



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



(FORMERLY ICEVI NEWSLINE)

April 2010

Message from the President

Bangkok, Thailand
April 13, 2010



Dear Colleagues:

As you will see from the dateline above I am in Bangkok as I write this message for the April issue of ICEVI E-NEWS.

No doubt many of you have read in your local newspapers or watched on television the recent protests here that turned violent last weekend. As I watched the coverage on CNN and the BBC and then walked the streets of Bangkok I experienced a near total “disconnect” between what I was seeing on television and what I was experiencing on the streets. I call this the “CNN effect”, where dramatic coverage leaves one with the impression that a particular situation is much more widespread than it really is.

Now let me be clear. I do not wish to minimize the seriousness of the situation here but I think it is important that you understand that these demonstrations and the accompanying violence last weekend were restricted to certain areas of the city; particularly around key government buildings. I felt perfectly safe and encountered no problems other than the minor inconvenience of some shops and restaurants being closed in the neighborhood where I stay.

With that said ICEVI wants you to know that we are monitoring the situation here very closely along with the Thai Host Committee. Yesterday, Dr. Mani and I met with the Host Committee and you will find elsewhere in this issue of E-NEWS and on the ICEVI website a summary of the decisions we have taken.

As this will be my last E-NEWS message as your president I want to take this opportunity to tell you what an honor and privilege it has been for me to serve as your president for past decade. Together I believe we have moved ICEVI forward in a positive direction and as I step aside to make way for new leadership I feel confident that the momentum we have achieved will be continued.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge and express my profound thanks to my fellow principal officers who have worked with me over the past decade; Mr. Bill Brohier, Immediate Past President, Mrs. Grace Chan, J.P., Treasurer (2002-2006), Dr. Jill Keeffe, 1st Vice President, (2006-2010), Mr. Harry Svensson, 2nd Vice President (2006-2010) and Mrs. Nandini Rawal, Treasurer (2006-2010).

No amount of hard work would have resulted in the accomplishments of the past decade without the support of our International Partner Members and the energetic and self-less work of our beloved Secretary General, Dr. M.N.G. Mani.

I hope I will have the opportunity to meet and thank many of you personally at our 13th World Conference in Jomtien, Thailand this summer.

While I will be stepping down from my duties as your president I hope that in small ways I will be able to continue to contribute to our communities collective efforts to create equal access to education for all children with visual impairment.

With much affection to all members of the ICEVI family, I remain

As always,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Larry Campbell'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small checkmark at the end.

Larry Campbell
President

FRANCOPHONE UNION OF THE BLIND – NEW INTERNATIONAL PARTNER OF ICEVI

ICEVI is pleased and proud to announce the decision of the Francophone Union of the Blind (FBU) to become an International Partner Member of ICEVI. This decision was announced in December by Mrs. Francoise Madray – Lesigne, President of the FBU and became effective in January, 2010. FBU is already hard at work promoting the EFA-VI programme in Burkina Faso (see page 5). The FBU has invited ICEVI's president to speak about the Global Campaign at its international conference scheduled for Montreal, Canada in late May. We believe this partnership between ICEVI and FBU will be of enormous importance in reaching the under-served French speaking countries of West Africa. WELCOME FBU!!!

THE NIPPON FOUNDATION PROVIDES GRANT TO EXPAND HIGHER EDUCATION INITIATIVE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

In late March The Nippon Foundation (Japan) approved a grant of US\$180,000 to support the first year of a two-year expansion of the work currently underway with ICEVI partners in Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam and to include Cambodia in this growing network to improve the situation of visually impaired students enrolled in university education. This program was initiated in Indonesia in 2006 and has gradually expanded to three additional ASEAN countries. During the current (2010-2012) phase the project is assisting students in overcoming the "access to information barrier" and "attitudinal barriers" that often results in an unwelcoming university environment.

Recently, the availability of relatively inexpensive and portable "netbook computers" with a battery lives of up to 11 hours, combined with the free open-source NVDA screenreader are providing a "technology lifeline" to visually impaired students with which they can overcome the "information access barrier" in ways that were unimaginable only a few years ago. To create a more welcoming university environment ICEVI and its local partners are working on the development of training and training materials for use with university administrators, faculty and the non-disabled student body.

