

# The Educator



VOLUME XVI, ISSUE 1

JANUARY - JUNE 2003

## Reaching the Unreached



## *Through* Inclusive Education

A Publication of



The International Council for Education of  
People with Visual Impairment

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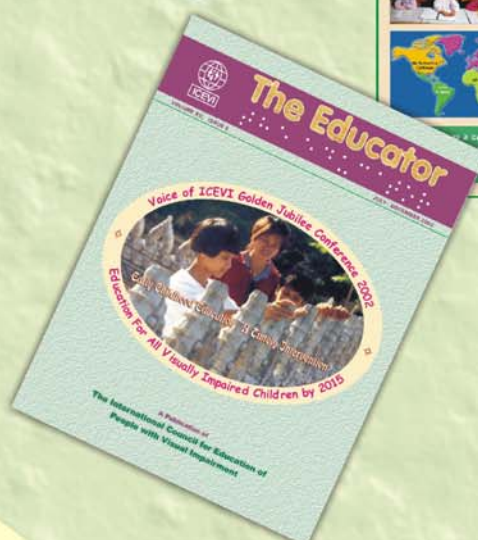
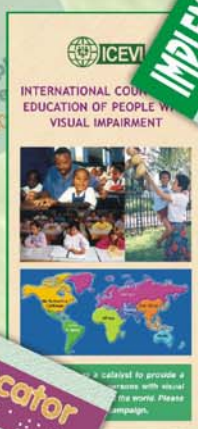
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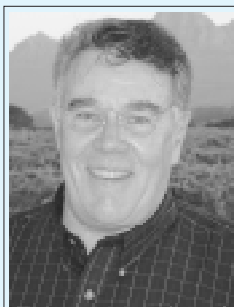
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## Contents

Letter from the President	2
Letter from the Editor	4
Letter from the Thematic Editor	5
Message from the President - World Blind Union	6
Strategic Up-date	7
Regional Up-dates	8
Joint Position Paper of ICEVI-WBU on Inclusive Education of Children with Visual Impairment	10
President's Letter to Executive Director of UNICEF	11
Reply Letter from Executive Director of UNICEF	12
Growing a 'Can Do' Society for All - Gwen Nagel and Karen Stobbs	13
Drs. Richard Charles and Esther Yewpick Lee Charitable Foundation Grant during 2003 - A Steady and Systematic Launch	24
ICEVI - Our Position on Key Issues	26
ICEVI and HADLEY Go "Globe ALL" - Offering Distance Education Courses to Professionals Worldwide	28
"Globe ALL" - The New ICEVI-Hadley Distance Education Program	29
Inclusion : A Growing Modality in the Education of People with Visual Impairment in Peru - Mary Valera	30
Building New Roads for People with Visual Impairment in Peru - Mary Valera	31
Inclusive Education in Brazil: Advances and Contradictions - Mara Syaulis and Marilda Bruno	32
Calendar of Events 2003	33
From a Parent's Perspective - Tula Baxter	34
The Malawi Itinerant Teaching Programme - The Gateway to Inclusive Education - Raphael Chigadula	37
ICEVI - Fact Sheet	38
Research initiative of ICEVI	39
The Role of Schools for the Blind in Inclusive Education - Phil Hatlen	40
Inclusive Education in India - Policies and Practices - M.N.G. Mani	44
International Updates - William G. Brohier	51
News - Here and There	52

## Letter from the President



*Lawrence F. Campbell*  
President

*Phnom Penh, Cambodia  
June 9, 2003*

*Dear Colleagues:*

As I write this letter for the July issue of *The Educator* I am half a world away from my Overbrook office at the end of a long trip through Southeast

Asia. Everywhere I have traveled there has been enthusiasm regarding ICEVI and the many new initiatives that have been launched since our 11<sup>th</sup> World Conference last summer. Let me give you and update with just a sample of some of these activities.

In late March ICEVI held the first Executive Committee meeting of this quadrennium in Stellenbosch, South Africa. It was, in my judgment, one of our most productive Executive Committee meetings ever. Space does not permit me to go into the details of the meeting here but you will find many of the issues discussed in the "Strategic Up-date Column" that follows this letter. The Executive Committee is most grateful to Wilfred Maina, Africa Regional Chair, and his Southern Africa sub-regional committee for their splendid hospitality.

The new ICEVI-Hadley distance education program "Globe-All" is being talked about everywhere I have traveled. This is a unique opportunity for you to enhance and update your skill and knowledge and to do so at home and at a pace that suits your needs since courses can be taken by e-mail or via regular mail. This program has something to offer everyone, so I hope you will look at the details of the Globe-All Program elsewhere in this issue of *The Educator* and take advantage by signing up as a student in the Globe-All Program. All courses are being offered free of charge.

As those of you who have taken the time to read the ICEVI Strategic Plan will know, collaboration is a key element of that plan. However, a plan is nothing if it does not begin to show results in concrete ways. Over the past six months we can see that collaboration has become more than just a "politically correct" word but is expressing itself in concrete actions.

The newly released ICEVI-WBU position paper on inclusive education is one example of how ICEVI is working closely with other organizations. You will find the position paper on our website and in this issue of *The Educator*. A big thank you to Bill Brohier and the team that put so much effort into this document. ICEVI and WBU are now working on revising and updating an education policy document developed several years ago by a team from both organizations. This document will be of particular interest to those of you who are trying to influence policy in your own country and should be available before the next issue of *The Educator* goes to press.

ICEVI is also working closely with International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB). An ICEVI team will conduct a symposium on education at the upcoming General Assembly of IAPB.

Sports and recreation are an important element to any comprehensive education program. I am happy to report that in August I will meet with Enrique Perez, President of the International Blind Sports Association (IBSA) at the IBSA World Games in Quebec City, Canada. At that time we will explore ways that our respective organizations can work together more closely. I am hoping that in future issues of *The Educator* you will receive regular updates from IBSA and that at the regional and national level we will launch some collaborative programs. In the near future you will find more on

the IBSA-ICEVI collaboration on our website [www.icevi.org](http://www.icevi.org) and the next issue of The Educator.

For those of you who are struggling with the challenges posed in teaching secondary level mathematics to children who are blind; a seemingly universal challenge, help is on the way. In May, ICEVI and the Overbrook-Nippon Network on Educational Technology (ON-NET) have launched a regional initiative in Southeast Asia aimed at improving teaching methods and materials in this curriculum area. It will take approximately one year to develop and field test the teachers handbook and training materials but once they are developed they will be available to everyone through the ICEVI [www.icevi.org](http://www.icevi.org) and ON-NET [www.on-net.org](http://www.on-net.org) websites. In the meantime you can follow the progress of the project on these websites and in future issues of our publications, The Educator and ICEVI Newslines.

We were recently saddened to learn that UNICEF is closing the Focal Point on Disability office and subsuming it under the "Children at Risk" program. I immediately wrote to Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of UNICEF to express our concern. Ms. Bellamy has responded to our letter and the full text of my letter and her response is included in this issue of The Educator. As you will see, Ms. Bellamy states that UNICEF's commitment to children with disabilities will not be diminished and will, in fact, be enhanced by this action. While we hope this is the case, we ask for your cooperation in monitoring the situation in your own country. Please provide feedback to the ICEVI Secretary-General on this matter in the months ahead and do work actively to see that the needs of children with visual impairment are fully addressed within appropriate UNICEF programs.

ICEVI has been working closely with the World Bank as they develop a "toolkit" on visual impairment for all World Bank offices. This "toolkit" is a document that will help guide the Bank in its efforts to incorporate the needs of persons with visual

impairment in its programs. Again, if we are to strengthen and expand educational services for children with visual impairment, particularly those in developing countries, we all need to make a special effort to work with the World Bank to see that this policy is reflected in programs launched by the World Bank with national governments.

Start planning now! I have just met with the Malaysian Association for the Blind Host Committee who will host the 12<sup>th</sup> World Conference in 2006. MAB and other partners in Malaysia are determined to make this the best conference ever and I believe they are on their way to keeping that promise. Kuala Lumpur will be a spectacular venue for our World Conference, so I hope you will plan to join us in "Malaysia, truly Asia"! A Program Committee will be appointed shortly and we hope to include the first announcement and the "call for papers" with the next issue of The Educator.

On the funding front I would like to take this opportunity on your behalf to publicly express thanks to the Asian Foundation for the Prevention of Blindness and Organizacion de Ciegos, Espanoles (ONCE) who have joined the growing list of international supporters by making an annual pledge of at least \$20,000 to our global effort to equalize educational opportunity for children and youth with visual impairment.

There are many more things I would like to share with you, but I know if the Editor were sitting here looking over my shoulder I think he would be saying..."finish up...finish up"! So, I will do that and in closing thank all of you for your active involvement that is helping ICEVI to become a stronger and more effective organization.

Sincerely,



**Larry Campbell**

President

## Letter from the Editor



Steve McCall  
Editor

### *Time, Facts and Opinions*

Ask any Editor of any Journal and they'll tell you it's a tricky business to get the right material in at the right time. It gets even trickier when the material comes from all over the world and is written in a number of languages. So I will begin by apologising to our magnificent Secretary General (who handles the layout and deals with the printers among other key jobs for The Educator) for once again running the deadlines perilously close and causing him such anxiety! But after reading the Journal I hope you'll agree that the articles were worth his sleepless nights. I am so grateful to him for his support and to the wonderful people who have contributed to this edition on such an important theme.

It's clear to me that to be useful the Journal needs to provide two things: clear facts and well informed opinion. You will find plenty of facts in this edition about the range of initiatives being undertaken by ICEVI in its effort to achieve one of its primary goals - equal participation in education for children with visual impairment by 2015. These facts lead to a clearcut conclusion: ICEVI is making huge strides forward in one of the most exciting periods of its history.

The goal of equal participation by the year 2015 cannot be achieved if children around the world continue to be excluded from schools on the grounds of their vision. But what is inclusion and how can it be best achieved? Even if we have all the facts available, complex questions don't usually generate simple answers – they generate opinions. The most useful of these opinions are usually those

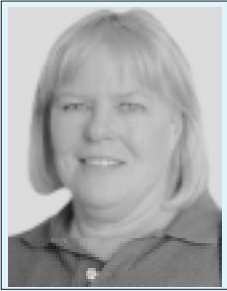
offered by the people who are most informed. I am very pleased that to address the issues around the complex question of inclusion we have a range of informed opinion from a variety of experienced people from different parts of the world.

From the outset I was concerned that the Educator should be seen present a balanced and global view on this vital issue, reflecting the ethos of the organisation with regard to inclusion, and I am happy that in this issue we have achieved this goal. I am delighted that in this issue we have been able to draw upon contributions from Africa, the Pacific, South America and Mongolia. The variety of opinion captured here includes the voices of teachers, teacher trainers, parents and people with a visual impairment - all of it informed by extensive first hand experience. If the contributors have one common feature it is that they are pragmatic and cautious in their approach. They allow for a range of solutions based upon a range of provision and allow for a variety of interpretations..

As you will read, I have recently returned from a successful visit to Uganda with the Secretary General to launch ICEVI's research programme. There are basic questions relating to the best way to achieve the global participation in education of children with VI that no one knows the answers to. ICEVI is a huge network and is perfectly positioned to collect the facts and the informed opinion from around the world that can begin to generate some answers to these questions. The process will be a lengthy one but will be worth taking time over, and you can be sure of one thing: the answers won't be simple and don't believe anyone who says they are (that's my opinion anyway!)



## Letter from the Thematic Editor



*Susan Spungin*  
Thematic Editor

There is no other topic in the profession of educating children who are blind and visually impaired that stimulates discussion and heated debate than that of inclusive education. Depending on the country, inclusion is a service delivery model that is based on the belief that all students with disabilities receive their total instruction in

the regular schools throughout the day. Some countries treat inclusive education as part of a continuum of placements options that are offered, based on student needs, along with special classrooms, resource rooms as well as residential special schools. As we enter the 21st millennium, the international community has come together to support inclusive education as one of the alternative models of service delivery on the condition that all necessary steps are taken in order to first put in place the required number of teachers trained in the special needs of blind and low vision children and the essential support systems, and necessary equipment such as, braille books, and low vision devices. Further they promote a high quality education in special schools as an alternative to inclusive or mainstream education and advocate for support for valued alternative forms of education, both formal and informal, for those who cannot benefit from an inclusive, integrated or special education program. (Joint Position Paper on Inclusive Education of Children With Visually Impairment by The International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment and The World Blind Union April 2003)

Some believe that educational decisions must not be made simply based on the availability of an educational model or service delivery system. The decision of educational placement must never overshadow the individual needs of the blind or visually impaired child. Regardless of setting, if the blind child is provided with timely and adequate specialized services by appropriately trained personnel, students who are blind or visually impaired can develop skills that will enable them to achieve success and independence as responsible citizens in a fully integrated society. If these students do not receive appropriate instruction designed to develop competencies that meet the sensory deficits of

blindness and low vision, critical learning opportunities will be lost, thus diminishing the potential for future accomplishments. Ample opportunities for instruction in such areas as braille, abacus, orientation and mobility, and low vision and the use of prescribed optical devices must be made available to students, in order to insure inclusion in an integrated society.

