



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



(FORMERLY ICEVI NEWSLINE)

OCTOBER 2015

Update on WBU-ICEVI General Assembly

The World Blind Union (WBU) and the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) will be jointly holding their General Assemblies at the Rosen Centre Hotel in Orlando, Florida, USA, from 18th to 25th August 2016. The theme of the General Assembly is **Human Rights and the CRPD – What Lies Ahead** and the Schedule is as follows:

- Thursday, August 18 – Meetings of the WBU Executive Committee and Assembly Committees
- Friday, August 19 to Monday, August 22 – WBU Assembly proceedings
- Monday, August 22 – ICEVI Opening Ceremony, ICEVI Papers Day
- Tuesday, August 23 – Wednesday, August 24 – Joint WBU-ICEVI concurrent sessions, ICEVI Regional Committee meetings, WBU / ICEVI Closing Ceremony and Gala Dinner
- Thursday, August 25 – ICEVI General Assembly and Executive Committee meeting

The Programme Committees of the WBU-ICEVI Joint days have already outlined a detailed programme for the Plenary and Concurrent sessions and have invited speakers, most of whom have confirmed. The plenary and concurrent session titles of the Joint Days are as follows:

Major Themes of Plenary Sessions

- Human rights for persons who are blind or have low vision
- Technology
- Youth Leadership and Social Engagement

Concurrent Sessions

- Creating demand for education
- Gender
- Advocacy
- Practices in realising the CRPD
- CBR in urban and rural settings

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- UN Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals
 - Moving to implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty
 - The Right to Literacy
 - Workshop: Wayfinding
 - Workshop on Web Accessibility
 - Workshop on audio description
 - Accessible technology
 - Access to the curriculum through mainstream and assistive technology
 - Mock debate on mainstream versus assistive technologies
 - Technology for persons with visual impairment and additional disabilities, and/or deafblindness
 - Technology for people with low vision
 - Technology in developing countries
 - Social Media and persons with visual impairment

More sessions on Youth Leadership and Social Engagement will also be added to the programme of the Joint Days.

ICEVI Day at the WBU-ICEVI General Assembly

The WBU-ICEVI Joint Assemblies will include an ICEVI Day on Monday 22nd August 2016 that will be dedicated to conference-style papers and workshops. The theme of the ICEVI Day is **“Education for All Children with Visual Impairment: Beyond 2015”**. The ICEVI Day Programme Committee headed by Dr. Frances Gentle is reviewing the 188 abstracts received for presentations. The committee has already started informing the authors of the selected abstracts and the full papers are expected by 25th February 2016. The abstracts selected for presentations cover the topics Access to curricular and extracurricular areas, or the expanded core curriculum; Access to mainstream or adaptive/assistive technologies; Awareness Creation and advocacy in education of children with visual impairment; Before-school or preschool education; Career Education; Curriculum alignment or adapted instructional materials; Early Childhood Intervention or Early childhood care and education (ECC); Education for children with visual

and multiple disabilities (MDVI) and deafblindness; Higher Education – opportunities and challenges; Inclusion or Inclusive Educational Practices; Innovation and emerging technologies; Innovations in the provision of support services or use of community resources; Literacy or alternative formats (Braille, large print or electronic); Low Vision; Orientation and Mobility; Parent and family perspectives (e.g. building family support systems, the role of parents in education, parent impact on community, formation of parent groups); Personnel Preparation - Education of teachers or other professionals; Role models and mentors; Social, Life and Independent living skills; Teaching Mathematics and Science and Transitions: Home to school, or school to adult life. The number of concurrent sessions will be decided based on the availability of speakers and the attendance of participants for the ICEVI day. A detailed programme with the speakers will be posted on the website by April 2016.

First International Conference on Special Education

The first International Conference on Special Education (ICSE 2015) was organised by the Office of the Basic Education Commission, Ministry of Education Thailand and Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation Regional Centre for Special Education (SEAMEO-SEN) in Bangkok, Thailand from 28 to 31 July 2015. The theme of the conference was **Innovation to Enhance Learning Initiatives and Practices**. ICEVI was one of the organising partners of the conference and contributed to the development of the agenda particularly with reference to the sessions dealing with education of children with visual impairment. Colin Low, President delivered a key note address at the first plenary session and gave an account of the current status of the EFA-VI campaign and the way forward. His address also highlighted the role of innovation to enhance learning initiatives and practices. M.N.G. Mani, CEO took part in the Round Table of the SEAMEO-SEN participating countries which discussed the priorities in the region. ICEVI also arranged an information booth on Vision Alliance consisting of ICEVI, the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) and the World Blind Union (WBU), which was visited by many participants of the conference.

