

The Educator



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**The International Council for Education of
People with Visual Impairment**

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Our International Partners





Message from **The President & CEO**



Dear Readers

Welcome to the first issue of The Educator for the 2021-2024 quadrennium. The quadrennium commenced with the first-ever virtual ICEVI General Assembly which was a key feature of the World Blindness Summit in June 2021. The Summit was organised by an International Organising Committee (IOC) consisting of ICEVI, the World Blind Union, and our host organisation, ONCE, the Spanish National Organisation of the Blind. The enormous success of the Summit, which included in-person and online presentations, meetings and webinars, was in large part due to the efforts of the ONCE team. The team provided ICT and language translation support for the 3000+ presenters and participants from 190 countries.

It is anticipated that ICEVI, like many international development organisations, will continue to use a combination of online and in-person approaches to information sharing, collaboration, and service delivery. The increased use of online platforms for conferences, meetings and workshops will positively contribute to climate action and the reduction of physical, financial and geographical access barriers to participation. The World Blindness Summit, however, highlighted the need to address existing inequalities in the availability of accessible ICT and internet connectivity across geographical regions and communities.

In the coming months, the ICEVI Executive Board will prepare the strategic plan for the 2021-2024 quadrennium. ICEVI will continue to prioritise collaboration with our international and regional members and partners to promote the right to quality education, as enshrined in Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. ICEVI will also prioritise collaborative partnerships with the global education and disability community and United Nations agencies as we strive to “build back better” post COVID-19 for children and young people with disabilities. Our efforts will include placing children with vision impairment and their families at the centre of education initiatives across the seven global regions of ICEVI.

In closing this message, we express gratitude to our incoming and outgoing office bearers. Without their substantial contributions, ICEVI’s mission and goals could not be achieved. We look forward to inviting you to 70th anniversary celebrations of ICEVI in 2022.

Frances Gentle
President

M.N.G. Mani
Chief Executive Officer



Message from **The Editor**

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

This issue brings you information on the changes to the Articles of Association and Memorandum of Association approved at the virtual General Assembly in June, as well as other proceedings from that event. In those proceedings, you will read about the new ICEVI officers, including the new Regional Presidents. We are, of course, grateful to the officers and Regional Presidents from the last quadrennium—Rima Canawati, Ben Clare, Bhushan Punani, Nandini Rawal, Cristina Sanz, Praveena Sukhraj-Ely, and Hans Welling—who served an extra year in their terms of office due to the postponed General Assembly. We also welcome our new officers and Regional Presidents: Bhushan Punani, as First Vice President; Sabine Fijn van Draat, as Second Vice President; Praveena Sukhraj-Ely, as Treasurer; and Regional Presidents Julio César Canizález (Latin America), Susan LaVenture (North America-Caribbean), Birendra Raj Pokharel (West Asia), John Ravenscroft (Europe), and Joanne Mosen (Pacific). These officers and regional presidents will serve until the next General Assembly in 2024, as will Frances Gentle, who serves another term as ICEVI Global President, and continuing regional presidents Gertrude Oforiwa Fefoame (Africa) and Aria Indrawati (East Asia). Congratulations to all, and please join me in thanking all of our officers and regional presidents for their service.

This issue also contains descriptions and links to some of the sessions from the World Blindness Summit on YouTube. We expect translations to be available for all of the sessions in the future.

You will also find an interview with ICEVI President Emeritus Larry Campbell. A new book, ***Partnerships for Change: National Strategies—Regional Collaboration***, debuted at the World Blindness Summit. You'll learn more about it—and how to obtain it for yourself—in the interview.

We continue to benefit from the contributions of Susan LaVenture, President of the International Association for Parents of the Visually Impaired, who has submitted another *Parent Perspectives* column, and from Ben Clare, former Pacific Regional President, who has submitted a *Talking Technology* column on using your smart phone as a navigation guide. I am so fortunate to have their support and appreciate everything they have done and will do for ICEVI.

We would appreciate your articles and ideas for the next issue of *The Educator*—please don't hesitate to contact me at any time.

Kay Alicyn Ferrell

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World Blindness Summit 2021

The World Blindness Summit (WBS) jointly organised by the World Blind Union, International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment, and the ONCE, Spain on 28-30 June 2021, was attended by more than 3000 participants from over 170 countries.

There were three components of the Summit—the first one was inclusive of the opening and valedictory sessions of the event and a book launch ceremony. The second component consisted of a series of thematic webinars organised by WBU and ICEVI. The first two components were common events for both WBU and ICEVI, whereas the third component consisted of exclusive general assemblies of WBU and ICEVI, participated in only by each organization's delegates.

The following sections provide details of the ICEVI General Assembly proceedings, summaries of the webinars organised by ICEVI, and some impressions of the participants from the East Asia region who attended the General Assembly sessions.

ICEVI General Assembly 2021

PROCEEDINGS

1. **Dr. Frances Gentle, President, ICEVI who presided over the General assembly welcomed the delegates.**
2. **The following 8 key contributors and many friends of ICEVI at the regional level and also at the national levels had passed during the Quadrennium.**

- **William G. Brohier**, Past President, ICEVI
- **Susan Jay Spungin**, Past Vice President, ICEVI
- **Ken Stuckey**, Editor, ICEVI's History Book, 2002
- **Mrs. Panagiota (Betty) Leotsakou**, Past Regional President, ICEVI Europe Region
- **Dr. James Aiwa**, Past Regional President, ICEVI Pacific Region
- **Mr. A.K. Mittal**, WBU Representative on ICEVI Executive Committee
- **Professor N.K. Jangira**, ICEVI Awardee, India
- **Dr. Elly Macha**, Deputy Regional Chair, ICEVI Africa region

Ms. Nandini Rawal, ICEVI Treasurer, paid tribute and led the ICEVI General assembly in observing a minute silence to mark our respect to the departed souls.

3. Report on Finances and Presentation of Audit Report of 2019:

Ms. Nandini Rawal, Treasurer, ICEVI, thanked the international partner members of ICEVI and The Nippon Foundation for their continued support in the past and especially at the recent time of the Covid pandemic. The quadrennial report of ICEVI which was sent to the delegates as a separate attachment included the audited report of ICEVI for the year 2019. The Treasurer informed that the audited report of 2020 was also under process. As per the report on finance, the opening balance in 2021 stood at US\$ 599,522, which is healthy. This included a reserve fund of US\$ 200,000, which ICEVI has been maintaining for many years. More than 80% of funds ICEVI received from the international partner members and The Nippon Foundation was spent on direct project activities in the ICEVI regions. With the ICEVI regions becoming legal entities, there is a scope for funds mobilisation at the regional level for supporting project activities at the regional as well as national levels in the future. In summary, the financial position of ICEVI presented at the General Assembly was healthy and ICEVI EXCO and the delegates thanked the international partner members, The Nippon Foundation, and organisational members for their support to ICEVI in furthering the cause of education for all children with visual impairment worldwide.

4. ICEVI Constitutional Amendments:

A brief note on the Governance Framework and the constitutional amendments was published in the January 2021 issue of The Educator and also circulated to the voting delegates of the General Assembly. Ms. Sabine Fijn Van Draat, who was the convenor of the ICEVI governance committee, presented the following amendments:

Proposed amendments to the 2010 Articles of Association (AOA) and Memorandum of Association of ICEVI

The 2010 Articles of Association (AOA) and Memorandum of Association (MOA) of ICEVI were endorsed in 2010. The Executive Committee proposes the following amendments to the AOA and MOA for endorsement by the ICEVI General Assembly, to be held virtually in June 2021. These amendments have come about as a result of the work of the ICEVI Governance Committee in developing a Governance Framework that was approved by the ICEVI Executive Committee in October 2019. The Governance Framework sets out the governance and administration processes of ICEVI at global and regional levels of the Council, and serves to ensure that all activities carried out under the ICEVI name and logo are compliant with the Vision, Mission, and Values of ICEVI, and also the ICEVI Code of Conduct and terms of reference.

Note for readers:

*Please note that the proposed amendments are indicated in **bold** with double asterisks (**) at the beginning and end of each proposed change. Additional comments are shown in purple colour and commence with the word “Note”.*

Articles of Association

PROPOSED: That the nomenclature used in all articles be amended as follows:

- The global body of the ICEVI be called ****ICEVI Global**** and the regions be called ****ICEVI Regions****
- The nomenclature ****Secretary General**** be changed to ****Chief Executive Officer****
- The nomenclature ****Regional Chairperson**** be changed to ****Regional President****
- The nomenclature ****Regional Committee**** be changed to ****Regional Board****
- The nomenclature ****Executive Committee**** be changed to ****Executive Board****

Note: The above proposed changes to the nomenclature will give greater distinction between the global and regional structures of the Council.

1. Membership

Note: As per the 2010 Articles of Association, membership is open to any individual or organisation subscribing to the objects of the Council as laid down in the Memorandum of Association.

PROPOSED: That clauses 1.1 and 1.3 of Article 1 be amended as follows:

- 1.1. Membership of the Council is open to any individual or ****non profit organisation**** subscribing to the objects of the Council as laid down in the Memorandum of Association.
- 1.3. ****The Council has different classes of membership. Voting and non-voting rights are defined by the Executive Board in the Bye-Laws.****

Note: The nomenclature of Clause 1.2 has been changed.

2. Regional Structure

Note: Each ICEVI region is either registered as an NGO with a legal entity, or affiliated with an existing legal entity, within the region. The following proposed changes aim to ensure that regional activities carried out under the ICEVI name and logo are compliant with the Vision, Mission, and Values of ICEVI, and also the ICEVI Code of Conduct and terms of reference.

PROPOSED: That the following clauses of Article 2 of the 2010 AOA be revised as follows:

- 2.2. The Regional Members shall elect from the region a ****Regional President to act on behalf of the region on the Executive Board of the Council and one or more Regional Deputy Presidents to support him/her in implementing the activities of the region.****
- 2.3. The Regional ****Presidents**** shall be responsible for establishing a Regional Board of not less than 5 members. Representation on the Regional Board shall reflect the diversity of the region.

Note: The final sentence in clause 2.3 in the 2010 AOA has been removed, namely: "The immediate past Chairperson and any Principal Officer belonging to the region shall be ex officio member of the Committee."

- 2.4. The Regional Board shall be responsible for ****ensuring that the region meets the terms of reference to operate under the ICEVI name and logo, as defined in the Bye-laws.****

- 2.5. ****The titles of the Regional Presidents and any Deputy Presidents are designated by each region according to the Constitution, customs and traditions of the region.****

Note: Clauses 2.5 to 2.9 of the 2010 AOA have been removed, as these articles are the responsibility of registered ICEVI regions, and also the regions that are affiliated with an existing legal entity with the region.