This issue of *The Educator - Reaching the Unreached Through Inclusive Education* - discusses the complex issue of inclusion from a variety of perspectives pointing out the critical need to discuss this and other topics within a multicultural context. There is no right or wrong service delivery placement system but rather a continuum of placement options that are child centered and based on individual needs at a particular time and place in the educational development of the child.

Nagel and Stobbs point to the key elements for successful inclusion that serves as a guide for all us. Mary Valera emphasizes the importance of teacher training discussing their innovative Program of Educational Extension. Syaulis and Bruno challenges us to look at the inclusion of students with multiple disabilities admitting that not all school systems have the necessary resources to meet specific and complex needs. Malawi addresses issues often found in the itinerant teaching model of service delivery such as difficulties experienced due to poor travel conditions and large caseload sizes negatively effecting the time spent with students. Hatlen suggests that there is no reason that "the champions of inclusion" cannot be leaders in schools for the blind" and suggest the special school with its experienced and most expert teachers serve as the hub or state or national resource center for educational services for blind and the visually impaired children regardless of where they go to school."

It is apparent that inclusive education often has the potential of reaching the unreached, and in many countries that is better than visually impaired children being excluded from any type of education at all, but it serves us well to remember the warning of those parents who responded to Tula Baxter's questionnaire when they said they believed their child was "integrated" but not included.

## \_\_\_\_ Message from the President - World Blind Union \_\_\_\_



*Kicki Nordström*  
WBU President

*Dear Readers,*

I am glad that I am meeting you once again through *The Educator*. By now you are aware that the joint position paper of ICEVI and the WBU on “Inclusive Education for Children with Visual Impairment” has been approved. I have received many assurances from friends around the world that the joint position paper will strengthen our campaign for making education for all children with visual impairment a reality by 2015. I attended the executive committee meeting of ICEVI in March 2003 in Stellenbosch, South Africa and pleased to know that many developmental activities are being planned by ICEVI. I am glad to know that ICEVI, through the assistance of the Drs. Richard Charles and Esther Yewpick Lee Foundation and other funding organisations, has approved nearly 100 projects in developing countries, mostly for the capacity building of teachers of visually impaired children. As teachers play a vital role in the development of a visually impaired child, this initiative of ICEVI is certainly going to improve the quality of education. The research work started by ICEVI in Uganda to identify the critical factors that should be in place for the successful inclusion of children with visual impairment in mainstream schools can help provide guidelines to developing nations in achieving the mission of education for all as advocated by the Dakar Declaration. Therefore, the efforts of ICEVI to address both the quality and coverage issues in education of visually impaired children are commendable.

During the executive committee meeting of ICEVI, I proposed that ICEVI should appoint members to the WBU committee on children and I am happy that ICEVI has already appointed three members and they will work with the members of WBU to develop position papers on this subject. I am also glad that ICEVI is fully supportive of the proposed UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People.

When we came to know that UNICEF was closing the Focal Point on Disability Office, ICEVI and WBU wrote to UNICEF with a request to reconsider the decision in the interest of persons with disabilities. I am glad that UNICEF has responded to both ICEVI and WBU saying that UNICEF's commitment to children with disabilities will not be diminished. This again shows the value of collaboration between ICEVI and WBU in tackling such common advocacy issues.

The current issue of *The Educator* is devoted to inclusion. In my view, inclusion should not be just looked at as a methodology to serve visually impaired children. The idea is to bring a total transformation in the entire educational system which becomes sensitized to the educational needs of our children. ICEVI and WBU have a tremendous role to play in enabling the policy makers of education understand the educational needs of children with visual impairment and other disabilities. I am glad that ICEVI has already circulated the joint position paper to educational policy makers and professionals around the world. The time has come to translate this policy into action and in this regard, the collaboration between ICEVI and WBU should be strengthened at the regional and national levels throughout the world.

## Strategic Up-date

***The Executive Committee meeting of ICEVI was held from 28 to 29 March 2001 at Stellenbosch, South Africa. The following salient decisions of the EXCO may be of interest to the readers of The Educator.***

1. As a first step to formalising plans for its global initiative on achieving equal education for all blind and low vision children in the world by 2015, a position paper is being drawn up by ICEVI for review at the next meeting of the EXCO.
2. ICEVI is considering its role in the UNESCO Flagship initiative.
3. ICEVI will collaborate with the World Bank in the development of a 'Toolkit' on blindness and low vision. All regional chairpersons were urged to keep in contact with the national and regional units of the World Bank to ensure that disability issues are being addressed within all World Bank programs.
4. It was agreed that guidelines should be developed and circulated to the Regional Chairs regarding the position of ICEVI on parents and parents' organizations and their representation in ICEVI activities.
5. An ICEVI – WBU joint Position Paper on Inclusive Education for Children with Visual Impairment was approved. (See page 10)
6. ICEVI activities in the regions should have regard to the following areas highlighted in the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action.
  - ❑ *Self-help organizations of persons with disabilities*
  - ❑ *Women with disabilities*
  - ❑ *Early intervention and education*
  - ❑ *Training and employment, including self-employment*
  - ❑ *Access to built environments and public transport*
  - ❑ *Access to information and communications, including information and communications technology*



*EXCO meeting in progress*

- ❑ *Poverty alleviation through capacity-building, social security and sustainable livelihood programmes*
7. The resolution passed at the World Conference of ICEVI supporting the UN Convention for the rights of children has been conveyed to the United Nations.
  8. Structures for an ICEVI membership were discussed and approval was given for scales which would offer guidance to individuals and organizations wishing to subscribe to ICEVI.
  9. ICEVI has set up a Research Committee to undertake the development of a pilot research project based in Uganda that will address the following research question.
 

***“What are the critical conditions that need to be in place in Uganda to allow children with blindness and low vision to be successfully educated in regular schools?”***
  10. Negotiations with the Malaysian Association for the Blind are underway to host the 12<sup>th</sup> World Conference of ICEVI in Kuala Lumpur in 2006.



## Regional Up-dates

Strengthening networks at the regional level has been a priority for ICEVI during the last six months, and the seven regions have made rapid progress in developing new projects focussed on ICEVI's mission.

The **Africa region** conducted its first regional committee meeting from 17 to 19 February 2003 in Nairobi. The meeting was attended by all members of the committee and the Secretary General was also present throughout the meeting. Recognising the importance of bringing together the representatives of the sub-regions for this vital event, Sight Savers International in Africa supported the travel and hospitality cost of the members who attended this meeting. Besides finalizing project proposals for the Lee foundation Grant, the Nairobi meeting developed plans for sub-regional meetings as a first step towards the development of sub-regional networks to establish and support educational services for children with visual impairment. The first sub-regional committee meeting was that of the Southern Africa region held in Stellenbosch, South Africa, from 25 to 26 March 2003. The members who attended the meeting developed action plans in areas such as capacity building and lobbying education policy makers. The Africa Regional Committee is also launching sub-regional committees in the Eastern Region and the Western Region as part of its strategy to consolidate ICEVI's influence in this vast continent.

The **East Asia** region was rocked during the first part of 2003 with the outbreak of SARS. As a result the proposed meetings of the

Regional Committee could not be held during this period. However, committee members were contacted through electronic media and encouraged to implement ICEVI activities, and in particular the Lee Foundation developments in the region. The President of ICEVI undertook an extensive tour in the region from May 20 to June 15, 2003 and spoke about ICEVI activities with the representatives of Governments, voluntary organizations, funding agencies etc., in Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam and Philippines. The President and the Secretary General also had a meeting at Ratchasuda College, Bangkok on 24 May 2003 regarding the ON-NET/ICEVI mathematics project which will provide a range of teaching resources for teachers of visually impaired children in the East Asia region in the near future. The region is proposing to organize its regional committee meeting for the month of August when the plan of action for the region will be finalised.

The **Europe region** has already published its second newsletter of the quadrennium, and the regional committee held its second meeting on 15 to 18 May 2003 in Ambares, France. A number of issues such as membership, plans for a European Conference, teacher training, special interest groups and publications were discussed, and the committee resolved to strengthen its links with the European Blind Union. ICEVI Europe is also planning teacher training workshop to be held in Dortmund sometime between April and July 2004 to coincide with the next meeting of the Regional Committee.

The **Latin America** region has already started implementing its ICEVI projects and is collaborating with various Government Agencies, CBM and voluntary bodies. ONCE has expressed interest in working with ICEVI to support activities in the Latin America region. In the last three months, capacity building and awareness programmes were organised in El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, etc. The Latin America Region has a well established regional network and regular planning meetings are taking place at the sub-regional levels.

In the **North America and Caribbean Region**, personnel preparation remains a top priority. The region is continuing its collaboration with AFB, Lighthouse International, RNIB (UK), RVIB (Australia), Hadley School and CNIB. The region has also prepared a position paper regarding training issues in the United States of America. Two goals of the strategic Plan of ICEVI - namely information and training-feature in strengthening the activities of the region. Recently the region organised a conference call among its members and is working on a white paper identifying the actual number of teachers needed in the three sub-regions. This information will be put on the web by early winter 2003.

The **Pacific region** conducted its first regional committee meeting of the quadrennium on January 14, 2003 at Gold Coast, Brisbane, Australia. The regional committee meeting provided an opportunity to strengthen collaboration between ICEVI and the South Pacific Educators of the

Visually Impaired (SPEVI). The Secretary General also attended this meeting and represented ICEVI at the Biennial conference of SPEVI. ICEVI also sponsored a pre-conference workshop on 11 and 12 January 2003 for 8 delegates from the Pacific Islands and the workshop included subjects such as the education of children with low vision, orientation and mobility and teaching mathematics. Delegates from Fiji, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Cook Islands, Samoa and Kiribati attended the workshop. The work of ICEVI in East Timor was also presented during the regional workshop.

**West Asia** is one of the largest ICEVI regions and contains a substantial number of persons with visual impairment. The last six months have seen successful networking with Govt. agencies, voluntary bodies and funding agencies to realise the vision and mission of ICEVI. The official launch of the Lee Foundation Projects took place at the Blind Peoples' Association (BPA), Ahmedabad on 21 June 2003 and was attended by Hon. Minister for Social Justice, Govt. of Gujarat, Board of BPA, ICEVI Secretary, and Secretary General. West Asia successfully launched most of its Lee Foundation projects during the period January – June 2003. Country level meetings were conducted by the Regional Chairperson in India and Bangladesh. The Region has been able to involve ICEVI in policy making programmes at Governmental level. The region has also conducted discussions with organizations in India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka to plan a joint regional conference of ICEVI and Deaf-blind International in the near future.

## Joint Position Paper of ICEVI-WBU on Inclusive Education of Children with Visual Impairment



by  
**The International Council for Education of  
People with Visual Impairment**  
and  
**The World Blind Union**



### **Preamble**

The **International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI)** is a voluntary, non-governmental, non-sectarian global association of individuals and organisations that represents educators of blind and low vision (partially sighted) children and youth throughout the world. ICEVI promotes equal access to appropriate quality education for all visually impaired children and youth so that they can achieve their full potential.

The **World Blind Union (WBU)** is the only organisation entitled to speak on behalf of blind and low vision (partially sighted) persons of the world, representing 180 million blind and visually impaired persons from about 600 different organisations in 158 countries. WBU promotes appropriate quality education in either integrated/inclusive education programmes or at special schools for all visually impaired children and youth so that they can achieve the best education possible and reach their full potential in life. The parents' informed choice, access to trained teachers, and the availability of essential equipment and materials are the guiding principles which will ensure high-quality education.