While these efforts are underway the project is simultaneously working toward the broader goal of having measurable impact on the public policies that all too often place disabled students at a distinct disadvantage. ICEVI, The Nippon Foundation and our project partners will not be satisfied until all disabled students entering universities in the region have full access to the same rights and services

afforded to non-disabled students. ICEVI project partners will jointly present a poster session at ICEVI's 13th world conference in Jomtien, Thailand in August. Do stop by and meet this remarkable young team that is doing so much to change what it means to be a blind university student in Southeast Asia. You will also find more information on this initiative on ICEVI's website www.icevi.org

VISION ALLIANCE – JOINT APPEAL FOR HAITI REHABILITATION

In response to the tragic earthquake in Haiti, the Vision Alliance consisting of the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB), International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) and the World Blind Union (WBU) is working together to develop and implement a thoughtful and well coordinated response that respects and addresses a plan developed for Haiti by Haitians. The Vision Alliance will conduct an assessment in the near future and working with our Haitian colleagues will develop a longterm response. For weeks the impact of the earthquake in Haiti was on the front page of newspapers throughout the world. In recent weeks the situation in Haiti has taken a back seat to other news. Please do not forget that while Haiti is not on the front page everyday the situation there is still very grim and this is exactly the time that all of us should redouble our efforts to remember our colleagues in Haiti. We hope Dr. Michel Pean, Haiti's Secretary of State for inclusion of persons with disabilities and ICEVI's longtime country contact will be with us in Thailand so that you may learn, firsthand of the current needs and programmes being undertaken. Further information on the situation in Haiti has also been posted on the Home and North America/Caribbean pages of the ICEVI website and the websites of our Vision Alliance partners.

EFA-VI NATIONAL TASK FORCE MEETING IN MOZAMBIQUE

The EFA-VI National Task Force Meeting in Mozambique met in Maputo on February 19, 2010. All major stakeholder groups were represented at this meeting that was chaired by Dr. Augusto John, Honorable Deputy Minister for Education. The report of the NTF indicates that at this time less than 200 visually impaired children in Mozambique have access to any type of education. Therefore, the EFA-VI NTF has decided to set up model inclusive education programme in order to reach more children with visual impairment. In Mozambique attention will be given to the training of special and general classroom teachers and provision of basic educational materials as Braille slates and canes for orientation and mobility. A complete plan of action for 2010 has been drawn-up and the

implementation of activities will be monitored by the Regional Coordinator of EFA-VI.

EFA-VI PLANNING MEETING IN BURKINA FASO

ICEVI's newest International Partner Member, the Francophone Blind Union is already working hard to expand the EFA-VI campaign to Francophone countries in Africa. Mrs. Francoise, President of FBU and Mr. Andre Kowalski visited Burkina Faso twice in the past few months and held a series of meetings with Government officials, representatives of international and inter-governmental organisations and appraised them the campaign plans. The ICEVI brochure and EFA-VI Campaign materials have been translated into French and shared with the officials. As Burkina Faso is one of the Fast Track countries of the World Bank, the campaign wants to capitalise on the commitment of the Government for the general education for all, where the EFA-VI could be embedded as its integral part. Francoise will visit Burkina Faso in the near future to come up with a detailed plan for the implementation of the campaign and with this initiative, Burkina Faso will become one of the focus countries of the campaign soon.

In May, ICEVI will participate in the international conference of FBU in Montreal, Canada where our president has been invited to address the assembly and provide an update on the Global Campaign.

ICEVI's PARTICIPATION IN AFRICA FORUM PLANNING MEETING

ICEVI has been invited to take part in the meeting in late April 2010 to plan the next Africa Forum. It was at a similar Forum in Nairobi, Kenya in 2007 where ICEVI launched the Global Campaign. Since then the Regional Committee suggested implementation of the campaign in 8 African countries with Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and Mozambique being among the first to develop implementation plans. The EFA-VI campaign has also been included as an official programme of the African Decade of Disabled Persons and this has contributed to heightened awareness among governments and organisations of and for the visually impaired in the region. ICEVI's participation in this planning meeting for the next Africa Forum provides still another opportunity to expand awareness and strengthen our network in Africa. ICEVI hopes to present sessions on the Global Campaign at the Forum where the experiences of Mozambique, Ethiopia and Burkina Faso will be shared.

RNIB'S LOW VISION TOOL KIT

The Royal National Institute of the Blind People (RNIB) has recently developed a new publication The Low Vision ToolKit. With support from the Welsh General Assembly this highly regarded publication was developed by RNIB's Office in Wales. ICEVI is now working with RNIB to make a more "international version" of this ToolKit available and we hope those of you coming to the 13th World Conference will be able to view it there. RNIB and ICEVI are now working on the details of an agreement through which ICEVI will have the authority to approve non-English language versions of the publication.

ICEVI feels that this publication can be of real assistance to those in developing countries working on the EFA-VI programme and needing clear and well organized materials to support the training of specialist and regular classroom teachers in the area of Low Vision. Copies of the Low Vision ToolKit will be available for review at the ICEVI Booth at the 13th World Conference..