- 2.6. The Regional ****Boards**** shall appoint delegates with voting rights to the General Assembly using a process which respects diversities within the region. The number of delegates per region shall be laid down in the Bye-laws.
- 2.7. ****The Regional Boards may seek approval from the Executive Board to establish national bodies of ICEVI in specific countries, providing the Regional Board has determined that such national structures would be sustainable and will strengthen the mission, vision, values and strategy of ICEVI.****

Note: All other clause changes are to nomenclature only.

3. General Assembly

- 3.2. Those entitled to vote at the General Assembly shall consist of the Executive ****Board****, not more than two Deputy ****Presidents**** from each region and the other delegates with voting rights appointed by the Regional ****Boards**** in accordance with ****the Bye-laws****.

Note: All other clause changes are to nomenclature only.

4. Executive Board

PROPOSED: That the following clauses and sections of Article 4 be revised as follows:

- 4.1. (e) one representative of each of the following ****umbrella Organisations****:
- International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness
 - Deafblind International
 - World Blind Union
- 4.2. The Executive ****Board**** shall ensure that ****the regions meet the Code of conduct and terms of reference to operate under the ICEVI name and logo, as defined in the Bye-laws.****

- 4.10. The Executive ****Board**** shall have power to appoint paid staff ****on a contractual basis**** in order to further the work of the Council.

Note: Changes to other clauses and sections of Article 4 relate to nomenclature only.

5. Principal officers

- 5.5. The ****Chief Executive Officer**** will normally be in attendance at meetings of the Principal Officers and Executive Board unless asked to withdraw while matters relating to his/her position as ****Chief Executive Officer**** are discussed.

Note: Changes to other clauses of Article 5 relate to nomenclature only.

6. International Consultative Committee

Note: The current (2010) Articles of Association refers to an advisory body called the International Consultative Committee (ICC), which was expected to meet once a year with the Executive Committee. This committee was relevant when ICEVI and WBU jointly implemented the global campaign on education for all children with visual impairment, and organisations other than those present at the Executive Committee participated in the campaign. In the present context, there is no longer a need for the ICC.

PROPOSED: That Article 6 be deleted in its entirety.

6. Terms of Office (**Note:** Article 7 in 2010 AOA.)

Note: Clause 7.4 of the current (2010) Articles of Association states: Regional Chairpersons and International Members of the Executive Committee should normally serve for no more than two full terms.

PROPOSED: That clauses 7.4 and 7.5 be combined and amended as follows:

- 6.4. ****The terms of office of the Regional Presidents are determined by the Regional Constitution, whereas the elected Principal Officers of the Council should normally serve in the same position for no more than two full terms.****

7. Alternative Methods of Decision Making (**Note:** Article 8 in 2010 AOA.)

Note: Clause changes are to nomenclature only.

8. Finance (**Note:** Previously Article 9 in 2010 AOA.)

Note: Clause changes relate to nomenclature only.

9. Use of Council's name (**Note:** Article 10 in 2010 AOA.)

Note: The use of the Council's name as per the current 2010 Articles of Association pertains to fundraising, sale of publications and income generation through products.

PROPOSED: That the following clause be added to Article 9

9.2. ****The ICEVI Executive Board reserves the right to withdraw agreement to be identified as an ICEVI region, should the Executive Board deem there has been a failure by the Regional Board to meet the Code of Conduct and terms of reference for use of the name and logo of ICEVI.****

10. Amendment of Articles of Association and Bye-laws (**Note:** Article 11 in 2010 AOA.)

Note: Clause changes relate to nomenclature only.

11. Dissolution of the Council (**Note:** Article 12 in 2010 AOA.)

Note: No change.

12. Miscellaneous (**Note:** Article 13 in 2010 AOA.)

Note: No change.

Memorandum of Association

The following amendments are proposed to the 2010 Memorandum of Association of ICEVI in order to eliminate any potential conflict of interest of Council Members.

Object 3:

PROPOSED: To add an additional clause, in recognition of the importance of collaborative partnerships within the Council.

3.8. ****To support and promote member and partner networks at global and regional levels of the Council.****

Object 5, clause 5.3:

The wording of Object 5, clause 5.3, in the 2010 MOA is as follows:

Notwithstanding the previous sub-clause members including directors may be paid interest at a reasonable rate on money lent to the Council and may be reimbursed in respect of reasonable out-of-pocket expenses (including hotel and travel costs) actually incurred in running the Council.

PROPOSED: To delete the wording “be paid interest at a reasonable rate on money lent to the Council and may” from clause 5.3, so that the clause reads as follows:

5.3. **Notwithstanding the previous sub-clause members including directors may be reimbursed in respect of reasonable out-of-pocket expenses (including hotel and travel costs) actually incurred in running the Council.**

Object 5, clause 5.4:

The wording of a section of Object 5, clause 5.4, in the 2010 MOA is as follows:

Provided a director may receive a benefit where the Council makes a payment to a company in which he or she has a less than five percent shareholding.

PROPOSED: To delete Object 5 of clause 5.4 in its entirety.

For the endorsement of the amendments, ICEVI required a quorum of two third of delegates, that is 74. ICEVI had received endorsements from 85 of the 111 delegates and three have abstained. There was no opposition for the amendments proposed by the executive committee.

Therefore, the resolution that the “constitutional amendments proposed by the ICEVI executive committee in the Articles of Association (AOA) and the Memorandum of Association (MOA), which were published in the January 2021 issue of The Educator and also circulated to the delegates of the ICEVI General Assembly be approved” was endorsed by the General Assembly.

5. Introduction of Regional Presidents and short remarks by them

The Latin America, East Asia, North America, Pacific and the West Asia regions of ICEVI had already elected their regional presidents for the Quadrennium 2021-24. The Africa region will have their election in November 2021 as per the Constitution of the ICEVI Africa region. Similarly ICEVI Europe will elect its regional president in the forthcoming Regional Assembly probably in 2022. The outgoing regional presidents and the incoming regional presidents of the ICEVI regions were requested to make brief statements.

Africa region: The present regional president **Ms. Gertrude Oforiwa Fefoame** from Ghana had contributed significantly for the growth of ICEVI Africa region. It was in her tenure that the Africa region had become a legal entity. The regional president of the region for the



forthcoming Quadrennium will be introduced to the ICEVI delegates once the Africa regional board meeting is over in November 2021 where the regional president is elected. Gertrude addressed the delegates of the General Assembly.

East Asia region: The current regional president **Ms. Aria Indrawati** from Indonesia was re-elected for the Quadrennium 2021–2024. Aria heads the region where one of the flagship programmes of ICEVI—The Nippon Foundation-supported higher education project was underway. Aria was also instrumental in registering the ICEVI Indonesia network as a legal body. Aria made her brief statement at the General Assembly.



Europe region: For the Quadrennium 2017-20, **Mrs. Panagiota (Betty) Leotsakou** from Greece was elected as the regional president. Due to the sudden demise of Betty in 2017, **Dr. Hans Welling**, the former vice president of ICEVI and also the regional president of the Europe region was asked by the region to serve as the regional president for the rest of the Quadrennium. Hans has been a great supporter of ICEVI in various capacities. The regional president of the Europe region will be elected when its regional assembly is held probably in 2022. Therefore, Hans is continuing as the regional president until the new regional president is elected. Hans made a statement at the General Assembly.



Latin America region: **Ms. Cristina Sanz** from Argentina served as the regional president of the Latin America region and contributed significantly to its development. It was during her tenure as the regional president that the region was registered as a legal entity. ICEVI places on record its gratitude to the contributions made by Cristina.



Mr. Julio César Canizález from El Salvador has been elected as the new regional president of the Latin America region and ICEVI wishes him great success in his position. Julio made a brief statement at the General Assembly.



North America and the Caribbean region: **Dr. Kay Ferrell** from USA served as the regional president of the North America and the Caribbean region for the past two Quadrennium. Kay contributed significantly to ICEVI for a long time and her recent contribution was the development of ICEVI teacher training curriculum for inclusive education that can be accessed from the ICEVI website. Kay is also serving as the editor of



ICEVI's magazine The Educator. ICEVI profoundly thanked Kay for her contribution and is pleased that she will continue her role as the editor of The Educator. Kay addressed the delegates of the General Assembly.

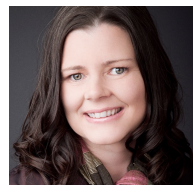
Ms. Susan LaVenture, who is an advocate of parents' movement at the global level, has been elected as the regional president of the NAC region for the Quadrennium 2021-24. ICEVI believes that her new position will provide impetus for strengthening the parents' movement within ICEVI. Susan addressed the General Assembly.



Pacific region: Mr. Ben Clare from Australia served as the regional president of the Pacific region for the Quadrennium 2017–20. Ben expanded the activities of ICEVI especially in the island countries of the region and contributed significantly in the area of technology. ICEVI placed on record its gratitude to Ben for his contributions for the growth of Pacific regional activities. Ben addressed the delegates of the General Assembly.



Dr. Joanne Mosen from Australia who is from the developmental field in the area of disability took over as the new regional president of the Pacific region. ICEVI hopes Jo will bring a new perspective to the regional development in the Pacific region. Jo addressed the delegates of the General Assembly.



West Asia region: Dr. Bhushan Punani from India served as the regional president of the West Asia region for many terms. With his legal background, he contributed significantly to ICEVI in framing policies. He also represented ICEVI in global forums and organised regional conferences in every tenure of his presidency. ICEVI expressed its gratitude to Bhushan and he addressed the delegates.



The West Asia region had elected **Mr. Birendra Raj Pokharel** from Nepal as its new regional president. Birendra is closely associated with ICEVI Nepal. Being an activist in the field, Birendra will certainly bring new momentum to the ICEVI West Asia region. Birendra addressed the General Assembly.



6. Report of Nominations Committee

Andrew Griffiths, chairman of the ICEVI nominations committee shared with the voting

delegates of ICEVI through mail, the slate of principal officers proposed for the Quadrennium 2021-24 with a request to endorse the nomination or provide any other suggestions. The proposed names were:

- **Dr. Frances Gentle** for the position of president,
- **Dr. Bhushan Punani** for first vice president
- **Ms. Sabine Fijn van Draat** for second vice president, and
- **Dr. Praveena Sukhraj-Ely** for the position of treasurer.

