



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



(FORMERLY ICEVI NEWSLINE)

April 2009

Message from the President

May 5, 2009

Dear Colleagues:

This issue of the ICEVI E-News is a bit late in reaching your mailbox and I am afraid I need to take the full responsibility for that. I have been so preoccupied with a number of other demands that I am afraid I have held up the ICEVI Secretariat in getting this issue of ICEVI E-News to you.

Having just returned from Thailand I am happy to let you know that the Thai Host Committee met on April 24, and arrangements for our 13th World Conference and General Assembly are proceeding well. This morning I spoke with Dr. Jill Keeffe, 1st Vice President of ICEVI and Chair of the Program Committee. She informs me that her committee is working hard to prepare a program that will both challenge and inspire. We hope that many of you will submit abstracts for concurrent and poster sessions. You will find information related to the Call for Papers later in this issue of E-News and on the website at www.icevi.org.

Despite the global economic downturn the “Education for All Children with Visual Impairment” Global Campaign is moving forward on schedule for Phase I; 2006-2010. In addition to the pleasure it gives us to see children who have previously been denied access to education at last in school; the collaboration that has become the hallmark of this program is equally gratifying. The World Blind Union and the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness are working with ICEVI in ways we might not have imagined just a decade ago. In the midst of preparing this letter to you I have just received word that the Pan American Health Organization wishes to know what role they and the members states of PAHO can play in improving the services for children and adults with visual impairment. In short, the entire community is working together around a shared objective of making education a reality for every child. This, indeed, bodes well for all visually impaired children, but especially for those in the underserved regions of the world.

So amidst all the economic and political gloom and doom there are rays of sunshine fighting their way through those dark clouds. It is you our members and partners in this global effort that are making that happen and we thank you for your collaboration and support.

As always,



Larry Campbell
President

GLOBAL TASK FORCE MEETING IN VIENNA

The Global Task Force (GTF) of the Education for All Children with Visual Impairment (EFA-VI) Campaign met at Vienna, Austria on 12th -13th February 2009 to review the progress of the campaign and plan further strategies. The meeting was hosted by the Light for the World, one of the members of the GTF. Members unanimously resolved that the EFA-VI campaign in the present and proposed focus countries should strive to become an integral part of the national initiatives. The Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Fiji, Honduras, Nepal, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Paraguay, and Vietnam were the focus countries at the time of the GTF meeting. Ethiopia and Mozambique have become the first two countries of the Africa region now, thus making the total tally into 11 focus countries. Though many countries in all developing regions of the world have potential to become focus countries, the Global Task Force took note of the current global economic crisis and opined that it is better to scale down the activities of the campaign. The GTF suggested that more national level meetings involving the local governments, non-governmental organisations, international non-governmental development organisations, and associations of the blind may be organised in evolving national plans and also to monitor the progress of the campaign.

MOU FOR EFA-VI IN FIJI SIGNED

The government of the Republic of the Fiji Islands and Fiji Society for the Blind have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with ICEVI to implement the EFA-VI Global Campaign in Fiji. Fiji is the first focus country in the Pacific region and the national plan approved by the government aims to include all children with visual impairment in schools. The national plan evolved at a workshop organised in Suva in July 2008, which was attended by representatives from the World Blind Union, ICEVI, and the Fiji Society for the Blind. The experiences in implementing the campaign in Fiji will be of great value in extending it to other countries in the region.

VISION ALLIANCE – VIENNA COMMUNIQUE

A meeting on Vision Alliance between the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB), International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) and the World Blind Union (WBU) was held in Vienna, Austria on 10th February 2009, which was attended by Larry Campbell, President ICEVI, Maryanne Diamond, President WBU and the CEOs of the three organisations.

The meeting formulated a Communiqué outlining the mission and terms of reference of the alliance, which are enumerated below:

Mission Statement: The Vision Alliance is an initiative of IAPB, ICEVI and WBU to create greater synergy and collaboration between the three organisations at the global, regional, and national levels for the purpose of improving the services and programmes of each organization.

Areas for synergy: During initial meetings of the three Vision Alliance partners, the following areas were identified that would contribute to enhanced synergy and collaboration.

1. Developing mechanisms to assure a systematic exchange of information between the three organisations.
2. Identifying common areas of mutual concern where the three organisations can work together through joint advocacy.
3. Creating common platforms where stakeholders such as parents, persons with visual impairment, voluntary organisations, educators, rehabilitation specialists, optometrists and ophthalmologists can work together in planning comprehensive services for persons with visual impairment.

How to move the Vision Alliance forward: The members of the Vision Alliance have listed the following actions that could be implemented in the near future to turn intent into action.

1. Create a Vision Alliance page that would appear on the websites of all three organizations and provide information that would facilitate improved synergy and collaboration, particularly at the regional and national levels.
2. Share information on meetings of the respective organisations in order to avoid schedule conflicts and offer opportunities to coordinate some meetings to save on travel costs.
3. Identify cross cutting issues where the three member organisations might take a unified position and speak with a more powerful, unified voice.
4. Arrange for regular contributions by the other two organisations in the respective publications as a means of keeping the respective constituencies informed of the work of all members of the Vision Alliance.

