



## WORLD VIEWS, SPRING 2022

AER International Services and Global Issues, Division 18

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Welcome to the Spring 2022 edition of the AER Global Issues newsletter. We're pleased to share the following Division 18 Highlights:

- We continued our Global Speaker Series, created by Dr. Kevin McCormack and hosted by AER's eLearning website. So far, the series has included:
  - Alex Bassan, The Change Foundation, United Kingdom
  - Molemisi Kono, Visual Eyes Afrika
  - Dr. Rebecca Kammer, Tanzania
  - Ben Clare, Australia
  - Sofia Pantel del Cueto, Puerto Rico
- We held our third annual Division Mixer in January 2022, a tradition we hope to continue in the spring and fall seasons
- Our annual scholarship is posted online, with a deadline of June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022. We look forward to announcing this year's winners at the AER International Conference!

<https://aerbvi.org/about/divisions/international-services-global-issues-division/scholarships/>

- We elected new officers for the next two-year term

We're always looking for ways to improve the Division. Please send any comments, questions, suggestions, or encouragements to us at [aer.global.division@gmail.com](mailto:aer.global.division@gmail.com)

Belinda Rudinger, Outgoing Chair

Katie Ericson, Chair

Callie Brusegaard, Chair Elect

Janet Cloaninger, Secretary

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**Thank you, Division 18!**  
**A message from outgoing chair, Dr. Belinda Rudinger**

As I wrap up my two-year term as chair of this incredible division, I'm so grateful to have had the opportunity to work with such amazing people. Special thanks go to Kevin McCormack for his support as past chair, and to Carmen McClain and Katie Ericson, who served as treasurer and secretary for the past two years. A huge debt of gratitude also goes to Michele Basham and Megan Doty at AER, for their consistent support and vast knowledge.

I know Katie, Callie, and Janet will do a marvelous job in their new officer positions, and I look forward to seeing all that they accomplish together!

A final word of thanks go to our wonderful Division 18 members. Your collective knowledge and international experience are the essence of this division!

Thank you all for the opportunity to serve in this capacity for the past two years!



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**Officer Spotlight:  
Katie Ericson, Chair**



Katie Ericson is currently pursuing a doctorate in Special Education at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She is a Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist and Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments. She received her MEd from Vanderbilt University, in Special Education, Visual Disabilities. She earned a graduate certificate in Orientation and Mobility from Portland State University. Katie has served a two-year term as the secretary for Division 18, International Services and Global Issues. She also serves on the Board of Directors for the Council of Exceptional Children's Division of Visual Impairments and Deafblindness (DVIDB), as well as a Research Assistant with Camp Abilities. She spent the past three years as an itinerant TSVI & COMS working with American military-connected students in the Asia-Pacific region.

**New Officer Spotlight:  
Dr. Callie Brusegaard, Chair-Elect**



Dr. Callie Brusegaard, the Director of the Northeast Resource Centre for Vision Education at the University of Massachusetts Boston, is a researcher, advocate of international inclusive education, and a teacher of students with visual impairments. Dr. Brusegaard's commitment to improving education quality for children has enabled her to extend her influence through inclusion in international conferences such as the United Nations Convention of the State Parties, The World Bank and Getting in Touch with Literacy, with research topics covering working with cultural diverse students and families, foreign aid and the inclusion of disabilities, and the "No One Left Behind" movement.

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**New Officer Spotlight:  
Janet Cloaninger, Secretary**



Janet Cloaninger is a Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist and Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments in Atlanta, Georgia. She earned dual master of arts degrees in TSVI and O&M from Western Michigan University, and she works for Fulton County Schools. Janet first became involved in serving individuals who are blind or visually impaired in 1994 when she worked as a counselor at Camp Dogwood for the Blind, a Lion's Club camp in North Carolina. Years later, while working as a speech-language pathologist, she decided on a career change to pursue her true love of educating children and adults who are blind or visually impaired. Janet combined her enjoyment of travel and exploring cultures with her expertise in educating individuals who are blind or visually impaired and worked as a volunteer consultant at several schools and programs serving children who are blind, visually impaired, or deaf-blind in Sri Lanka and Indonesia. Janet feels strongly that her experiences volunteering abroad have enriched her ability to serve the diverse population she teaches in metropolitan Atlanta.

