



**INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR EDUCATION OF  
PEOPLE WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT**



**ICEVI E-NEWS**

**April 2017**

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## Message from the President

Dear ICEVI Members and Associates,

Welcome to the April 2017 Issue of ICEVI E-News. This issue includes a summary of the outcomes of the Strategic Planning and Executive Committee meetings that were held in Pretoria, South Africa in February 2017. The Strategic Planning meeting provided an important opportunity to chart the course of the organisation for the 2017-20 Quadrennium, and work has already begun on implementing the strategic goals and activities at global and regional levels of ICEVI. The Principal Officers have also been engaged with our Members and Partners in continuing to build and strengthen the ICEVI flagship programs of the previous quadrennium. Reports on these flagship programs are included in this issue, and include the ICEVI and Nippon Foundation Higher Education initiative in East Asia, the ICEVI project "Breaking Barriers: Mathematics Made Easy", and ICEVI regional reports on implementing the "Education for All Children with Visual Impairment" (EFA-VI) global campaign.

This Issue includes updates from the ICEVI Regions and reports on ICEVI support and participation in meetings of United Nations agencies and global education partner organizations. Worthy of note is the inaugural Education Seminar that was held in South Africa in conjunction with the annual meeting of the ICEVI Executive Committee. The Seminar offered a unique opportunity for ICEVI Members, many of whom are world leaders in the field of education for children with visual impairment, to provide input into the issues and challenges faced by national and civil society organizations providing education support for preschool and school age children with visual impairment in South Africa. We aim to conduct similar seminars in other ICEVI regions in conjunction with future ICEVI Executive Committee meetings.

The Issue concludes with an invitation to contribute manuscripts and ideas for the ICEVI journal, *The Educator*, and contact details for others who may be interested in receiving future issues of the E-News.



**Frances Gentle**, President, ICEVI

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## Strategy Review of ICEVI

The ICEVI Executive Committee (EXCO) conducted its 2017-2020 Strategic Planning meeting in Pretoria South Africa in February 2017, in conjunction with the annual EXCO meeting. Members reviewed ICEVI's 2012-16 strategic goals and achievements in the context of current international perspectives and approaches to education of children with visual impairment, and established the strategic goals for 2017-20.

### Our Mission

In recognition of the continuing global challenges in achieving access to quality education for the millions of out-of-school children with blindness and partial sight, ICEVI is a membership organisation with a mission to promote access to inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all people with visual impairment

### Our Values

We believe that all children and youth with visual impairment have basic human rights.

- They are entitled to a full range of educational services and to be included in the educational programs of their respective countries and communities
- They should receive pre-school support
- Their teachers and other professionals supporting them should be properly trained
- Their parents and other family members should be encouraged to support their education
- Appropriate educational materials and methods should be available to meet each child's needs
- Educational programs should be of a high standard and conform to best practices
- The children should be able to live in an environment free of barriers, social stigmas, and stereotypes, and to lead a productive life according to their aspirations and capabilities.

### Goals

**Strategic Goal 1:** Promoting access to quality education for people with visual impairment including those with blindness, partial sight, deafblindness and additional disabilities.

The activities that will be taken up to realise this goal are as follows:

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1. Developing Model curriculum for teacher training
  2. Development of Country Assessment Tools for national education of children with visual impairment
  3. Documentation of good practices
  4. Promoting the use of Technology
  5. Upgrading ICEVI Website for better dissemination of information
  6. Translation of ICEVI Documents into Regional Languages
  7. Bringing out ICEVI Publications

**Strategic Goal 2:** Influencing governments' and relevant stakeholders' implementation of the SDGs and UNCRPD in the area of education of people with visual impairment

The following measures will be undertaken to achieve Goal 2:

1. Preparing an inventory of existing ICEVI resources
2. Organising Country champion capacity building programmes
3. Exploring the possibility of recruiting a person for advocacy work

**Strategic Goal 3:** Improving networking, information sharing and collaboration at national, regional and global levels.

This goal will be achieved by undertaking the following activities:

1. Developing software for the mapping of services of Members, including regional location and service recipients
2. Development and implementation of communication strategy
3. Representation of ICEVI at UN meetings addressing education of children with disabilities

A follow-up matrix to monitor the progress of ICEVI 2017 activities towards achieving the three strategic goals has also been prepared and there will be more updates posted on ICEVI website [www.icevi.org](http://www.icevi.org) at regular intervals.