### **ICEVI and WBU,**

**Conscious** of the gross inequalities in educational opportunities for blind and low vision (partially sighted) children and youth, especially in the developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America, where 90% of all children with visual impairment live and where less than 10% of these children currently have access to any type of formal or non-formal education:

- ◆ **Affirm** the human right of all children who are blind or have low vision to equal access to appropriate quality education as provided for in the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989), the *World Declaration on Education for All* (1990), the *Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disability* (1993), the *UNESCO Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action* (1994), and the *Dakar Framework for Action* (2000);
- ◆ **Urge** all governments, which have not yet done so, to include the special educational needs of children with visual impairment in their respective National Education Plans for achieving Education for All by 2015 which were to be submitted to UNESCO by the end of 2002, as agreed and committed to at the World Education Forum, April 2000;
- ◆ **Request** all governments to also ensure adequate financial provisions for the successful implementation of the above plans for children who are blind or have low vision;
- ◆ **Endorse** the concept of child-centred pedagogy, as enunciated in the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, 1994;
- ◆ **Support** inclusive education as one of the alternative models of service delivery, on condition that all necessary steps are taken to first put in place the required number of teachers trained in the special needs of blind and low vision children and the essential support systems, the necessary equipment, Braille books, and low vision devices to guarantee true inclusion;
- ◆ **Promote** a high-quality education in special schools as an alternative to inclusive or mainstream education;
- ◆ **Recommend and advocate** the continued support for valued alternative forms of education, both formal and non-formal, for those who cannot benefit from an inclusive, integrated or special education programme;
- ◆ **Encourage** the provision of early detection, early intervention, and pre-school services which include the parents, other family members, and the community in general;
- ◆ **Assure** governments of their joint and separate fullest support, especially in terms of advocacy, professional advice, and technical assistance.



**The President, ICEVI wrote to Executive Director of UNICEF to express concern over restructuring plans that appeared to shift UNICEF's focus away from childhood disability in favour of a more generic 'child protection' approach. It was feared that this might jeopardise support for children with visual impairment. The letter of the President, ICEVI is given below :**



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

Please reply to : **Lawrence F. Campbell**, President  
Overbrook School for the Blind, 6333 Malvern Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19151-2597, USA  
Phone : 1 215 877 77 13 ✧ Fax : 1 215 878 88 86  
e-mail : [larry@obs.org](mailto:larry@obs.org) ✧ Web : [www.icevi.org](http://www.icevi.org)

April 17, 2003

**Ms. Carol Bellamy**

Executive Director  
UNICEF  
3 United Nations Plaza  
New York, N.Y. 10017

*Dear Ms. Bellamy:*

I am writing to you in my capacity as the President of the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI). ICEVI is a global association of individuals and organizations that promotes equal access to appropriate education for all children and youth with visual impairment.

As an international organization representing the interests of more than 4,000 individuals and organizations concerned with the education of children and youth with visual impairment we are very upset to learn of your decision to close the Focal Point on Disability and merge it with the Focal Point on Children at Risk.

The needs of children with disabilities are enormous and largely unmet. In the case of children with visual impairment we know that less than 5% of these children in the developing world have access to any form of education. While you may argue that these children will be served by UNICEF's "Focal Point on Children at Risk"; experience with similar efforts to homogenize disability specific issues into other large scale human development initiatives consistently yield the same results; the needs of persons with disabilities simply get lost. Children with disabilities, and specifically children with visual impairment require and deserve specific strategies that address their unique needs.

ICEVI through its regional units has and wishes to continue to work closely with UNICEF. However, we feel that the decision to close the Focal Point on Disability, diminishes the common ground we share and further minimizes the chances of reaching those 6 million children with visual impairment; 90% of whom live in developing countries.

We respectfully ask you to reconsider your decision to close the Focal Point on Disability.

Sincerely,

**Lawrence F. Campbell**  
President

cc: Executive Committee  
NGO Committee of UNICEF

*The response from Ms. Carol Bellamy, Executive Director, UNICEF is presented below for the benefit of the readers of The Educator.*



United Nations Children's Fund  
Fonds des Nations Unies pour l'enfance  
Fondo de las Naciones Unidas para la Infancia

#### Office of the Executive Director

UNICEF House  
3, United Nations Plaza  
New York, New York 10017  
(212) 326 7035  
Telex: 49620199 / Fax: (212) 326 7758

28 May 2003

Dear Mr. Campbell,

Thank you for your letter of concern regarding UNICEF's attention to the issue of childhood disability. UNICEF's commitment to this issue is well established and has in fact become stronger in recent years.

I understand that your concern has been triggered by some proposed changes in UNICEF's staffing structure. However, I want to assure you that the proposed internal staffing changes will strengthen rather than weaken our ability to address child protection, including attention to disability. Among other changes, UNICEF has within the last year placed a Child Protection Advisor in each of our seven regional offices. These colleagues provide senior level guidance and support to all country offices within their region to assist them in addressing these issues. Here in New York, responsibility for disability issues has been placed with a Senior Advisor, and thus at a more senior level than was previously the case. Ms. Alexandra Yuster, Ayuster@unicef.org, phone number (212) 326 - 7232 is available to interact with you and other interested individuals and organizations on all matters pertaining to UNICEF programming in the area of childhood disabilities.

Non-discrimination is one of the guiding principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which guides us in our work. In addition, both the Convention and UNICEF's mission statement make specific reference to children with disabilities. The letter notes that we are committed to "ensuring special protection for the most disadvantaged children - victims of war, disasters, extreme poverty, all forms of violence and exploitation and those with disabilities".

UNICEF's work with partners at local, national and global levels encompasses efforts to prevent disability - through improvements in maternity and child birth care, increased immunization coverage, and interventions to protect children from violence and armed conflict. We are also dedicated to preventing discrimination against those with disabilities, to ensure all children have access to basic social services, are protected from violence, abuse and exploitation, and grow up in an environment of acceptance, understanding and inclusion.

In recent years, we have further strengthened our commitment to the issue of child protection, an area which incorporates our efforts to prevent and address deliberate violations of children's rights, including those with disabilities. One way we have done this is by looking at how we can address the full range of elements which are essential to ensure protective environment for children, rather than focusing only on service provision after preventive and protective efforts have failed. This brings our work to a higher level on the policy agenda, and makes it increasingly possible for us to emphasize the links between protecting children and achieving national and international development goals. It also frequently allows us to address several issues of concern within child protection with broader, yet more effective and long lasting interventions.

We value our relationship with your organization, and wish to assure you that preventing disability and combating discrimination against children with disabilities remain an important part of UNICEF's work.

Yours sincerely

**Carol Bellamy**  
Executive Director

# Growing a 'Can Do' Society for All

*Inclusive Education for Learners in Aotearoa New Zealand who are Blind and Vision Impaired*

*Gwen Nagel & Karen Stobbs*

*A strong, proud assertive society needs successes. It needs the confidence that there is a good life here for future generations. ...A strong society is also by definition inclusive, offering opportunity and security to all its members.*

*- (Rt. Hon. Helen Clark, Prime Minister of New Zealand, 2001)*

## Inclusion

Inclusion takes many forms and may be observed across a range of settings. In Aotearoa New Zealand there is no formal or official definition of inclusion. There are, however, some generally agreed upon principles of inclusive education for schools. These are:

- ❑ Respecting the rights of all children to enrol and receive education at state schools, to be treated with respect, to have dignity and independence, to have access to a fair share of all special education resources, and not to be directly or indirectly discriminated against.
- ❑ Having a philosophy of providing for all children, including children with special education needs.
- ❑ Recognising and responding to the diversity of their population;
- ❑ Accommodating to children's different learning styles and rates of learning; and
- ❑ Ensuring that equitable educational opportunities are provided for all learners through appropriate curriculum, school organisation, use of resources and partnerships with communities.

*(Quinn & Ryba, 2000)*

Inclusive education is concerned with the process of adapting the educational environment to match the needs of the learner. Within this ecological approach the emphasis is upon learners' abilities and what they are capable of achieving rather than their deficits.

Inclusion as a social practice depends on shared understandings, values and beliefs and is most likely to succeed when there are opportunities for interactive learning that enable participation of all learners in achieving their educational goals. Inclusion requires development of an inclusive 'regular' education system, an inclusive

curriculum, inclusive school policies, and networks of support that take place through collaboration and consultation (Quinn & Ryba, 2000).

## An Early Experience of Inclusion

New Zealand is fortunate to have a long history of services for people who are blind and vision impaired, starting officially with the establishment of the Jubilee Institute for the Blind in Parnell, Auckland, in 1891 (Mitchell & Singh, 1987; Nagel, 1998). And learners who are blind and vision impaired have been integrated within regular education for some decades. In the mid 1950s M was mainstreamed for his secondary education following early schooling at the Institute. He reflects on his experiences.

*I remember starting school at the Institute for the Blind in the brick building in Parnell Road at age 5. I had some visual memory of my Mother leaving me and howling my eyes out and being clutched to the bosom of a white-aproned matron who was very kindly. She was very nice to me. But that began my life of education and institutional living. My family had moved to Auckland. They gave up their roots in the Hawkes Bay. My elder brother had to attend a new school, and my father had to find another job.*

*I boarded at the Institute during the week. I went to school on Monday morning with my Father – on his way to work he would drop me off. We took the tram ride up. And on Friday afternoon my Mother would come and collect me and that was just wonderful. One can talk a lot about institutional life and how it was ruled by bells at half-past six in the morning, and running down iron stairs to get washed in porcelain basins, and tiled bathrooms that echoed, and cold water, and being sent back to clean one's shoes three or four times because they weren't quite right, and the food was terrible... I think I must have been quite an emotional child because every now and then I knew that feigning a stomach-ache would allow me*



to get out of all of this and stay in bed. And on Monday mornings I continually protested to my Mother that I didn't want to go to school and it was a real battle for her to get me off.

But having said that, I began to learn Braille at age 5. We used to have little pins that we put in a board that gave the shape of the Braille alphabet and we played with that. These were the days when the chairs in the school had little planks up the back of them and I said, "What are these for?" And they said that the people who could see a bit used to have blindfolds on and they had their heads tied back so that they had to use their fingers to read the Braille and they wouldn't be using their eyes. So those were the sorts of methods that were taught in those days.

I initially had some sight but my early childhood is a memory of pain caused by infantile glaucoma and at age 7 my education was interrupted for about 9 months when my eyes were taken out.

I learnt to touch type at age 8. I remember being very proud of having an Underwood portable typewriter put in front of me and learning ASDFG. And doing pages and pages of those finger exercises. We had relief maps, of the North Island and the South Island with little nails in it. I loved geography, I loved learning my way around and finding the different places. It was wonderful and I have a lovely memory of it.

The Headmaster of the school was a wonderful Maori man who told us stories about the war. In the afternoons, he or his wonderful wife, who also taught at the school, would read us the newspaper. And then we had a lovely lady, who was the senior teacher - a wonderfully wise woman who believed in us kids and we had to get our spelling right and we had to do mental arithmetic, and it wasn't good enough if you didn't know, and "You go back and learn these things." So she had very high expectations of what we could achieve.

I remember sort of little memory tasks. We used to begin the day's lessons with a prayer and a hymn. We would sing a hymn - usually two or three verses, and we had to learn the words of the hymns off pat. That was the first lesson of the day. After the prayers we would go back to our rooms and learn the words of the hymn for the next morning. Then we would have Mental Arithmetic, and then we'd have spelling and so these were basic things that we learnt.

There was no orientation and mobility. Playtimes were play times. And we used to run about bowling tyres with manuka

sticks. That was part of our mobility, although we didn't know that at the time. We would also get an old football and kick it onto the roof of the gym and you could hear when the ball bounced down where it was. We learned to chase the ball and if you didn't get it you didn't play again. And if you did get it you did play again, so that was your reward. And we would get five-pound treacle tins from the kitchen to play hockey using manuka sticks. It would be an hour or two before it was knocked into quite a round sort of ball and we would chase that around listening to where it went and came. There were trees that we climbed and we would have what we called cock fights, where we would piggy-back on one another. We made our own fun.

The nights, I remember, as being particularly difficult. I was a bed wetter and I always got into trouble. I do remember bad dreams and things like that. But, the education was wonderful.

When I was around 12 they thought that I might be able to go to Auckland Grammar. I think we did some exam before that and I wasn't terribly aware of what this exam was for, but anyway, I got selected and a group of 3 or 4 of us went off to Grammar. We boarded at the Institute still, but each morning at about quarter past eight we would pack our bags and walk up to the school.

I have to say, that that was just wonderful mainstream education. I was lacking in confidence and I just muddled through really, but the teachers were very good. We used to use the Stainsby machines, very noisy Braille writers, to take notes in class, and the teachers would write up on the board and dictate to me. I never had to ask, "Would you please read it out". Sometimes the teacher would get my partner sitting next to me to read out, but most often the teachers read. I was very embarrassed with the noise that the machine made as I wrote my notes and the only saving grace was that I would write faster than anybody else. And so I would sit there for thirty seconds while everybody caught up and I thought that was sort of quite nice.