ICEVI East Asia Regional Conference

ICEVI East Asia region organized its regional conference in Bali, Indonesia from 28th September to 1st October 2015. The title of the conference was **“Education For All Children with Visual Impairment Beyond 2015 – Asian Perspectives”** and attended by over 250 participants from 16 countries. The East Asia Regional Conference was used as a platform to establish strong networks at the regional level, particularly with the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation – Regional Centre for Special Education (SEAMEO SEN) in organising various capacity building programmes. Following were the key recommendations of the conference, which will be highlighted in various programmes of ICEVI in the region in the next Quadrennium and onwards:

Delegates and participants gathered in Bali, Indonesia for the ICEVI East Asia Regional Conference recognize that:

- Education for all Children with Visual Impairment (EFA-VI), including visually impaired students with additional disabilities (MDVI) was launched by International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) in partnership with the World Blind Union (WBU) at ICEVI’s World Conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in July, 2006,
- That Article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) states very explicitly that all children with disability have the right to appropriate quality education and mandates its signatory member countries to develop national education systems that are inclusive of the needs of children with disabilities,
- That most of countries within the ICEVI East Asia region have ratified the UNCRPD and after end of the implementation period of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), have now endorsed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which place further attention on the provision of quality education for all children with disabilities and
- The East Asia region had contributed to the achievements of MDGs, and we hope will contribute even to the achievement of SDGs.

Delegates and participants gathered for this East Asia Regional Conference of ICEVI endorse the following recommendations:

1. Vigorously continue efforts to provide all children and youth with visual impairment, including those with additional disabilities with an appropriate, quality education. Such educational options should include early intervention and preschool service, primary and secondary education and appropriate higher education. These efforts should involve all stakeholders within the region, including but not limited to government, regional inter-governmental bodies and multi-lateral government cooperation which should include: region, disabled peoples' organizations, parents associations, teachers and school authorities, universities, donor agencies, the business sectors and other relevant civil society organizations.
2. In order to implement these efforts, we urge increased development cooperation among the stakeholders mentioned above to share resources, skill and knowledge.
3. Being aware that a number of critical areas related to education of children with visual impairment, including children with additional disabilities, will require special attention, we strongly urge attention to:
 - The availability of special services for students with low vision;
 - Expanding the role and involvement of parents and other family members in educating children with visual impairment, including visually impaired children with additional disabilities;
 - Expanding and improving teaching and learning methods for visually impaired children with additional disabilities including the improvement and expansion of human resource development in this area;
 - The effective provision and use of assistive technology and increased attention to the inclusion of this area within all human resource development programs for teachers and related ancillary personnel;

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- A greater focus on the transition period between school and adult life for all children, with special attention to the needs of those with additional disabilities.
 - The availability of education supporting services, including trained resource teachers, to allow inclusive education to be more optimally implemented;
 - Developing strategies that expand access to and the improvement in the instruction of Mathematics and the Sciences at the primary and secondary levels; allowing greater opportunity for visually impaired students with the interest and aptitude to pursue the STEM areas of the curriculum in higher education;
 - The transition period between higher education and employment for university students with visual impairment and
 - Accelerated community involvement in education of children with visual impairment, including children with additional disabilities.

Education for children with visual impairment, including children with MDVI will improve their future quality of life. This should cover all level of education. As we understand that primary and secondary education is important, whereas, higher education is the strategic way to make a change. Let's make sure that no one is left behind.

Special Award to the Nippon Foundation

A special award to the Nippon Foundation was given at the East Asia Regional Conference for their support to ICEVI in implementing higher education programmes for persons with visual impairments in Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines, Vietnam and Lao PDR, which has benefitted more than 1500 students with visual impairment. The caption of the award is as follows: ***"in grateful recognition of your support and partnership in expanding educational access and full inclusion of blind and low vision persons"*** in the East Asia Region. Mr. Shuichi Ohno, Executive Director, the Nippon Foundation attended the event and congratulated ICEVI for making the higher education programme successful.

Higher Education Coordinators Meeting

A meeting of the coordinators of the higher education project was also held in Bali in conjunction with the East Asia Regional Conference. It was resolved at the meeting that many of the higher education coordinators should make presentations in various technical sessions of the WBU ICEVI general assembly to be held in Orlando in August 2016. The coordinators' meeting was also attended by Colin Low, President and Larry Campbell, President Emeritus & Project Director, Higher Education. The higher education project will focus more on softskills development and employment creation avenues in addition to the existing thrust on technology and inclusive higher education.

