



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



(FORMERLY ICEVI NEWSLINE)

April 2008

Message from the President

Philadelphia, PA
April 23, 2008

Dear Colleagues:

This issue of ICEVI E-NEWS brings you up-to-date on a number recent decisions taken by the Executive Committee of ICEVI and the EFA-VI Global Task Force so I will not spend much time in “plowing that ground”.

However, as momentum builds and the EFA-VI Global Campaign gains traction in all of our regions the greatest challenge that I face as your President and as the Chairperson of the Resource Mobilization Committee is matching need with available resources. Therefore I hope you will permit me the opportunity to reach out to you, our members, for your advice and support.

There is no question that the EFA-VI Global Campaign has caught the imagination of educators and governments throughout the world. For the first time ever, the international community in the field of visual impairment is working together with a clear and determined focus; a focus that can lead to a world in which every child with a visual impairment enjoys the right to education.

Since the last issue of ICEVI E-News two more major organizations have become full International Partner Members of ICEVI. We welcome the Perkins School for the Blind and Vision Australia to this category of membership with the financial, moral and technical support that comes with it. In addition to this support, the Norwegian Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted has recently stepped forth to pledge \$50,000 to specific programs carried out by the global campaign and The Nippon Foundation has provide a grant of \$170,000 for the higher education dimension of the campaign.

On my return from our recent meetings in Hanoi I had very positive and productive meetings with our former Treasurer Mrs. Grace Chan, J.P., who is the Executive Director of the Asian Foundation for the Prevention of Blindness and its chairperson, Mr. Clive Oxley, OBE. Both expressed enthusiasm for what the campaign is achieving and their willingness to work with us to help raise resources in Hong Kong for work in China and other Asian countries. This is the same type of commitment and support that we seek from those of you who have yet to become as fully engaged with this effort as you might.

The Resource Mobilization Committee has developed an ambitious Business Plan for the Global Campaign that you will find on our website www.icevi.org soon. Please take time to review the plan and provide us with your suggestions on how you or your organization might help “open a door” to a potential supporter. Remember this Global Campaign may be led by ICEVI but it truly belongs to our entire community. Each door you help open to a potential supporter will in-turn open hundreds of school house doors that currently close and locking out more than 4 million children with visual impairment in the developing world.

I hope we can count on your support in helping us to generate the needed resources to match the need. Please feel free to contact me directly with your suggestions at larry@obs.org or president@icevi.org or send your suggestions to Dr. Mani at the ICEVI Secretariat sgicevi@vsnl.net.

As always,



Larry Campbell

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING IN HANOI

ICEVI's third executive committee meeting of the quadrennium 2006-2010 was held in Hanoi, Vietnam on 9-11 April 2008. The members of the committee reviewed the work of the regions of ICEVI and suggested that closer collaboration should be established with Governments and all stakeholders to expand educational services for children with visual impairment. The executive committee also suggested that a series of publications on inclusion of children with low vision in the mainstream, visually impaired children with multiple disabilities, orientation and mobility, braille, etc., should be prepared for assisting general classroom teachers in the Global Campaign on Education For All Children with Visual Impairment (EFA-VI). The group also expressed the need for a short video that could be used to popularize the EFA-VI Global Campaign and also be used in efforts to mobilize resources for the campaign. One of the key recommendations of the meeting was that ICEVI should explore the possibility of facilitating the establishment of a Resource Centre for procurement and distribution of high quality-low cost educational aids and devices to children with visual impairment in schools. This resolution is in conformity with the third guiding principle of the EFA-VI campaign that children with visual impairment should be provided access to appropriate support services. The executive committee unanimously endorsed the idea of building a Vision Alliance between ICEVI, International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) and the World Blind Union (WBU) for reaching the unreached and also to ensure quality services for persons with visual impairment worldwide.

GLOBAL TASK FORCE MEETING

The Global Task Force (GTF) Meeting of the EFA-VI campaign was held in Hanoi on 7-8 April 2008. Besides reviewing the progress of the campaign, the GTF included Pakistan and Nepal as the new focus countries in addition to the existing three countries namely Dominican Republic, Paraguay and Vietnam. The GTF also worked out details for establishing the Regional Secretariat for EFA-VI campaign in Nairobi. The GTF approved a comprehensive Business Plan for mobilising resources for the campaign and also suggested appropriate mechanism for documenting the impact of the campaign through short-term documentation and by conducting long-term impact oriented research studies. The meeting resolved that more international organisations involved in services for persons with visual impairment should be encouraged to play an active role in the campaign.