## Key Recommendations of the ICEVI EXCO

ICEVI organized its Executive Committee (EXCO) meeting in conjunction with the strategic planning meeting in Pretoria on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2017. The meeting was attended by 32 Members and

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observers and the following key decisions and actions were determined:

- The ICEVI Strategic goals were endorsed by the EXCO and there will be a monitoring mechanism to implement the activities addressing these goals.
- The EXCO recommended designated budgetary provision for implementation of the 2017-20 strategic goals and activities. The budget will be in addition to what is earmarked for the regional ICEVI activities.
- The following priorities for regional development have been endorsed by the ICEVI Executive Committee.
  - Registration of each region as a legal entity to make it vibrant and also to mobilise resources through grants and membership as approved by the EXCO and regional committee;
  - Hosting of regular regional conferences to promote membership of individuals and organisations and for the exchange of technical expertise;
  - Exploration of inter-region collaboration;
  - Identification of delegates for the Quadrennium who will serve as country coordinators and also contribute to the ICEVI activities aimed at translating its mission and goals;
  - Formation of suitable sub-committees to deal with specific issues in the regions; and
  - Promotion of young leaders at the regional level by for example, showcasing the abilities of young people with visual impairment.
- The President ICEVI will appoint a committee to look into various aspects of Governance, including ICEVI's organizational structure, the linkages between ICEVI global and the seven regions, policy priorities, and fund-raising approaches.
- The Principal Officers will discuss with the World Blind Union (WBU) the possibility of organizing the third Joint WBU-ICEVI Assemblies in 2020 in which the unique program structures and characteristics of both the organizations will be showcased.
- A write-up on the Marrakesh Treaty will be published in The Educator, ICEVI's official journal.
- Members had detailed discussions about the Visionary Learning project jointly prepared by the DAISY Consortium and ICEVI. Members approved the project in principle and there was a general

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consensus that if funding is secured, DAISY could take a leading role in relation to the administrative aspects, while ICEVI providing technical expertise and guidance. The matter will be further discussed by the DAISY Board and the outcomes will be shared with the ICEVI EXCO.

- The regional chairs were requested by Perkins School for the Blind to assess the Braille supply and maintenance mechanism in the regions and to refer to them any technical assistance requirements.

The decisions and action points summarized in the EXCO meeting minutes will be regularly reviewed and progress reported through the subsequent issues of The Educator and E-News.

## **Quadrennial Plans for ICEVI Regions**

In response to the recommendations of the ICEVI Executive Committee, the regional committees have started preparing their Quadrennial Plans for implementing the 2017-20 strategic goals. The East Asia regional committee has developed a Plan that focusses on such activities as documentation of good practices, promotion of technology, strengthening parents' movements, conducting country champions' capacity building programs, strong linkages with the UN bodies in the region and organizing a regional conference. The Latin America regional committee has developed a Plan highlighting the implementation of EFA-VI activities in countries in the region, strengthening the legal structure of ICEVI Latin America, strengthening networking between international organizations working in the region, signing MOUs with key regional organizations for networking and advocacy. The Latin America committee initiatives also include activities for developing leadership in the region. Other regions are in the process of preparing regional plans in consultation with their respective regional boards.

## **Revamping the ICEVI Website**

In accordance with the ICEVI strategic goals for the quadrennium, the ICEVI Secretariat is in the process of revamping the ICEVI website, [www.icevi.org](http://www.icevi.org), to improve the ease of access to the wealth of information provided, and to improve its accessibility for persons with blindness or low vision. To date, the Secretariat has finalized the website template and is in the process of preparing content for the various sections. The updated website will include the following

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sections: About ICEVI, Regions, Officers, Programs, Publications, Events, Resources, Membership and News. It is anticipated that the revised website will be launched by the end of August 2017, and until that time the current version will remain active.

