



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

Newsline

APRIL 2003

Message from the President:

Dear Friends of ICEVI:

We have just concluded the 1st Executive Committee meeting of the new quadrennium in Stellenbosch, South Africa. We wanted to hold this first meeting of the new quadrennium in the African continent as this is a region where children and youth with visual impairment, their parents and their teachers face enormous challenges. We hope in the coming years that ICEVI can serve as a catalyst for positive change in the Africa region and if our recent meeting is a barometer we should see much progress in over the next four years.

Every detail of our meeting was arranged with care and the Executive Committee is grateful to Wilfred Maina, Desmond Frank, Henock Schoemann and Ben Pizer for their efforts to make this meeting such a great success.

Since the Executive Committee met in Bensheim, Germany in February, 2002 to develop our Strategic Plan, ICEVI has made very significant strides forward. I will not attempt to describe those now as many are summarized elsewhere in this issue of "Newsline".

Moving ICEVI forward on so many fronts has required great teamwork. I am grateful to have on our Executive Committee so many persons who not only volunteer many hours of their personal time but have the same type of commitment from their organizations that I have from Overbrook. Without that individual and organizational commitment we would not be able to have achieved what we have in just fourteen months.

Now that ICEVI has a full time secretariat and a very talented and energetic Secretary General you can expect to see the momentum that has been generated over the past fourteen months continue.

I hope you take the time to read the brief updates that have been compiled for this issue of Newsline on the many new ICEVI initiatives that are underway. Most importantly, I hope you will find ways to become more actively involved. This is your organization and without your involvement and support it will be impossible to achieve our goal of "equal access" to education for all children and youth with visual impairment.

Sincerely,

Larry Campbell

President

Important Meetings of ICEVI since the World Conference:

1. *The Principal Officers met from 16 to 17 November 2002 at the Hong Kong Society for the Blind.*
2. *The executive committee of ICEVI met at Stellenbosch, South Africa from 28 to 29 March 2003.*
3. *The Europe region conducted its regional committee meeting in October 2002.*
4. *The Pacific region organized its regional committee meeting at the Gold Coast, Australia on January 14, 2003.*
5. *The Africa Region organized its regional committee meeting in Nairobi from 17 to 19 February 2003.*
6. *The sub-regional committee meeting of the Africa region was conducted in Stellenbosch, South Africa from 25 to 26 March 2003.*
7. *The Latin America region conducted three sub-regional committee meetings in 2002.*
8. *A meeting of the ICEVI national network in Bangladesh was conducted in Dhaka in January 2003.*

ICEVI-WBU Joint Position Paper:

It is gratifying that ICEVI and WBU are working closer than ever before and a joint position paper on “Inclusive education of children with visual impairment” has been developed. The Executive Committee of ICEVI and the Officers of WBU have approved the position paper.

Thanks to our Supporters:

We are pleased to report that the following international organizations have stepped forward to support ICEVI by making an annual contribution of at least \$20,000 to support our global campaign to create equal educational access for all children with visual impairment:

1. *Asian Foundation for the Prevention of Blindness*
2. *Christoffel Blindenmission*
3. *Organizacion Nacional de Ciegos Espanoles*
4. *Sight Savers International*

ICEVI also expresses its gratitude to the Helen Keller Worldwide and the Perkins School for the Blind which have also made cash contributions to our work since the last issue of Newsline.

These contributions have allowed us to access funding from a very generous matching grant that has been provided by The Drs. Richard Charles and Esther Yewpick Lee Charitable Foundation.

To all of our supporters a very hearty THANK YOU!!!!

ICEVI - Hadley Collaboration :

One of the objectives of the Strategic Plan is to develop distance education courses for the benefit of professionals working in developing nations. ICEVI has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Hadley School for the Blind to offer distance education courses for the benefit of professionals, parents, and teachers in developing nations. As per the MOU, the Hadley School will offer these courses free of cost and the Regional Chairpersons of ICEVI will popularize these courses in the regions. Hadley will be using the expertise of ICEVI in formulating new courses on the basis of needs of developing countries. As human resource development is one of the key areas to achieve the goal of education for all children with visual impairment by 2015, this collaboration will go a long way in addressing this global objective. Those interested in joining the courses may contact their respective Regional Chairperson, the Secretary General of ICEVI or the Hadley School directly. The address of the School is *Hadley School for the Blind, Winnetka, Illinois 60093, U.S.A.* e-mail : bina@hadley-school.org and website : www.hadley-school.org

When signing up for courses, please be sure to state that you are enrolling as part of the ICEVI-Hadley distance education scheme.