EFA-VI MEETING WITH PARTNERS IN VIETNAM

The Executive Committee of ICEVI had an interactive workshop on 9 April 2008 with the representatives of organisations working with persons with disabilities in Vietnam.

Dr. Nguyen Ngoc Hung, Deputy Director General for External Affairs, Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) chaired the workshop that was co-chaired by Dr. Nguyen Loc, Deputy Director of the National Institute of Educational Strategy and Curriculums (NIESC) at the Ministry of Education and Training and ICEVI President Larry Campbell. Following welcoming remarks by Dr. Hung, Dr. Loc added his welcome and helped place the EFA-VI initiative within the broader perspective of what MOET was doing to address the needs of all disadvantaged and disabled children in Vietnam. ICEVI's President provided an overview of the organizational development of ICEVI and the evolution and purpose of the EFA-VI campaign. Dr. Nguyen Duc Minh, Secretary of the National Technical Task Force of EFA-VI and Deputy Director of the Center for Education of Exceptional Children at NIESC provided a detailed account of the progress of the campaign in Vietnam. He explained that 7,149 children with visual impairment had already been identified and added that the objective of the campaign in Vietnam was to provide educational opportunities to 70% of the population of children with visual impairment by 2010 and 100% by 2015. Dr. Mani, Executive Director of the campaign moderated the discussions and summarized the recommendations.

The Vietnam experience reveals a strong commitment on the part of the Government that is enhanced by the excellent working relationship it has developed with the Vietnam Blind Association and other national and international organisations involved in the general and special needs education sectors. All of this is being done within the framework of a well-defined "national plan for education of all children with disabilities" which builds upon the country's still broader general EFA initiative. Of particular note is the way a "national technical task force on EFA-VI" has been able to eliminate the gap that often exists between intent and delivery when it comes to the inclusion of education of children with visual impairment within the broader EFA infrastructures. In short, Vietnam provides many valuable lessons for other countries in the region and beyond as they strive to create educational equity for all children with visual impairment. The workshop also provided a wonderful opportunity for the members of the executive committee of ICEVI to learn firsthand of the impact the global campaign is making on the lives of thousands of children with visual impairment worldwide.

REGIONAL COORDINATOR FOR EFA-VI – CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

ICEVI calls for applications from candidates fulfilling the following qualifications for the position of the Regional Coordinator of the EFA-VI Secretariat to be established in Nairobi. The candidate is one who has -a post-graduate degree in education / special education, -knowledge in inclusive education, -knowledge and experience in education of children with visual impairment, -good writing skills, -the willingness to travel, -the ability to work independently, and language proficiency in English.

Language ability in French is desirable. Interested candidates may send in their applications with curriculum vitae providing details for the above prescribed qualifications to The Executive Director, African Union of the Blind (AfUB), P. O. Box 72872, 00200, Nairobi, Kenya. E-mail: elly@afub-uafa.org Last date for the receipt of applications is June 30, 2008. Short-listed candidates will be called for an interview at the AfUB office in September 2008. Please log onto ICEVI's website www.icevi.org to know more about the position and job descriptions.

NASSCOM RECOGNITION OF WIMATS

WIMATS (Webel ICEVI Mathematics Transcription Software), jointly invented by the Webel Mediatronics, Kolkata and the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment was recently certified by the National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM) in India as an innovation of 2007 in the IT sector. The software enables reproduction of visual format of the mathematical text on the computer screen and braille presses could use the package to produce mathematics textbooks with ease. The mathematical braille codes used in school text books are grouped under different categories such as functions dealing with fractions, shapes, algebraic operations, inequalities, etc., so that the transcriber knows where to locate the inserted figure, shape, symbol, etc. The software is Windows based and is compatible to work with all types of Braille embossers. An Overbrook-Nippon Network on Educational Technology (ON-NET) team is in the process of scripting the software so that it is compatible with Jaws software. More information on this development will be published on the website of ICEVI (www.icevi.org)

ICEVI CONGRATULATES MONTHIAN BUNTAN

ICEVI is very pleased to inform our members that Monthian Buntan, the President of the Thailand Association of the Blind has been appointed as a Senator in the Parliament of the Royal Thai Government. Monthian has and continues to play a key role in the disability sector worldwide and this recognition is well deserved and will help the cause of persons with visual impairment in Thailand and throughout the world. Congratulations Monthian!