## **ICEVI-Nippon Foundation Higher Education Visits**

Dr. MNG Mani, CEO ICEVI and Co-Project Director of the ICEVI and Nippon Foundation Higher Education Initiative, visited the higher education programs in Indonesia, Philippines, Laos, and Cambodia during the March and April 2017. The key discussion points for follow-up are as follows:

### **Laos:**

1. The National University of Laos (NUOL) will aim to enrol at least 15-20 visually impaired students for higher education by the beginning of the ensuing academic year (September 2017).
2. As parents and teachers from the schools for the blind play important roles in sending visually impaired children to higher education, the higher education project will aim to mobilise their support by organising sensitisation programmes.
3. The Resource Centre of the project has prepared more than 50 books in braille and also in audio version and the number will be increased in the year 2017.
4. The technical team of the higher education project will meet once in three months and also organise awareness programmes in other provinces of Lao PDR to encourage more higher education institutions to enrol students with visual impairment.

### **Philippines:**

1. The Resources for the Blind (RBI) will organise a "Country Champion Program" in June 2017 involving approximately 30 young leaders with visual impairment who will discuss how they are making (or can make) an impact on national legislation and promoting positive social attitudes towards young people with visual impairment in study and work environments, and in society as a whole.
2. The RBI will also prepare video materials and print publications highlighting the achievements of students of the higher education

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project as well as their success in securing employment in public and private sector undertakings.

**Cambodia:**

1. The project will continue to organise soft skills programme to increase the employability of persons with visual impairment.
2. Documentation of good practices will be made and shared with ICEVI
3. The project will also organise Country Champion Program in 2017 as suggested at the ICEVI Strategy meeting

**Mongolia – New country for the Higher Education Project**

ICEVI's Higher Education project being supported by The Nippon Foundation is extended to Mongolia with effect from 2017. Larry Campbell, President Emeritus ICEVI and Co-Project Director of the Higher Education Initiative had a meeting with key persons involved in the project from 29 January to 2 February 2017 to discuss on the needs assessment and action to be taken. The following is a list of some of the areas that appear to require adequate attention in Mongolia which will be taken up by ICEVI in a phased manner:

1. Teacher preparation to address special education needs,
2. Creating an unified Mongolian Braille Code,
3. Development of a working text-to-speech engine for the Mongolian language,
4. Improved access to effective assessment of the skill and knowledge level of students in the use of assistive technology as study tool,
5. Development of short-term training strategies to address the learning needs of students with visual impairment.
6. Increased access to accessible learning materials for students in all levels,
7. University and community public education programs to enhance understanding of the needs and the capabilities of persons with visual impairment,
8. Awareness and education programs for potential employers,

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9. Identification of human and material resources currently available within the Higher Education Network that might be of greatest assistance to Mongolia as it develops and implements its medium-term plan of action.

More updates on the development of the project will be shared through ICEVI publications and the website.

### **Mathematics Project Update**

ICEVI has initiated a project "Breaking Barriers: Mathematics Made Easy" with the assistance of The Nippon Foundation and with technical guidance from the Perkins School for the Blind, Overbrook-Nippon Network for Educational Technology (ONNET) and the Texas School for the Blind. The focus of the project is preparation of mathematics video packages to assist teachers in the teaching of mathematical concepts to students with visually impairment. These packages will be available through ICEVI for wider dissemination. ICEVI has formed an academic team and a core team consisting of different international organizations that are supporting the project. A core team meeting was recently held in Austin Texas to discuss progress on the Maths project pilot phase. The academic team has already prepared about 15 sample videos on Maths concepts which will be reviewed in August/September 2017, with further development of the video packages to be undertaken in ICEVI's regions. The project is expected to prepare nearly 150-200 video packages by 2020. Video lessons for each concept will include three sections, namely, 1) explanation of the specific concept, 2) how that concept is generally taught to sighted students, and 3) what adaptations are required for visually impaired students. The lessons will also include suggestions on teaching aids, teaching techniques, etc. More updates on this task will be published in the future issues of The Educator and E-News.

### **Meeting of the Global Campaign for Education**

The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) hosted a two-day meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2017 in London involving the international NGOs and Northern Education Coalitions on the theme of "Strengthening the education movement and joint planning for 2017". Participants included GCE member coalitions in Europe and North America, GCE INGO members including ICEVI, organisations involved in campaigning on

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education including the Malala Fund, IDDC members, Human Rights Watch, and invited representatives of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), Education Cannot Wait and the Education Finance Commission. The meeting's objectives were (a) to plan an effective and high profile joint campaign on education financing in 2017, (b) to strengthen the global education movement, and (c) to prepare for the Global Action Week on Education in 2017. Included in the discussions were the following reports and initiatives, and their potential as opportunities to promote a transformative shift in education financing:

- Global Campaign for Education leaflet, "Advocacy and accountability to deliver GPE 2020: The Civil Society Education Fund, November 2016 – see [http://www.campaignforeducation.org/docs/csef/CSEF%20GEN%20LEAFLET%20NOV%202016%20RGB\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.campaignforeducation.org/docs/csef/CSEF%20GEN%20LEAFLET%20NOV%202016%20RGB_FINAL.pdf)
- 2016 Report of the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity, entitled "The learning generation: Investing in education for a changing world" – see <http://educationcommission.org/>
- The World Bank's planned first report on education, "World Development Report 2018: Realizing the promise of education for development" – see <http://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/wdr2018>
- The Education Cannot Wait fund for education in emergencies– see <http://www.educationcannotwait.org/>
- 2017 Global Partnership for Education 3<sup>rd</sup> replenishment campaign to deliver the GPE Strategic Plan, 2016-2020 – see <http://www.globalpartnership.org/funding/replenishment>

Dr. Frances Gentle and Dr. Praveena Sukhraj-Ely represented ICEVI at the GCE meeting, and extended ICEVI's thanks to David Archer and the GCE Board for an informative event.

## Celebrating Global Action Week

ICEVI has been supporting the GCE activities aimed at empowering persons with disabilities in general and persons with visual impairment in particular. One of the significant activities of the GCE is the Global Action Week (GAW) and the ICEVI regions celebrated this in the past by organizing a wide range of activities. In 2017, the GAW fell on

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23<sup>rd</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> April but organisations are free to select a suitable timeslot to celebrate this event. The ICEVI regions have been organizing activities that fall under the GAW mandate and some of the potential activities are as follows:

- creating awareness about the capabilities of persons with disabilities
- activities contributing to the development of appropriate national legislations on disability
- organizing parents' movements
- bringing out publications for awareness creation
- lobbying for increase in the Government level funding for the disability sector

Each region will come up with its unique activities to celebrate the Global Action Week. There are National Coalitions on Education in every country and ICEVI regions will also try to collaborate with them in organizing these activities.

### **South Africa Education Seminar**

ICEVI hosted the South Africa Education Seminar in partnership with Blind SA, Gauteng Department of Education and Prinshof School for the Blind in Pretoria. The seminar took place at the Prinshof School during February 2017, with Prinshof staff and students offering a warm welcome to the 132 participants. Participants included educators from early childhood centres, schools, colleges and universities; officials from the Gauteng government and education department; representatives of non-government organisations; suppliers and parents. The Seminar theme was "Implementation of inclusive education for blind and partially sighted learners in South Africa: A reality or dream", and the plenary and concurrent sessions addressed the following topics:

- The South African experience and challenges
- Synergies between the roles of the Department of Education, special schools, mainstream schools, district-based support teams, teachers and parents, orientation and mobility, and support services
- Early childhood development
- Teacher training and support and the role of training of itinerant teachers, facilitators and teacher aides

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- Braille, DAISY – Accessible textbooks, learner teacher support material (LTSM) and other learning materials, assistive devices and adapted and mainstream technology
  - Teaching deafblind and blind multiple disabled learners with the primary disability of vision impairment

The Seminar was a great success and provided the opportunity for ICEVI Executive Committee members to contribute their expertise and global perspectives on education for children with vision impairment. ICEVI has also suggested that similar forums should be organised in conjunction with its future meetings, which will give an opportunity to interact with educators and professionals at country levels.

### **Inclusive Education South Africa Workshops**

Frances Gentle, President ICEVI was invited by Inclusive Education South Africa (IESA) to host two workshops in Cape Town on the theme of “Including children with vision impairment in pre-school and school settings” on 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> February 2017. The workshops focussed on inclusive approaches to modifying the curriculum, teaching pedagogy and learning environments for children and young people with vision impairment. The 115 participants included educators and parents of preschool and school-age children with vision impairment who are enrolled in mainstream and special school settings, together with government officials, therapists, learning support advisors, and psychologists. Practical activities included sighted guide techniques, use of the kinaesthetic sense with physical activity to promote concept development and learning, and use of touch as a teaching tool. ICEVI extends its thanks to Caroline Taylor and the IESA team for facilitating the workshops.