IDP Africa Forum

The IDP Africa Forum was held on 4-8 October 2015 in Kampala, Uganda. ICEVI organised the following technical sessions at the Forum besides conducting its executive committee meeting and also re-launching the Global Campaign.

- Vision Alliance
- International Disability and Development Consortium
- EFA-VI Global Campaign with reference to the Africa region
- Education of Children with Multiple Disabilities
- Early Intervention strategies
- Mathematics education for students with visual impairment
- Teacher preparation strategies

The Regional Executive Committee of the Africa region was also organised in conjunction with the Africa Forum, where strategies for registering the Africa region in Nairobi was discussed. Hans Welling, Advisor, Regional Development, ICEVI also attended the meeting and guided the members of the regional committee.

Re-launch of EFA-VI Global Campaign

EFA-VI Global Campaign was relaunched at the IDP Africa Forum. Children from inclusive education in Uganda made a strong appeal for the expansion of the campaign in the entire Africa region to reach out

to children with visual impairment, who are currently unreached. Dr. M.N.G. Mani, CEO gave a brief status of the campaign and Lord Colin Low, President ICEVI outlined the future course of action to make the campaign as a Movement. A video message by Mr. Gordon Brown, Special Envoy of the United Nations for Global Education and former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom on the EFA-VI Global Campaign was played at the event. The text of the video message is as follows:

Good Afternoon,

This is Gordon Brown. I am speaking as the UN Special Envoy for Global Education, appointed by Secretary-General Bank Ki-moon so that every single child in the world has a chance of Education and I delighted to speaking to this great conference. I wish you well and I particularly wish you well your initiative for education for all visually impaired children and I want to work with you so that this becomes a successful vehicle by which every single child in the world who is visually impaired gets a chance of education. We know that there are 1 billion people in the world who have one form of disability or another. We know also the 200 million have very severe disabilities and we know as a fact that the chances of a child with disability receiving education is half as great of those without disability and it is this that we wish to change. You may know that the original millennium development goals set in 2000 did not do enough for disabled children and particularly for visually impaired children. You may know also however that the Convention for the Rights of the Disabled insists that every single child should have education and that is why I am pleased that the result of your representations and others the new sustainable development goals makes it imperative that every single child has education and now we can start to make big advances hopefully with greater public support and international aid to make sure that every single visually impaired child has the chance of the best education possible. We have got one new advantage that we can build upon and you are already building upon as a great organization that is to use modern technology to enable visually impaired

children and adults to be able to get the benefits of learning. As a result of some of the great advances in technology it is possible to convert print into audio very quickly indeed and almost instantaneously and that is why it is possible for someone who is visually impaired to get all the advantages of learning courses and reading books through the audio system the people without visual impairment have already be able to read books directly.

So I want us to embark a major initiative in technology. I know you have started with pilot projects in Africa and elsewhere. I know you planned to expand the technology initiative for more widely and I know that we can work together and secure the resources are necessary so that we can cover every single country whether visually impaired children in the world who needs this support.

Let me say that your efforts on behalf of the visually impaired children of the world will have the support of the United Nations. Let me say also that I will be prepared to go to countries and ask them to provide the resources that you need.

This launch of the Education For All Visually Impaired Children initiative is of such consequence, that I want to congratulate you that what you have done, the conference what is achieving and I want to congratulate you in advance on the work we can do together. You deserve the support of the whole world in your efforts and I wish you all well - not just to have a successful conference but that the next few years see the most major advances in delivering education to visually impaired children in the history of the world. Thank you very much.

ICEVI is honoured that Mr. Brown has extended the support of UN and other nations for the EFA-VI campaign and this will certainly help the ICEVI regional chairs to work closely with the Governments.

EFA-VI Global Campaign shortlisted for the Zero Project Awards

The Zero Project based in Austria is an initiative of the Essl Foundation. It identifies and shares models that improve the daily lives and legal rights of all persons with disabilities. For 2016, the Zero Project called for nominations on inclusive education / ICT and the deadline was 10th July 2015. We understand that the Zero Project had received 337 applications from 98 countries and over 2000 experts were involved in the selection process.

The Zero Project has informed ICEVI that the EFA-VI Global Campaign has been selected as one of the Innovative Practices on education and sent invitations to Larry Campbell, President Emeritus who nominated the campaign for the award, Colin Low President and M.N.G. Mani CEO, ICEVI for the Zero Project Conference in Austria, Vienna on 10-12 February 2016.

