



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



(FORMERLY ICEVI NEWSLINE)

APRIL 2012

Message from the President

Since my last message in the Educator, we have held a further regional planning event, this time for East Asia, in Bangkok in April. I was very disappointed not to be able to attend due to illness, but from the notes it is clear that the meeting was very successful. Happily I am now firing on all cylinders again, and in fact I am writing this as I attend a conference organised by the China Disabled People's Forum in Beijing entitled "Removing Barriers, Promoting Integration: Towards Implementing the CRPD". I shall be speaking in a session on education where I shall be banging the drum for ICEVI.

In my last message I mentioned that we had been asked for a strategy for taking the EFA-VI campaign to the next stage by Gordon Brown, the former UK Prime Minister. This has now been drafted and when it has been considered by the Principal Officers and the ExCo we will send it to Mr Brown. It will also serve as the basis of discussion at the high-level strategic planning day which is being organised as part of the joint ICEVI-WBU Assemblies in Bangkok in November. Planning is now well advanced for the two days of joint sessions with WBU, and Dr Mani, our hard working CEO, has done a fantastic job in securing the agreement of the 93 speakers invited - no easy task. At the last count 88 had already accepted, 4 simply had a few queries and the rest were being rounded up. I hope by now you will have visited the Assembly website and registered if you wish to come.

Following the Africa strategic planning meeting in Accra, Ghana last July, we met with WBU and IAPB to progress the resolution agreed at the recent Executives of ICEVI and WBU about developing an advocacy strategy to persuade the World Bank and national governments to implement the UN's Education for All Millennium Development Goal in a way that was more inclusive of the needs of disabled children, including those with a visual impairment. We decided that we needed to refresh our campaign materials, and so we have produced a crisp statement of our philosophy and objectives. This can be seen on our website at www.icevi.org. However we were always clear that this needs to be amplified with guidelines on implementation, and I am extremely grateful to Dr Mani, and to Heather Mason and Steve McCall lately of

Birmingham University for undertaking the considerable amount of work involved in putting together an absolutely excellent draft. This is now with the Executive Committee for comment, and as soon as it is approved it too will be placed on the website.

Finally, I am delighted to be able to tell you that our higher education project in Cambodia, Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines has secured a further round of funding from the Nippon Foundation. This reflects great credit, for the work already done, on our Immediate Past President, Larry Campbell, and our very able colleagues in the four countries mentioned. Additionally this time, we will be working in Myanmar which will present us with exciting new opportunities.

C. M. Low

Colin Low
(ICEVI President)

ICEVI Annual Report 2011 published

ICEVI has published its annual report of 2011 which provides a glimpse of the yearlong activities of the organisation during the year. The Annual Report contains statistical information about ICEVI activities, networking initiatives with the International Non-Governmental Development Organisations, progress of the higher education activities implemented in collaboration with the Nippon Foundation, Vision Alliance concept, etc. Both the PDF and MS Word formats of the Annual Report can be accessed from the publication section of ICEVI website. Printed copies of the report are also being sent to ICEVI's key contacts, International Partner Members, Organisational and Individual members.

WBU-ICEVI Joint event – Message to Members

Elaborate arrangements are being made to host the historic joint assemblies of the World Blind Union (WBU) and the ICEVI in Bangkok in November 2012. The Registration for the event has just begun and the details can be accessed by logging on to the website <http://www.wbu-icevi2012.org>. Of special interest at the event is a joint session of WBU and ICEVI on 15 - 16 November where a series of academic presentations will be made in plenary and parallel sessions. During these days, 3 plenary sessions on The Right to Read, Access to Technology and Employment and 15 parallel sessions covering topics such as The CRPD, Early Intervention and Childhood Development, Multiply Disabled Visually Impaired - Assessing Community Needs, Encouraging Sport and Physical Activity, Research in Special Education, A new inclusive approach to government funded curriculum materials for the digital age, Challenges and solutions to independently accessing the Physical Environment, Practices and Challenges in EFA-VI, Advocacy for inclusion - Perspectives of parents and young people, Community Based Rehabilitation, Promoting and Developing Braille, Low Vision, Improving Access to Higher Education: A Case for Multi-Country Collaboration, Human Resource Demands for Inclusive Development/Capacity Building and a Workshop on Technology / Education will be conducted. Both the Presidents of WBU and ICEVI have personally written to the invited speakers and the responses are

highly encouraging. Both WBU and ICEVI are excited about this synergy and we are looking forward to a great event in November.

