



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



ICEVI E-NEWS

OCTOBER 2017

Message from the President

The International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) is the World's major association of individuals and organisations concerned with equality of access to appropriate education for children and youth with vision impairment. ICEVI has consultative status with the United Nations' Economic and Social Council and is a founding member of the UNICEF NGO Committee on Children with Disabilities. ICEVI works closely with UNESCO, UNICEF, UNECOSOC, the World Bank, and the World Health Organisation. It operates through regional and national committees in each of seven regions (Africa, East Asia, Europe, Latin America, North American/Caribbean, Pacific, and West Asia) and is governed by an Executive Committee composed of the Principal Officers, Regional Chairpersons and Partner Member organisations.

The ICEVI E-News is a bi-annual online publication that reports news and events in the field of education for children and young people with visual impairment. This October 2017 issue includes reports on international and regional conferences, meetings of the ICEVI-Nippon Higher Education Program and the Mathematics Project, and highlights the success of the first ICEVI Country Champion Program for young adults with visual impairment that was held in the Philippines in June 2017.

On behalf of the ICEVI Executive Committee, I extend a warm welcome to the incoming CEO of the World Blind Union, Mr José Maria Viera, and acknowledge the enormous contribution of Ms. Penny Hartin who was appointed as WBU's first CEO in 2006. ICEVI looks forward to working with the WBU Executive in planning the joint WBU-ICEVI General Assembly in 2020. We will share updates on the General Assembly via the The Educator, the E-News and the ICEVI website.



Frances Gentle,
President, ICEVI

ICEVI Governance Committee

ICEVI's Strategic Plan for 2017-2020 included establishment of a Governance Committee to undertake the following responsibilities:

- Review the organization's governance and due diligence functions; and make recommendations to the EXCO.
- Facilitate the development and review of governance standards, policies and procedures; and engage the EXCO in dialogue for change of existing governance and compliance documentation if required.
- Offer guidance as required to ICEVI Regional and other Committees in fulfilling the organization's governance and compliance requirements and documentation.
- Take actions that enable the Governance Committee to fulfil its responsibilities. This includes seeking independent advice to perform its duties when required.

The Committee priorities during 2017-18 will include the following:

- i. Defining the relationship between the ICEVI Global body and the Regions in the light of the regions becoming registered legal bodies. This includes review of clauses of the Constitution that are associated with compliance.
- ii. Framing the governance principles of advocacy and networking roles and structures, to enable ICEVI to effectively engage with such global bodies as United Nations agencies, Global Campaign for Education, International Disability and Development Consortium, and organisations addressing disability-inclusive education.

The Governance Committee has conducted two teleconference meetings since its inception earlier this year, and will develop guidelines for ensuring a strong relationship between the ICEVI global body and its regions.

Start-Up Teacher Training Curriculum

The “Start-Up Curriculum Teacher Training” is an activity sponsored by ICEVI Executive Committee and led by Kay Ferrell, Chairperson, ICEVI North America and the Caribbean region, with co-authors and collaborators Kevin Carey (United Kingdom), Sabine Fijn van Draat (the Netherlands), Celene Gyles (Jamaica), Suwimon Udompiriyasak (Thailand), Mary Zatta (USA) and Nafisa Baboo (South Africa). The curriculum has been approved by the ICEVI Executive Committee (EXCO) and was presented to the UNICEF Children with Disabilities Program Division by ICEVI President Frances Gentle, CEO M.N.G. Mani, and Dr. Ferrell in November. The Curriculum is intended as a starting point for training in countries that do not yet have the existing infrastructure to train specialist or regular class teachers. The 25 modules of the Curriculum introduce topics relating to education of children with visual impairments and will shortly be available on the ICEVI website for free download and viewing on a mobile phone. The start-up curriculum is considered a “living document” that will be expanded over time to include additional content and links to existing teacher training standards, expanded core curricula, online courses and video examples of best practices in educating students with visual impairments.