I excelled in subjects like History and Geography, and perhaps English to a lesser extent, where it was just a matter of learning and reading and memorising. Science was a bit more of a struggle because it was somewhat more schematic and visually presented with formula and positions. Where I do feel aggrieved about my education is in Maths. Arithmetic was just fine but when it came to Algebra and Geometry there was just no way in which I could conceptualise that, and I think that was as much my failing - I obviously didn't have an

absolute aptitude for it. But nor were the teaching methods going to be changed to get me there. So I dropped Maths and went into something like Commercial Law, which was just simply a rote learning exercise.

The support that we got from the Institute during this time was coming back and doing our prep with students from the Teachers Training College who were volunteers helping us with our homework and being readers. But it wasn't support in the sense of learning how to do things a different way. And the other huge disadvantage was the slowness in the transcribing of French vocabs and all the texts. I think I had one text book and that was in French - and I didn't actually pass School C French. The only other texts we had were those which were read to us and the notes that we took. And we took copious notes. I remember having Eastlight folders stuffed full of handwritten and Stainsby notes and that's how the information was revised for examinations.

As I got into the upper school, it became a possibility that I could get to Physiotherapy School in London, which was a school run particularly for blind students. In order to achieve entry, I had to have Matriculation or University Entrance in Physics. And one of the Physics teachers took me aside and gave me some coaching and I managed to achieve that. So that's the sort of commitment which Grammar had to this. I went on to University and did Education, Psychology and Philosophy for a year, just to prove that I could exist in a tertiary institution. That was a very lonely year because again, I didn't use the Stainsby in that situation. Tape recorders were only just coming onto the market. They were very bulky and not able to be taken into the lecture room and I used to use a hand frame - a stylus and frame to take notes. I managed to scrape through but felt very unsatisfied with my time at university.

Then I went to the Royal National Institute for the Blind School of Physiotherapy in London. Well, that was an absolute joy. There were all the books. There were small classes, a wonderful professor, and [experiential learning]. I really enjoyed learning without restriction. Having all the resources to hand and of course, living in London was exciting. I was homesick and poor but that, in a way, didn't matter.

I suppose reflecting on my education, and my subsequent development, I was a shy child. I never really began to overcome my sense of insecurity until I was well into my thirties. There were not a lot of recreational things that I participated in, although music, I used to play in bands and things like that. I didn't mix a lot because I was a boarder and I was betwixt and

between. And my relationships with girls, and so on, were very limited. So, it's that social side that I feel that was only made up by sort of ongoing experience in later life.

In reflecting on the education system today, the things I think we should be seeking are literacy, numeracy, self-confidence in movement, and personal functional independence. The quest for knowledge and knowing where, and the ability to turn to resources. I think benchmarking against the regular curriculum is extremely important because we've got to foot it with this competitive world that we live in. Like it, or not. And if you want a job you have to compete, you have to be there, you have to develop skills and talents. Part of this is having the ability to know and to deal with others, and to live in the real world. You have to be able to learn to take the knocks and have the ability to deal with prejudices.

The sense of self-esteem is important, also an optimistic view of the future. An approach that finds out what the potential and what the particular talents of the individual are, and builds on strengths. Rewarding. Nothing succeeds like success.

An ability to advocate for one's self is needed. I think one needs to stick up for one's self in the nicest possible way. You know, with grace - that ability to say "I'm sorry, I don't quite catch on there, but I wonder if you'd mind just showing me again" or "Could you go over that again?" Because you can't expect the rest of the world to know exactly. My experience is that you are either greatly underestimated, or greatly overestimated. It is only the rare individual that gets it somewhere right. There is that need for that ability to keep a balance between levels of aspiration and levels of personal performance - to have insight into, and be realistic about one's strengths and weaknesses. Being surrounded by people who believe in you, I believe to be one of the most powerful factors in education and personal development.

### Legislation, Policies and Guidelines

Today, inclusive education with its focus on regular settings and community-based opportunities, has led to the majority of learners who are blind and vision impaired attending their local school. Their education takes place within the context of New Zealand's education and human rights legislation, special education policy and guidelines, and the disability strategy. All support inclusive education.

The New Zealand Disability Strategy, Making a World of Difference, Whakanui Oranga, (Ministry for Disability Issues, April 2001) presents a long-term strategy for changing

*Aotearoa New Zealand from a disabling to an inclusive society. Barriers to full participation in society are identified and a means for delivering the strategy outlined. Fifteen objectives have been identified. While all objectives are relevant, five are highlighted as relating specifically to children with special needs, their families and whanau. These are:*

*Objective 3 : Provide the best education;*

*Objective 7 : Create long-term support systems centred on the individual;*

*Objective 10 : Collect and use relevant information about disabilities, people and disability issues;*

*Objective 13 : Enable disabled children and youth to lead full and active lives;*

*Objective 15 : Value families, whanau and people providing ongoing support.*

Within the broad education context, *Education Priorities for New Zealand* (Mallard, Minister of Education, May 2003), states achievement objectives and strategies aimed at raising achievement and reducing disparity. The four key areas of focus are:

- ☞ Providing all New Zealanders with strong foundations for future learning;
- ☞ Ensuring high levels of achievement by all school leavers;
- ☞ Ensuring that New Zealanders engage in learning throughout their lives and develop a highly skilled workforce; and
- ☞ Making a strong contribution to our knowledge base, especially in key areas of national development.

In New Zealand, all learners between the ages of 5 and 19 years are entitled to free enrolment and education in any state school. (Attendance can be extended to 21 years.) Section 8 of the *Education Act* (1989) specifies that *people who have special education needs have the same right to enrol and receive education at state schools as people who do not.* Therefore, all schools have statutory obligations to provide an appropriate education for all learners irrespective of their level of ability. Section 57 of *The Human Rights Act* (1993) also upholds this right.

The National Education Guidelines *require each school to analyse barriers to learning and achievement, develop and implement strategies that address identified learners needs in order to overcome barriers to students' learning, and assess student achievement.*

While *The New Zealand Curriculum Framework* states that:

- ☞ Young children and students with special education needs have the same rights to a high-quality education as people of the same age who do not have special education needs;
- ☞ The primary focus of special education is to meet the individual learning and developmental needs of the young child and student.
- ☞ All young children and students with identified special education needs have access to a fair share of the available special education resources; and
- ☞ Partnership between students' families/whanau and education providers is essential in overcoming barriers to learning. (Ministry of Education, 1993)

The aim is for all schools to be inclusive and accepting of all learners.

While legislation, guidelines and the school charter provide a framework for inclusive education, both the principal, as providing professional leadership within the school, and the class teacher, are crucial to successful inclusion. Bishop in her study of 1986 identified the attitude of the class teacher as the most significant factor in the successful mainstreaming of learners who are blind and vision impaired. A teacher's attitudes and assumptions influence their interactions and expectations of children. Like most children, children who are blind and vision impaired usually respond positively to being given class responsibilities, to warm friendly guidance and support, opportunities to help others and not always be on the receiving end of help, high but realistic, expectations, opportunities to take risks and learn from their mistakes, and opportunities to succeed, both individually and with their peers. The most vulnerable aspect of many learners is a lack of self-esteem. A teacher's positive attitude and belief in a child is crucial and can have lasting effect (Neilson, 2000).

## Special Education

The education of learners who are blind and vision impaired is a co-operative effort shared between regular and special education. Special education in New Zealand has undergone and continues to undergo considerable change. The genesis of its policies and systems were the education reforms introduced in 1989, under what is referred to as *Tomorrow's Schools* (Lange, 1988). Overall, the changes involve several paradigm shifts: from a medical to an ecological model of special education needs, from a binary

system of education to an inclusive system, from a centralised administration to a decentralised one. The objectives are that children with special education needs will achieve better learning outcomes, be welcome at their local school, benefit from having more flexibility in the provision of programmes, and receive equitable levels of resourcing according to level of need, whatever their learning environment (Mitchell, 2000).

Eligibility for special education services in Aotearoa New Zealand is determined under the *Special Education 2000* policy (Ministry of Education, 1996a). It comprises a complex, interlocking set of provisions aimed at achieving a world-class inclusive education system that provides learning opportunities of equal quality to all learners. Introduced in 1996, the policy has been stage-implemented. The areas most relevant to learners who are blind and vision impaired are:

- ☞ The Ongoing and Reviewable Resourcing Scheme (ORRS) which provides a guaranteed level of resourcing for learners with high and very high learning needs;
- ☞ Moderate Education Needs which comprises a special education grant to schools for learners with moderate special education needs and access to the services of Resource Teachers Vision;
- ☞ Early Childhood which makes provision for co-ordinated specialist advice, teaching and paraprofessional support.

The implementation of *Special Education 2000* has brought significant changes to the way in which services are funded and accessed including the directing of funding by the Ministry of Education to a designated fundholder, rather than directly to the service provider; the allocation of ORRS teacher resourcing (.1 and .2 Full Time Equivalent Teachers) directly to the learner's school; the intention that schools purchase those services and resources they deem most relevant to their learners with special needs; and the resourcing to provide support to learners with moderate needs.

### **Specialist Services for the Education of Learners who are Blind and Vision Impaired**

In Aotearoa New Zealand there are 1,234 children and young people who are blind or vision impaired. This includes learners who are blind, learners with low vision, learners who are deafblind, and learners with complex-interrelated needs.

They come from a range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, including Maori and Pakeha (New Zealand European), as well as those of Pacific, Asian, European and African cultures. The learners range in age from newborn through to 21 years, are spread across the various levels of education, and have a broad spectrum of developmental and educational needs. Some live in large cosmopolitan areas, others in small communities.

Those within the Sector are committed to an array of educational placement options available to learners according to their education needs at any point in time. Thus, learners may move in and out of a number of settings during their schooling years. Their education settings include early childhood facilities such as PlayCentres, Kindergartens, Kohanga Reo, Language Nests, and Early Intervention Centres. School settings include Primary, Intermediate and Secondary Schools, Kura Kaupapa, and Special Schools. Of those learners in compulsory education, 67% attend mainstream settings, 19% attend special units located within regular schools and 14% attend special schools. The children learn in one to one, small group and whole-class contexts.

Table 1 indicates the education sector, funding category, and communication medium of the children.

*Table 1*  
**Learners who are blind and vision impaired**

<b>Education Sector Category</b>	
Early Childhood	235
Primary	631
Secondary	359
Tertiary Transition	9
	<b>1,234</b>
<b>Funding Category</b>	
ORRS: Very high needs	378
ORRS: High needs	316
Moderate needs	305
Early Childhood	235
	<b>1,234</b>
<b>Communication Medium</b>	
Braille/Tactile modes	91
Dual mode (Braille & Print)	19
Print	585
Sign, augmentative & alternative communication modes	539
	<b>1,234</b>



These learners have the same rights and requirements to receive the education available to their sighted peers, that is, the right to equal opportunity and equal access to all aspects of education - access to a visual world, access to information, access to curricula, access to knowledge, and access to human relationships.

The total curriculum for learners who are blind and vision impaired consists of two parts. The first, the regular curriculum, is provided to all learners, and in Aotearoa New Zealand is delivered through *Te Whāriki*, the Early Childhood Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1996b), and the *New Zealand Curriculum Framework* (Ministry of

- ▣ Parents and professionals;
- ▣ Professionals within transdisciplinary teams;
- ▣ Local, regional and national specialist service providers;
- ▣ The blind and vision impaired community; and
- ▣ Special education and regular education.

The IEP (Individual Education Programme) is the means employed to ensure an education appropriate to the individual learner. It provides the opportunity for teaming of both parents and professionals to consider the learner's educational development, learning needs and programme.

**Table 2**  
**Relationship between Expanded Core and Regular Curricula**

Expanded Core Curriculum	Regular Curriculum
Literary Braille supports access to	Language and Languages
Nemeth Braille to	Mathematics
Music Braille to	The Arts
Spatial Development, Living Skills, Orientation and Mobility to	Physical Education and Health and Well-being
Concept Development, Visual Efficiency Skills, and the use of high and low Technology supports access to	All areas of the regular curriculum
Listening Skills, and Social Skills support the development of	Communication Skills
Organisational Skills and Techniques for Management support the development of	Self-management Skills
Social Skills support the development of	Social and Co-operative Skills

Education, 1993). The second, *The Expanded Core Curriculum*, comprises the body of knowledge and skills unique to the needs of learners who are blind and vision impaired and provides a tool for access to the regular curriculum as well as the development of independence skills. It includes areas such as language and communication, literacy through braille and/or print, listening skills, concept development, visual efficiency, physical abilities, developmental orientation and mobility, social skills, life skills and adaptive technology.