### **Participation of ICEVI in CCNGO/EFA Meeting**

The Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education (CCNGO) was established by the Education Sector in 1984 as a mechanism to facilitate dialogue between UNESCO and non-government organizations (NGOs) on the theme of literacy. The role of the CCNGO has expanded since the launch of the Education for All (EFA) movement in Jomtien in 1990, a movement that has served as the basis of the ICEVI-WBU EFA-VI global campaign since 2006. The CCNGO/EFA is now UNESCO’s key mechanism for dialogue, reflection and partnerships with NGOs and the global education community in relation to implementation of the

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Sustainable Development Goal 4 for education and the Education 2030 Framework for Action. Going forward, ICEVI'S EFA-VI campaign will be closely aligned with SDG4 and the Framework for Action.

The 150 delegates in attendance represented UNESCO and non-government, civil society and international organizations. ICEVI was one of 22 international non-government organizations (INGOs), and was represented by Dr. Frances Gentle. The meeting chair was Mr Jordan Naidoo, UNESCO Director, Division for Education 2030 Cooperation and Support; and open and special addresses were delivered by Anne Lemaistre, Director, UNESCO Phnom Penh; Maria Lourdes Almazan Khan, Secretary-General, Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education; H.E. Dr Hang Chuon Naron, Minister, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Kingdom of Cambodia; and Dr Koumbou Boly Barry, Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Summarized below are the key actions from the Siem Reap meeting:

1. Change of name from CCNGO/EFA to CCNGO/Education 2030, to reflect the absorption of the EFA movement into the Education 2030 Framework for Action.
2. Election of the CCNGO Coordination Group for 2017-18, consisting of regional and international Focal Points and directly elected Members.
3. Release of an outcomes document entitled the "CCNGO/Education 2030 Global Meeting Declaration", which includes general recommendations, actions for civil society, and recommendations for CCNGO members.

The meeting closed with an expression of thanks to the organizers: UNESCO and the Cambodian government NGO Education Partnership (NEP).

### **Meeting with Higher Education Students**

At the conclusion of the CCNGO meeting, Dr. Frances Gentle travelled to Phnom Penh to meet with ten higher education students who are supported by Krousar Thmey, The Phnom Penh School for Deaf and Blind Children, and the ICEVI-Nippon Foundation higher education initiative. Krousar Thmey is a non-governmental organization that

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supports underprivileged Cambodian children – see <http://www.krousar-thmey.org/en/>. The ten higher education students are currently completing a range of university courses, including public law, information and communication technology, hospitality, sociology, and English literature. They spoke of the challenges associated with being the first blind students to enroll in their university courses, and the pride of their families and communities in their achievements. Krousar Thmey supports the students in their transition to higher education. This support includes provision of brailled textbooks and assistance with finding suitable accommodation and part time employment to cover living costs and university fees.

The visit concluded with a site tour of the School for Deaf and Blind Children. The School provides enrolment for children from preschool to secondary school, and includes braille production and computer training facilities. ICEVI extends its appreciation to the staff of Krousar Thmey Cambodia for arranging the meeting with the higher education students, with special thanks to Mr Auray Aun and Mr AEP Chanveasna of Krousar Thmey; to Mrs. Phalla who is in charge of the School for Blind Children; and to the ten students who met with Frances and shared their life experiences and hopes for the future.

### **Participation in 5<sup>th</sup> Parents' Congress, Philippines**

ICEVI was one of the co-sponsors of the 5<sup>th</sup> Parents' Congress of the Parent Advocates for Visually Impaired Children Inc. (PAVIC), in Metro-Manila Philippines, 12-14 May 2017. PAVIC was founded in 1999 by about 12 parents of children with blindness, low vision, and visual impairment with additional disabilities. The PAVIC Mission is to "advocate actively for all visually impaired children by providing support to their family and promoting partnerships with social institutions that will result in awareness, acceptance and access".

The theme of the 5<sup>th</sup> Parents' Congress was "Connecting families towards equity and access", and the plenary sessions addressed the topics of raising a child with visual impairment, accessing quality education and government services, and going out into the world. ICEVI was represented by Dr. Frances Gentle and joined the 150 parents and other stakeholders who travelled from a wide geographical area to attend the Congress. An important component of the Congress was the situational analysis of services across the Regions of the Philippines and action planning for 2017. Through these activities, the

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parents from each region came together to share the joys and challenges of parenting, and to collaboratively plan region-specific activities that would yield tangible results for their children. The planning process was empowering and friendship building, with new and returning Congress delegates supporting each other.