Following is the summary of the responses received from the delegates before the stipulated deadline of 20 May 2021.

- 88 endorsements approving the slate of principal officers were received, which is more than 2/3rd majority of the ICEVI delegates.
- No opposition for the proposed candidates was received from any delegate.
- No alternative names were suggested for any of the four positions.

In the face-to-face General Assembly the principal officers are suggested by the nominations committee for endorsement and the delegates either unanimously approve or may suggest candidates from the floor of the General Assembly. As this process is cumbersome in a virtual General Assembly the delegates were contacted by mail and requested for their written endorsement. The responses clearly indicate that the proposed slate of principal officers had already received overwhelming endorsement for their respective positions and technically elected to assume office for the next Quadrennium. The General Assembly endorsed the recommendations of the nominations committee and welcomed the new principal officers for the Quadrennium 2021 to 2024.

7. Short remarks by the new Principal Officers

Dr. M.N.G. Mani, CEO ICEVI, formally invited the President Elect and the new Principal Officers to make their remarks.

President: Dr. Frances Gentle (Australia):

Dr. Gentle has been President of ICEVI for the past quadrennium and has been elected for her second term. She has contributed significantly to the field of education for children with blindness or low vision in Australia and internationally for the past three decades. She is also co-president of the South Pacific Educators in Vision Impairment (SPEVI); and represents ICEVI on the Executive Committee of World Blind Union.



Frances is a member of the academic and research staff at the NextSense Institute (formerly the Renwick Centre for Research and Professional Education within the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children's Renwick Centre in Australia); and holds conjoint positions with Macquarie University and the University of Newcastle. Dr. Gentle addressed the delegates of the General Assembly.

First Vice President:

Outgoing First Vice President: Dr. Praveena Sukhraj-Ely (South Africa):

Dr. Praveena served as the First Vice President of ICEVI from 2016–20. She represented ICEVI and the World Blind Union (WBU) on the International Disability Alliance and also represented ICEVI on the Accessible Books Consortium and many other international bodies. Dr. Praveena addressed the delegates.



Incoming First Vice President: Dr. Bhushan Punani (India):

Dr. Punani has been elected by the delegates for the position of the First Vice President of ICEVI. He has a long and active history within ICEVI, is General Secretary of the Blind People's Association (India), and has significant experience of advocacy on the rights of people with visual impairment. ICEVI believes that his vast administrative experience and legal background will auger well for the organisation. Dr. Punani addressed the delegates of the General Assembly.



Second Vice President:

Outgoing Second Vice President: Ms. Rima Canawati (Palestine):

Ms. Rima Canawati has a long history with ICEVI and did significant work for increasing the involvement of ICEVI in the Middle East region. She also played a key role in the implementation of education for all children with visual impairment campaign in Palestine and contributed to policy statements of ICEVI submitted to global bodies.



Incoming Second Vice President – Ms. Sabine Fijn van Draat (The Netherlands):

Ms. Sabine Fijn van Draat has been serving on the Executive Committee of ICEVI for the past seven years, representing Royal Dutch Visio, one of the International Partner Members. She has led the work of the ICEVI Executive Governance Committee in the past quadrennium, which has successfully completed its work. She has extensive experience of development and working on inclusive education and is currently



Coordinator of the Allied Charity Foundation. Sabine addressed the delegates of the General Assembly.

Treasurer:

Outgoing Treasurer: Mrs. Nandini Rawal (India):

Mrs. Nandini Rawal is one of the most popular faces in ICEVI circles. Known for her excellent communication loaded with a sense of humour and poems, she served as the master of ceremonies for many international events of ICEVI. She served as the treasurer of ICEVI for the past many terms and brought clear financial structures that will strengthen ICEVI going forward. She is currently serving as the Executive Director of the Blind People's Association which is one of the premier organisations for persons with disabilities in India. Nandini addressed the delegates of the General Assembly.



Incoming Treasurer: Dr. Praveena Sukhraj-Ely (South Africa):

Financial management and accounting is one of the core job functions performed by Dr. Praveena Sukhraj-Ely on a daily basis as a Director in her employment with the National Department of Justice and Constitutional Development in South Africa. She has experience in a range of functions that are associated with the position of Treasurer. Her various positions in government and national and international NGOs will allow her to support ICEVI effectively during the next quadrennium. Dr Praveena addressed the delegates.



8. Quadrennial Plans

Dr. M.N.G. Mani, CEO ICEVI, informed the General assembly that the ICEVI regions will be preparing quadrennial plans outlining the priority activities that will be taken up by the regions during the period 2022 to 2024. He mentioned that the quadrennial plans will be prepared by involving the members of the regional boards, representatives of international partner organisations present in the regions, national stakeholders, parents, persons with visual impairment, and all other stakeholders. The quadrennial plans are expected to be ready by the end of September 2021 that will be consolidated thereafter and presented at the executive committee meeting of ICEVI that is likely to take place in December 2021. The detailed quadrennial plans will be posted on the ICEVI website and also shared with the ICEVI constituency.

9. Words of Gratitude

Dr. France Gentle, the President of ICEVI for the Quadrennium 2021 – 2024 and Dr M.N.G. Mani, CEO ICEVI, thanked all the delegates for making the General Assembly successful. They also placed on record the special appreciation of ICEVI to ONCE and the World Blind Union for the efficient conduct of the first virtual General Assembly. They also thanked all the international partner members, the former regional presidents, and their parent organisations for providing administrative support to ICEVI. Special thanks were extended to the staff of the former Treasurer of ICEVI Mrs. Nandini Rawal (Harmish Modi and Lalita) and the staff of the ICEVI Secretariat (M.R. Visvanathan, N. Velmurugan and B.M. Bhagath Singh) for their dedicated work in ICEVI. They hoped that there would be opportunities soon to meet in person and organise international and regional conferences of ICEVI that would strengthen the momentum going forward.

Revised Articles of Association—July 2021



International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment

COMPANY No. 4521195
The COMPANIES ACTS 1985 and 1989

COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE AND NOT HAVING A SHARE CAPITAL

ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION OF INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR EDUCATION OF PEOPLE WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

1. Membership:

- 1.1. Membership of the Council is open to any individual or non profit organisation subscribing to the objects of the Council as laid down in the Memorandum of Association.
- 1.2. Members shall pay an annual subscription as shall be determined from time to time by the Executive Board. Subscriptions shall reflect the diversity of the financial resources available to different organisations and in the different regions of the Council.
- 1.3. The Council has different classes of membership. Voting and non-voting rights are defined by the Executive Board in the Bye-Laws.

2. Regional Structure:

- 2.1. The basic structure of the Council is a regional one and the members of the Council are primarily members of a region. The Executive Board shall determine the number of regions into which the Council is divided and the countries making up each region.
- 2.2. The Regional Members shall elect from the region a Regional President to act on behalf of the region on the Executive Board of the Council and one or more Regional Deputy Presidents to support him/her in implementing the activities of the region.

- 2.3. The Regional Presidents shall be responsible for establishing a Regional Board of not less than 5 members. Representation on the Regional Board shall reflect the diversity of the region.
- 2.4. The Regional Board shall be responsible for ensuring that the region meets the terms of reference to operate under the ICEVI name and logo, as defined in the Bye-laws.
- 2.5. The titles of the Regional Presidents and any Deputy Regional Presidents are designated by each region according to the Constitution, customs and traditions of the region.
- 2.6. The Regional Boards shall appoint delegates with voting rights to the General Assembly using a process which respects diversities within the region. The number of delegates per region shall be laid down in the Bye-laws.
- 2.7. The Regional Boards may seek approval from the Executive Board to establish national bodies of ICEVI in specific countries, providing the Regional Board has determined that such national structures would be sustainable and will strengthen the mission, vision, values and strategy of ICEVI.
- 2.8. The Regional Presidents shall report regularly to the President of the Council on an agreed schedule.
- 2.9. If a Regional President is unable to fulfil his/her duties, one of the Deputy Regional presidents shall take over by agreement among themselves. If neither the Regional President nor any of the Deputy Regional Presidents is able to fulfil these duties, the Regional Board in association with the Regional President shall take decisions about the continuation of the region's work.
- 2.10. The Regional Boards shall appoint delegates with voting rights to the General Assembly using a process which respects diversities within the region. The number of delegates per region shall be laid down in the Bye-laws.

3. General Assembly:

- 3.1. A meeting of the General Assembly shall be held at the end of each term.
- 3.2. Those entitled to vote at the General Assembly shall consist of the Executive Board, not more than two Deputy Regional Presidents from each region and the other delegates with voting rights appointed by the Regional Boards in accordance with the Bye-laws.
- 3.3. At a General Assembly, there shall take place a business meeting at which the Regional Presidents and Principal Officers shall present a report on their activities during the past term and their plans for the next term. The business meeting shall

elect the Principal Officers of the Council, who shall be the President, the First Vice-President, Second Vice-President and the Treasurer. The Immediate Past President is also a Principal Officer.

3.4. The General Assembly may also include a professional conference, which non-delegates may attend.

3.5. At a business meeting of the general assembly, a quorum shall be one third of the members entitled to be present and to vote.

4. Executive Board:

4.1. The business of the Council between General Assemblies shall be conducted by an Executive Board, which shall consist of:

- a) the Principal Officers of the Council, namely
 - the President;
 - the Immediate Past President (or other person appointed by the Executive Board if the Immediate Past President is unable or unwilling to serve);
 - the First Vice-President;
 - the Second Vice-President
 - the Treasurer;
- b) the seven Regional Presidents representing Africa, East Asia, West Asia, Europe, Latin America, North America/Caribbean, and the Pacific;
- c) one representative of each of the Founding Members of the Council as follows:
 - American Foundation for the Blind
 - Perkins School for the Blind
 - Royal National Institute of the Blind;
- d) one representative of any international non-governmental organisation which supports the objects and plans of the Council and makes a significant financial contribution to its work, the level of such contribution to be determined by the Executive Board from time to time as part of the dues structure of the Council.
- e) one representative of each of the following umbrella Organisations:
 - International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness
 - Deafblind International
 - World Blind Union.

The Executive Board may also invite to any of its meetings the Chairperson of any Standing Committee or Working Group established by the Executive Board.