Vision 2017 International Conference

The 12th International Conference of the International Society for Low Vision Research and Rehabilitation (ISLRR) took place at the World Forum in The Hague, Netherlands on 25-29 June 2017. The conference theme was “Low vision rehabilitation, a global right” and the keynote speakers included HRH Princess Margret of the Netherlands and Penny Hartin of the World Blind Union. ICEVI was represented by Frances Gentle, President, and M.N.G. Mani, CEO. Of particular interest was the relatively new field of research into the neuroplasticity of the human brain. Presentations explored current research into the brain’s capacity to bypass areas of damage by generating new neural pathways. This included research into damage to the visual system, with research showing the relationship

between visual perception training and improvements to visual acuity levels. Understanding of the potential of the human brain to regenerate is a new area of study, and research breakthroughs are highlighting the importance of early intervention for children with visual impairment.

International Conference on Special Education 2017

The second International Conference on Special Education (ICSE) took place at the Borneo Convention Centre in Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia from 31st July to 2nd August 2017. The conference was organised by the South East Asia Ministers of Education Special Education Network (SEAMEO-SEN), with support from the Malaysian Ministry of Education. The 13 conference organisers included ICEVI, the Sarawak State Government, UNICEF Malaysia and UNESCO Bangkok.

Frances Gentle, President ICEVI was one of the keynote speakers of the conference who made a presentation on basic knowledge every teacher should have for the successful inclusion of children with visual impairment. She also represented ICEVI at the SEAMEO-SEN Development Plan workshop, and assisted with the review of SEAMEO-SEN's draft Five Year Development Plan for 2019-2020 and offered recommendations for national and regional SEAMEO-SEN priorities in the area of visual impairment. Mani, CEO, Larry Campbell, President Emeritus and national Coordinators of the ICEVI-Nippon Foundation Higher Education program also attended the ICSE conference.

Mathematics Project – Update

A meeting of the Academic Team of the ICEVI–The Nippon Foundation Mathematics Project was held at the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Austin, Texas on 7th and 8th September 2017. Members reviewed 40 sample videos of mathematical concepts, in terms of adequacy of content, clarity of presentation, ease of using materials for demonstration, lighting conditions of video demonstrations and duration of the video lessons. Suggestions from the Academic Team will be taken into account when preparing the next version of the video lessons that

will be used for pilot testing. Members decided that the videos prepared to date should focus on instructions to teachers that should be geared towards their effective training to teach mathematics to children with visual impairment. However, utmost care will also be taken to address accessibility issues in order to use the materials as learning tools for students. At present the videos are being prepared in English only and translation into regional languages may be considered after the official launch of the full package of videos in 2020.

Members discussed at length the venue for pilot testing of the sample videos. Importance was given to mathematics education, presence of a lead agency for monitoring the pilot testing mechanism and the availability of local teachers for orientation to use the videos for training purposes. M.N.G. Mani, ICEVI CEO, shared the success of the ICEVI Education Forum organised in South Africa in February 2017 and it was agreed that the ICEVI Africa region, together with organisations in South Africa and ICEVI's Higher Education partners in East Asia should be approached to pilot the training videos.

Higher Education Program – Coordinators meet

ICEVI conducted its joint country coordinators meeting of the Higher Education Initiative and the Overbrook Nippon Network on Educational Technology (ON-NET) in Kuching, Malaysia on 2-3 August 2017. Meeting participants included Frances Gentle, President ICEVI, Larry Campbell, President Emeritus, Mani, CEO and Wenru Niu, Director, ON-NET program, and the Country Coordinators. The meeting reiterated the achievements in the last decade and urged the Coordinators to integrate innovative and collaborative opportunities into the future project activities of ICEVI and ON-NET in order to optimise utilization of resources.

Members resolved that individuals with visual impairment who are in need of additional support in specific areas, such as online information and resources, may be linked to social media groups that already exist in the member countries. ICEVI, ON-NET and the Country Coordinators from the Member countries expressed their profound thanks to The Nippon Foundation for their generous support, which continues to have a positive

impact on the lives of young persons with visual impairment in the East Asia region.