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# Visually Impaired Rugby—The Sport, Its Aims and Objectives

Creating a New Generation of Rugby Players

By Alex Bassan, The Change Foundation

The sport of Visually Impaired (VI) rugby was developed in 2016 using coaching guidelines formulated by its ambassadors Andy Robinson OBE and Ian McKinley, as part of an initiative by The Change Foundation to create an innovative and inspirational new sport – but drawing on rugby's commitment to social inclusion and personal wellbeing, as well as its values of teamwork and fair play.

The sport was launched in 2017 in New Zealand, with a three-match test series between the Blind All Blacks and the Blind lions. The game was then developed in Japan two years later, during the Rugby World Cup in 2019, with The Change Foundation setting up the Japanese Blind Rugby Union seeing the Blind Blossoms face off against the VI Roses.

As well as providing a competitive sport for its participants, VI rugby has social objectives, including increased integration into communities for its players, and pride in their sporting achievements, leading to greater self-confidence in their wider lives.

It also leads to a more inclusive environment within those clubs that take part, which currently include Wasps, Harlequins, Exeter and Worcester Warriors.

The sport itself is a form of seven-a-side touch rugby with uncontested scrums and lineouts. Each team is allowed six tackles – with the final tackle resulting in possession going to the opposition.

Bells are inserted into a standard rugby ball to allow players to hear it when it is moving, while specially designed contrasting playing shirts enable them to see it when in close proximity.

The aim is to make each game as close to a sighted rugby match as is possible.

The Change Foundation's aims for the future in this sport include encouraging increased female participation, upskilling and qualifying coaches, and continued international development by setting up teams in Wales, Ireland, Scotland and Italy with a first World Cup to be held in 2023 and the introduction of a Six Nations tournament a year later.

[The Change Foundation VI Rugby Link](#)

*The Change Foundation would like to thank all its sponsors, funders and supporters who have made it possible to develop visually impaired rugby.*

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## Resource Focus: The CVFI

The Curriculum Framework for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment is a newly developed curriculum from the United Kingdom, with similarities to North America's Expanded Core Curriculum. Eleven teaching areas are included:

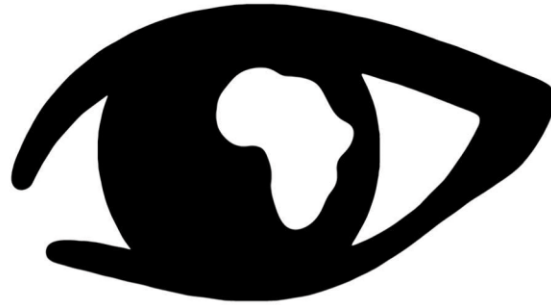
- Facilitating an Inclusive World
- Sensory Development
- Communication
- Literacy
- Habilitation: Orientation and Mobility
- Habilitation: Independent Living Skills
- Accessing information
- Technology
- Health: Social, Emotional, Mental and Physical Wellbeing
- Social, Sports and Leisure
- Preparing for Adulthood

To learn more, visit the [CFVI resources](#) available from RNIB.

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## Non-Profit Focus: Visual Eyes Afrika-International



Visual Eyes Afrika-International, founded by Molemisi Kono, is a nonprofit organization committed to providing equitable, inclusive, sustainable and resilient access to habilitation and rehabilitation in Africa and elsewhere in the world. For more information, follow them on Twitter [@VisualEyesAfri1](#), visit their [Facebook Page](#), watch Molemisi Kono's [TED Talk](#), or check out their recorded webinar from our Global Speaker Series: <https://www.pathlms.com/aer/courses/36865>

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