- 4.2. The Executive Board shall ensure that the regions meet the Code of conduct and terms of reference to operate under the ICEVI name and logo, as defined in the Bye-laws.
- 4.3. The Executive Board shall evaluate regional developments in terms of the Council's policy, the global targets set for the term and regional plans.
- 4.4. The Executive Board shall keep under review the Memorandum and Articles of Association and the Bye-laws of the Council.
- 4.5. The Executive Board shall appoint the members of the Programme, the Nominations, the Finance, the Publications and any other global Standing Committees of the Council.
- 4.6. A Regional President who shall be appointed by the Executive Board shall act as Chairperson of the Nominations Committee. When a member of the Nominations Committee wants his/her name to be considered for one of the Principal Officer positions, he/she shall send a letter of resignation to the Chairperson of the Nominations Committee, who in turn will consult the President and have a substitute appointed in the place of the member who resigned from the Committee.
- 4.7. The President is ex officio a member of the Programme Committee.
- 4.8. The Treasurer is ex officio Chairperson of the Finance Committee.
- 4.9. One of the Vice-Presidents shall be the ex officio member of the Publications Committee.
- 4.10. The Executive Board shall have power to appoint paid staff on a contractual basis in order to further the work of the Council.
- 4.11. At a meeting of the executive board, a quorum shall be one third of the members entitled to be present and to vote.

5. Principal Officers:

- 5.1. The Principal Officers are the executive officers of the Council who shall act on behalf of the Council and on behalf of the Executive Board. They shall report on their activities to the Executive Board and the General Assembly, and shall meet as necessary. Three shall be a quorum.
- 5.2. Each of the Principal Officers, in addition to the duties of their post, shall have specific duties as agreed amongst themselves from time to time.

- 5.3. Each Principal Officer is authorised to act on behalf of the Council on condition that the action is based on the Memorandum and Articles of Association or Bye-laws of the Council; its policy, custom and practice; or a decision of the Executive Board or of the Principal Officers.
- 5.4. If the President is unable to discharge his/her responsibilities, the First Vice-President shall take over responsibility from the President. If for any reason he/she is or becomes unable to do this, the Second Vice-President shall take over.
- 5.5. The Chief Executive Officer will normally be in attendance at meetings of the Principal Officers and Executive Board unless asked to withdraw while matters relating to his/her position as Chief Executive Officer are discussed.

6. Terms of Office:

- 6.1. All office holders shall take up their positions at the end of the General Assembly at which they were elected. Elections or appointments taking place between General Assemblies shall have immediate effect.
- 6.2. All office holders shall remain in post until the end of the next General Assembly after their election or appointment.
- 6.3. Ad hoc appointments shall come to an end when the task for which they were made has been completed, but in any event not later than the end of the next General Assembly after they were made.
- 6.4. The terms of office of the Regional Presidents are determined by the Regional Constitution, whereas the elected Principal Officers of the Council should normally serve in the same position for no more than two full terms.

7. Alternative Methods of Decision Making:

- 7.1. With the prior agreement of the President, a member of any organ of the Council may validly participate in a meeting of that body through the medium of telephone or video conference or any other form of electronic communication equipment, provided that all persons participating in the meeting are able to hear and speak to each other throughout such meeting. A person so participating shall be deemed to be present at the meeting and shall accordingly be counted in the quorum and be entitled to vote. A resolution passed at any meeting held in such manner and signed by the Chair of the meeting shall be valid and effective as if it had been passed at a meeting of that body duly convened and held.
- 7.2. A postal ballot may be used for deciding any question which requires decision within any organ of the Council. Ballot papers, clearly stating the proposal to be

voted on, shall be sent to all persons entitled to vote on the matter in question. All means of written communication may be used.

8. Finance:

The Council's financial year runs from 1st January to 31st December. The accounts of the Council shall be subject to annual audit by a qualified auditor and the Principal Officers shall appoint an external auditor for the purpose. The audited accounts shall be presented to the Executive Board who shall have responsibility for approving the financial report. The Executive Board shall also approve the annual budget of the Council.

9. Use of the Council's name:

- 9.1 The use of the name of the Council for any purpose, including fund raising, income generation or the production or sale of publications, irrespective of whether initiated and/or executed by members of the Council, is only permitted if authorised in writing by the Principal Officers.
- 9.2. The ICEVI Executive Board reserves the right to withdraw agreement to be identified as an ICEVI region, should the Executive Board deem there has been a failure by the Regional Board to meet the Code of Conduct and terms of reference for use of the name and logo of ICEVI.

10. Amendment of Articles of Association and Bye-laws:

- 10.1. These Articles of Association may be amended by the General Assembly.
- 10.2. Proposals for amendment of the Articles of Association shall be recommended to the General Assembly by the Executive Board.
- 10.3. Proposals for amendment of the Articles of Association shall be published in the Council's journal and on the Council's website not later than three months prior to the General Assembly at which they are to be discussed.
- 10.4. Amendment of the Articles of Association shall require a two-thirds majority of the votes either of the members present and voting at a General Assembly or voting in a postal ballot, provided in each case that not less than 50% of those entitled must have voted in order for the proposal to be carried. In the event that less than 50% of those entitled shall have voted, a second ballot on the same proposal may be organised not earlier than two weeks and not later than six months after the first ballot. In this event, not less than 25% of those entitled to vote either at a General Assembly or in a postal ballot must have voted in order for the proposal to be carried.

10.5. The Executive Board may change or add to the Council's Bye-laws by a simple majority on a recommendation of the Principal Officers made not later than three months before a meeting of the Executive Board or a postal ballot on the same. The quorum for votes on such recommendations shall be two-thirds. If there is no quorum, a second ballot may be organised not earlier than two weeks and not later than six months after the first ballot. For the second ballot on the same proposal, the quorum shall be 50%.

10.6. The text of any changes to the Articles of Association or any additions or changes to the Bye-laws, together with the result of any vote, shall be published in the next issue of the Council's journal following their agreement and on the Council's website.

11. Dissolution of the Council:

On the winding up and dissolution of the company the provisions of the Memorandum of Association shall have effect as if repeated in these Articles.

12. Miscellaneous:

In cases for which there is no clear provision either in these Articles of Association or in law, the Executive Board shall decide issues according to the spirit of the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

Name

Address

Description

Name

Address

Description

July 2021

Revised Memorandum of Association—July 2021



International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment

COMPANY No. 4521195
The COMPANIES ACTS 1985 and 1989

COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE AND NOT HAVING A SHARE CAPITAL

MEMORANDUM OF ASSOCIATION OF INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR EDUCATION OF PEOPLE WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

1. The name of the company (hereinafter called "the Council") is the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment.
2. The registered office of the Council will be situated in England and Wales.
3. The objects for which the Council is established are:-
 - 3.1. To be a global association of individuals and organisations that promotes equal access to appropriate education for all visually impaired children and youth so that they may achieve their full potential.
 - 3.2. To establish and maintain regions and support their activities;
 - 3.3. To convene a General Assembly at the end of each term;
 - 3.4. To promote cooperation with local, national, regional and global governmental and non-governmental organisations active in or related to the education of people with visual impairment;
 - 3.5. To influence governmental and United Nations agencies with respect to the education of people with visual impairment;
 - 3.6. To promote a positive image of people with visual impairment;
 - 3.7. To promote involvement of persons with visual impairment and their families in educational policy and planning.

- 3.8. To support and promote member and partner networks at global and regional levels of the Council.
4. In order to facilitate the exchange of expertise and professional knowledge and skills, the Council shall have power to:
 - 4.1. Promote local, regional and global networks;
 - 4.2. Promote training courses, conferences and meetings at a local and regional level;
 - 4.3. Promote local, national, regional and global communication;
 - 4.4. Publish a global journal and regional newsletters through the internet and otherwise;
 - 4.5. Promote local and regional special interest groups and their inter-regional linkages;
 - 4.6. Do all such lawful things as may assist in carrying into effect the objects of the Council.
5. Benefits to Members and Directors
 - 5.1. In this clause "director" means a member of the executive board as provided for in the Articles of Association.
 - 5.2. The property and funds of the Council must be used only for promoting the objects and do not belong to members and there shall be no distribution of any profit whether by declaration of dividend or otherwise.
 - 5.3. Notwithstanding the previous sub-clause members including directors may be reimbursed in respect of reasonable out-of-pocket expenses (including hotel and travel costs) actually incurred in running the Council.
6. The liability of the members is limited.
7. Every member of the Council undertakes to contribute to the assets of the Council, in the event of the same being wound up while he/she is a member or within one year after he/she ceases to be a member, for payment of the debts and liabilities of the Council contracted before he/she ceases to be a member and of the costs charges and expenses of winding up and for the adjustment of the rights of the contributories amongst themselves such amount as may be required not exceeding £1.
8. If upon the winding up or dissolution of the Council there remains, after the satisfaction of all its debts and liabilities, any property whatsoever the same shall not be paid to or distributed among the members of the Council but shall be given or

transferred to some other body having objects similar to the objects of the Council and which shall prohibit the distribution of its income or property among its members to an extent at least as great as is imposed on the Council, under or by virtue of clause 5 hereof, such body to be determined by the members of the Council at or before the time of dissolution, and in so far as effect cannot be given to the foregoing provision, then to some other charitable body.

We the persons whose names and addresses are subscribed are desirous of being formed into a company in pursuance of this Memorandum of Association.

July 2021

World Blindness Summit 2021:

Webinars Initiated by ICEVI

(with links to presentations on YouTube)

Working with People with Multiple Disabilities —Challenges and Opportunities

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H0BDNa0jT_4&list=PLozzZqfL-rc8AcJ4JUJ8VE66qurjcT0Fn&index=32

The session addressed the importance of communication, self-esteem and empowerment of people with multiple disabilities in poor and developing countries, overcoming limitations through exquisite planning and execution of programs in collaboration with different stakeholders. It showed how government policy could be influenced to strengthen the rights of people with multiple disabilities and how transition planning is important for their economic empowerment and self-esteem. Good practices, simple and common sense adaptations, and capacity building measures were shared.

Moderator:

Nandini Rawal, ICEVI Treasurer Executive Director Blind People's Association (India)

Higher Education and the Visually Impaired

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5VVQF9Z2aE0&list=PLozzZqfL-rc8AcJ4JUJ8VE66qurjcT0Fn&index=34>

The ICEVI higher education program being implemented in Indonesia, the Philippines, Cambodia, Myanmar, Mongolia, Vietnam and Laos, with the support of the Nippon Foundation, is one of ICEVI's flagship activities. This program has had a profound impact on the field of higher education in the ASEAN region. The project is implemented with the aim of creating inclusive environments in higher education institutions and improving the technological skills of visually impaired students to cope with their studies. The program, which started in 2007 in Indonesia and is currently operational in all seven countries, has helped more than 2,500 visually impaired students to pursue higher education.