Country Champions Program – The Philippines

ICEVI successfully conducted its first Country Champion Program at the Resources for the Blind in Manila, Philippines on 9th and 10th June 2017. The program was attended by 30 students with visual impairment, mostly from the Universities in Manila, Baguio, and Cebu. There were also students from secondary schools who shared their experiences about school education and highlighted their aspirations for the future. The program on Day 1 started with the introduction of participants and a keynote address by Mr. Eric Marco Ramos, a person with visual impairment who works as a Professor of the Philippines Normal University. The first technical session was addressed by the Director of Special Education, Chief of the National Council for Disability Affairs (NCDA) and the President of Parents Association of Visually Impaired Children (PAVIC) who highlighted the policy and rights perspectives in services for persons with disabilities in the Philippines. The second technical session was addressed by three students from the Universities and Secondary schools and they spoke on "Overcoming disabilities at home and in school". The title of the third technical session was "Dream Big! Conquering the Work Environment", which was addressed by persons with visual impairment who are currently employees or employers. Mr. Marx Vergel Melencio, who is a visually impaired entrepreneur and Founder President of Grayscale Consultancy and Management Services made a strong appeal to the young visually impaired participants to develop soft skills besides education qualifications and to also set goals in life. The fourth technical session on Day 2 was titled "Overcoming Disability Barriers" and five students spoke about Programmatic, Physical, Attitudinal, Communication and Social barriers.

The ICEVI Country Champions Program is proving to be an important high impact program that will promote young people with visual impairment to become the future leaders and ambassadors for education of persons with visual impairment.

Indian National Conference of ICEVI and Sense India, December 2017

The ICEVI India and Sense India are jointly organizing a National Conference on 8 - 10 December 2017 at Ahmedabad Management Association, Vastrapur, Ahmedabad. The theme of the conference will be "Two Decades of Inclusive Practices." For more details visit <http://iceviwestasia.in>. The conference will be attended by over 400 delegates, including the ICEVI Principal Officers who are holding a concurrent meeting. An ICEVI Country Champion program will be held in conjunction with the meeting, together with an early intervention workshop that will be delivered by Frances Gentle, ICEVI President. Arrangements for the events are looked after by Nandini Rawal, Treasurer, ICEVI, Bhushan Punani, Regional Chair of ICEVI West Asia region and Akhil Paul, Director, Sense India.

ICEVI East Asia – Regional Conference, October 2018

As per the notification issued by Aria Indrawati, Regional Chair, ICEVI East Asia will be conducting its Regional Conference in Manila, Philippines from 17 to 19 October 2018. The main theme of the conference will be EFA-VI 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals. Conference presentations and workshops will address such topics as global perspectives on education for all, Sustainable Development Goals, Legislation and policies, curricular strategies, human resource development, technology and higher education. The conference plenary sessions will focus on the following main topics.

- EFA and Disability: In the light of the SDGs
- EFA-VI – Progress and Asian Perspectives
- Legislation for inclusion – ASEAN Experience – SEAMEO
- EFA: Strategies to serve children with low vision children and additional/multiple disabilities (MDVI)
- Role of Technology
- Higher Education and Employment

The ICEVI Executive Committee will hold its annual meeting on 15th October 2018 in conjunction with the conference. Members of the Executive Committee will also assist the Resources for the Blind (RBI) in organising a Philippines Education Forum on the 16th October. The Forum will provide an opportunity for local educators and policy makers to discuss global and regional issues and perspectives pertaining to education of children with disabilities in general and children with visual impairment. Information about the East Asia Regional Conference and Education Forum will be posted on the ICEVI website in coming months - www.icevi.org.

