



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



ICEVI E-NEWS

OCTOBER 2016

Message from the President

Dear ICEVI Members and Associates,

It was a great honour to be elected President of ICEVI at the General Assembly in Orlando Florida in August 2016. I look forward to working with ICEVI's Principal Officers, Regional Chairpersons, and organisational and individual members during the 2016-2020 quadrennium. Our incoming Principal Officers Group includes Lord Colin Low, Immediate Past President; Dr M.N.G. Mani, Chief Executive Officer; Dr Praveena Sukhraj-Ely, 1st Vice President; and Ms Nandini Rawal, Treasurer. The ICEVI Principal Officers welcome Ms Rima Canawati to the position of 2nd Vice President and look forward to working with her in promoting education for learners with visual impairment in Palestine and the Middle East Region.

On behalf of the Executive Committee (EXCO), I extend an ICEVI welcome to our incoming office bearers and farewell with thanks to, Lucia Piccione (former 1st Vice President), Tigabu Gebremedhin (ICEVI Africa), Suwimon Udampiriyasak (ICEVI East Asia), James Aiwa (ICEVI Pacific) and Martin Osangiri Okiyo (ICEVI Africa Regional Coordinator). We wish them all the best in their future endeavours.

This October 2016 edition of the E-News includes an overview of the WBU-ICEVI General Assembly and ICEVI Day, together with information about a range of initiatives and meetings that are taking place at the global and regional levels of ICEVI. Included on page 3 is an overview of the EXCO and strategic planning meetings that are scheduled for February 2017 in Pretoria, South Africa. The meetings bring together global leaders in education of learners with visual impairment and as a result, have sparked interest among organisations in South Africa. With thanks to the efforts of Praveena Sukhraj-Ely, ICEVI 1st Vice President, and Cathy Donaldson, President, Blind South Africa, we have successfully gained the support of the South Africa Department of Education to include a panel discussion on the educational context in South Africa and presentations on global

perspectives and practices in the field of education for learners with visual impairment.

During the 2016-2020 quadrennium, ICEVI will continue to work closely with its members, United Nations agencies and regional and international organisations, to support and promote the provision of quality education for all learners with visual impairment. The UN Sustainable Development Goal for education (Goal 4) highlights the challenges of bringing education to the world's estimated 57 million out-of-school children. We know that in many regions of the world, children with blindness, low vision, deafblindness and additional or multiple disabilities swell the ranks of out-of-school children and are without the "quality of life" benefits of education.

I invite you or your organisation to contribute your ideas to ICEVI's strategic planning process and schedule of activities for the quadrennium. Perhaps you have ideas about "disruptive innovation" in education, or have experienced success in linking out-of-school children with visual impairment with educational opportunities. One priority that I have set for the quadrennium is to identify successful approaches to "school readiness", that is, the "readiness" of children with visual impairment and their families to engage with learning opportunities, and the "readiness" of schools and education systems to provide quality education without discrimination and on the same basis for all.

In closing, I wish to thank Dr Mani, CEO and the ICEVI Secretariat for preparing this October 2016 edition of ICEVI E-News.



Frances Gentle,
President, ICEVI

New Officers of ICEVI

ICEVI conducted its General Assembly on 25th August 2016 at the Rosen Centre Hotel, Orlando and we are happy that Dr. Frances Gentle has been elected as the new President of ICEVI for the Quadrennium 2016-20. Dr. Gentle is a lecturer in vision impairment at the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children (RIDBC) in Australia. She served as the Regional Chair of the ICEVI Pacific Region (2006-12) and 2nd Vice President of ICEVI (2012-16) and her experience will certainly guide the organisation in various dimensions of development. The newly elected Principal Officers are as follows:

- **Dr. Frances Gentle**, President
- **Dr. Praveena Sukhraj**, First Vice President
- **Ms. Rima Canawati**, Second Vice President
- **Mrs. Nandini Rawal**, Treasurer
- **Lord Colin Low**, Immediate Past President

The Principal Officers of ICEVI bring a lot of goodwill to the organisation. ICEVI Constituency congratulates Dr. Frances Gentle and the other Principal Officers for a successful Quadrennium.