An example of the relationship between the Expanded Core Curriculum and the regular curriculum is provided in Table 2. Access to *Te Whāriki* and *The New Zealand Curriculum* is supported through the provision of specialist services. Effective, collaborative partnerships in the provision of these services are essential. Such partnerships involve:

The team approach enables all members' perspectives to be considered with a focus on clear objectives and goals, both within the educational setting and for living within the wider community. The Ministry of Education's publication on IEP guidelines (1998) provides support in the process.

Practices to ensure access to education programmes include:

- ▣ Delivery of the Expanded Core Curriculum;
- ▣ Adaptation of the learning environment;
- ▣ Adaptation of teaching and learning approaches;
- ▣ Provision of accessible format materials;
- ▣ The use of technology; and
- ▣ Adaptation of the regular curriculum.

Key participants involved in the delivery of services and programmes are the Resource Teachers Vision of the 12 Visual and Sensory Resource Centres, Homai National School for the Blind and Vision Impaired, the Children's Services of the Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind, and Group Special Education of the Ministry of Education.

Resource Teachers Vision provide a range of support services across all educational settings in partnership with families and teachers. A primary role is to support learners to access and participate in the curriculum. This is undertaken by:

- ✧ Working as a member of the learner's education team;
- ✧ Providing functional vision assessment;
- ✧ Relaying information from Low Vision Clinics and ophthalmic assessments to class teachers;
- ✧ Providing information and advice to teachers on strategies for effective inclusion;
- ✧ Providing advice on programmes and the learning environment;
- ✧ Providing information on strategies for teaching and learning;
- ✧ Teaching programmes based on the Expanded Core Curriculum;
- ✧ Advocating for appropriate resources and services;
- ✧ Co-ordinating assessment and making application for appropriate equipment;
- ✧ Providing instruction in use of equipment;
- ✧ Providing in-service professional development;
- ✧ Liaising with other specialists (eg, Developmental Orientation and Mobility specialists);
- ✧ Developing, accessing or requesting appropriate accessible format materials (large print books, audio);
- ✧ Establishing and co-ordinating professional networks; and
- ✧ Assisting families to access support networks.

- (Ministry of Education & Vision Education Agency, 2003)

Homai National School for the Blind and Vision Impaired provides a number of services. These include campus-based programmes of learning for students with vision impairment and complex-interrelated needs, a transition living skills programme for young adults, and support to learners in regular education settings through its national assessment and training services, residential services and itinerant services (Auckland Visual Resource Centre).

Currently, Homai is reviewing its strategic direction and looking to extend its national role with the aim of fostering more cohesive and better co-ordinated services throughout the country.

*The Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind provides services to learners through the provision of:*

- ✧ Developmental Orientation and Mobility Services;
- ✧ Peer Support programmes;
- ✧ Support as learners transition from school to the community;
- ✧ Child and Family Social Workers, and Aronga, who work with the Maori community; and
- ✧ The production of Accessible Format Materials.

The Ministry of Education's Group Special Education (GSE) has psychologists, therapists and special education advisers available to assist schools with meeting the special needs of learners who are blind and vision impaired. Resource Teachers Vision work closely with GSE's Early Intervention teams in providing services to infants and young children.

The Ministry of Education also funds the training of teachers specialising in the education of learners who are blind and vision impaired by providing study awards each year. The Education of Students with Vision Impairment (ESVI) Post-graduate Diploma, a one-year course of study, is delivered by Auckland College of Education, both on- and off-campus. The Ministry also resources professional development for class teachers and paraprofessionals.

At a national level, a collaborative approach has been taken by Sector organisations - Parents of the Vision Impaired (PVI), the Association of Teachers of Learners with Vision Impairment (NZATLVI), the Association of Blind Citizens (ABCNZ), Homai National School for the Blind and Vision Impaired (HNSBVI), Visual and Sensory Resource Centres, the Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind (RNZFB) and the Vision Education Agency (VEA) - to initiatives aimed at further enhancing the education of learners.

Each group carries behind it constituents who are passionate about the education of children and provide valuable knowledge and expertise.

Key initiatives arising out of the Sector collaboration include:

- ✧ The development of a National Plan;
- ✧ The establishment of a national body, the Vision Education Agency;

- ✧ Establishment of a National Database; and
- ✧ Development of the publications *Guidelines to the Expanded Core Curriculum*, *Access to Learning*, and *The Early Years*.

### The National Plan

A *National Plan for Learners who are Blind and Vision Impaired in Aotearoa New Zealand*, (Nagel & Wells, 1998), provides the context for the delivery of specialist services.

It outlines a philosophical position, describes trends, and defines a set of 17 principles and associated goals for the delivery of inclusive, co-ordinated services. These relate to:

- ✧ Equal rights and unique needs of learners who are blind and vision impaired;
- ✧ Parent partnership;
- ✧ Service delivery;
- ✧ Identification, referral, assessment and eligibility for services;
- ✧ Access to the curriculum
- ✧ Professional development
- ✧ Monitoring and evaluation; and
- ✧ Research.

### The Vision Education Agency

A critical ingredient for the fulfilment of the National Plan was the development of an effective co-ordination body, the Vision Education Agency. Some of its key functions are to promote the needs of the Sector to Government, ensure the goals of the National Plan are implemented, develop standards and best practice guidelines, hold a national database of learners, develop and promote the official recognition of the Expanded Core Curriculum, and provide advice to parents.

### Publications

The publication, *Guidelines to the Expanded Core Curriculum* (Ministry of Education & Vision Education Agency, in press) details current best practice in Aotearoa New Zealand and provides guidelines to teaching and learning in the Expanded Core Curriculum. Its primary aim is to support specialist educators of learners who are blind and vision impaired in their work. The publication seats the Expanded Core Curriculum within the context of the unique needs of learners, education through partnership, assessment and the classroom environment.

A second publication *Access to Education* (Ministry of Education & Vision Education Agency, 2003) provides best practice guidelines for class teachers of learners with moderate vision impairment.

*The Early Years* is the first in a series of three publications to be produced for parents. The aim of the series which will also include *The School Years* and *Transition* are to provide parents with information to support them in their role as 'first teacher'. These are being developed with the support of Parents of Vision Impaired (PVI).

### Establishment of a National Database

A national database of learners who are blind and vision impaired has been developed to:

- ✧ Identify their learning needs;
- ✧ Identify the resources available to meet their needs;
- ✧ Identify any gap in resourcing;
- ✧ Determine how they are accessing the regular curriculum;
- ✧ Determine how well they are achieving;
- ✧ Determine the effectiveness of services and programmes;
- ✧ Identify patterns and trends;
- ✧ Provide a basis for research and policy development; and
- ✧ Develop a comprehensive knowledge about what it is that learners who are blind and vision impaired need to support them in their development and education.

Data analyses are providing a sound basis for information to Government, and Ministries on the current and future education requirements of the learners.

### Experiencing Inclusion Today

*So how have the legislation, policies, and practices impacted on today's learners?*

More than fifty years on from the beginning of M's story, we meet 11 year-old Sam, a little boy who had a stormy start to his journey through life. Arriving prematurely, he developed retinopathy of prematurity and became blind as a result. His mother, Justine, picks up on the story to date, sharing her perspectives on some of the successes and challenges experienced.

*... Since then he has developed and is very bright. He is only blind, there is nothing else wrong with him, a very bright boy,*

top of the class, reading at a fifteen year level and doing really very well. Which hasn't been easy all the way along. We have had to work on it and here he is. He likes school and gets on well with everyone. We've always brought him up so that he is a child first, so his blindness is an influence but not the main influence. He must behave like every other child first. I know my grandmother found that hard to start off with. She said, "You won't be able to tell him off, smack him or anything like that." I said, "Whatever! I am not having a spoilt little special needs child that nobody wants to know." And I think its pretty obvious coming through that he is not like that.

In 2003 Sam is attending his local school, is age appropriate academically, can Braille, type, loves learning and attends two extension programmes each week for gifted children and creative thinkers. He is in the school performance, loves music, learns an instrument and has several more lined up that he would like to play. Sam loves school and enjoys his family and friends.

So what do M and Sam, as young boys have in common? They, like all children were filled with a love of learning. They have been fortunate to have parents who believed in them and ask 'Why not?' when an idea is suggested. Crossing their paths have been people - teachers, administrators and support staff - that believe they can do anything and have a right to reach for their full potential.

Like M, Sam's family have had to consider where they live and moved away from their extended family to be close to appropriate support - such are the limitations of New Zealand's wide spread geography and population. Unlike M, Sam has had designated resourcing and support from specialists in the Education of the Blind and Vision Impaired Learners. His mother continues ...

...He started with early intervention when he was one. I am early childhood trained so I knew what I wanted. I was being visited, I think I had met the Visual Resource Teacher by that stage when he was one, and I had the Neurodevelopmental therapist coming in as well for the prematurity side. The Child and Family Social Worker from the Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind ended up taking me to an Early Intervention Centre and the Neurodevelopmental therapist wasn't that happy that she had done that because she thought it was her job. There is always that kind of conflict between different therapists. So, when he was one he started going there twice a week. He had speech language therapy and cognitive therapy once a week and while he was there he got

socialisation skills because it was a play group as well. There were siblings there, not just children with special needs. It was the best of both worlds. Now I look at it and I definitely see it as a bridge. I ended up being the manager there because I believe that's the way it should be for all special needs kids - it's the parents that also need that support. Because you're blind doesn't mean that you are going to get on with every blind child, and the same for the parents (of blind children) as well. So Sam started there and he continued there until he was four. But in that time, he also started at PlayCentre, when he was two and half - that was the normal age. He had a teacher aide, but not full time. I had a very big push against that because I had a different perspective to the Visual Resource Centre at that time. I wanted him to go to PlayCentre not a Kindergarten. If he went to Kindergarten he would need a teacher aide full-time because there are 45 kids, but at PlayCentre you were lucky to have fifteen kids with four to five adults and you didn't actually need to have a full time teacher aide. I didn't want him to have that. I knew that as he got older he would need that (more teacher aide and teacher time) and I wanted him to have access to kids

Sam attended three primary schools as Justine sought the education which would both meet his learning needs and challenge his capabilities.

.....When we started the third school, which was awesome, that's the best situation we could ever have for any blind child in my opinion. We had the class teacher, the Resource Teacher Vision (RTV) and the teacher aide working hand in hand for two years. The class teacher stayed for two years, and even though Sam had just started at this school, it was an easy transition because they all got on so well. The teacher was new at the school. The teacher aide had already been at the school, so that made it a little easier, and she learnt Braille. It went really well, you couldn't ask for any better. It was absolutely perfect. The RTV got the homework before everyone else and she could Braille it out and he could work at exactly at the same level and that was that, it was accepted, expected of him. The classroom teacher was very creative and into dance and did aerobics and did a production and he had to do it all as well, and art splash and all sorts of things. Then Orientation and Mobility (O&M) came in, Special Education Services gave money so that he could learn to cross the roads and things like that.

One of his biggest wants in life was to do road patrol and because we were away when this was done he was disappointed and missed, and one of the teachers said he couldn't do it.



*So we had to go in and say this is what he really wants to do and its like – ‘he is going to do it!’ The policewoman wasn’t that happy, but we said, “He’s just an extra one on the road patrol, he could push the barrier arm out” and he loved it. He made some great friendships. There were people to chat with, old people tooting as they passed by, and that sort of thing. So that was really great, those last two years of primary schooling were the best you could want.*

*What made it so good was the team – and the principal. We know that schools are just so different now, but the principal was right there, he wasn’t over the top either. All of them having their eyes open to see he is a very bright boy. Because, academically he is up with all the rest, in fact above the rest. Just their ability to be flexible, to look at different options for doing things, and not be one-eyed, tunnel-visioned. That was really great.*

*Just realizing the importance of having O&M, and at school as well. It doesn’t sound much, but it is so important. Most people only have IEPs every year. I have always had them four times a year. We have a team here and we don’t always get together so it is important. Even if you only meet briefly you need to have the RTV, the teacher aide, the parents and O&M. You need to know what is going on. If you have one once a term it might be for one, not two hours. We did do that and it was good...*

One major difference is the role parents now take in the education of their child and the level of involvement:

*... I have to be more assertive. Stropky as well, because professionals, be they doctors or educationalists, all think that he is their child and he is actually mine and I have to live with him, they don’t. They can quit their jobs, whereas I have got to be there until the day I die. ... Parent partnership is highly needed but not always there. They say you are emotionally involved but that’s part of it. They underestimate what parents can offer.*

So fifty years on, in some ways much has changed, and yet, in others, nothing has changed.