WORLD BRAILLE COUNCIL UPDATE

Diane Wormsley, who represents ICEVI on the World Blind Council of the World Blind Union, indicates that the WBC is interested in learning of research concerning Braille that you or your colleagues may be aware of. If you are aware of any such research ICEVI encourages you to be in contact with Peter Brass, pbrass@t-online.de

At its first meeting in Madrid the WBC agreed to focus on several important areas including:

- the differences between the representations of mathematics and science notation in various countries.
- the development of a comprehensive database of existing international Braille research and teaching materials,
- developing guidelines for use by countries which do not currently have a Braille authority,
- the development of an international conference on Braille to be held in Leipzig, Germany in 2011.

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INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS – CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

The International Institute of Social Entrepreneurs (IISE) a programme being implemented by Braille Without Borders in Trivandrum, Kerala, India successfully trained the first batch of students from 12 countries in 2009 and the second batch including 29 participants from 18 different countries, started their course in January 2010. IISE is now seeking applications from highly motivated and committed candidates who have overcome obstacles in their life, have an interest in learning and working with different cultures, and who have a dream to realize for the 2011 course. If you are twenty-two years or older and can speak, read and write English, you are invited to apply for this one-year scholarship-based programme. For additional information visit <http://www.bwb-iise.org/> and/or email your inquiries to BrailleWB@gmx.net. You may also fax your questions at 0031848307904 or write via regular post at:

Braille Without Borders

International Institute for Social Entrepreneurs
c/o P. Kronenberg, Vivekananda Nagar, Vellayani, Ookode, Nemom PO,
Trivandrum 695020, KERALA, INDIA

Deadline for applications for the 2011 course is the 30th of May, 2010.

EUROPEAN CONGRESS ON VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

The Spanish Association of Professionals of People with Visual Impairment is going to celebrate the First European Congress on Visual Impairment in Spain, named as “Rehabilitation and Attention of People with Visual Impairment” from 22nd to 24th October 2010. It is to be celebrated in Valladolid, in collaboration with the University Institute of Applied Ophthalmology. The objectives of the Congress are:

- To let the scientific community dedicated to visual impairment share their knowledge and main research interests
- To settle the basis for the future European Society of Professionals and Researches dedicated to visual impairment
- To get an overview of the state of the art of the research and the rehabilitation procedures in Europe

The deadline for abstract submission is April 30th, 2010. For details on registration and other information please log on to www.eurovisionrehab.com.

ICEVI WORLD CONFERENCE UPDATE

The Programme Committee had already sent letters of acceptance to people whose abstracts were selected for presentation at the 13th world conference of ICEVI to be held in Jomtien, Thailand in August 2010. The early bird registration closes on 15th May. The Programme of the conference will be finalised by the third week of May and posted on the website. The schedule of presentation by the participants will be informed personally by the end of May 2010, which will also be posted on the website. Unlike previous conferences, poster sessions have been provided with 30 minutes everyday for exclusive viewing by the participants as no concurrent sessions have been slated during that time. As many persons attending the conference are those with low vision, poster presenters need to take additional caution to use the right colour and contrast. For any questions on registration, please direct your queries to kan@fepblind.com and for any questions on papers and presentation formats, please contact oficevi@gmail.com or oficevi@vsnl.net. There is limited sponsorship available for supporting participants from developing countries and preference will be given to those whose abstracts have been accepted for presentation. The extent of support is decided by the regional committees concerned and therefore, those who wish to apply for a sponsorship are requested to contact the regional chairperson concerned. The addresses of the regional chairpersons may be found on the website of ICEVI.

In his message at the start of this issue of ICEVI E-NEWS the president referred to decisions that were taken at a meeting with the Thai Host Committee on April 12th. What follows are the major decisions made:

- 1) The Host Committee is currently monitoring the political situation in Thailand and a final decision on the Conference will be made before May 3rd.
- 2) In the light of the above development, the deadline for reduced early bird registration has been extended to May 15th.
- 3) If the conference is postponed, the registration fees paid by the participants will be applied to the re-scheduled conference. If the conference is cancelled, the registration fee will be refunded.
- 4) The Host Committee recommends that individuals not purchase restricted non-refundable tickets at this time until the final decision is made.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION – THEME OF THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE EDUCATOR

The next issue of The Educator, ICEVI's official magazine, is devoted to the topic Inclusive Education, as inclusion is one of the important strategies for the realisation of education for all children with visual impairment. Those interested in making contributions to this issue are requested to contact the editor Harry Svensson (harry.svensson@spsm.se), the guest editor Steve McCall (s.mccall@bham.ac.uk) or the associate editor M.N.G. Mani (sgicevi@vsnl.net) for details.

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

For further details, contact:



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