Having succeeded in increasing the number of blind and visually impaired students entering universities, the Project is currently focusing on developing social skills and creating job opportunities for visually impaired graduates. To date, the project has also facilitated the employment of more than 300 graduates.

Project partners stress that to develop an inclusive labor market, intervention must be carried out from two sides. The first is the environment, which includes the development of

proactive government policies, the awareness of employers for the creation of jobs for the visually impaired and also making reasonable adjustments in the work environment to bring out the best skills of visually impaired workers. The second is the intervention with people with visual disabilities, improving their skills, which increases their employability and empowerment.

During the webinar, project partners from Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam shared their experience in increasing opportunities to achieve higher education for visually impaired students and also the strategies adopted to maximize their employment opportunities with a special focus on how they adapted activities during the COVID 19 pandemic.

Moderator:

Aria Indrawati, Regional President, ICEVI East Asia

Disability and Intersectionality: Joint Efforts To Promote Full Inclusion

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7OgoSQRdYY0&list=PLozzZqfL-rc8AcJ4JUJ8VE66qurjcT0Fn&index=33>

As indicated in articles 4, 5 and 6 of the CRPD, issues such as gender, multiple discrimination, etc., together with the basic elements of the Sustainable Development Goals, constitute a broad area of advocacy that still requires further action by organizations of persons with disabilities and other stakeholders. This session explored in depth the current situation of disability and intersectionalities and how organizations of persons with disabilities can play a unique role in eliminating existing forms of discrimination.

With the presence of high-level experts and representatives of DPOs who brought the experience of regions around the world, the session provided details to understand the challenges that lie ahead and how to be better equipped to promote and defend our rights.

Moderator:

Gertrude Oforiwa Fefoame, Member, United Nations Committee for Persons with Disabilities, Member of the UMC executive committee, Sightsavers.

Inclusive Education

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LrZiS-s6PNs&list=PLozzZqfL-rc8AcJ4JUJ8VE66qurjcT0Fn&index=29>

The aim of this webinar was to reflect on the landscape of Inclusive Education and how it has evolved over the last five decades, where we currently stand in terms of inclusion of children with visual impairments in inclusive classrooms, and how different stakeholders can advocate for effective implementation of inclusive education, globally. The focus was on how to facilitate overall systemic change to ensure inclusion, equity, and quality education in accordance with the provisions of SDG4 and Article 24 of the CRPD.

A panel of experts from different regions of the world led this webinar. The wide and diverse experience and knowledge of this esteemed panel allowed for a multifaceted debate, spanning from academia and research, finance and resources, policy and practice, as well as the promotion and implementation of inclusive education initiatives in developed and developing countries. Reference was also made to the IDA Flagship Report, the Gem Report, and other relevant national and international reports.

Moderator:

Dr. Praveena Sukhraj-Ely, ICEVI First Vice President and WBU representative in the Inclusive Education working group of the International Disability Alliance.

Parental Involvement

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=auJYfKP_uoo&list=PLozzZqfL-rc8AcJ4JUJ8VE66qurjcT0Fn&index=28

Parents of children who are blind or visually impaired, as well as those with multiple disabilities, share an emotional bond from the initial diagnosis, the need to understand how visual impairment will affect their children's development, and how to ensure that their child receives the medical care and education necessary to meet their development. There is no stronger power than the love of a father / mother for his / her child. The webinar was an opportunity to hear stories from parents around the world about the important role they have played in their children's lives and the impact they have collectively had with their voices to advocate and support other families at the local, regional, national and international levels.

Moderator:

Susan LaVenture, Deputy President, North America and Caribbean region, ICEVI, and International Association of Parents of Children with Visual Impairments (IAPVI)

Climate Change

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iG_rLVgpJFc&list=PLozzZqfL-rc8AcJ4JUJ8VE66qurjcT0Fn&index=22

People with blindness, deafblindness, and other disabilities are among the most under-resourced groups in the world. They are at risk of being marginalized in society due to intersecting factors, such as their gender, sexuality, ethnicity, level of education, and geographic location. It is not surprising, therefore, that people with disabilities are highly vulnerable to the effects of accelerating climate change. In practice, this means that they and their communities live with significant climate-related problems, such as increased storms, floods and landslides; the droughts; the forest fires; infrastructures and living environments; extreme temperatures.

This session discussed the importance of accessible information, health and wellness considerations, work to develop disability-inclusive responses in disaster risk reduction, and much more. Presentations included initiatives and research on disability inclusion, and the situation on the ground for children with disabilities and their families in Kiribati, a small Pacific island country at the forefront of climate change.

Moderator:

Frances Gentle, ICEVI President

Low Vision

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WCtyD7jNUPs&list=PLozzZqfL-rc8AcJ4JUJ8VE66qurjcT0Fn&index=6>

The webinar examined three specific areas related to people with low vision. (a) Dr. Penny Rosenblum of the American Foundation for the Blind reviewed research conducted last year on the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the education of infants, children, and youth with low vision. The results of these studies provided information that helps families and professionals better understand the challenges and successes experienced by visually impaired students, including those with additional disabilities and deafblindness, as they relate to educational services. The AFB research also investigated how orientation and mobility teachers and instructors provided services when they did not have access to their usual instructional tools and methods. (b) Martin Kieti discussed the “psychosocial gap” and highlighted the challenges that students with low vision face as they struggle to fit into the classroom and learn at the same time. (c) Prof. Maria Rodrigues examined the knowledge and use of nonverbal communication among adolescents and young adults with low vision.

Moderators:

- **Penny Rosenblum**, Director of Research, American Foundation for the Blind
- **Kay Alicyn Ferrell**, North America–Caribbean Regional President, ICEVI

Youth Leadership

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jhkn8H7kBXc&list=PLozzZqfL-rc8AcJ4JUJ8VE66qurjcT0Fn&index=18>

Creating demand for education was one of the key principles of the global campaign on Education for All Children with Visual Impairment (EFAVI) carried out by the International Council for the Education of People with Visual Impairment in collaboration with the World Blind Union. The aim of the campaign was to identify youth leaders among the visually impaired to organize national networks and work with parents to enhance the education of their visually impaired children. ICEVI has been implementing a higher education program for visually impaired students in the East Asia region with the support of the Nippon Foundation, and in 2017 a program was organized in the Philippines under the title of the

country champions program in which visually impaired graduates participated who spoke about how to become agents of change, how to deal with educational and work situations, how to influence legislation, etc. Encouraged by the positive impact created by this program, the ICEVI regions carried out a series of youth leadership programs in the last quadrennium and the global ICEVI also included youth leadership as one of the strategies for the future. ICEVI believes that the youth leadership program is one of the key strategies for empowerment.

Moderator:

Marie Joyce Lopez, Resources for the Blind, Philippines

COVID 19 Intervention in Services for the Visually Impaired

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WO3Z06Q1F7c&list=PLozzZqfL-rc8AcJ4JUJ8VE66qurjcT0Fn&index=19>

In most West Asian countries, lockdown was declared in the last week of March 2020 with no room for any specific preparation. COVID is an extraordinary situation for which governments, NGOs, educational centers, individuals and parents were hardly prepared to face the educational needs of children with special needs. All residential schools, shelters and inclusive schools were closed. In many cases, students did not even have the opportunity to retrieve their Braille books and audio materials. Even after a year of school closings, in some places the situation is still unclear as to when schools would reopen.

ICEVI West Asia encouraged its partner organizations to develop methods of online training, performance assessment and exam taking using technology, audio material and virtual means of access to the material. Thanks to the hard work and persistent efforts of educators and school management, 4 options have emerged for innovative initiatives for online training and handling of new technologies for children with visual disabilities through the use of a mobile application; the exchange of audio material through virtual media and access to audio material through the Internet; and the search for the participation and involvement of parents in the development of short videos on teaching functional skills to children with multiple disabilities. All these approaches have been developed and applied in India, are applicable and replicable in any developing country in the world. The objective of this webinar was to share these techniques with the participants and motivate them to develop these methods. Participants also shared their experience, demonstrated the use of the applications and shared links to social networks to improve participants' understanding and promoted the use of these virtual initiatives to ensure the education of children in situations such as the pandemic.

Moderator:

Bhushan Punani, Regional President, ICEVI West Asia

The Importance of Employment in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x8rZ7GfDRVo&list=PLozzZqfL-rc8AcJ4JUJ8VE66qurjcT0Fn&index=5>

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals form the global framework for improving health and education, reducing inequalities, and promoting economic growth with the goal of ending poverty. There is no clearer way to end poverty than job creation. In this session, a panel made up of employers, representatives of the disability sector and service providers addressed strategies to increase employment opportunities for people who are blind or have low vision.

Moderator:

Karen Wolffe, USA

Mathematics Training for the Visually Impaired

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rlvsehI5Q84&list=PLozzZqfL-rc8AcJ4JUJ8VE66qurjcT0Fn&index=15>

Mathematics is one of the most important subjects in any child's learning, as it contributes to analytical thinking ability and also provides the basic foundation for many technology-related jobs. Unfortunately, teaching mathematics is considered difficult for visually impaired children and, therefore, they are sometimes denied the opportunity to learn this subject. With the growth of inclusive education, learning mathematics becomes essential and, as a result, efforts are being made in various parts of the world to devise strategies that contribute to the learning of mathematics by children with visual disabilities.

Presenter:

MNG Mani, Chief Executive Officer, ICEVI

Learning of the Future Facilitated by Technology

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_8mxpwnx4dU&list=PLozzZqfL-rc8AcJ4JUJ8VE66qurjcT0Fn&index=4

In many countries, technology has transformed education, and the pace of change has accelerated during 2020. What, then, are the opportunities and skills that will transform opportunities for blind and visually impaired students? How can we ensure that technology really enables education and is not a distraction or worse, a waste of scarce resources? In this Session the participants knew about the ICEVI Visionary Learning Framework that provides a simple model for placing technology in a holistic context. The session enabled participants to learn how ICT for inclusive education helped sustain the education of visually impaired students even during the pandemic; how essential IT skills were integrated into the curriculum of a South African school; and how a European NGO and a West African

organization for the blind worked together to transform access to learning and employment into a multi-year project. Finally, the participants learned how different stakeholders in Kenya came together and are using the Visionary Learning Model to develop and deliver better educational outcomes driven by accessible technologies.