There are areas for urgent attention, such as the levels of and access to resourcing, access to all aspects of the Expanded Core Curriculum, alleviation of the high learner: Resource Teacher Vision ratio, increased opportunities for specialist training, and the implementation of an equitable, co-ordinated and cohesive system for service delivery.

## Elements for Successful Inclusion

The key elements for successful inclusive education remain:

- ✧ Early identification and a good early start;
- ✧ The most stable home life that can be achieved;
- ✧ Emotional support – some way of instilling belief in self – “You’re different, you’re ok”;
- ✧ An institutional willingness;
- ✧ Good environmental design;
- ✧ A welcoming and supportive principal – an attitude of “We’re going to make it together”;
- ✧ A class teacher with a positive, enabling attitude;
- ✧ An appropriate level of resourcing;
- ✧ Access to the Curriculum and all that that implies;
- ✧ Total exposure to the Expanded Core Curriculum;
- ✧ Access to, and instruction in the use of technology;
- ✧ A focus on the development of literacy and numeracy, problem-solving skills, effective mobility, and functional independence;
- ✧ Support for regular class teachers;
- ✧ Trained specialist teachers;
- ✧ Trained teacher aides and other paraprofessionals;
- ✧ Ongoing professional development;
- ✧ Provision of support to parents;
- ✧ Valuing the knowledge and expertise of parents;
- ✧ Working in partnerships and teaming;
- ✧ Exposure to peer and personal benchmarking;
- ✧ Effective transitions;
- ✧ A valuing of independence;
- ✧ High expectations of achievement; and
- ✧ An optimistic view of the future.

And what makes for an inclusive society? M considers it is one that is non-discriminatory, that has a human rights base, and values the potentials of people, no matter how humble. A society where there is affirmative action available as needed.

*I think we need institutionalised equity. We need a kind of society where people in all of the major institutions of society can say, “Well, why not”. Not “How can you?” but “Why not?”. There is a different frame of reference here.*

And how would he rate Aotearoa New Zealand as an inclusive a society?

Not too bad. If I look back over my lifetime, we have come a long way. I think we are beginning to slow down, probably because we are not a wealthy country any more. And we are getting more and more bureaucracies that have to be battled for environmental design and so on. But I think we are not too bad and we do have the great ability that you can still get to your politicians, you still know your politicians and you still know to whom to turn to advocate, whereas in larger populations, that's not possible.

## Conclusion

To conclude, let us return to the beginning - to take up the challenge and renew commitment to a society that is inclusive and offering opportunity to all its members. In doing so there is the need to focus on increased opportunities and initiatives designed to equip children and young people for complex and diverse cultural, social, and economic environments.

By working in collaboration, we can strive to ensure that children who are blind and vision impaired have access to a quality education, achieve educational and social outcomes that will enable them to lead meaningful and valued lives, and that there is an enabling society in which they might be fully participating members.

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## ***Drs. Richard Charles and Esther Yewpick Lee*** ***Charitable Foundation Grant during 2003***

### **A STEADY AND SYSTEMATIC LAUNCH**

#### ***Introduction:***

The World Health Organization estimates that nearly 90% of the global population of persons with visual impairment live in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) is facilitating programs in all regions to achieve the global objective of education for all children with visual impairment in line with the Dakar Declaration, which states that education for all children should be achieved by the year 2015. While reaching the target in the stipulated time is important, ensuring equal educational experience for children with visual impairment is equally important. As these children are devoid of visual experiences, the teachers and other personnel involved in serving them should understand the techniques of providing the best possible experiences to optimize their learning. It is in this context that efforts are needed at all levels to improve the capacity of teachers and other personnel working with children with visual impairment.

Many developing countries still have to mount human resource development programs to prepare practising teachers to serve children with visual impairment. While some nations have a specialist element in their initial/pre-service teacher training, there are very few opportunities for serving teachers to receive additional specialist training. As both pre-service and in-service training are important to improve the quality of teachers, ICEVI with the help of Drs. Richard Charles and Esther Yewpick Lee Charitable Foundation is providing technical assistance to countries that wish to launch human resource development programs

and offer capacity building programs to the existing teachers to update their skills. In addition to these programs, the ICEVI-Lee initiative will also help to create awareness among various personnel regarding the capabilities of persons with visual impairment. Support from the Lee Foundation is creating an opportunity to address one of the long held global objectives of providing quality education for all children with visual impairment.

#### ***Processes adopted in the ICEVI-Lee Initiative:***

The ICEVI-Lee initiative was discussed at length within the Executive Committee of ICEVI where it was decided to focus attention on the developing countries within four regions; Africa, East Asia, Latin America, and West Asia where need was greatest. A comprehensive Needs Assessment Questionnaire was developed and shared with the Regional Chairpersons of ICEVI to fix priorities within their regions. The objectives of the Lee initiative were then shared with the delegates of the 11<sup>th</sup> World Conference held at the Netherlands in July/August 2002 where the scheme was officially launched. Evaluation criteria were developed for the selection of projects to be supported under the Lee Foundation Scheme. Regional Committees selected the projects from their region for which they requested support. Regional Chairpersons were encouraged to generate matching contributions in the form of materials, manpower, etc., for the projects implemented under the Lee Foundation Grant.

These projects were then reviewed by the Secretary General and the Principal Officers before final approval was granted. The

procedures adopted for project selection, monitoring and reporting are rigorous. As this is the first full year of implementation we will review these procedures carefully and make necessary adjustments based upon our experiences and the outcomes of the first year of operation.

### **Description of major topics:**

The Regional Chairpersons were asked to prepare proposals under the broad objectives of the Lee Foundation Grant, namely, creating awareness about the capabilities of persons with visual impairment, developing capacity of teachers and other personnel, and developing innovative strategies and best practices. The project proposals that have been accepted address the following specific themes:

- ☞ Awareness of information technology for persons with visual impairment
- ☞ Inclusive education for persons with visual impairment
- ☞ Teaching-learning materials
- ☞ Community based rehabilitation
- ☞ Parental Education
- ☞ Braille codes
- ☞ Computer literacy
- ☞ Evaluation strategies
- ☞ Education of low vision children
- ☞ Teaching Mathematics
- ☞ Education of deafblind children
- ☞ Education of children with multiple disabilities
- ☞ Orientation and Mobility
- ☞ Early Intervention
- ☞ Visual Stimulation
- ☞ Regional and national networking
- ☞ Non-formal education
- ☞ Effective teacher preparation programs
- ☞ Plus curricular activities for children with visual impairment

During the year 2003, 99 projects are being implemented – 22 projects in Africa region, 17 in East Asia region, 30 in Latin America, and another 30 in the West Asia region.

### **Target Audience:**

The programs in the ICEVI-Lee initiative target stakeholders at all levels including:

- ☞ Policy makers
- ☞ Teacher educators
- ☞ Teachers
- ☞ Community leaders
- ☞ Children with visual impairment
- ☞ Sighted children
- ☞ Parents and parents' organizations

### **Direct and Indirect Beneficiaries:**

During the year 2003, the projects are expected to provide professional development training and awareness programs to 4,298 teachers and personnel. We project that these trained persons are likely to support 72,860 children with visual impairment in the four regions. These are the direct beneficiaries. The average per capita training cost will be approximately \$ 82.71 resulting in a unit cost of \$ 4.88 per child.

### **Funds:**

The ICEVI-Lee Initiative is working on the basis of matched funding generated by ICEVI from other donor sources. The total cost of the program during 2003 is \$350,800 of which \$170,800 has been granted by Drs. Richard Charles and Esther Yewpick Lee Charitable Foundation and \$180,000 has been generated from other donors.

ICEVI is proud of this collaboration with the Lee Foundation and its other donors and is glad that this unique initiative is helping to address the global objective of ICEVI to make education for all visually impaired children a reality by 2015.



## ICEVI - Our Position on Key Issues

As ICEVI grows, the Principal Officers and the Regional Chairs are facing decisions on a range of issues such as parents' participation in ICEVI programmes, representation of ICEVI in international meetings, formation of ICEVI networks at the regional and national levels, etc. The table below summarizes the position of ICEVI on some of these issues as of May 2003. ICEVI's position papers will be reviewed in subsequent meetings of the Principal Officers and Executive Committee.

S.No.	Issue	ICEVI's Stand
1.	<b>Parents' Participation in ICEVI's programs</b>	<p>Although ICEVI is not a Parents' Organization, we strongly believe that parents have a vital role to play in increasing educational opportunities for persons with visual impairment.</p> <p>ICEVI as a professional organization works with parents in the areas of capacity building, creating awareness, improving advocacy about disability, etc.</p> <p>ICEVI believes that the voice of parents and consumers should be appropriately reflected within our publications. That belief is translated into action by columns in our magazine devoted to Parents and the work of the World Blind Union.</p>
2.	<b>Formation of National Chapters</b>	<p>ICEVI wishes to see the formation of more national chapters in the future and the Principal Officers are preparing guidelines for creating such chapters which will be reviewed at the EXCO meeting in February 2004.</p> <p>ICEVI believes that the formation of national chapters should be an evolutionary process. The stand of ICEVI is that the nations within a region should first form national networks which may in time lead to the development of the national committees. Once a proven record of successful activities has been demonstrated by the national committees, legal status can be sought to formalise them into national chapters based upon the guidelines that are being developed.</p>
3.	<b>ICEVI's stance in international meetings</b>	<p>Although ICEVI's stance in international meetings is necessary to maintain its visibility, it is appropriate for representatives to attend only those meetings that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ <i>reflect the goals, mission, and mandate of ICEVI.</i></li> <li>✧ <i>extend an official invitation to ICEVI at least 3 months prior to the date of the event.</i></li> <li>✧ <i>address the millennium goals which include a rights based, barrier-free and inclusive society for persons with disabilities.</i></li> </ul>

S.No.	Issue	ICEVI's Stand
		The Regional Chairs are encouraged to use their discretion in determining which meetings are relevant for strengthening their region. When such invitations are received centrally, the secretariat will explore the possibility of the relevant regional chairperson or any member of the regional committee representing ICEVI in such meetings.
4.	<b>Formation of Specific Interest Groups</b>	<p>The Regional Chairs may wish to form specific interest groups to strengthen areas such as early childhood education, information and communication technology, education of children with low vision, services to children with multiple disabilities, inclusive education, Braille literacy, etc.</p> <p>We ask that regions regularly share the work of any such committees with the Secretariat. We feel that the work of such special interest groups may be helpful to ICEVI as it considers and formulates future ICEVI policy documents and other publications.</p>
5.	<b>Collaboration with International Agencies</b>	ICEVI promotes collaboration with international agencies such as the DbI, IAPB, IBSA, and WBU for facilitating better services for persons with visual impairment throughout the world. The Regional Chairs need to explore the possibilities of establishing collaboration with the regional representatives of these organizations for influencing policies and exchange of information.

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## ICEVI and HADLEY Go “Globe ALL”



**Offering Distance Education Courses to  
Professionals Worldwide**

To achieve the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment's (ICEVI) global objective to assure equal access to education for all children with visual impairment by 2015, a vital partnership between ICEVI and The Hadley School for the Blind, United States, has been established. The “Globe ALL” program, will offer educators of blind children worldwide distance education coursework designed to enhance their abilities as teachers.



*MOU being signed by Michael Bina (Hadley) and  
Lawrence F. Campbell (ICEVI)*

Founded in 1952, ICEVI is a global association of approximately 4000 individuals and organizations in 155 countries working for the expansion of educational opportunities for persons with visual impairments. The Hadley School for the Blind, established in 1920, offers 90 courses to blind people and their families and is expanding its services to blindness professionals. Courses range from Braille and daily living skills to computer training. Currently 8,000 students in 100 countries have courses available in braille, large print, audiocassette and on the Internet. These learning opportunities allow study at anytime, any place - all free of charge.

A Memorandum of Understanding to formalize this partnership was signed by Lawrence F. Campbell, President of ICEVI, and Dr. Michael J. Bina, President, The Hadley School for the Blind at the Executive Committee meeting held in Stellenbosch, South Africa, in March 2003.