PAVIC is a non-governmental organization with a Board of Trustees that consists of voluntary members. PAVIC works closely with the Resources for the Blind Inc. (RBI) and other national organizations to provide parent seminars and workshops, and offers a highly successful national sporting event each year for children with visual impairment. PAVIC's President, Board and Members play a vital role in creating public awareness of the education and welfare needs of children with visual impairment in the Philippines, and through their efforts, PAVIC's membership has grown to 710 parents as at December 2016.

ICEVI recognizes PAVIC as an excellent example of the potential power of parents and the importance of parent-educator partnerships in promoting the right to education and quality of life for children with visual impairment from birth to adulthood. Encouraging Parents' organizations is a vital component of ICEVI activities and ICEVI will seek PAVIC's support in promoting parent organizations in other countries in the East Asia region. ICEVI is also planning to assist PAVIC in preparing booklets on "Tips for Parents in rearing children with Visual Impairment" and in preparing audio visual materials.

### **Report from ICEVI Africa Region**

ICEVI Africa held its first face-to-face management committee meeting for this quadrennium in Pretoria, South Africa on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> April 2017. The meeting was chaired by Gertrude Oforiwa Fefoame, Chairperson of ICEVI Africa and was well attended. The South African National Council for the Blind, as they did in the last Quadrennium, hosted the meeting at their offices and two of their employees attended the meeting as observers. The First Vice President of ICEVI, Dr Praveena Sukhraj-Ely attended the meeting in an ex officio capacity to support the deliberations and discussions and to provide guidance. Nafisa Baboo, (Management Committee Member) from Light for the World, Martin Kieti (Vice Chairperson) from Perkins School for the Blind, and Gertrude Oforiwa Fefoame (Chairperson) from Sight Savers ensured that the voice of the international partner members were heard, whilst Miss Cathy Donaldson and Mr Komivi AYASSOU, country

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representatives of South Africa and Togo respectively, also made significant contributions to the meeting discussions and action items. Some of the significant decisions taken at the meeting were that ICEVI Africa will be registered as a non-profit company in Kenya once its Constitution is finalized. Further, focus will be given to country champions and the role that they can play to further the objectives of ICEVI in Africa.

### **Report from ICEVI Latin America Region**

Ms Maria Cristina Sanz, Chair of the ICEVI Latin America recently visited three of the six countries in the Latin America region where the ICEVI-WBU global EFA-VI campaign is being implemented. In April, Cristina visited El Salvador and Guatemala where she met with the National EFA-VI Task Group and disseminated the activities of ICEVI Latin America with new regional members. In El Salvador, Cristina represented ICEVI at the Meeting of the Board of Directors of ULAC (Latin America Union of the Blind), and signed a Collaboration Agreement between both organizations. During her visit to Paraguay in May, and in the celebration of the 60th Anniversary of Santa Lucía Resource Centre, Cristina received an award on behalf of ICEVI. The award is a wooden statuette carved by Sergio Jara, which represents an open eye. This award was handed over to the people and organizations that were key supporters of the Santa Lucía Resource Centre, and ICEVI was the only international organization awarded. Paraguay is an EFA-VI focus country and the Santa Lucía Resource Centre works to promote inclusive education of children with visually impairment.

During May 2017, Cristina will be visiting Honduras, Nicaragua and Dominican Republic, the three other EFA-VI focus countries. In June, Cristina will be attending the Madrid meeting of the Board of Directors of the ONCE Foundation for Solidarity with the Blind in Latin America (FOAL in Spanish), and will be signing a Memorandum of Understanding between FOAL and ICEVI Latin America.