News from the Regions

ICEVI Africa collaborated with the organizers of the national Digital Essay Competition in Kenya to include learners with visual impairments in their competitions. In collaboration with the African Union of the Blind (AFUB), ICEVI Africa has been carrying out a number of activities with the aim of getting African countries to ratify and domesticate the Marrakesh Treaty. In Kenya, ICEVI Africa has been involved in a number of engagements with the Ministry of Education to improve the quality of education for learners with visual impairments. In collaboration with Sightsavers, the Chairperson of ICEVI Africa Gertrude Oforiwa Fefoame exploited a number of opportunities to raise the profile of ICEVI Africa and its work in the region.

North America and Caribbean Region: Canadian News: Fall 2017 will see stakeholders in educational programming for students with visual impairments seeking endorsements of the newly-updated *Canadian National Standards for the Education of Students who are Blind or Visually Impaired, Including Those with Additional Disabilities*. This document outlines fourteen standards and related indicators of high quality educational programming for students with visual impairments and represents a collaborative effort by national, provincial, and community-level stakeholders from across Canada.

United States News: There have been three major weather disasters in the US this past year: Hurricane Harvey, which flooded Houston, Texas, and the surrounding area; Hurricane Irma, which affected the US Virgin Islands and almost the entire state of Florida; and Hurricane Maria, which caused cancellation of the NA/C planning call in September, and eviscerated Puerto Rico. Our thoughts are with all residents impacted by these storms as relief efforts and rebuilding continues, says Key Ferrell, the NAC Regional Chair.

The Latin America Regional Chair Cristina Sanz attended regional events in Argentina, Guatemala and Uruguay which were organised by Parents organisations, ULAC, UN bodies and regional organisations. The region is a legal body now and a bank account has also been opened. The regional body is being strengthened with the inclusion of members from key countries. The Regional Chairperson will also participate in the Meeting of FOAL's Board in Madrid, Spain, in December 2017 to carry out the follow-up of the MoU between FOAL and ICEVI Latinoamérica.

The Pacific Region Chair Ben Clare has been busy working on the implementation phase of Kiribati's inclusive education policy and producing course content for various components of a teacher aid course which will be taught at Kiribati teachers College. This course is aimed at people who want to be support teachers for blind students attending school.

Events of the ICEVI Europe

The ICEVI Europe Regional Conference was held at Burges, Belgium from 2 to 7 July 2017. The theme of the conference was "Empowered by Dialogue", and presentations and workshops centered on the Quality of Life Framework. The 2017 General Assembly of ICEVI-Europe was also held, the members have elected or re-elected the Members of the Board. ICEVI would like to take this opportunity to gratefully thank all Board Members for their time, tireless efforts and outstanding contributions to the Mission of the organization within their role.

The elected new members of the Board are the following: Mrs. Anne Kristine Grosbøll, representing the Baltic and Nordic countries, Mrs. Kathleen Vandermaelen, representing the German and Dutch speaking countries and Mrs. Beata Pronay representing the Central European countries.

The Board of ICEVI Europe sincerely looks forward to engaging in fruitful cooperation with the new elected Board Members and hopes that they in turn, will find the experience both beneficial and pleasant. Unfortunately, the region did not manage to find a candidate for the position of President after the death of the former President Betty Leotsakou. Hans Welling has agreed to assume the position of Interim President.

Mr. José Maria Viera – Incoming CEO of the WBU

Mr. José Maria Viera has been appointed as the incoming Chief Executive Officer of the World Blind Union. Mr Viera will assume the position when the current CEO, Penny Hartin, retires during 2018. On behalf of ICEVI, Frances Gentle, President extended congratulations to Mr. Viera on his appointment. The ICEVI Executive Committee (EXCO) has been privileged to work with Penny Hartin over the past decade, and has benefited from her leadership in the joint ICEVI-WBU EFA-VI Global Campaign. ICEVI welcomes the opportunity to continue the close relationship between our two organisations. This includes our plans to jointly host the third WBU-ICEVI General Assembly in 2020.

Call for Themes for ICEVI's journal, 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. Those who have suggestions for new topics for the future issues of The Educator may contact Marianne Riggio (Marianne.Riggio@Perkins.org), Editor and MNG Mani (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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