibility Decisions for English Learners," will be led by [Martha Thurlow](#) and [Erik Larson](#). They will highlight the results of the DIAMOND educator survey and the DIAMOND focus groups that are relevant to educators working with English learners. Audience members will be encouraged to consider the professional development training and resources suggested by study participants and to add their own ideas.

A similar approach will be used for a presentation on April 22 at the annual conference of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) in Boston, Massachusetts. The session, "DIAMOND Project: Making Optimal Accessibility Decisions for Students with Disabilities," will be led by Martha Thurlow and [Linda Goldstone](#). As in the NABE session, special educators attending the CEC conference will be encouraged to consider the professional development training and resources suggested by study participants and to add their own ideas.

Presentation PowerPoints will be posted to the [DIAMOND website](#) following each presentation.

MN LEND Early Admission Application Cycle is Now Open

February 1 - March 15, 2017

Accepting Applications for Next Fall's MN LEND 2017-18 Cohort



ICI's [Minnesota Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities Program \(MN LEND\)](#) is recruiting its cohort of [LEND Fellows](#) for 2017-18. This year-long interdisciplinary leadership program uses evidence-based research and practices to train new leaders to help improve access and equity for children and young adults with neurodevelopmental disabilities (NDDs), such as autism and other related disabilities. LEND Fellows receive a stipend, national networking and travel opportunities, and lifelong interdisciplinary connections. UMN-TC graduate students, post doctorates, outside community professionals, family members, and self-advocates who demonstrate leadership potential and hands-on experience in NDDs are all welcome. Future leaders from under-represented communities are especially encouraged to [apply](#).

STAFF UPDATES



Kristi Liu: [Liu](#) was interviewed for a two-part article on refugee/immigrant students with disabilities being published on the LRP Publications website, Special Ed Connection®. The first part of the article is in the January 9 edition and is written by Ragini Algoe. The title is, "Be Sensitive to Cultural Differences, Trauma When Serving Refugee Students with Disabilities."



Jana Hallas: On January 14-25, [Hallas](#) was in East London, South Africa to work with Masibumbane and South Africa Partners as they begin implementing ICI's [Check & Connect](#) school engagement model in four of their local high schools. Four mentors, who recently graduated with degrees in social work, will be implementing Check & Connect with 30 students each, as they evaluate the effectiveness of Check & Connect with their students. Following the initial year of implementation and evaluation, Check & Connect may be implemented in other provinces within South Africa.



Brian Abery, Tom Donaghy, and Renáta Tichá: [Tichá](#) (right), [Abery](#) (not in picture), and [Donaghy](#) (left) provided editorial support for the new issue of the *Journal of the International Association of Special Education*, 16(1). Co-editor [Tichá](#), who directs ICI's [Global Resource Center for Inclusive Education](#), helped select, review, and edit the articles for content. Managing editor [Donaghy](#) edited the selected articles and laid out the journal. Consulting editor [Abery](#) reviewed the publication.



Angela Amado, Rachel Freeman, Barb Kleist, Anne Roehl, and Erin Watts: On February 7, ICI's team members for Organization-Wide Implementation of Person-Centered and Positive Supports Approaches - [Amado](#), [Freeman](#), [Kleist](#), [Roehl](#), and [Watts](#) - met at Pattee Hall with Michael Smull (pictured here with Freeman and Roehl), an internationally-known developer of person-centered approaches. The team discussed their progress in three areas of Minnesota during their first two years of implementing these approaches, and considered future directions as the state moves toward a person-centered human services system.

Joe Timmons and Jody Hofer Van Ness: On February 8-9, [Timmons](#) and [Hofer Van Ness](#) were in Grand Rapids, Minnesota to lead customized employment trainings. Their training sessions were, "Discover and Customizing Employment," which covers person-centered approaches to employment planning, and "Working with Employers," which emphasizes strength-based practices among employees while still keeping the employers' needs in mind.

ALUMNI UPDATES



Aaron Gutzke: [Gutzke](#) is a Humphrey School graduate who received his [Disability Policy and Services Certificate](#) from ICI in 2014. He is now Executive Director of ThinkSelf, a program of Communication Service for the Deaf, Inc. (CSD). In July 2017, ThinkSelf will spin off from CSD to become a Minnesota-based nonprofit organization that serves Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing adults in the state. The agency aims to provide adult education and advocacy services in a language-rich environment to help clients acquire the skills needed to improve the physical, emotional, and intellectual aspects of their lives. The agency will empower program participants with tools to become their own agents of change, whether in their personal lives or careers. He found a useful tool for his own career. "That certificate from ICI proved to be a valuable asset," he says. "Working with [Beth Fondell](#) and [Amy Hewitt](#) provided insight into the world of disability and showed how I can, as a Deaf person, work to ensure others receive the services they deserve to reach their full potential."

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