5. Identify areas of mutual interest and concern where a single Task Force formed and led by one organisation with representation from the other two organizations could a) save resources, b) avoid potential duplication of effort, c) assure all perspectives are considered and d) lead to greater collaboration between the respective programmes of the three member organizations.
6. Facilitate meetings of the regional chairs of the respective organisations in order to nurture the Vision Alliance at the regional levels.

The recommendations of the communiqué are being followed-up.

EFA-VI PLANNING MEETING IN NAIROBI

In January 2009, Mr. Bernard Mogesa took over as the Regional Coordinator of the EFA-VI Global Campaign for the Africa region. The Regional Secretariat has been established at the premises of the Africa Union of the Blind, Nairobi, Kenya. The Global Task Force Meeting held in Vienna, Austria, in February 2009 suggested that two focus countries from the Africa region should be short-listed for implementing the campaign in 2009-2010 and consequently a planning meeting was organised in Nairobi from 31st March - 1st April 2009, which was attended by Mr. Wilfred Maina, Regional Chairperson, ICEVI Africa region; Dr. Elly Macha, Executive Director, AFUB; Dr. Mani, Secretary General, ICEVI, and Mr. Bernard Mogesa, EFA-VI Africa Regional Coordinator. The Africa Regional Committee had already short-listed Ethiopia, Kenya, Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, Mali, Rwanda, and Uganda as the focus countries. The planning meeting reviewed various parameters of the campaign, including that of geographical distribution, involvement of international non-governmental organisations, etc., and decided to select Ethiopia and Mozambique as the focus countries during the first phase of the implementation of the campaign. The meeting also suggested that EFA-VI preparation activities should be carried out in other countries. The Regional Coordinator will liaise with the Governments and the relevant stakeholders in these two countries and arrange national level workshops to evolve national plans for the implementation of the EFA-VI Global Campaign. ICEVI believes that the involvement of all stakeholders in these focus countries will ensure ownership of the campaign by the respective countries which is imperative for sustainability.

13TH WORLD CONFERENCE – INFORMATION ON REGISTRATION

ICEVI's 13th World Conference will be held at the Hotel Ambassador City, Jomtien, Thailand from 9th - 13th August 2010. While the main conference will be held from the 9th -12th, the General Assembly will be held on the forenoon of the 13th. The host committee, which consists of the Thai Blind Union and the Foundation for the Employment Promotion of the Blind (FEPB), has negotiated with the hotel to provide affordable prices for the participants of the conference. The tariff of the hotel rooms ranges from US \$ 35.00 for a standard room to US \$ 120.00 for a suite. The host committee met in Bangkok on April 24th to discuss the logistics of the conference including the forming of the transport committee, cultural programme committee, technology committee, and reception committee for the successful conduct of the conference. Please log onto www.icevi.org to learn more about the world conference. The early bird registration fee is US \$ 500.00, whereas the regular fee is US \$ 600.00. Register before March 10, 2010 and save US \$ 100.00.

13TH WORLD CONFERENCE – CALL FOR PAPERS

ICEVI is inviting abstracts for oral presentation and posters at its 13th World Conference. The topic of the conference is **“Education for All Children with Visual Impairment: Challenges and Strategies,”** and the presentations may fall under 16 major themes. Please visit our website www.icevi.org to learn more about the conference themes and the topics under which you can make presentations. In addition to the plenary, poster, and concurrent sessions, the conference will host 10 focus-day sessions on specific areas of interest and we also encourage you to take advantage of one of the focus-day sessions. During the Conference there will be dedicated sessions for poster presentations, an ideal way to present projects and outcomes of research. For the 12th world conference, we received more than 400 abstracts, and this indicates the interest of professionals in contributing to the academic discussions at the world conference. We are expecting more professional contributions for the 13th world conference and are confident you will be happy to become part of this great event, which reiterates the need for education for all children with visual impairment at a venue, where the concept of education for all children was raised twenty years back. The last date for the submission of abstracts is 31st October 2009. Be a part of this historic event!

EXTENSION OF HIGHER EDUCATION PROJECTS

The Nippon Foundation has been supporting ICEVI in implementing higher education projects in Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines to encourage visually impaired adults to make effective use of technology to enhance their performance in higher education. The programme commenced in Indonesia in 2006 and the excellent results during its implementation motivated the Nippon Foundation to extend its support to Vietnam and the Philippines in early 2008. The Nippon Foundation has extended the project till June 2009. The higher education project in these countries has enabled hundreds of young students with visual impairment to improve their academic performance at universities and colleges and also to improve their leadership skills. ICEVI believes that these youngsters will become role models for other persons with visual impairment. ICEVI views the higher education of persons with visual impairment as a continuum of the school education, which is promoted through the EFA-VI Global Campaign. ICEVI hopes that the Nippon Foundation will extend its support for expanding the EFA-VI in the future.

