



November Newsletter

International Centre for Disability and Rehabilitation

We are pleased to present you the end-of-year newsletter from the International Centre for Disability and Rehabilitation (ICDR) for 2025!

The goal of this newsletter is to appraise the members and stakeholders of the ICDR as well as the wider Rehabilitation Sciences Sector community of ongoing activities.

In this issue:

- *The ICDR-Trinidad celebrates 20 years of partnership with the Trinidad and Tobago Occupational Therapy Association (TTOTA)*
- *We welcome ICDR-Armenia to the ICDR Country Groups*

Andrea Duncan, PhD
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Supporting Valued Partnerships

Authors: Lauren Marcus and Deb Cameron

For nearly 25 years, the ICDR Trinidad Working Group has partnered with the University of Toronto rehabilitation sciences sector to support student placements at the Immortelle Children's and Vocational Centre in Port of Spain, Trinidad. The Immortelle Centre provides education and opportunities for children and young adults with a wide range of disabilities. This partnership has always been a special one!



Alt text: Three adults standing beside a swing set on a grassy yard, helping a child who is seated on one of the swings. Another empty swing hangs beside them. A concrete wall and trees are in the background.

Beginning in 2022, the Trinidad Working Group started collaborating with Immortelle to plan for a new accessible playground that will meet the diverse needs of their students. Planning has included: a needs assessment to ensure accessibility for all children, a review of best practices in inclusive playground design, and consideration of equipment that promotes motor skills, social interaction, and multi-sensory engagement.

This fall, four University of Toronto occupational therapy students will complete a placement at Immortelle under the supervision of Maneesh Singh, a Canadian occupational therapist with family roots in Trinidad. Maneesh will support the students both in person and remotely during the placement.

When Maneesh learned about the vital need for a new accessible playground, infrastructure repairs, new learning materials, and other improvements at Immortelle, he took action by creating a donation website (www.shristory.ca) in honour of his father. All funds raised will go directly to Immortelle projects, including the new playground, repairs, new furniture, and programming materials. Maneesh also reached out to connections in Trinidad who may be able to help with this initiative. We look forward to hearing more about the project as it develops this fall during the placement.



Alt text: Outdoor playground with green plastic climbing structure and trampoline on grass, near peach building with air conditioners and black water tanks.



Alt text: A collage featuring 3 images:

First image at the bottom: An entrance to a building with peach-colored walls and a blue trim, featuring a decorative metal gate with a tree design and the word "IMMORTELLE" displayed above the doorway.

Second image at the top left hand corner: A classroom setting with two people seated at a wooden table, engaging in an activity with colorful playdough. The room has light blue walls, a patterned curtain, and a jar of items on the table.

Third image at the top right hand corner: A cluttered storage area with several worn black chairs stacked together, a yellow door, and assorted furniture pieces including a blue plastic chair and a yellow frame. The floor is tiled in reddish-brown.

ICDR Armenia

Welcome to the ICDR!

Author: V. Armineh Babikian, MS, OTR/L, PhD(c)

The ICDR is proud to announce the launch of
its newest country group, **ICDR-Armenia!**

ICDR-Armenia brings together researchers, clinicians, and students to exchange ideas, build networks, and sustainably advance rehabilitation and disability services in Armenia. This group seeks to foster global collaboration in rehabilitation, inclusion, and disability rights in Armenia and be leaders in Eurasian rehabilitation development. With Armenia currently undergoing national rehabilitation and health system redesign, ICDR-Armenia members can make a significant impact on future of the field.

ICDR-Armenia works in partnership [Therapists for Armenia](#) (TFA), a nonprofit organization founded by RSI PhD candidate Armineh Babikian. Since 2019, TFA and their multidisciplinary rehabilitation volunteers have led various humanitarian and development initiatives collaborating with sector leaders including the National Institute of Health (NIH) Armenia, National Autism Foundation, Disability Rights Agenda NGO, and WHO Armenia. They were leaders in education and professional development for the WHO Armenia Rehabilitation Task Force and recently became members of the WHO Disability Health Equity Network. These partnerships allow for sustainable education, research, and service initiatives with established institutions.

A blue poster with orange and white text. At the top right is the TFA logo. The main title 'VOLUNTEER WITH ICDR-ARMENIA' is in large white and orange letters. A speech bubble contains a question about graduate students. To the right, text from the University of Toronto's ICDR is shown. A list of benefits is on the left, and a QR code with the text 'Learn more & apply' is on the right.

VOLUNTEER WITH ICDR-ARMENIA

Are you a graduate student in OT, PT, SLP or Rehabilitation sciences interested in international rehabilitation and disability studies?

University of Toronto's **International Centre for Disability and Rehabilitation (ICDR)** is seeking volunteers to join the new **Armenia** group!

- Gain hands-on experience in international research
- Build professional skills in cross-cultural collaboration
- Connect with multidisciplinary mentors
- Make a lasting impact on equity-deserving communities

Learn more & apply



Alt text: A poster asking for volunteers at the University of Toronto's International Centre for Disability and Rehabilitation (ICDR) in Armenia. This opportunity is for graduate students in OT, PT, SLP, or Rehabilitation Sciences to gain hands-on experience in international research, build professional skills, and make a lasting impact. QR code leads to <https://icdr.utoronto.ca/our-community/icdr-armenia>

ICDR-Armenia is guided by ICDR's vision to close global health gaps through collaboration, innovation, and social justice. The mission of ICDR-Armenia is to:

- (1) Advance the fields of occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech-language pathology, and other allied health disciplines,
- (2) Promote inclusion, equity, and empowerment of people with disabilities, and
- (3) Foster well-being within Armenian communities through education, collaboration, support, and advocacy.

ICDR-Armenia offers unique opportunities for students across all disciplines to engage in interdisciplinary collaboration and real-world impact. ICDR-Armenia welcomes graduate students from occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech-language pathology, and rehabilitation sciences who share an interest in disability, global health, and social justice. Students have the opportunity to engage in interprofessional learning environments that integrate theory, research, and community practice.

Members will have the chance to:

- **Collaborate globally:** Engage with clinicians, researchers, and educators from Armenia and the Armenian diaspora in joint initiatives aimed at building rehabilitation capacity and fostering inclusive educational practices.
- **Support active projects:** Contribute to innovative programs that advance rehabilitation in remote regions such as the Azad 3D project (3D-Printed Adaptive Equipment), national disability assessment research, southern Armenia capacity-building initiative, and the ECHO virtual case discussions.
- **Gain research and advocacy experience:** Participate in creating accessible resources and educational tools that support people with disabilities and their families.
- **Strengthen cultural competence and interdisciplinary teamwork:** Learn to navigate diverse sociopolitical contexts and limited resource settings, practice accessible communication, and build collaboration skills essential for global rehabilitation work.

Students who are passionate about global health, disability inclusion, and interprofessional collaboration are encouraged to join ICDR-Armenia. Help strengthen partnerships between Armenia and the global rehabilitation community, promote accessible education, and create lasting change that supports people with disabilities, rehabilitation service users, and caregivers. Learn more about ICDR-Armenia [here](#) and support innovative rehabilitation in Armenia!



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