The regional chairs were also elected at the General Assembly and the new regional chairs are as follows:

- **Gertrude Fefoame**, Regional Chair, ICEVI Africa Region
- **Aria Indrawati**, Regional Chair, ICEVI East Asia Region
- **Betty Leotsakou**, Regional Chair, ICEVI Europe Region
- **Maria Cristina Sanz**, Regional Chair, ICEVI Latin America Region
- **Kay Ferrell**, Regional Chair, ICEVI North America and Caribbean Region
- **Ben Clare**, Regional Chair, ICEVI Pacific Region
- **Bhushan Punani**, Regional Chair, ICEVI West Asia Region

The full contact details of the officers can be found from ICEVI's official website www.icevi.org

Strategic Review of ICEVI

ICEVI has been gearing up for a Strategic Review in February 2017 which will revisit its mission, vision and goals in the light of the global developments in the education of persons with visual impairment and the role of ICEVI in augmenting quality services. A Strategic Planning Committee consisting of nine members of the ICEVI Executive Committee has been established and interviews with EXCO members are currently being conducted by Frances Gentle, the President ICEVI; Dave Power, CEO of the Perkins School for the Blind; Kay Ferrell, Regional Chair, ICEVI North America and the Caribbean Region and Andrew Griffith, Sightsavers. The purpose of the interviews is to identify the strategic issues and priorities for the 2016-20 quadrennium that will be explored by EXCO members in February 2017. The Strategic review will be undertaken with the assistance of a professional facilitator and more updates for the ICEVI constituency will be available in March 2017.

WBU-ICEVI General Assembly – Strengthened Relationship

The WBU-ICEVI General Assembly conducted in Orlando in August 2016 was attended by 857 delegates from 174 countries. The General Assembly was another opportunity to strengthening collaboration between ICEVI and the World Blind Union (WBU). ICEVI constituency places on record its profound thanks to the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) for the successful conduct of the WBU-ICEVI General Assemblies. The arrangements were excellent and the delegates had no major complaints. The executive staff and members of the NFB assisted the delegates efficiently. The Rosen Centre Hotel staff were very accommodative and many mentioned that they had gained experiences in assisting people with visual impairments during previous NFB conferences conducted at the Hotel. Originally ICEVI officers had some concerns about participants' Visas but it was handled smoothly and the Registration Desk was very supportive in issuing invitation letters in time which helped immensely in the visa process. The Orlando General Assembly will remain as one of the memorable events for a long time. For ICEVI, this event was very special as we did not have a General Assembly in the US in the last four decades and conducting the Assembly has brought a lot of visibility to ICEVI within the United States. Thanks to the NFB and the WBU for the collaboration and ICEVI

is looking forward to more joint events in the future. The joint breakfast hosted by WBU and ICEVI for the regional chairs on the 21st August was just a beginning of strong regional collaboration and there is a long way to go.

ICEVI Day Highlights

One of the recommendations of the 2012 General Assembly was to devote a full day in the 2016 General Assembly for paper presentations by the ICEVI participants. The Joint Program Committee of the WBU-ICEVI General Assembly 2016 encouraged this proposal and the responses were overwhelming. August 22, 2016 - the first day of the ICEVI part of the Orlando General Assembly was called "ICEVI Day" and 1 joint plenary and 30 concurrent sessions were organised, which helped more than 110 participants to present their research papers and case studies. Though there was a general impression in the sessions that limited time was available for interactions, the ICEVI Day provided opportunities to network among the professionals, parents and organisations working in the area of blindness. Most of the presenters were also of the opinion that the duration of the ICEVI Day in the future General Assemblies should be extended to at least 2 days. ICEVI will highlight this need at the meeting of the Program Committee when formed for organising the next General Assemblies.

Skype calls with the Regional Chairs

Since the beginning of the Quadrennium, the President and CEO of ICEVI have conducted conference calls with the Regional Chairs of Africa, Latin America, Europe and Pacific regions. The conference calls offer an opportunity to informally address a variety of topics such as regional networking, advocacy, strengthening collaboration with the World Blind Union at regional level, initiating Vision Alliance activities, formation of strong regional boards, working with the Governments for influencing policies on education of persons with disabilities, etc. Skype calls are scheduled for November and December with other regional chairs. Strategies for further strengthening communication between Principal Officers and Regional Chairs will be discussed at the meeting of the Regional Chairs scheduled for 17th February 2017 in conjunction with the ICEVI EXCO meeting in Pretoria, South Africa.