*The Educator*, the bi-annual magazine of ICEVI, will contain further information on the Globe ALL program in subsequent issues. Individuals interested in enrolling in this program should contact Dr. Michael Bina at [bina@hadley-school.org](mailto:bina@hadley-school.org) or the ICEVI Secretary General, Dr. M.N.G. Mani at [sgicevi@vsnl.net](mailto:sgicevi@vsnl.net).



## **“GLOBE ALL”**

### **The New ICEVI-Hadley**

### **Distance Education Program**



Since the ICEVI-Hadley “Globe All” (Growth and Learning Opportunities in Blindness Education) was launched in March, 2003 there has been much interest expressed by educators throughout the world. The following are some of the most frequently asked questions and their answers, that we hope will help you to better understand this new program.

**Q : Who can participate in the “Globe All” Program?**

- A : The program is open to any individual associated with ICEVI. The program offers distance learning courses appropriate for teachers, students and family members. The Hadley Catalog will provide you with descriptions of the four programs that serve specific audiences:
- *Adult Continuing Education*
  - *High School Education*
  - *Family Education*
  - *Professional Education*

**Q : What kind of courses are available through this program?**

- A : There are more than 90 courses to choose from in such diverse areas such as “communication skills”, “technology”, “early childhood”, “parenting”, “Braille instruction”, “low vision” and many more.

**Q : Do I need to have access to a computer to enroll in a course?**

- A : No, a computer is not needed. While courses can be taken by e-mail, they are also available using surface mail.

**Q : What does it cost to participate in the ICEVI-Hadley “Globe All” program?**

- A : All courses are available to you free of cost.

**Q : What confirmation will I receive when I complete a course?**

- A : Persons who successfully complete courses through the ICEVI-Hadley “Globe All” program will receive a certificate signed by the President of ICEVI and President of the Hadley School for the Blind. However, to receive a certificate, you must indicate when you register that you are signing up through ICEVI.

**Q : How can I get a list of courses and sign-up for one?**

- A : If you have internet access you can review the course catalog and register for a course at [www.hadley-school.org](http://www.hadley-school.org) or get general information by writing to <info@hadley-school.org>. If you do not have access to the internet or e-mail you can request a catalog and registration materials by writing to:

**Globe All Program**

Hadley School for the Blind, 700 Elm Street,  
Winnetka, IL 60093-2254, USA



# Inclusion : A Growing Modality in the Education of People with Visual Impairment in Peru

Professor Mary Valera

The Ministry of Education of Peru has been encouraging the acceptance of children with special educational needs into regular schools as part of its plan to create inclusive schools. There are laws in existence which regulate this development (Act 23384, Act 27050), however, the implementation of this process at a national level has been slow due to the following factors:

- *The relatively low social and economic status of professionals in education does not encourage them to continue their professional development and maintain an open mind towards change.*
- *Low expectations regarding the potential of people with visual impairment and consequent discrimination.*
- *The centralised nature of the Peruvian system which does not permit professionals in education to experiment with new techniques and implement innovations.*
- *The widely differing topography of each region.*

It is important to stress that the Ministry of Education has been working toward this objective of inclusion, and is offering training on curricular diversification, favouring the integration/inclusion of students with visual impairment.

A good example of a project promoting integration/inclusion can be seen at C.E.E. (Special Education Centre) "San Francisco de Asis" in Lima which has been in operation for twenty years and has produced very positive results. Its operation is based around these broad strategies:

1. A comprehensive assessment service (psychological, visual and pedagogical) designed to establish the strengths and weaknesses of each student and to offer him/her better support.
2. The provision of training to staff from regular schools. This is made available to all the professionals working at each school and especially to those who are directly involved in the visually impaired student's education. The training involves:
  - *Sensitisation - the needs of persons with visual impairment are explored through simulation techniques and case studies.*
  - *Technical Orientation - advice on the adaptation of the curricula, on access, on teaching strategies and on the evaluation and assessment of learning.*

- *The introduction of information about the cognitive, behavioural and social development of the student with visual impairment.*

3. Follow-up and support to regular schools which is delivered by itinerant teachers who co-ordinate support, respond to teacher's questions, adapt teaching materials and teach the students specialist skills such as the use of the abacus and Grade Two Braille. Children are also visited at home where they are taught ADL techniques and Orientation and Mobility.

At the project's resource centre, specialist teachers provide additional support for mostly high school students in subjects such as, Mathematics and English which cannot be given at school. Learning materials on tape are also used in these two subjects. In some cases, elementary school students attend on Saturdays with the prior consent of their teacher and parents in order to enhance their study of Mathematics and Communication.

4. The transcription of print texts into Braille and the preparation of raised diagrams and embossed materials in subject areas, where these cannot be supplied by regular teachers or parents.

## Attendance/Coverage

Every year the number of students in the program increases. At present, an average of 45 students are served covering 26 districts of Lima and Callao. The team comprises 5 itinerant teachers, a co-ordinator, and professionals working at the resource centre who offer their full support.

## Economic Resources

Inevitably the transportation of itinerant teachers to regular schools in the different districts has a cost, which is paid for by the contribution of parents, "San Francisco de Asis" school and CBM.

## Conclusion

The work of the Special Education Centre "San Francisco de Asis", Surco-Lima is progressing satisfactorily, thanks to the contribution of parents, the cooperation of the teachers in regular schools and the continuous follow-up and support of the inclusion/integration team. However, I consider there is still much to do especially regarding the sensitisation of regular teachers and society in general, in order to consolidate the modality of inclusion as an educational option for the person with visual impairment.

# Building New Roads for People with Visual Impairment in Peru

*Professor Mary Valera*

In this article I will describe a new kind of teacher training programme in Peru which is based at the Special Educational Centre “San Francisco de Asis” in Lima. The programme is called the “Plan of Educational Extension”.

The objective of the programme is to support children and young people with visual impairment who live in the provinces of the country by training local professionals to offer education and rehabilitation. These professionals will support the children’s development and allow them to progress and become integrated within their own social environment.

The training is offered in Lima and in other provincial cities and is delivered by Peruvians with great experience in the field of visual impairment supported by specialists from overseas sent by ICEVI to provide additional academic input to the programme.

The “Plan of Extension” has the following features:

## 1. Teacher training

- ✎ The training lasts no less than 40 hours and is addressed to professionals already involved in working with people with visual impairment and to others with an interest in the topic
- ✎ Initial training is based around a set of general core topics and continues with additional specific elements in areas such as: Early Intervention, the Development of Teaching Materials, Low Vision and Community-Based Rehabilitation, which the participants choose in accordance with the needs of their local population.
- ✎ At the end of each course, booklets on the topics covered are distributed to the participants.
- ✎ At the end of each course, a certificate of participation is given to each professional who has complied with the set conditions.

It is important to add that this year we have planned a course for participants from the fields of both visual and hearing impairment.

## 2. Observation

The teachers who are trained on the courses are visited in their own areas and are observed to ensure that they are applying the knowledge acquired in the courses successfully. These follow-ups are as important as the

training courses themselves and they demand the same amount of time because the lecturers have to travel around the country.

The observation is organised as follows:

- ✎ Annual visits lasting a week in each area. The purpose of the visit is to encourage the teachers; to clarify any uncertainties the teachers may have; to correct any mistakes in practice and to develop and offer advice on aspects not dealt with in the training courses. The visits also help the lecturers to assess both teacher’s and student’s needs and thus help us to identify ideas for new training courses.

## 3. Internships

In order to be able to develop their skills and obtain further specialised knowledge, some professionals apply for internships at the centre. The placement at the centre can last for three, five or ten days, depending on the needs of the applicants.

## 4. Distribution of material

In our country, as in some other Latin-American countries, there is a lack of material for students with a visual impairment (as indeed there is for their peers with normal vision), and therefore we offer schools Braille guides, abacus, walking canes, magnifying glasses, audible balls, geometry instruments, etc. This material is donated by CBM in order to complement the work of the centre.

## 5. Coverage

This work is carried out in the Centre and North of the country, and covers the coast, hills and jungle regions.

At the beginning, only those teachers who were already working with the people with visual impairment were trained; at present, open courses are offered in which teachers with different specialities and parents can participate. In the year 2002 five sessions were held, training 271 professionals.

## Conclusion

The Program of Educational Extension makes the education and/or rehabilitation of people with visual impairment possible in areas far from the capital. These people would otherwise have had no access to personal and social development. The Program of Educational Extension encourages and enables teachers to train students with blindness and low vision.

## *Inclusive Education in Brazil: Advances and Contradictions*

By Mara O Campos Syaulis and Marilda Moraes Garcia Bruno

Brazil is a signatory both to the Jomtien Agreement (Thailand, 1990) and to the World Declaration on Education for All (Salamanca, 1993) which support educational practices aimed at satisfying the basic learning needs of individuals, the full development of their human potential, and the improvement of their quality of life and knowledge and participation as citizens in the cultural transformation of their community.

In line with this commitment, Brazil's National Educational Guidelines of 1996 and the National Guidelines for Special Education in Primary Education recommend the inclusion of people who have serious disabilities or significant learning difficulties in mainstream education systems. To this end it proposes that the Union, the States and Municipal governments collaborate in order to implement inter-sector initiatives that facilitate and put into operation educational systems that will address the specific and educational needs arising from disabilities.

There has been significant development in Brazil relating to the concept of Special Educational Needs, and national guidelines have been produced to encourage educational systems to organize and restructure themselves and to develop educational programs and inclusion plans jointly with families, schools and specialized institutions that provide support for inclusion.

In the area of childhood education, there has been a great advance in the acceptance of the concept of education as a social right. The medical model of caregiving, based upon a clinical approach to early intervention, has evolved towards a social-educational focus that values diversity, family life and the modification of the environment to promote the development and learning processes of children with Special Educational Needs.

The Ministry of Education, acting through the National Office of Special Education together with Primary Education, has developed practical advice in the form of Educational Strategies and Guidelines for the Education of

Children with Special Educational Needs (2003). The eight volumes of the guidelines include: Introduction, Accentuated Learning Difficulties or Limitations in the Developmental Process, Autism, Multiple Disabilities, Physical Disabilities, Communication and Signing Difficulties, Visual Impairment, Hearing Impairment, Deafblindness and Gifted Children. These materials will be distributed to each of the 5.800 Brazilian municipalities who will become responsible for their local dissemination and for putting their content into practice.

Similarly, materials have been developed for the development of human resources to support the inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms at the level of primary education. These include guidance for class teachers on teaching strategies, access to the curriculum, curricular access, adaptation of materials and the additional curriculum. In the area of visual impairment three documents have been prepared: Understanding Visual Impairment, The Education of Visually-Impaired Students and Rehabilitation.

The Ministry of Education, through the National Office of Special Education in partnership with ABEDEV – the Brazilian Association of Educators of People with Visual Impairment – created 25 CAPs – Teaching Support Centers for Inclusion – a project conceived by Marilda Moares Garcia Bruno, a member of ICEVI-Brazil. This project was implemented by the Ministry of Education to provide support and assistance for the inclusion of children and young people with visual impairment and support for teachers and parents in various Brazilian states.

The Teaching Support Centers produce Braille and large print books, run workshops on adapting teaching materials and resources and make available assistive technology resources that students can use at the centers. They also take on responsibility for providing training and carrying out educational research in partnership with universities and specialist organizations.

Large urban centers are served by specialist organizations such as Laramara, the Fundação Dorina Nowill and the Santa Casa de Misericórdia in São Paulo; CEPRE in Campinas; the Instituto Benjamin Constant in Rio de Janeiro and the Instituto de Cegos in Salvador, Bahia among others. These organizations provide a range of services including the assessment of vision, early intervention programs, evaluation and guidance for integration developments, and student based programs such as orientation and mobility, daily living activities, communication, Braille and abacus techniques. They also provide adaptive technology and other special aids.

The great challenge facing our country is the inclusion of students with multiple disabilities in schools. To respond to this challenge, Lararama, in São Paulo, has led study groups on inclusion and has provided further education and training for teachers with an ecological focus aimed at developing leadership within families and communities to face problems encountered in daily life. It has also created specialized

support materials on inclusion for students, teachers and parents and furnished specialized equipment and technical assistance to enable access to the curriculum. For example, since 1999, Laramara has distributed 1681 Perkins braille writers and 152 Tatrapoint braille writers throughout the country, 1001 of which have been delivered at no cost to visually impaired users with the support of sponsors and donation campaigns.