NEW CEO OF THE IAPB

Dr. Larry Hanson has been appointed as the new CEO of the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness. Congratulations Larry.

EXPANSION OF HIGHER EDUCATION PROJECTS

The higher education project of ICEVI supported by the Nippon Foundation has been extended to Philippines, Vietnam, and the Surabaya and Makasar in Indonesia from 2008. A technology centre under the aegis of this project is now functioning at the Vietnam Blind Association (VBA) headquarters in Hanoi where visually impaired students enrolled in higher education programs in the capitol make use of the centre as they pursue degree courses and careers in a wide variety of fields such as journalism, law, psychology, information and communication technology, etc. Similar technology centres have or will soon be opened in Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam), Manila (Philippines), Makasar and Surabaya (Indonesia). The young students who are today using these centers are the future leaders who are “changing what it means to be blind” and in so doing will motivate parents and youth with visual impairment to recognize the value of education.

PARENTS ASSOCIATION SETS UP ICT TRAINING CENTRE

The Egyptian Parents Association of Visually Impaired Persons has established a model ICT Resource Training Center in Cairo to train teachers working in educational institutions of persons with visual impairment and students themselves. This is the first authorized IBM computer training for visually impaired persons in the Middle East. During 2007, the centre trained more than 50 teachers and 100 visually impaired and blind persons in Cairo Governorate who received IBM certificate. It is a classic example for how parents association can empower persons with visual impairment through education and employment. For more details of this initiative, contact the Founder of the Association and the ICEVI Chairperson of Northern Africa Dr. Sawson El Misseri (smessiri@soficom.com.eg)

CONGRATS SUSAN

Dr. Susan Spungin, Vice President for International Programs, American Foundation for the Blind was honored by the National Association of Parents of Children with Visual Impairments (NAPVI) with their Founders Award at a recent meeting held in Omaha, Nebraska. Susan has been a long-term member of the ICEVI Executive Committee and is a former Vice President of ICEVI and a former Chairperson of the North America-Caribbean Region. Susan also serves as the current Treasurer of the World Blind Union. Well deserved Susan!!

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS

Braille Without Borders (BWB) International Institute for Social Entrepreneurs (IISE) in Kerala, South of India, will start its first course in January 2009. For the participants that will study during the first two years, BWB will provide scholarships either through

funds raised by BWB or scholarships provided by other organisations or individuals. BWB will accept applications until July 2008 for participants that are interested in this unique program. BWB is looking for engaged, motivated people who want to add something to society by setting up their own social or environmental projects in their own regions and countries. Please note that a preference is given to blind and/or partially sighted candidates. To find out more about this program go to the website www.Braillewithoutborders.org.

BLIND CAN NOW ENROLL IN PRIVATE SPORTS CLUB

Mohammed Towfik Bellow, General Manager EBSAR Foundation, who is also the IAPB Advocacy and Public Relations Committee Member and ICEVI West Asia KSA (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) Representative says that blind persons can now enrol in Private Sports Clubs in Saudi Arabia. Sports is one of the weakest links in the education and rehabilitation programmes for persons with visual impairment and this initiative will go a long way to change that situation in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

INDEPENDENCE – THEME OF THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE EDUCATOR

The theme of the July 2008 issue of The Educator will be “**Independence**”. Peter Rodney, one of the members of the Publication Committee will be the guest editor for this issue and Harry Svensson, the Second-Vice President will be the Editor. Manuscripts must be received before May 15th to be considered for acceptance. Those interested in making contributions may contact Harry at harry.svensson@sit.se or contact the ICEVI Secretariat at sgicevi@vsnl.net

“**Braille**” and “**Literacy**” will be themes of the January 2009 and July 2009 issues of The Educator.

ICEVI E-News 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 ICEVI E-News and The Educator.

For further details, contact:



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