### **Report from ICEVI Pacific Region**

Ben Clare, Chair of ICEVI Pacific Region has recently assisted the Kiribati Institute of Technology (KIT) with the enrolment of students with disability. KIT is a government funded vocational training facility where various courses ranging from automotive to IT and hospitality

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are offered. Through an extensive partnership with Tertiary and Further Education (TAFE) colleges in Australia, KIT is able to graduate students with qualifications that are fully recognized and endorsed in Australia and Internationally. In line with the Kiribati Ministry of Education's inclusive education policy, KIT has recognized the need for inclusion of people with disability in as many courses and areas of study as possible. Ben has worked to promote KIT enrolments of students with disabilities by promoting partnerships between the Kiribati Institute of Technology, the Kiribati School and Centre for Children with Special Needs, and the national advocacy group known as Tetoa Matoa. Ben has created a free, foundational 8-week intensive training course for people with disabilities that introduces basic literacy and numeracy knowledge and skills through exploration and operation of a standard desktop computer, including with voice output software for students who are vision impaired. This course is designed for people with low literacy levels who wish to study at KIT, including people who have not attended or completed formal schooling. The foundation course was approved by the Ministry of Education and the first five students, all from Tetoa Matoa and with vision impairment, have commenced studying at KIT.

In other news, Ben will be providing a Perkins braille maintenance workshop in Papua New Guinea during May 2017. The workshop is fully supported and endorsed by Perkins School for the Blind and will take trainees through the various components of a Perkins Braille, provide detailed instruction on basic maintenance such as cleaning, fluid replacement and testing, as well as replacing various spare parts within the machine as needed. Trainees will be provided with extensive training materials including manuals, instructional DVD's and diagrammatic representations. The course will involve employees of Callan Services National Unit, a nationwide provider of disability support services, and trainees will be people with and without disability. Following the initial workshop, graduates will be invited to conduct training for others throughout the country, thus ensuring a wide knowledge of Perkins Braille machine maintenance. This a pilot program and Ben is keen to see how it improves service provision for people with disability in Papua New Guinea. If successful, he will consider conducting similar training programs in partnership with Perkins in other Pacific Island countries.

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## IAPB Release Global Prevalence Data

ICEVI's Vision Alliance Partner, the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB), has released a Vision Atlas that brings together the latest data and evidence related to avoidable blindness and sight loss – see <http://atlas.iapb.org/>. The Vision Atlas presents prevalence rates for blindness and visual impairment that are disaggregated by country, gender, and age; and includes summary data on national systems of eye health and eye health workforce levels. The Atlas highlights the opportunities to eliminate some blinding conditions; and warns of emerging threats that, if ignored, could reverse the progress that has been made in reducing prevalence over the past 25 years.

## Forthcoming ICEVI Conferences

- ICEVI will be conducting its 9<sup>th</sup> ICEVI European Conference in Burges, Belgium from 2 to 7 July 2017. For more details please visit <http://www.icevi-bruges2017.be/>
- ICEVI will also be conducting its West Asia National Conference: Celebration of Two Decades of Inclusive Practices in Ahmedabad, India from 8 to 10 December 2017. For more details please visit [www.icevi.org](http://www.icevi.org)

## Sad loss of Dr Elly Macha

It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the death of Dr. Elly Macha, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President of World Blind Union, in London on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017. Dr Elly was a passionate crusader for the disability movement in general and the visually impaired community in particular, and her contributions to the disability sector will be greatly missed. Among her many achievements, Dr Elly was a parliamentarian in the Tanzanian parliament, a member of the Tanzania Women Parliamentary Group (TWPG), a Board Member of the Community Based Rehabilitation Africa Network (CAN), and a Member of the Working Group on the Rights of Older Persons and People with Disabilities in the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.

For us in the ICEVI, Dr Elly was a member of the Executive Committee representing World Blind Union. Elly took an active interest in ICEVI and was one of the people involved in our strategic planning process.

The ICEVI Executive Committee extends our condolences to Dr Elly's family at this time of great loss.

### Potential topics for The Educator

ICEVI has been focusing on thematic issues such as inclusion, teacher preparation, technology, early intervention, low vision, Braille literacy etc., for The Educator and the past issues can be accessed through the website of ICEVI [www.icevi.org](http://www.icevi.org). Those who have suggestions for new topics for the future issues of The Educator may contact **Marianne Riggio** ([Marianne.Riggio@Perkins.org](mailto:Marianne.Riggio@Perkins.org)), Editor and **MNG Mani** ([sgicevi@vsnl.net](mailto:sgicevi@vsnl.net)), Associate Editor.

**ICEVI E-News comes to your mailbox in May and November every year. Please provide us with the e-mail addresses of individuals and organizations that may be interested in receiving the ICEVI E-News and The Educator.**

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