EFA-VI – Thanking our International Partners

ICEVI is glad that leading International Organisations working in the area of visual impairment are on board to support the implementation of the Global Campaign on Education for All Children with Visual Impairment. These organizations are CBM, Light for the World, ONCE, Perkins School for the Blind, Royal National Institute of Blind People, Norwegian Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted, Francophone Blind Union, Royal Dutch Visio, Sightsavers, Vision Australia, and World Blind Union. We believe that together all organizations can achieve more and complement the efforts of each other. With the support of the International Partners, ICEVI, acting in partnership with the World Blind Union (WBU), launched a Global Campaign in 2006 to improve educational access to children with visual impairment, particularly in the developing countries. The EFA-VI Global Campaign is currently underway in 12 focus countries including Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Honduras, Mozambique, Nepal, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Paraguay, The Dominican Republic and Vietnam. The preparations for implementation of the campaign are underway in Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Guatemala and Palestine.

Many key players including Governments, International Non-Governmental Development Organisations (INGDOs), local NGOs, Organisations of blind people etc., in the focus countries are engaged in providing services to children with disabilities in general and children with visual impairment in particular. ICEVI has been serving as a catalyst in creating a demand for education of children with visual impairment in these countries through awareness programmes being organised at various levels. We have also conducted more than 200 capacity building programmes for 17,479 teachers and parents. It is gratifying that the enrolment of children with visual impairment in these countries is certainly increasing and data from 11 countries (Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Honduras, Mozambique, Nepal, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Paraguay, The Dominican Republic and Vietnam) reveals that 49,102 additional children with visual impairment have

been enrolled in schools. ICEVI applauds the collective efforts of all stakeholders which are important factors in creating conducive environment for the inclusion of children with visual impairment in the mainstream education.

Regional Strategy Planning Meeting, Bangkok

A meeting of the ICEVI with the UN Bodies and the International Non-Governmental Developmental Organisations (INGDOs) present in the East Asia region was held at Suan Dusit Rajabhat University, Bangkok on 11 - 12 April 2012. The broad objectives of the meeting were: 1) To devise a framework within which we can work together to advocate for the education of children with visual impairment; and 2) To identify ways of sharing human resources and exchange good practice for the effective implementation of the Global Campaign. The meeting was attended by officers of WBU, ICEVI, and representatives of International Non-Governmental Development Organisations, UNESCO, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific and the Secretariat of South East Asia Ministers of Education Organisation. One of the key recommendations of this meeting is that the East Asia region may be divided into the following four sub-regions to strengthen educational services for children with visual impairment.

Sub Region 1: Thailand, Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia and Vietnam.

Sub Region 2: China, North Korea, Mongolia, Singapore and Hong Kong.

Sub Region 3: Philippines, South Korea, Chinese Taipei and Macau China

Sub Region 4: Indonesia, Japan, East Timor and Brunei

More development from the region will be posted on ICEVI website (www.icevi.org)

Regional Strategy Planning Meetings of ICEVI

With the experience gained by organizing Regional Planning meetings in the Africa and East Asia regions in 2011 and 2012 which were very productive, ICEVI will be organizing similar regional meetings of the West Asia region in September 2012 and Latin America region after the

WBU-ICEVI joint event in Bangkok. These meetings will be used to facilitate the regional players to formulate effective regional plans for expanding educational opportunities for children with visual impairment. More information on this will be available in the subsequent publications of ICEVI.

Impact of China Research

ICEVI, the Asian Foundation for the Prevention of Blindness and CBM supported a research in China to identify factors contributing to success of inclusive education. Ms. Xianguang Peng, the past Regional Chairperson of ICEVI East Asia region spearheaded this research through the China National Institute for Education and Research (CNIER) and ICEVI is glad that the research has become a solid source for formulating policy on inclusive education. Contribution in the policy front is also one of the indicators of success of the campaign and ICEVI is glad that the EFA-VI campaign is contributing to such changes.

Strategy Development Meeting with Allen Foster, President, CBM

ICEVI Executive Committee which met in Leipzig in October 2011 suggested that the organization should actively involve itself in Global Initiatives in order to replicate the promising practices of the EFA-VI Global Campaign. A brainstorming session consisting of Colin Low, *President, ICEVI*, Allen Foster, *President, CBM*, Larry Campbell, *Immediate Past President, ICEVI*, Dr. Jill Keefe, *First Vice President, ICEVI*, Peter Ackland, *CEO, IAPB* and MNG Mani, *CEO, ICEVI* was conducted in London on 21st March 2012. Besides formulating strategies for the session on EFA-VI Global Campaign to be organized during the WBU-ICEVI joint event on 17th November, discussions were also held to develop a comprehensive strategy document to expand the Global Campaign in all dimensions addressing advocacy, policy formulation in countries, promoting promising practices on inclusion, capacity building programmes etc. A draft document based on the discussions and the way forward is being developed which will be used as the background literature for further discussions and adoption in

Bangkok in November 2012. ICEVI will circulate the document to a wider audience for feedback and it is believed that this vital document will serve as the blue print for ICEVI activities in the ensuing quadrennium 2013-2016.