Moderator:

Gertrude Fefoame, Member, United Nations Committee for Persons with Disabilities, Member of the UMC Executive Committee, Sightsavers, and ICEVI Regional President—Africa.

Early Childhood

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FTIn4Kg0rG8&list=PLozzZqfL-rc8AcJ4JUJ8VE66qurjcT0Fn&index=11>

UNESCO considers early childhood to be the first and most important stage of lifelong learning and development. This webinar was moderated by Dr. Frances Gentle, President of ICEVI, who presented perspectives on early childhood care and education for young children with visual impairments.

Dr. Linda Lawrence presented an ophthalmologic perspective on why children need glasses, recent treatments for retinopathy of prematurity and Leber congenital amaurosis, and trials for other retinal dystrophies. Dr. Lawrence has worked with the WHO Scientific Committee on International Consensus, helping to develop the International Standards for Low Vision Rehabilitation. Dr. Mindy Ely presented the results of her unique US case study on a service delivery approach that prioritizes family participation and decision-making. Emily Shepard provided a parent's perspective on Usher syndrome, a disease characterized by deafness and impaired vision caused by retinitis pigmentosa, and the reasons why she created the UsherKids Australia parenting organization. Dr. Naomi Dale reviewed the design of the Developmental Journal for Infants and Toddlers with Visual Impairment (DJVI), and the results of the scientific evaluation of early intervention including the DJVI that she led as the principal investigator.

Moderator:

Dr. Frances Gentle, President of ICEVI

Innovative Approaches in Teacher Training

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_5UggFb5faE&list=PLozzZqfL-rc8AcJ4JUJ8VE66qurjcT0Fn&index=24

The fourth goal of sustainable development envisions a world in which inclusive and equitable education is available to all. However, without trained staff, there is no guarantee that inclusive education will be equitable for students with visual impairments, whose

disability changes the way they acquire information for learning. The basis of teacher education is that blindness and visual impairment affect how children learn, not what they learn. However, even after more than 170 years, there are still few teachers and community workers who understand this principle. If we are to meet the core principle of SDG 4, we will need more staff who understand and know how to help visually impaired children achieve their educational goals.

Moderator:

Kay Alicyn Ferrell, ICEVI Regional President for North America and the Caribbean

Bernadette Kappen **named one of 2021 Bronx Power 100**



Bernadette Kappen, Executive Director of the New York Institute for Special Education, was recently named one of a new generation of local leaders, both in and out of government, who are getting the Bronx, a borough of New York City, back to the “boom” times. Dr. Kappen is a long-time friend of ICEVI, a former member of the Executive Committee representing Deafblind International, and a Regional President for the

North American–Caribbean Region in the 1990s. She has spent her career educating children with visual and hearing impairments, as well as other disabilities, and prior to her present position was Director of the Overbrook School for the Blind in Philadelphia, PA.

Dr. Kappen has also been recognized as “a compassionate leader” by Pennsylvania’s Bureau of Special Education and was honored by the Governor of Pennsylvania as “an extraordinary presence in special education.” The Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities in New York placed Dr. Kappen among “the most influential, innovative and outstanding individuals as graduates who help make New York State great.”

Seldom does a special educator receive such great distinction from persons outside the field of education. ICEVI is proud of Dr. Kappen’s continuous contributions to the education of children and youth with visual impairment and looks forward to many more years of such exceptional service!

World Blindness Summit 2021: Statements from Some Participants

Nida Grace Rabelista, Philippines



At first, I was quite hesitant to attend because it would require us to stay late up night due to the time differs,

But when I started to attend the different sessions, I started to enjoy it and listen to the different presenters from around the globe. Some of the perks we have experience in attending the WBS this We were given the chance to pick and attend the topics that are relevant to us. And also we were able to travel around the globe without spending a single penny and we were learning at the same time.

I am happy to know that inclusivity of the visually impaired in all most all the aspects of life is evolving and improving as time goes by.

Mike Daryl Ocol, Philippines



This event was actually exciting because this was my first time to have attended a worldwide conference even though it was done virtually. The World Blindness Summit has really caused me to maintain my commitment to pursuing advocacy efforts for the sector of youth with visual impairment. If there is one greatest personal take-away I will be bringing as I move forward from the day of the event, it will be the realization that the COVID-

19 pandemic should not be construed as a misfortune that limits opportunities for employment but a phenomenon that increases more the same opportunities wherein people with visual impairment could bank in. And as President of the Youth as Advocates, Philippines (YAP), I am glad that this summit has strengthened more my perspective on this pandemic in relation to our employment advocacy for my fellow people with visual impairment.

I Made Wikandana, Indonesia



I join in seminar with topic Inclusive Urban Development for People with Disabilities and Where's Waldo, Where's Wally. During the first session, I learned a lot about how significant the role of a city in building an inclusive environment for PWDs community, given that many PWDs live in an urban area in many parts of the world. After attending the event, I realized that

building an inclusive urban environment is not only about building a better infrastructures, public transportation, information and communication around the city, but it also involves the development of a friendly and responsive social structures for PWDs, including legal framework, gender approach, and inclusive awareness for the people to see PWDs as part of the active society.

Abizard Giffari Nasir, Indonesia



I would like to thank to WBU and ICEVI for the great event where I got a lot of information and knowledges. And I also would like to thank to Pertuni for giving me a great opportunity to join this amazing event. From this event, I got so many meaningful lessons which are motivating me to keep on doing for the best. These are the list of seminars that I joined: Global Technology & Accessibility Conference (GTAC), Accessible Learning Materials, Participations of people with disabilities and educators in the achievement of SDG 4, Youth Leadership, Audio Description Around the Globe, Visionary Learning Enabled by Technology. This is Global Technology & Accessibility Conference (GTAC). From this conference I received information about various kinds of technologies that can be used to support people with visual impairment in doing their activities.

Hoang Ly, Vietnam

I'm totally blind. Currently, I'm working for the TNF-ICEVI project to support the students with visually impaired at Sao Mai Center for The Blind. I am in charge of coordinating the activities that support books for students with visually impaired. In addition, I'm also a primary school teacher at Bung Sang School for The Blind.

Attending the 2021 World Blindness Summit has provided me with a lot of useful information and knowledge in my work, such as accessibility forums, high-education, accessible learning materials, etc.

If I can meet face to face to communicate with other attendees, It's amazing. Thank you for organizing this very successful webinar. I really learned a lot of useful information and knowledge even during this covid pandemic."

Tam Le Minh, Vietnam

(A graduate student majoring in music teaching at the HCM University of Pedagogy)

The WBS World Forum for the Blind has brought me many new experiences as I couldn't imagine we could organize a large scale event online. I feel like I still lack too much knowledge after listening to the presentations of the speakers."

Borey Sun, Sengoun Heng and Sinat Yeom, Cambodia

I am so honored to have participated in The World Blindness Summit which was held on June 28-30 2021, hosted in Spain through an online conference. Although the blindness Summit organized by the online, there are more people registered to participate in the meeting from around the world. Within 3 days of the World Blindness Summit, they have organized many topics related to blindness and development have been prepared and shared by famous speakers from around the world. These are all very interesting topics and one of the key to the development the field of blindness in Cambodia for the future. I got some information that I never know before and it's really amazing and interesting to learn new knowledge from this event. I think it is a rare opportunity for me to attend and get the latest news related to this field of blindness.

Meet our New President, ICEVI Europe



Dr. John Ravenscroft is the new President of ICEVI Europe Region for the quadrennium 2021-24. He was elected in October 2021. He is the Chair of Childhood Visual Impairment at The University of Edinburgh.

Welcome John !

International Voices from Parents of Children with Visual Impairments Heard at the World Blindness Summit

Susan LaVenture, President, ICEVI North American–Caribbean Region, and
President, International Association of Parents of Children with Visual Impairments

The World Blind Summit (WBS) gave the platform for the ICEVI Webinar on Parental Involvement to listen to the International Voices from Parents of Children with Visual Impairments and their stories about the significant role they have played in their children's lives and the impact they have made collectively with their voices to advocate and support families.

When a child becomes visually impaired from birth or acquires one through illness or injury, his or her parents feel a great sense of emotional pain of shock, grief and sometimes feelings of guilt that for some reason they are responsible for the cause. These feelings cross all international borders—geographically, economically, culturally, ethnicity, religiously and gender. Whether your family suffers poverty, or is wealthy, or the average family, struggling to provide week to week, parents experience similar emotional pain upon their child's diagnosis. As parents, we can find solace by connecting with other families who have had similar experiences and can understand what you feel and what you're going through.

We as parent leaders began our support system by forming the International

Association of Parents of Children with Visual Impairments (IAPVI), which was officially recognized by ICEVI at its world conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in 2006. We have stuck together all of these years. We are bonded together by having experienced raising a child with a visual impairment. We have also extended ourselves to help other families and you can hear their remarkable stories on the WBS recordings available at this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLozZqfL-rc8AcJ4JUJ8VE66qurjcT0Fn>

Presenters were:

Guila Seidel, Founder and Chair, OFEK Liyladenu, (Hebrew for Our Children's Horizon), the Israel Association of Parents of Children with Visual Impairments, mother of Nili (a blind musician), presented on "Parental Involvement in Advocacy to Governments". Guila gave examples of their parents association's advocacy on both the national and international levels. OFEK appealed successfully to the Supreme Court of Justice, and now the Ministry of Education must provide alternate-format text books and teaching materials in Israel. OFEK has also engaged in international work with the

United Nations Convention on the Rights of The Child.

Angelette Akkermans, Founder of Mi ta stimabo, Association of People Involved, from The Netherlands, and mother of Laura (who is visually impaired and a mother herself now), presented about “Why Emotional Support for Parents is Important”. Her remarks spoke to the hearts of parents with the most important message—stick to your parent feeling/instinct about your child! The message to professionals was about the importance of listening to and cooperating with parents of the children they serve.

Ely Delapaz, President of Parent Advocates for Visually Impaired Children (PAVIC) of the Philippines and father of Joshua (who is totally blind) and Rosemary Alonzo, mother of a son (who is visually impaired with other disabilities), presented on “Parent Outreach to Families who are Marginalized”. Ely spoke about PAVIC’s continued support during COVID -19 and the successful Parent Congresses. Marie presented about reaching marginalized populations of families of blind children by sharing ways therapists teach parents what to do with their child at home and having access to on-line learning.

German Moya, Director of Educational Resource Center of the ONCE in Madrid, Spain, presented about their education programs for families. German gave the example of how important services from agencies of and for the blind can be to support families and youth who are blind.

German is also a father of a child who is visually impaired.