Formation of Regional Committees of ICEVI regions

The newly elected regional chairs have started forming strong and dynamic regional committees, as the success of ICEVI depends mostly on comprehensive regional development. The composition of the regional committee will be mostly as follows though there is flexibility to address region specific issues:

1. Regional Chair
2. Immediate Past Regional Chair
3. One or two Deputy Regional Chairs
4. Representatives of key International Partner Members who are present in the region
5. Representatives of key countries which are active in ICEVI
6. Parents' Organisations / DPOs / Mainstream bodies / Key policy makers

As per the current structure of ICEVI regions, it is mandatory to form a Regional Committee. In many regions, the Regional Committee is too large and they are suggested to form a Regional Executive Committee (REXCO) involving a few representative members of the Regional Committee to take decisions which should be ratified by the Regional Committee when it meets or the decisions can be endorsed by mail. In the global ICEVI, there is an EXCO with nearly 30 members whereas the 6 Principal Officers, who are members of the EXCO are actively involved in the day-to-day running of the organisation. The REXCO at the regional level is similar to the Principal Officers at the global level. Some regions do not have this arrangement and simply have the Regional Committee and therefore, such arrangements are left to the regions. The regional committee can decide what is best for the region. The contact details of the regional committee members will be posted on the regional pages of ICEVI website soon.

UN Side meetings

Frances Gentle, President ICEVI attended the International Disability Development Consortium (IDDC) side event at the UN General Assembly in New York on 17th October 2016. The meeting was organised by IDDC's Inclusive Education Committee and we congratulate Nafisa Baboo, IDDC Co-Chair and ICEVI EXCO member for her substantial contribution to the success of the event. The event was

well attended and the panel speakers included Gopal Mitra of UNICEF (Moderator), Jan Kickert (Permanent Representative of Austria to the UN), Patrick Montjourides (UNESCO Institute for Statistics), Julia Gillard (Global Partnership for Education) and Betty Najjemba (Ugandan National Association for the Deaf). Presentations by panel members clearly articulated the importance of global funding for inclusive education of learners with disabilities.

The report is entitled *#CostingEquity: The case for disability-responsive education financing#* and may be downloaded from the IDDC website, <http://www.iddcconsortium.net/resources-tools/costing-equity>. Follow-up action of ICEVI at the regional level will be discussed with the regional chairs at ICEVI EXCO meeting in Pretoria on 17th February 2017.

Following the UN side meeting, Frances Gentle attended meetings with Aubrey Webson and Gopal Mitra of UNICEF and John Price of Perkins Solutions, to discuss UNICEF activities to address the Sustainable Development Goals. The need for empirical data on learners with blindness and low vision was highlighted, together with innovative ways of offering training in disability-inclusive education for teachers in rural and remote communities in developing countries.

CIUD 3rd International Congress on Universities and Disability

ICEVI will be well represented at the 3rd International Congress on Universities and Disability, hosted by ONCE Foundation in Madrid on 10th and 11th November 2016. Frances Gentle, President ICEVI will speak at the Roundtable on Inclusive education and Mani, CEO will deliver a brief presentation on the higher education project. This opportunity will be used to meet some of the Board members of ONCE and to strengthen the collaborative work of ICEVI and ONCE, particularly in the Latin America region. Cristina Sanz, the Chairperson of ICEVI Latin America region will also be attending the Congress and will take advantage of the trip to hold a meeting of the ICEVI Latin America regional board. For information about the Congress, visit <http://ciud.fundaciononce.es/en>.

Higher Education Project Coordinators meeting

The annual meeting of the coordinators of ICEVI's Higher Education Project was held at Orlando on 26th August 2016. The meeting was chaired by Larry Campbell, Co-Project Director, Higher Education. CEO Mani, Co-Project Director welcomed the members of the meeting and placed on record ICEVI's profound thanks to Mr. Sasakawa of the Nippon Foundation for delivering the inaugural ICEVI Day address on 22nd August 2016. Mr Sasakawa's address and attendance increased the visibility of the higher education project and ICEVI's partnership with the Nippon Foundation. Members also congratulated Aria Indrawati, Higher Education Coordinator of Indonesia for her election as the Regional Chairperson of ICEVI East Asia region.