We are excited that the EFA-VI Campaign, which was originally conceptualized by our International Partner Members along with the Officers of ICEVI way back in 2005, is being recognised at the global level. As key UN players, Corporate Houses and International mainstream organisations will be present at the conference in February 2016, our campaign will definitely receive the attention it deserves and we are confident that the expansion in the next Quadrennium will receive global support.

We sincerely thank all our regional chairs, International Partner Members, Vision Alliance network, local Governments, the National Task Forces of the campaign, country coordinators, trainers, parents, and children with visual impairment who made their contributions at various levels to make the campaign successful. This recognition from the Zero Project is a tribute to our collective work and once again we thank you for the whole hearted support in making this campaign productive.

SEAMEO SEN Board Meeting in Kuching, Malaysia

The SEAMEO-SEN invited ICEVI for its Board Meeting held in Kuching, Malaysia on 14-16 September 2015. The CEO M.N.G. Mani and Dato Kulasegaran, Deputy Regional Chairperson, ICEVI East Asia region

attended the meeting and shared the educational needs of children with visual impairment in the 19 countries of the East Asia region. It was resolved to organise a number of capacity building programmes in partnership with the SEAMEO-SEN in the future. The first such programme will be a regional workshop on Mathematics for visually impaired children, which will be organised at the premises of the SEAMEO-SEN in November/December 2015.

Executive Committee Meeting in Kampala, Uganda

The ICEVI conducted its Executive Committee meeting on the 3rd and 4th October 2015 in Kampala, prior to the IDP Africa Forum. The discussions included education proposals for Lions International, Membership, WBU – ICEVI Joint Event, Regional activities, Finance, Higher Education, Expansion of EFA-VI Global Campaign and Constitutional Amendments. Members had substantial discussions on the constitutional amendments and the suggestions will be incorporated in the revised document, which will be circulated to the members of the EXCO for further inputs. The revised constitution, after incorporating inputs from the EXCO members will be posted on the ICEVI website and also published in the January 2016 issue of The Educator. The revised constitution is expected to be endorsed at the ICEVI General Assembly to be held in Orlando, USA in August 2016.

Frances Gentle – Chairperson, Teacher Education Task Group

Frances Gentle, 2nd Vice-President ICEVI appraised at the Executive Committee meeting about the invitation she has received from the Teacher Education Task Group of UNICEF to serve as its Chairperson with immediate effect. The EXCO opined that such a position will increase the visibility of ICEVI and therefore, suggested that Frances Gentle accepts the invitation to chair the Task Group on teacher education.

ICEVI Focal Persons for International Organisations

The following officers of ICEVI are the focal persons for various international networking organisations.

- UNICEF and UNESCO working groups – Frances Gentle
- UN Network in USA – Kay Ferrell

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- Global Campaign for Education (GCE), International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC) and Accessible Books Consortium (ABC) – Praveena Sukhraj
 - Latin America Networks and Regional Development – Lucia Piccione, Nandini Rawal and Bhushan Punani (primarily working with Hans Welling)
 - South Pacific Educators of the Visually Impaired (SPEVI) – James Aiwa
 - UN Regional networks in Bangkok and the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation (SEAMEO) – Suwimon Udompiriyasak
 - African Decade, African Union of the Blind (AFUB) and Africa Network – Tigabu Gebremedhin and Martin Osang’ri Okiyo
 - The Nippon Foundation – Larry Campbell

Maths Video Package

In continuation of the Kampala EXCO meeting discussions regarding the development of a Mathematical Video Package, representatives of ICEVI, the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI) and the Perkins School for the Blind met at the TSBVI on 30th October 2015 to discuss the scope of the project and also prepare a Concept Paper that can be shared with the EXCO and International Partner Members of ICEVI. The Mathematics video package preparation work will use ICEVI’s publication “Mathematics Made Easy for Blind Children” as the base material. The Team suggested that the following organisations may be interested in supporting the project as they are actively involved in training activities.

1. The Nippon Foundation
2. The Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired
3. Perkins School for the Blind
4. Overbrook School for the Blind
5. CBM
6. Sightsavers
7. Norwegian Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted
8. Royal Dutch Visio

9. The Royal National Institute of the Blind
10. Light for the World
11. ONCE

On 18th November 2015, the first draft of the concept paper was shared with the members of the Austin meeting and the Principal Officers of ICEVI for their inputs. A number of good suggestions were received, which have been incorporated in the second draft of the Concept Paper and sent to ICEVI Executive Committee and International Members for their inputs. The detailed proposal with budget will be prepared in the next meeting, which is likely to take place in March 2016.

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. Those who have suggestions with the 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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