Jean Bosco, native of Rwanda, father of his 10 year old daughter, Blessing (who is visually impaired), spoke about “Parental Involvement in Education” and his story of founding the Blessing School for the Visually Impaired. Bosco shared how the school became a solution to not only help blind children to realize their potential, but also to let parents know that blind children are not made for begging but to contribute to the well being of society.

Alvin Teoh, from Malaysia, leader of a National Group for Children with Visual Impairments and Family Support group for Children and People with Special Needs, and father of Ernest (who was born blind), shared his family’s story in raising their son. It’s great to see fathers’ involvement in parenting. Oftentimes worldwide we see more mothers with strong involvement in raising children with disabilities. Alvin’s son Ernest gave a perfect closing of our presentation by playing on the violin the song “You Raise Me Up,” which the lyrics go on to say, “...so I can stand on mountains!”—The best compliment parents can get. Our children can do things because we believe in them! Alvin gave the closing presentation of “How Do Parents Communicate Globally via IAPVI”.

The IAPVI team has been developing our website that we will be launching in the new quadrennium. To join our network please go to our parent survey at <https://forms.gle/LkecF2KzBzA7Pks49>.

Survey Launched at World Blindness Summit Parental Involvement Webinar to Reach More Parents and Parents Associations Globally

The International Association of Parents of Children with Visual Impairments (IAPVI) is a living entity and network of individual parents and parent organizations from around the world. We encourage and educate families in raising their child/children with visual impairment, and who may have additional disabilities.

One of the key initiatives of IAPVI is to identify and reach out to more parents and parent associations from around the world so they can be a part of our network that aims to provide emotional support and share the wealth of knowledge and expertise by experience of parents from all over the world.

This survey launched June 28, 2021 to commemorate the Parent Involvement session of the World Blind Summit 2021 in Madrid. Please complete the following information in our survey form if you would like to join our network. The questionnaire will take about 10–15 minutes to complete.

Here is the link to the parent survey: <https://forms.gle/LkecF2KzBzA7Pks49>

Thank you!

IAPVI Team

Talking Technology

Ben Clare

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Welcome to your third instalment of Talking Technology!

As I write, we are approaching the end of another strange year. As we look towards celebrations such as Diwali, Thanksgiving, Christmas, etc., it's also a good time to reflect on times passed, such as the incredible World Blindness Summit, held back in June and which brought together virtually over 4000 people to discuss and learn about issues pertaining to people who are blind. The event was a triumph in so many ways, certainly in the technology sense, which enabled the event to proceed in pandemic times and also enabled the participation of so many who would normally not be able to travel to such an event. Even 10 years ago, technology would not have allowed for such large online events to take place. Fortunately, mainstream platforms such as Zoom and Teams are not only easy ways to host large events but are also mostly accessible for use with screen readers and magnifiers.

Sincerest thanks to the team at ONCE in Madrid, Spain, contributors, participants, and everyone else connected to the staging of the World Blindness Summit for creating such a memorable and informative forum. I am already looking forward to the next one!

In this edition of Talking Technology, we'll be exploring the smartphone, specifically how it can be used as a mobility tool.

Gone are the days when the humble cellular or mobile phone simply made and received calls and text messages. While such phones were cutting edge technology 15 years ago, the smartphone, so named because of the ever growing list of features, has become an integral part of our lives. Many of us look at our phones before we get up in the morning and before we go to sleep at night. The information we look at during those times and throughout the day is as variable as the features

and apps installed on the phone itself. Information commonly sought includes checking Facebook and Twitter, reading messages received from several platforms including Messenger, WhatsApp, and Viber, checking the weather, news headlines, etc., etc. and all within seconds!

Indeed, the importance of smartphone technology has increased during the pandemic, as many countries have introduced check-in procedures, this being the scanning of QR codes when entering public venues such as restaurants and shops so that health authorities can contact patrons if they have been exposed to Covid-19. As the pandemic progresses and vaccines become increasingly available, our smartphones will likely feature vaccination status which will be read at a glance when checking into public venues. It's true we may be obsessed with our smartphones, but they are becoming more and more a necessity, rather than something we may choose to have. The same can be said in developing countries, where the use of smartphones is increasing exponentially, partly due to their relative affordability and also due to necessity with check-in procedures being adopted widely or alternatively, government-developed apps that closely track movements of the public to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

While smartphones vary greatly in size and shape, their features are relatively standard with more advanced features governing how expensive the phone is. Even lower-end models of the standard smartphone feature such things as a camera, touchpad for inputting text, the ability to make calls, send texts, browse the web, install apps, play music, and watch videos. The more advanced phones may have more internal storage capacity, better and multiple cameras, faster connectivity to 5G networks—but overall, the features of almost all smartphones are

delivered through the operating system software that is installed, the main ones being IOS for Apple devices, Windows for Microsoft Nokia, and Android (produced by Google), which works on all the rest. These operating systems utilise the hardware of each phone to turn it into the smart device we are so familiar with, further delivered through installed applications, and often referred to as apps that further control what we get out of these devices.

Many apps are free while others are available via paid subscription where additional features may be enabled. Google, Windows, and Apple host vast libraries of apps, submitted by individuals and large corporations. Smartphone users access these libraries through inbuilt apps on their phone. These are often referred to as app stores. Apps are usually made available for all operating systems and usually contain the same features, regardless of what operating system the user is running. Where interactivity between users occurs, the operating system being used is not a factor, meaning Apple IOS users can communicate with Android users without a problem.

For people who are blind, the smartphone is as relevant as ever with many features fully accessible through inbuilt screen reading and magnification technology that can easily be enabled as soon as the phone is switched on for the first time. The vast majority of apps available also work with these inbuilt screen readers. Many app developers, recognising the power of smartphone technology, work to produce apps that directly utilise phone features to provide accessibility that could only be considered a dream not so long ago. For instance, with a standard phone camera, it is possible to have text from a document or label on a bottle read aloud, receive an audio description of photographs, explore a room and surroundings with audible feedback on obstacles, equipment, and so much more.

So how can the smartphone be used as a mobility tool? The below information will show you how this can be done with ease.

In recent years, the development of standalone mobility devices has become increasingly mainstream with Google and Microsoft, among others having a go at manufacturing wearable devices that enhance mobility capability. While these devices are undoubtedly useful, their affordability is an ongoing issue. If an existing device can be successfully utilised, it results in this technology being much more available to a larger number of people.

To get started, there is no need to download or install additional apps. Native apps, apps that come standard on all smartphones, are sufficient to convert your phone into a smart mobility device. All you need is the Maps app. This program is fully accessible with whatever inbuilt screen reader you are using. Using Maps to get from place to place is very simple. If you have not used this app before, you may have come into contact with it when riding in an Uber or taxi where the driver may have used the app to get you from your pick-up point to your destination.

This is exactly the same except, in this example, when setting up your journey, you would choose the Walk option. This tells the map you are walking, rather than driving, which may alter the route taken so it is important to have the right option selected. It's also important to have data enabled, as your phone will be accessing the Internet during your voyage. The amount of data used, of course, depends on the length of your journey, but even limited data plans should offer you some freedom in this regard as data transfer is usually not excessive. To use Maps to help guide you, therefore, turning your phone into a talking mobility device, do the following:

1. Open the Maps app.
2. Input your location, then swipe to input your destination. It is possible the app has figured out your current location. If this is correct, you can leave as is, if not, make any necessary corrections.
3. Double tap on Go!
4. As you walk, you will receive audio prompts from your screen reader for when to make

turns, when road crossings are coming, and an estimate of how long it will take you to reach your destination.

It's as simple as that! Some smart features include typing the name of a particular building or business as your destination, if you're unsure of the exact address; groovy sound effects that resemble the indicator in a vehicle when making a turn; and receiving accurate timetable information for public transport, thus extending the capability of the device beyond just walking.

The Maps app simply utilises the phone's GPS feature to provide information; who would've thought a satellite whizzing hundreds of kilometres above the earth could guide you from home to the mall?

If you have a smartwatch compatible with your phone, the Maps app should work just as well on that device.

While using your smartphone as a powerful mobility device, it's important to note it is not a replacement for conventional aids such as canes and service animals, but can serve as a companion, an additional assistive option when travelling independently.

As the Maps app serves to provide a great experience when travelling, there are a multitude of similar apps that tap directly into Maps itself or consult other sources to enhance the mobility experience even further. Many of these apps, unlike Maps, are designed with the blind traveller in mind and extra features are aimed at giving more information that could be useful to someone who is blind. One such app, BlindSquare, utilises various phone features and other popular apps to present information related to indoor and outdoor environments. It is possible to navigate within buildings, locate cafes, shops and other businesses by name and have feedback presented in various ways including spoken and vibration. Find out more by visiting the website: <http://www.blindsquare.com>.

Further taking advantage of various smartphone features is a US based company called Aira,

which offers a deluxe mobility service that extends into other areas of assistance. Instead of relying on maps and GPS for guidance, Aira users are connected to human agents who can guide users by viewing their camera in addition to GPS. This service, only currently available in the US, UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, seeks to provide a very personalised service where customers liaise directly with people who work for the organisation and who can assist with various tasks, ranging from one-on-one guidance from place to place in real time, to assistance with reading and signing documents, navigating inaccessible websites, locating lost items dropped nearby, getting information about the colour of clothing and other items, etc. Users download the Aira app, then subscribe to a plan that best meets their needs, mainly based on the amount of time a user can access the service during a monthly period. While the service is subscriber-based, various locations such as major airports, shopping malls, transport hubs and services for the blind have arrangements with the company that enable nonsubscribers to access Aira services for free. If a subscriber enters a free location, no time is deducted from their monthly subscription for as long as they are in that location. These locations are usually acquired through sponsorship or donations that enable Aira to provide free service.

Find out more about Aira by logging onto their website: <https://aira.io/>

Well, we've come to the end of this edition of Talking Technology! Our next issue will explore how the smartphone camera assists with reading, photo descriptions, and identifying objects.

As always, comments, questions and suggestions are welcome!

Please Email me: bwclare@gmail.com.

Until next time...

Ben Clare

Interview with Larry Campbell, ICEVI President Emeritus, on the Publication “Partnerships for Change: National Strategies – Regional Collaboration”

*Those of you who had the pleasure of participating in the World Blind Summit may have attended the inaugural session at which a new joint publication of Overbrook International, ICEVI, and The Nippon Foundation titled, **Partnerships for Change: National Strategies—Regional Collaboration**, was officially launched.*

After listening to that session I wanted to learn more about this book so I asked Larry Campbell, President Emeritus of ICEVI, to sit for an interview regarding this new publication and what follows is a transcript of that conversation.

