

The Sino Norwegian Occupational Therapy Curriculum Development Project (NMA)

There is a need for 100,000 therapists in the next 10-20 years with the future direction of specialization for therapists.

In 2002 the national government of the **People's Republic of China** called for **rehabilitation for all by 2015**. In response, rehabilitation education in China expanded exponentially over the last ten years; from about 13 programs in 2001, the numbers have increased to over 67 diploma and, 27 technical secondary school and 41 bachelor programs for rehabilitation therapy (combining OT/PT/ST) in 2007. While these programs are impressive, they fall short of international standards which call for the education of discipline-specific rehabilitation personnel, i.e. international standards call for occupational therapists (OT), physical therapists (PT) and speech therapists (ST) to be educated in distinct programs.

There is an interest in taking the present programs in rehabilitation therapy to an international level. To support this process of internationalization, a Sino-Norwegian Occupational Therapy curriculum development project was initiated in Kun Ming in June 2009 with three priorities:

- To initiate discussion on national guidelines by providing more information on international OT education philosophy, international guiding principles and content for OT education as found in the WFOT Minimum Standards.
- To organize an international expert to visit the four selected education programmes for a designated period using a template for detailed data collection (expenses paid by the project)

The project was introduced at The World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) Council Meeting in May 2010 where it was given full support. In July 2010, at the National Congress on Rehabilitation Education' in Nanjing, an international Occupational Therapy advisory committee was officially established to support the development of the project. The international founding members Nils Erik Ness, **Helene Polatajko**, and Kit Sinclair, were named to the committee as was Sue Baptiste, at the time president-elect of the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapy.

International Advisory Committee for Occupational Therapy Curriculum Development

The mission

- To develop a nation-wide online teacher training program
- To develop a contextually-appropriate curriculum in occupational therapy to be approved in the next short period so that implementation can take place as soon as possible nation-wide.

How you can get involved:

If you are interested in this project and are a qualified occupational therapist who is mandarin speaking, Helene is eager to speak with you. Please contact her at h.polatajko@utoronto.ca