The Higher Education Project Coordinators reviewed the progress of the Higher education project against the following key objectives of the cycle 2015-18:-

- **Increased enrolment in higher education programme:** 2142 students have been benefitted by the higher education projects since its inception in 2006/07 and the rate of growth is steady and significant.
- **Advocacy and public policy:** Indonesia has brought out a Decree on higher education, Laos has instituted a scholarship scheme for increasing the enrolment of students in higher education, more universities are coming forward to promote higher education for students with visual impairment in all countries and more measures in this direction will be undertaken. The collaboration of ICEVI with the SEAMEO-SEN (Special Education Regional Centre of the South East Asian Ministers of Education Organisation) will be used to influence educational authorities in the member countries to facilitate inclusive higher education.
- **Increased option in course selection:** Visually impaired students have started opting for courses such as management, science related studies, law etc., in recent years against the traditional selection of courses in humanities, language etc. More awareness programmes for higher education faculty will be arranged to demonstrate the skills of visually impaired students so that wider options can be made available for them when it comes to course selection.

- **Focus on soft skills and employment:** All partners have organised a number of programmes on soft skills for the higher education students with visual impairment and exchange programmes have also been facilitated. A total of 117 graduates have been assisted by the projects to secure employment.

Key highlights of Higher education project 2015-2016 and country reports were presented. The project partners shared experiences on how the above broad objectives of the project could be achieved through exchange of expertise within the region.

Math Project Update

ICEVI has initiated a project "Breaking Barriers: Mathematics Made Easy" with the assistance of The Nippon Foundation and technical guidance from the Perkins School for the Blind, Overbrook-Nippon Network for Educational Technology (ONNET) and the Texas School for the Blind, in preparing mathematics video packages to assist teachers teach mathematics concepts to visually impaired children. The higher education project partners will also be closely involved in the Math project, particularly in the preparation of video lessons. The pilot phase of the project till May 2017 is enumerated as follows:

- 10-20 sample concepts covering K-12 mathematics will be shortlisted by a group of mathematics experts working with the CEO ICEVI, who is the overall Director of the project.
- Video script for each concept by including three sections – 1) explanation of the specific concept, 2) how that concept is generally taught to sighted students and 3) what adaptations are required for visually impaired students, will be prepared and this will include suggestions on teaching aids, teaching techniques etc.
- Sample video lessons will be prepared for at least 5 concepts and presented at the meeting of the Math project Academic team, which will meet in Austin in December 2016.
- Based on the suggestions of the Academic team, video lessons for another 5-10 concepts will be prepared before May 2017 and the Core Committee of the project will review for adequacy and technical clarity.

- The final packages will be presented to The Nippon Foundation for scaling up and the project is expected to prepare video packages for about 200 concepts during the Quadrennium 2016-2020, provided funding is available.

Thank You Martin Osangiri Okiyo!

Martin Osangiri Okiyo, ICEVI's Regional Coordinator of the Africa region will be leaving ICEVI with effect from 1st December 2016. In his letter of resignation, Martin has mentioned that he will be transiting and taking advantage of different other opportunities that ICEVI has gladly opened door to, in his tenure at the Regional Secretariat. He is also optimistic that the common goal for Global Sustainable Development towards and beyond 2030 will most certainly bring him and ICEVI Africa region together in different ways in the near future. Martin brought visibility to ICEVI in the Africa region and ICEVI will miss him in its work. The Regional Chair of the Africa region Gertrude and the Regional Committee will decide the course of action for the Africa region in the current Quadrennium, soon after the Strategic Review meeting in February 2017.

UNESCO ICT Conference in Costa Rica

UNESCO is organizing a regional conference on ICT for Persons with Disabilities in San Jose, Costa Rica on 14-16 November 2016. UNESCO states that the conference seeks to empower people with disabilities and to provide a space for regional governments and ICT companies to develop and subsequently enact the relevant policies to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities. ICEVI is one of the sponsors of this event by deputing 7 persons representing the ICT field and also the key National Federations of persons with disabilities, who play a key role in the policy formulation of their respective countries. The outcomes of this conference will be posted on the Latin America page of ICEVI website.