Editor : Whose idea was it to write this story that covers a series of development initiatives in some seventeen countries that spans a period of more than three decades beginning in 1985?

Larry : The idea for this book originated from Yohei Sasakawa, Chairman of The Nippon Foundation (TNF), a longtime supporter of the international work of both Overbrook and ICEVI.

In 2016 Chairman Sasakawa participated in the ICEVI/WBU General Assemblies in Orlando, Florida where he met a number of the young blind beneficiaries of the collaborative work of Overbrook and ICEVI in Southeast Asia. He was impressed with the self-confidence these individuals displayed and the outcomes they were achieving, particularly through cross-border collaboration.

When he returned to Japan he proposed to his staff that a book be written telling the story of this long-term development initiative with the hope that the approaches used and lessons learned would be helpful to other countries struggling with the same challenge of securing change through expanded access to education and employment for individuals with visual impairment by leveraging the power of technology to achieve that goal.

Editor : In addition to the written word, I understand the book contains 52 embedded videos. Could you give our readers an overview of the content of the book and why you chose to include embedded video footage and how that fits into the story.

Larry : When TNF encouraged us to consider writing this book we formed a small publication team consisting of Ms. Wenru Niu with Overbrook International, Dr. Mani, ICEVI's CEO, and myself. Our initial challenge was how to tell a story that covers a period of more than three decades and not create a dry chronology of little interest to anyone other than those directly involved with these programs.

On numerous occasions those early planning meetings ended with one or more of us saying “I wish we could only find a way for the reader to meet some of these empowered blind youth who are accomplishing so much change.”

Then one day the idea of incorporating embedded video footage using links and QR codes came to us. We all felt that these short video clips would add context to the written text and allow the reader to virtually step into the region and “meet” some of the young blind change agents who are the “real” authors of this story that demonstrates how assistive technology in the hands of motivated blind youth collaborating across national borders can affect real change.

A number of readers have told us that a humorous but unintended attraction of the video footage is the “walk down memory lane” they provide, reminding us of just how much technology has changed over this three-decade period. This has elicited more than a few laughs and shouts of “Oh, remember those!”

The book is divided into five chapters. The first two chapters introduce the reader to the principal partners who are the facilitators of this story and the foundation blocks of the regional network that has been built and who accomplished so much through regional collaboration. We share with the reader the evolution of what began as a small Philadelphia-based leadership development program for blind youth from around the world and how with the urging of many of those graduates resulted in two regionally based development networks, the first in Eastern Europe and the Baltics beginning in 1996 and a second larger and more ambitious network in Southeast Asia known as the Overbrook-Nippon Network on Educational Technology (ON-NET) in 1998.

Chapters 3 and 4 introduce the reader to the many challenges encountered and solutions developed to bring about needed change in the nine countries that became partners in this regional network. We invite the reader to “travel” through the region and “meet” many of the individuals and organizations that shared ideas and experiences, crossed national borders and together developed strategies that are effectively eliminating many of the barriers that have previously limited access to education and employment.

In chapter 5 we look at some of the landmark events for persons with disabilities that occurred during the first two decades of the 21st century. We acknowledge these milestone events as “favorable winds” at our back that greatly assisted our efforts to bring about needed change. We also present a set of development principles that guided our work from the outset. We offer these not as any magic formula that we have created but rather as issues that readers may wish to consider as they struggle with similar challenges to those we are addressing.

Editor : In your opinion what are some of most important lessons learned and outcomes achieved that you feel our members will take away from reading this new publication?

Larry : There are so many important lessons we have learned that it is hard to know where to begin an answer to that question. As mentioned in my remarks at the book launch

ceremony at the World Blind Summit, we feel that three of the most critical factors that have contributed to bringing about the very needed changes sought by persons with visual impairment include:

- 1) From the start a majority of the members of the regional advisory group that defined the most critical changes needed, devised appropriate solutions, and guided all work were individuals with visual impairment. That made an enormous difference because no one understands these challenges and the changes needed any better than those who live with them every day. In fact we became so bold as to tinker with that age old mantra “Nothing about us without us” by making our mantra, “Nothing about us without us **in the lead.**”
- 2) We paid special attention to the incredible and ever increasing power of assistive technology to help shape innovative solutions. We recognize that technology itself is not a solution. In fact, the development landscape is littered with far too many examples of well-intended initiatives through which technology was purchased and seen as the solution but sits unused. However, in the hands of educated, motivated, and creative human resources, technology is perhaps the most powerful tool ever available to persons with visual impairment capable of shaping solutions that lead to long-term systemic change. And,
- 3) From the start, our work was not confined to one country but rather gave the communities of blind individuals we work with the very unique opportunity to work across borders, to share ideas and create appropriate solutions while learning from each other.

Having worked internationally for the past forty-four years I have long been frustrated to be in one country today where they are struggling with a problem and then the next day be in a near-by country where that same problem has been solved but with no process for sharing that solution. Those situations that occur far too often represent a huge waste of time, effort and resources.

Thanks to the vision of our supporters at TNF the initiatives described in this book demonstrate a way to change all of that by working together as one “regional or sub-regional community,” an approach I hope more countries will have the opportunity to explore.

From this regional collaboration countries learned about each other's strengths and weaknesses and because we could work across borders we were able to build upon strengths and diminish weaknesses through creative collaboration.

For example, one of the challenges we have addressed is that of securing new open-market employment opportunities. We had some initial successes, only to find that many of those newly employed individuals were unable to hold onto their jobs. As we took a deeper look at this issue and talked to employers we found that these failures had nothing to do with academic preparation or lack of technology skills. The problem had its roots in weaknesses in such areas as self-confidence, social skills, and self-advocacy, what is often referred to as “soft skills”.

In this case our Indonesian partner Mitra Netra shared a training program they had recently developed which proved to be very effective. Within a few years every country involved in the network was adapting and using this tool and reporting more positive employment outcomes including job retention.

Another example of the value of cross-border collaboration arises from the benefits all countries received thanks to the pioneering work that our Philippine Partner, Resources for the Blind, had undertaken to expand access to the S.T.E.M. curriculum for students with visual impairment. Their approach and the educational materials they developed are now widely used throughout the region, as are the math education training videos developed as part of the ICEVI regional initiative to expand inclusive higher education. These materials are now available to teachers, parents and anyone else who can use them through a special YouTube Channel, “ICEVI Math Made Easy”.

Still another example of this cross-border collaboration began with our Vietnamese partner, the Sao Ma Center for the Blind, which has done remarkable work in creating new open source software. They worked closely with partners in Myanmar to develop a Burmese text-to-speech engine that allows the blind of Myanmar to use a computer in their own language for the first time.

Sao Mai has also developed new open source software for Braille production (SM Braille) and another that supports collaboration between blind and sighted musicians (SM Music). These products are now being used throughout the region and beyond. Since they are all open source materials, they have been enormously helpful in expanding the use of technology in countries with limited resources, where commercially available software is often unaffordable.

Everyone involved with our work was proud and pleased when the Austrian based ZERO Project recognized these products with a 2020 Zero Project Award in their multi-round, peer reviewed competition.

There are so many other examples I could give but I hope my response is adequate to demonstrate that this new publication lives up to the key words in its title—“**partnerships**” and “**change**”—and confirms that old African proverb “**If you want to go fast, go alone, but if you want to go far, go together**”.

Editor : Well, you have sparked my interest enough to pose my final question. If I want to read this new book where can I purchase it?

Larry : I have a good news answer to that question. We have only printed a limited number of hard copies of the book because we feel it is the type of book, with 52 embedded videos, that is best read in an electronic format. ***Partnerships for Change: National Strategies—Regional Collaboration*** is now available for download, free of cost, in PDF, DAISY and EPUB formats at: ICEVI, <https://icevi.org/partnerships-for-change>, and at Overbrook School for the Blind, <https://www.obs.org/what-we-do/international-program.cfm>.

Currently, the book is only available in English. However work is underway on Thai and Vietnamese language versions. ICEVI and Overbrook will post notices on their websites on how to access these and any other translations that may become available.

International Partner Members



CBM
www.cbm.org



ONCE
www.once.es



OVERBROOK
SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND
www.obs.org



Perkins School for the Blind
www.perkins.org



Advancing 160 years of RIDBC experience.
NextSense Institute
www.nextsense.org.au

R N I B

See differently
**Royal National Institute of
Blind People**
www.rnib.org.uk



Sightsavers
www.sightsavers.org



The Norwegian Association of the
Blind and Partially Sighted
**The Norwegian Association of the
Blind and Partially Sighted**
www.blindeforbundet.no



Royal Dutch Visio
www.visio.org

Organisational Members

American Printing House for the Blind
www.aph.org

Canadien National Institute for the Blind
www.cnib.ca

Federazione Nazionale Delle Istituzioni Pro Ciechi
www.prociechi.it

Hadley School for the Blind
www.hadley.edu

LES DOIGTS QUI REVENT (Typhlo & Tactus)
www.tactus.org

Lions Clubs International Foundation
www.lcif.org

**Round Table on Information Access for
People with Print Disabilities**
www.printdisability.org

ICEVI Fact Sheet

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, the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) is a membership organisation with a mission to promote access to inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all people with visual impairment.

Goals

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

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

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

History of the Organization

Founded in 1952 in the Netherlands, the ICEVI conducted its Golden Jubilee conference in the Netherlands from 28 July to 2 August 2002.

ICEVI Regions

The 7 regions of ICEVI and their coverage of countries are as follows:

| | | |
|--|---|--------------|
| Africa Region | : | 52 countries |
| East Asia Region | : | 19 countries |
| Europe Region | : | 49 countries |
| Latin America Region | : | 19 countries |
| North America and the Caribbean Region | : | 15 countries |
| Pacific Region | : | 15 countries |
| West Asia Region | : | 25 countries |

Currently, more than 4000 individuals and organizations in over 180 countries are actively involved in ICEVI.

Networking with other organizations

ICEVI works closely with International Non-Governmental Development Organizations (INGDOs) and UN bodies such as United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN-ECOSOC), UNESCO, UNICEF, and WHO.

Publications

ICEVI's biannual magazine "The Educator" is available in electronic version in both English and Spanish and is also posted on our website www.icevi.org. ICEVI also publishes a biannual electronic newsletter that is currently distributed to more than 4000 individuals and organizations.

Website of ICEVI

www.icevi.org