CONGRATS ANA FOR BECOMING THE UN COMMITTEE ROTATING CHAIRPERSON

The first Conference of States Parties on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), held at the United Nations on November 3, 2008 elected a new Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which will be in charge of monitoring the implementation of the CRPD. The Committee comprises seven men and five women, of which nine are persons with disabilities. Ana Palaez, who is representing the Spanish National Association of the Blind (ONCE) on the Global Task Force of the EFA-VI campaign, has been elected as the rotating Chairperson of the Committee. ICEVI and the Global Task Force extend hearty congratulations to Ana on this coveted assignment. Ana will certainly make an impact on this committee's work. Other members of this committee are Monsur Ahmed Choudhuri (Bangladesh), Amna Ali Al Suweidi (Qatar), György Könczei (Hungary), Cveto Uršič (Slovenia), Jia Yang (China), Mohamed Al-Tarawneh, (Jordan), Ron McCallum (Australia), Maria Soledad Cisternas Reyes (Chile), Germán Xavier Torres Correa (Ecuador), Lotfi Ben Lallohom (Tunisia), and Edah Wangechi Maina (Kenya). ICEVI congratulates all the members of this committee and hopes their work will result in a better tomorrow for persons with disabilities in general and persons with visual impairment in particular on all fronts including education and rehabilitation.

ICEVI'S PARTICIPATION IN UNESCO'S FLAGSHIP PROGRAMME

ICEVI is involved in UNESCO's Flagship Programme on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Towards Inclusion. A meeting of the members of the Flagship Programme was organised in Bangkok on 18th February 2009 on the sidelines of the Asia Pacific Congress on CBR. Dr. Kenneth Eklindh, Head of the Special Education Division at UNESCO; Mrs. Venus Ilagan, Secretary General of Rehabilitation International; Mr. Giampiero Griffo from Disabled Peoples International (DPI); Mr. David Webb from World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry (WNUSP); Prof. Markku Leskinen and Prof. Hannu Savolainen, both from the Flagship Secretariat; and Dr. M.N.G. Mani, Secretary General, ICEVI attended the meeting. The participants found that a lot of changes have taken place both at International Disability Alliance and at the Flagship secretariat and that there is a need to further strengthen information sharing from both sides. A link to the Flagship Programme has been created on the website of ICEVI.

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS – CALL FOR APPLICATIONS FOR 2010 SESSION

The International Institute for Social Entrepreneurs, located in Kerala, India, founded by Braille Without Borders (BWB) offers full scholarships and transport to qualified, motivated candidates with blindness or partial sight to participate in a one-year course, which covers business management, communication, project and financial planning, open source computer technology, English, public speaking, and fund-raising, among other subjects. The institute is now accepting applications for the course beginning January, 2010. Candidates from all over the world who are at least eighteen and older and who can read and write English are invited to apply for this one-year programme before the 30th of June. For more information please visit the website at <http://www.bwb-iise.org>

EUROPEAN CONFERENCE OF ICEVI

The ICEVI Europe region will hold its 7th regional conference from 5th-10th July in Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland. The theme of the conference is "Living in a Changing Europe," and more than 200 abstracts have already been received by the Programme Committee. Those interested in registering for the conference may log onto www.icevidublin2009.org for more information on the conference and also for online registration.

LARRY CAMPBELL, A KEYNOTE SPEAKER IN COUPVRAY, FRANCE

Larry Campbell, President ICEVI, will be delivering a keynote address on education at the International Braille Conference to be held in Coupvray, France, the birth place of Louis Braille in June 2009. This international conference is being organised to commemorate the bicentennial of Louis Braille's birth. Larry will highlight the importance of the global campaign on education for all children with visual impairment as well as Braille literacy at this important event.

EFA-VI MEETING WITH CBM'S REGIONAL DIRECTORS OF AFRICA

Monika Brenes (CBM, Germany), a member of the Global Task Force and Executive Committee of ICEVI and Dr. Mani, Secretary General, ICEVI met with the Regional Directors of CBM for the Africa region on 17th March 2009 in Bensheim, Germany, and apprised them of the EFA-VI Global Campaign. The Regional Directors evinced interest in this campaign and expressed the desire for cooperation in making the campaign a success in their respective regions. ICEVI is looking forward to effective interaction between the international non-governmental organisations working in the focus countries of the Africa region to bring synergy to the implementation of the campaign.

BRAILLE LITERACY – THEME OF THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE EDUCATOR

Two issues of The Educator, ICEVI's official magazine, are devoted to the topic of Braille, as 2009 is the bicentennial celebration of the birth of Louis Braille, the inventor of the Braille system, which enables millions of children with visual impairment all over the world to receive a formal education. The January 2009 issue of The Educator dealt with "Braille – Past, Present and the Future" and contained scholarly articles pertaining to the development of Braille. The July 2009 issue of The Educator will deal with Braille literacy highlighting practical approaches to teaching braille.

Those interested in making contributions to this issue are requested to contact the editor Harry Svensson (Harry.svensson@spsm.se), the guest editor Cay Holbrook (cay.holbrook@ubc.ca) or the associate editor M.N.G. Mani (sgicevi@vsnl.net) for details.

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

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