WBU-ICEVI General Assembly Evaluation by ICEVI participants

The following questionnaire adopted from the evaluation form prepared by the World Blind Union has been sent to all ICEVI participants who attended the Joint Assemblies in Orlando. We have been receiving responses from the attendees and are requesting them through this

E-News to please email completed evaluations to oficevi@gmail.com or sgicevi@vsnl.net, by 30 November 2016.

Evaluation Form

To assist ICEVI in planning our future Assembly, your evaluation of the ICEVI components of the WBU-ICEVI Joint Assemblies 2016 would be appreciated. This evaluation is being sent to all those who participated in the ICEVI General Assembly events. If you had also participated in the WBU specific events, you can expect to receive a survey from WBU directly.

General information

Your full name :
Organization :
Country :
Email address :

Please insert a rating of 1 to 5 beside each item that is listed under topics A to E below. A space for your general comments is also provided under each topic.

Rating scale:

5 = Excellent, 4 = good, 3 = Average, 2 = Fair, 1 = Poor

Or N/A means not applicable (for example if you did not attend that part of the events).

A. ICEVI Day, 22nd August 2016 (Rate from 1 to 5)

- Overall satisfaction with the ICEVI Day:
- Program Schedule:
- Quality of presentations:
- Inaugural session:
- Topics of concurrent sessions:
- Attendance at the concurrent sessions:
- Level of interaction in the sessions:

General Comments (please add):

- What you liked
- Areas for improvement
- Other:

B. WBU-ICEVI Joint Sessions, 23th & 24th August (Rate from 1 to 5)

- Overall evaluation:
- Quality of presentations:
- Joint Days Plenary Sessions:
- Joint days Concurrent sessions:

General Comments (please add):

- What your liked:
- Areas for improvement:
- Other

C. ICEVI General Assembly (for those who were delegates) (Rate from 1 to 5)

- Duration:
- Quality of discussions:
- Election process:
- Awards presentation:

Comments:

- What you liked
- Areas for improvement
- Other:

D. Local Arrangements (Rate from 1 to 5)

- Assembly Venue:
- Technology Exhibition:
- Volunteer Support:
- Event website:
- Tea breaks:
- Express lunch facility:
- Hotel Accommodations:
- Transport services to and from the airport:

Comments:

- What you liked
- Areas for improvement
- Other:

E. Overall comments (Rate from 1 to 5)

- Please rate your overall assessment of holding joint WBU and ICEVI Assemblies (1 - 5):

Comments:

- What aspects of the joint assemblies require improvement?

Comments:

- Do you recommend that we hold a future joint event? (Yes or no):

Comments:

What were the three top highlights for you?

1)

2)

3)

Please add any additional comments or suggestions for future events:**Revising ICEVI website**

The ICEVI website is being revised at present and we request the viewers to bear with occasional interruptions. The current layout of the website has the consensus of ICEVI EXCO and we have been using this layout for the past 4 years. The EXCO emphasised that the accessibility of the website is more important than the visual appeal and we have been strictly following this direction and ICEVI is glad that our website is fully accessible and easy to navigate. We have been uploading many documents in various sections of the website including the regional pages and our Publication section is most visited by viewers. The link page listing the organisations involved in the services for persons with visual impairment is also expanding.

We are currently undertaking a review of the website with the inputs by the regions regarding its layout and the classification of content. ICEVI members and viewers are also requested to offer their suggestions and inputs latest by November 2016 and we hope to commission the

revised website from March 2017 soon after the conduct of the ICEVI Strategic review meeting.

Potential topics for The Educator

ICEVI has been focusing on thematic issues such as inclusion, teacher preparation, technology, early intervention, low vision, Braille literacy etc., for The Educator and the past issues can be accessed through the website of ICEVI www.icevi.org. Those who have suggestions for new topics for the future issues of The Educator may contact **Marianne Riggio** (Marianne.Riggio@Perkins.org), Editor and **MNG Mani** (sgicevi@vsnl.net), Associate Editor.

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

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