IAPB - ICEVI Collaboration:

The Secretary General attended the regional workshop of IAPB-SEAR held at Chittagong, Bangladesh from 6 to 7 February 2003 and made a presentation on ICEVI and educational intervention for children with visual impairment. The Regional Chairpersons of ICEVI are urged to collaborate with the IAPB units at the national and regional levels and promote awareness on education of children with visual impairment under the overall programme of Vision 2020.

IMC-ICEVI Collaboration:

The President and the Secretary General made a presentation on ICEVI on March 31, 2003 at the 11th International Mobility Conference held at Stellenbosch, South Africa and talked about the educational interventions for children with visual impairment. ICEVI and IMC will be collaborating in the future to ensure educational opportunities for children with visual impairment and also in the development of mobility skills in them through qualified mobility specialists.

In addition to the major initiatives such as the signing of MOU with the Hadley School, adoption of the ICEVI-WBU joint position paper on inclusive education, etc., the EXCO recommended the revival of the ICEVI-INGOs partnership to strengthen policy perspectives related to educational services in various regions of ICEVI. It was also decided that ICEVI should develop guidelines for enrolling individual and institution members in the course of time.

Networking at the national level:

The structure of ICEVI purports to strengthen the network right from the international to the national level. It is ideal to promote ICEVI activities at the national level through national level chapters. However, ICEVI believes that the national chapters of ICEVI can be formed and put into operation effectively only when a sound understanding among various stakeholders of the country is developed. Therefore, ICEVI suggests formation of national networks at the country level as the first step to bring organizations together to work for the cause of education of children with visual impairment. Following the successful formation of national level networks, national level committees may be formed to work with the local governments and organizations. When the national committee is in place with proven activities at the country level, formation of national chapter of ICEVI would become ideal. Therefore, ICEVI suggests an evolutionary process in the formation of ICEVI chapters at the national level.

Support for the UN Convention on Rights of Disabled People:

The World Conference of ICEVI held at the Netherlands resolved that ICEVI should support the proposed UN Convention on Rights of Disabled People. Consequently, the President has communicated with the United Nations expressing the support of ICEVI for the proposed convention.

Position paper on Education For All Children with Visual Impairment:

The first goal of the strategic plan is to address the global issue of education for all children with visual impairment by 2015. This is in line with the Dakar Declaration to achieve education for all children by 2015 and ICEVI is particular that this declaration should include education of children with visual impairment too. ICEVI is working through its Regional and Sub-Regional Committees to influence policy changes in the respective member countries. A position paper to this effect is being prepared by ICEVI. ICEVI is currently doing a needs assessment by looking into the policies of various countries in the developing nations, mechanism of human resource development, dissemination of materials, etc., in order to prepare a comprehensive position paper which can be used by the member countries in developing nations to achieve the goal of education for all children with visual impairment. This position paper will be circulated to Executive Committee members and discussed at the next meeting of the Executive Committee.

World Bank's initiative:

We are pleased to inform our readers that The World Bank has appointed Ms. Judith Heumann as its Advisor on Disability. This is a positive sign that The World Bank is taking seriously its commitment to include the needs of persons with disabilities in its programs worldwide. The ICEVI President recently met with Ms. Heumann in Washington, D.C. and since then ICEVI has been assisting The World Bank with the development of a toolkit (document) that will provide World Bank offices with guidance on programs that both prevent blindness and include blind and low vision persons into existing World Bank programs. ICEVI's Regional Chairs have been asked to make special efforts to develop a good working relationship with World Bank offices in their region and to monitor whether the needs of blind and low vision persons are being considered in the context of World Bank development programs.

Working with Parents:

ICEVI believes that parents of visually impaired children have a significant role to play in expanding services for children with visual impairment. With a view to activate parents' groups and also to develop communications between them, ICEVI has started a "Parents' Column" in The Educator. The recent issue carried a detailed column for parents and ICEVI believes that the interaction between parents' groups throughout the world will grow from strength to strength in the future and they will

play a vital role for advocating better educational opportunities for these children throughout the world.

Website:

The ICEVI website has a new look now. It has more information on the regions, forthcoming events, frequently asked questions, etc., and is constantly being updated. The webmaster is taking extra care to make the website accessible to persons with visual impairment. ICEVI needs more information from the regions to update the regional pages for the benefit of the viewers. The readers are urged to go through the website of ICEVI at www.icevi.org and offer suggestions.