WBU Diversity Forum

World Blind Union Diversity Forum will be held in Bangkok on 10th and 11th November 2012. The focus of the Diversity Forum will be to demonstrate the challenges faced by blind women, young people, older people, ethnic minorities and indigenous people. More importantly the Forum will help to identify ways in which people from these groups have brought themselves together, have focused successfully on working and campaigning to change their lives.

Over a 2 hour lunch period on the 10th November we will be holding a 'shared fayre' during which individuals, agencies and projects will have the opportunity to staff a table to which delegates will be invited to 'drop by' and to network. You will have the opportunity to discuss and share ideas, make contacts and to build up networks.

Through the shared fayre we hope that members and partners from across the world who are attending the Diversity Forum will get to share, to network but most importantly to take up learning and contacts to build on and to be able to make a real difference in their communities.

If you or a colleague will be attending the Diversity Forum, the WBU GA, the AFUB GA or ICEVI GA and would like to participate and to share your knowledge please contact alan@fsbinsight.co.uk .

Vision Alliance

Vision Alliance is an initiative of the International Agency for Prevention of Blindness (IAPB), ICEVI, and WBU to create greater synergy and collaboration among the three organizations at global, regional and national levels to improve services and programs of each organization.

Areas of synergy:

- Development of mechanisms to ensure a systematic exchange of information between the three organizations.
- Identify areas of common concern on which the three organizations can work together through joint advocacy.
- Create common platforms where stakeholders such as parents, people with visual disabilities, voluntary organizations, educators and ophthalmologists can work together in planning comprehensive services for people with visual disabilities.

The Vision Alliance is in the process of making itself active in countries where EFA-VI Global Campaign is underway.

Higher Education Project Extension

ICEVI and the Nippon Foundation have been implementing a project for Higher Education of students with visual impairment in Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam. This project is primarily focusing on the use of technological applications to increase the higher education opportunities for students with visual impairments and it has already benefited more than 900 students in these countries. The Nippon Foundation is pleased with the outcomes of this project and has agreed to extend the same in 2012-13 to assist more students. In addition to these four countries, ground work will also be initiated to extend the programme to one or two additional countries in the East Asia region. A meeting of the coordinators of this project was held at the Suan Dusit Rajabhat University on 25 – 26 May 2012.

Beyond 2015 Initiative

The International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC) consisting of a number of international and professional organizations has started deliberating on what will happen to the global Education for All initiative once the target year of 2015 is over. ICEVI will be discussing with the international community through the IDDC partners

to include education of children with disabilities on international and national agendas of the Education for All initiatives.

Paths to Literacy Initiative

The Perkins School for the Blind *and* the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI) have come up with a new website by name **Paths to Literacy for students who are blind or visually impaired** (<http://www.pathstoliteracy.org>). The purpose of the website is to assist educators and families in the quest to provide literacy experience for children who are blind or visually impaired. The information on this site ranges from a basic overview of literacy to various stages of development and special challenges as well as an exploration of different media (print, Braille, auditory strategies). The viewers are encouraged to add their ideas and questions so that this will be an interactive hub of resources.

Math Project with Sightsavers

Sightsavers has initiated a project by name **Access Mathematics Project** with an objective to popularize Mathematics among visually impaired children in schools. It has asked ICEVI to allow its publication "Mathematics Made Easy for Children with Visual Impairment" to be used as a source document for the project. The Principal Officers have endorsed the idea and informed Sightsavers that the book can be converted into accessible format for wider use with visually impaired students. ICEVI is also exploring the possibility of posting the document on its website for larger use by teacher educators and teachers of visually impaired children throughout the world.

IAPB General Assembly – Joint Stand

The IAPB General Assembly will be held in Hyderabad from 17 to 20 September 2012. The WBU and ICEVI will setup a joint stand highlighting the activities of both the organizations with particular reference to the Global Campaign on Education for All Children with Visual Impairment (EFA-VI). It will give an opportunity to a large number of medical professionals who will be attending the General

Assembly to know more about the educational aspects of children with visual impairment. Small handouts for distribution are also being prepared to raise awareness about Education of Children with Visual Impairment and also the Millennium Development Goals.

Migel Medal

ICEVI congratulates Kathy Huebner, Regional Chair of North America and Caribbean Region of ICEVI, who received the M.C. Migel Medal on May 3rd 2012 at the AFB leadership meeting in St. Petersburg, Florida. This is an award to recognize the professional excellence in the area of visual impairment.

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 Educator may contact Aubrey Webson (Aubrey.Webson@perkins.org), Editor or 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.

For further details, contact:



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