The Educator

Like the website, The Educator, ICEVI's magazine is also improving. The last issue on "Early Childhood Intervention" included four information-packed articles, regional news, etc. The next issue of The Educator will be published in July 2003 and the theme of the issue is "Inclusion".

Updating the database of ICEVI:

ICEVI requests the readers of The Educator and the Newsline to help the Secretariat update the database. Some of the mails sent by the Secretariat to the members as per the old database are bouncing back and therefore, the readers are requested to provide correct postal addresses. This would help the Secretariat to strengthen communication with the members of ICEVI.

Projects under the Drs. Richard Charles and Esther Yewpick Lee Charitable Foundation Grant (LFG):

The members know about the grand launching of the LFG during the World Conference of ICEVI held in the Netherlands in July/August 2002. Since then, the developments are good. The Regional Chairpersons of Africa, East Asia, Latin America, and West Asia have come up with 30 activities aimed at creating awareness about the capabilities of persons with visual impairment and 69 workshops and inservice courses to update the skills of teachers and other professionals who are serving them. More information on the results of these programs will be provided on our website and through subsequent issues of The Educator. Those who want to learn more about this program are asked to contact their Regional Chairperson. The ICEVI-Lee initiative is welcomed in the developing countries and ICEVI believes that building the capacity of teachers and others involved will substantially improve the quality of education of children with visual impairment.

Workshops and Seminars:

1. ICEVI sponsored a pre-conference workshop on curricular areas for delegates from the Pacific Islands in Gold Coast, Australia from 11 to 12 January 2003. The Secretary General, the Regional Chairperson of the Pacific Region, Dr. Jill Keefe and other experts from Australia organized this workshop which included subjects such as education of low vision children, teaching mathematics, early intervention, orientation and mobility, etc.
2. The ICEVI West Asia Region supported a National Conference on Science and Technology organized by the National Association for the Blind in Mumbai, India in February 2003.

Research initiative of ICEVI:

One of the goals of the Strategic Plan suggests that ICEVI should undertake scientific research activities to come out with best practices. The Research Task Force formed by ICEVI discussed this issue at length at its meeting on March 27, 2003 based on the draft discussion paper and decided to undertake scientific research studies to find out variables contributing to the effective inclusion of children with visual impairment in regular schools. Though the magnitude of the problem is large, it was decided to undertake research studies in a phased manner. To begin with, ICEVI will be undertaking a research study in Uganda to study the “*factors that contribute to the successful education of children with visual impairment in regular schools*”. The research team will be headed by Dr. Steve McCall, Vice-President of ICEVI with the Secretary General, ICEVI, Mr. Wilfred Maina, Regional Chairperson, Africa Region, and Mr. Ben Male, Uganda as its members. The research team will come up with a detailed plan of research by the end of May 2003. Sight Savers has agreed to meet part of the expenses incurred with this research study. ICEVI believes that such action oriented research studies might help in suggesting measures for increasing educational opportunities for children with visual impairment in developing nations. More information on the research will be available in the subsequent issues of the Newsline and The Educator.

International Updates

Many international events have taken place since the World Conference. Similarly many more events will be organized internationally in 2003. For more details, please refer to the website of ICEVI www.icevi.org

Negotiations for the 12th World Conference of ICEVI in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in 2006:

ICEVI is working with the Malaysian Association for the Blind to explore the possibilities of holding the 12th World Conference of ICEVI in Malaysia in 2006. It is expected that a formal agreement with the Host Committee will be finalized in the next few months. Once the plans are finalized you will find more information on the website, in The Educator and in the next issue of Newsline.

Transforming Plans into Actions:

We hope this issue of Newsline has helped you to see that the momentum and enthusiasm that was generated at our 12th World Conference last summer has not subsided but has accelerated. ICEVI is your organization! Our success or failure in achieving the goals we have set within our Strategic Plan very much rests on the involvement of individuals like you. Please get involved with ICEVI in your region. Find out from your Regional Chairperson how you can join our Global Campaign to create equal access to education for all children with visual impairment...no matter where in the world they live.

This electronic Newsline of ICEVI comes to your mailbox in April and October every year. Please provide us the e-mail addresses of individuals and organizations that may be interested in receiving the Newsline and The Educator.

For further details, contact:



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