Brazil is an immense country, full of contradictions. It is undeniable that in the last 10 years our country has made great strides in the area of legislation, and has developed recommendations and guidelines to ensure the social rights and inclusion of people with visual impairment in schools, the workplace and society. However, what leaves us perplexed is the fact that even though there are services available such as the ones we have mentioned, in practice, students with visual impairment and their families cannot find in all schools the necessary resources and support to meet their specific needs.

## Calendar of Events

### 2003

#### 19-23 June

Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America's (RESNA) 26<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Technology and Disability: Research, Design, Practice, and Policy. Atlanta, GA  
[www.resna.org](http://www.resna.org)

#### 22-27 June

10<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Human-Computer Interaction, Crete, Greece.  
[www.hcii2003.gr](http://www.hcii2003.gr)

#### 28 June – 4 July

National Federation of the Blind's 2003 National Convention.  
[www.nfb.org](http://www.nfb.org)

#### 12-18 July

2003 American Association of the Deaf-Blind Convention, San Diego, CA  
<http://www.tr.wou.edu/dblink/aadb2.htm>

#### 17-21 July

European Blind Union Employment Conference, Paris, France.  
[www.euroblind.org](http://www.euroblind.org)

#### 5-10 August

13<sup>th</sup> DBI World Conference on Deafblindness, Mississauga, Canada  
[www.dbiconferencecanada.com](http://www.dbiconferencecanada.com)

#### 31 August - 3 September

7<sup>th</sup> European Conference for the Advancement of Assistive Technology in Europe., Dublin, Ireland.  
<http://www.atireland.ie/aaate>

#### 28 September - 3 October

7<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, International Agency for Prevention of Blindness (IAPB), Bahrain.  
[iapbsect@yahoo.com](mailto:iapbsect@yahoo.com)

#### 20 - 21 November

Techshare 2003 Conference, Royal National Institute for the Blind, Birmingham, UK.  
e mail : [techshare@rnib.org.uk](mailto:techshare@rnib.org.uk)  
[www.org.uk/techshare](http://www.org.uk/techshare)

### 2005

#### 1 - 4 August

International Special Education Conference - ISEC 2005, Glasgow, Scotland.  
e-mail : [isec2005@strath.ac.uk](mailto:isec2005@strath.ac.uk)  
[www.strath.ac.uk/Departments/pdu](http://www.strath.ac.uk/Departments/pdu)



## From a Parent's Perspective

Tula A Baxter, Editor, Parents' Coloum

Hon. Chairman T.E.A.M. Europe - Email: tulaabaxter@hotmail.com

25, Newlands Avenue, Thames Ditton, Surrey, KT7 0HD - Fax/phone: +44 (0)20 8224 0735

Welcome to our second contribution to *The Educator*. Our column in the last issue was praised and I wish to share the compliments with all the contributors. Many thanks for making it happen.

The theme for this issue is "Inclusive Education". Some parents see Special Schools as the answer to their child's education. Some see Special schools as the problem and not the solution. Others feel that their child is a refugee from poor mainstream school inclusion. Several parents that I spoke to said that their child was "integrated" but not included. "What is inclusion and what should be done about it?" I asked parents. Before I go on to the individual contributions lets take a look at the Salamanca Statement of the UNESCO World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality (June 1994). It makes a number of statements. Three of those relate to our present theme.

- ☞ Every child has a fundamental right to education and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain acceptable levels of learning;
- ☞ Those with Special Educational Needs must have access to mainstream schools, which should accommodate them within a child centred pedagogy capable of meeting those needs.

☞ Mainstream schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all.

The statement went on to urge Governments to:

- ☞ Give the highest policy and budgetary priority to improve the education system to enable them to include all children regardless of individual differences or difficulties.
- ☞ Adopt as a matter of Law or policy the principle of inclusive education, enrolling all children in mainstream schools, unless there are compelling reasons to doing otherwise.
- ☞ Encourage and facilitate the participation of parents, communities and organisations of disabled people in the planning and decision making processes concerning the provision of Special Educational Needs.

So, after almost 10 years - from 1994 to 2003 - inclusion is very much on the top of our agendas and here are some views for this theme. A big thank you to Liu Guitao from Inner Mongolia and Dorine in 't Veld from the Netherlands who took the time to write. Your contributions are greatly appreciated.

### Inclusive Education in My Village

Liu Guitao, Yong Chang Village, Yang Qun Tan town, Zheng Xiang Bai Banner, Inner Mongolia

I am the mother of a blind child named Jianfeng. Though he lost his sight at birth, he is still my beloved son. In 1997 when he was seven years old, I sent him to school. Because of his blindness, some of his peer classmates gave him a nickname; some threw small stones at him. There was even once when they dug a hole on his way home and he fell in and was greatly hurt. After that he was reluctant to go to school.

In 2000, the Golden Key Project brought the spirit of humanitarianism to our remote village. Everyone in the village, including the adult villagers, school children, teachers and school headmasters all gain a new and fresh look towards the disabled children. To make it easy for the disabled children, they levelled the way to school and made it free of obstacles.

His teacher, named He, took the advantage of his summer vocation to teach my son Braille. On the day when he was integrated to school, an opening ceremony was held on his behalf. A Volunteer Group was formed to help the disabled children. To make the teaching more effective, Teacher He not only formulated an Individual Teaching Plan, but also made touchable teaching aids for him. In addition, when Teacher He realized that Jianfeng liked to sing songs, he bought an electric musical instrument with his own pocket money. He began to learn it first and then taught my son how to play it.

Now there is always a classmate accompanying him on his way to school and back home. I can often hear them talking and laughing. His peers finally regarded him as an equal pal.

### **Inclusion - MAKING IT WORK!**

Dorine in 't Veld, The Netherlands

What do I feel about inclusive education? I, like many other parents, support inclusion. What better than my VI son being educated in the local mainstream school alongside his sighted and VI peers instead of in a special school further away or perhaps even in a residential school.

But now, in secondary education, I find there are many 'gaps' in my son's education. Often in Physical Education and in many inaccessible parts of the 'visual' methods that are in use in mainstream schools, he's excluded from education. In addition to that he learns no special skills, not even Braille; all that stops after primary school in Holland. Sadly, in our case, inclusion is really **not working**.

Now he wants to study certain subjects that are "not on offer" at his inclusive school. Even worse: they are not on offer for blind students in special education in Holland either. There is no Special education at the equivalence of A-levels at all.

I found a specialist school in Great Britain that can meet his talents where, if I can find the means (money), he could go. He's been assessed and made very welcome. I am reluctant to part with my son for 6 weeks at a time, but of course I will not deny him a proper education and I am fighting to get him there.

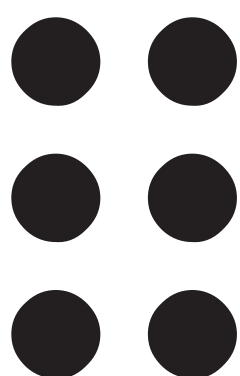
And my son? He says: "Right now I will go to a special school no matter how far it is from home, if it means that I can be taught the subjects of my choice." He realises it will be difficult in another culture, speaking another language all the time. But frankly I think he will adapt quickly and be happy, with peers with the same interests, situation and intelligence around him.

Full educational inclusion should run parallel to social inclusion with equal opportunities of accessing the chosen educational subjects. At present we effectively identify what is “wrong” with a Special Needs children and then attempt to apply treatment to “cure” what is wrong and we overlook their talents! In addition to that budgetary and priority policies become barriers to having the child’s needs met so the child cannot reach his/her true potential.

These barriers also prevent structural international cooperation. In all European countries due to ‘integration’ we see a loss of specialist knowledge, especially for certain ‘categories’ of very small numbers of children. We should create in Europe knowledge centres for these ‘exceptional children’ and from there support mainstream schools and thus gain and expand knowledge in this field. This doesn’t necessarily mean travelling a lot. Once personal contact is established, internet and online contact, using webcams for instruction and supervision, can be a great help.

For inclusion to work, inclusive schools should take a pro-active approach to the development of practice, procedures and policies so that they can accommodate SEN pupils.

I would like also to make another point - that of “pupil participation” - and I quote from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: “Children who are capable of forming views have a right to receive information, to give an opinion and to have that opinion taken into account in any matters affecting them”. Are we seeking the views and opinions of our children?



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# The Malawi Itinerant Teaching Programme - The Gateway to Inclusive Education

**Raphael T. Chigadula**

*Low Vision Programme Co-ordinator, Montfort College, Limbe, Malawi*

## INTRODUCTION

This itinerant teaching programme in Malawi started in 1983 in Lilongwe district with one itinerant teacher supporting two children with visual impairment. There are now sixty itinerant teachers in Malawi supporting 1,239 children. In the programme an itinerant teacher, trained in working with blind and low vision children, identifies the children in a catchment area and then places them in their nearest local schools where they learn alongside their sighted peers. The purpose of introducing the itinerant teaching programme was to get away from the traditional provision based special schools and resource centres because it was felt that not all children with vision problems needed residential settings. The number of children with visual impairment which one teacher supports varies from one itinerant teacher to another, depending on a number of factors such as the needs of the individual child and the number of schools around being visited in the catchment area. Currently the minimum number of children with visual impairment supported by one itinerant teacher is five while others are supporting up to forty children.

## A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN ITINERANT TEACHER

Enock Kabvina, thirty-eight years of age is an itinerant teacher working in the suburbs of Blantyre a large city which was the former capital of the country. On a usual working day, Enock wakes up at around 6.00 a.m. to prepare for the day's work. Today, he is visiting four pupils in three different schools. He starts off at about 7.00 a.m. to cycle the 4 km distance to Masala Primary, the first school on his programme. Patuma Halida is 10 years old and attending class 3 at Masala where Enoch has planned to do visual training with her for about one hour. There are sixty pupils in standard 3 at Masala including Patuma. At 8.45 am. Enoch packs his bags and takes leave of Patuma to the next school, which is just across the stream, about a kilometer away. At 9.00 a.m. Enock meets Mr. Kadaya the standard 7 class teacher at Namatapa Primary where Jani Loti and Mary Gauti are the two children with visual impairment in the class of eighty pupils. Mr. Kadaya reports to Enock that Jani had problems in his Maths while Mary didn't do very well in her English exercise of the day. The itinerant teacher decides to withdraw the pupils one at a time to assist them

with the problems they encountered in the respective subject areas. The revision work subject takes more time than Enock anticipated. By 11.00 a.m. the itinerant teacher arrives at the Islamic Community Day Secondary School where Josephina Mtamula of form 1 has just been prescribed new glasses. Enoch spends most of his time to talking to the class teacher about Josephina and her new glasses. By noon, Enoch leaves the school for home, and arrives home around 1.00 in the afternoon. He will then have lunch, rest for while, and later in the afternoon plans to visit the Gama family who have a three year old girl who is blind. Enoch makes regular visits once in a while to the Gama family to introduce various play activities for the young boy and advise the parents on how best they can prepare the boy for school. The teacher completes his days work at 4.30 in the afternoon.

This is only one sample of the itinerant teacher. It was possible to visit up to three schools because the schools visited on this particular day are close to each other and needs of the pupils are not complex. When Enock is visiting a pupil who has severe visual problems at St Kizito Primary, which is 6 km away from his home, he starts off much earlier and spends more time at the school, at times the whole day, depending on his workload.

## DISTRIBUTION OF ENROLMENT

The itinerant teaching programme operational in 11 district of Malawi. The introduction of the programme has provided more children with visual impairment access to basic education. At the close of the last school session, there were 1628 blind and visually impaired children in all the educational programs for children with visual impairment and of these 1239 were in the itinerant teaching programme.

### Enrolment as at December 2002

Programme	Blind	Low Vision	Total
Resource Centres Units	197	117	314
Residential Schools	38	37	75
Itinerant Teaching Programme	51	1188	1239
<b>Total</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>1342</b>	<b>1628</b>



Table showing the distribution of children with visual impairment.

### ADVANTAGES OF THE ITINERANT TEACHING PROGRAMME

Results of the programme over the years have demonstrated that there are several advantages to itinerant programmes over the residential settings. The most outstanding of these include the fact that;

- ✎ The learner is within the local environment in the company of parents, brothers and sisters and local community at all times as he operates from home to school.
- ✎ The classroom atmosphere is always conducive as the learner is in the company of other children from the neighbourhood, those he already knows and plays with at home.
- ✎ The sighted peers readily accept the blind and visually impaired amidst them since they have known him for some time even before starting school.
- ✎ The community takes the responsibility of the needs of both the sighted and visually impaired children of the local school in developmental planning.

### LIMITATIONS OF THE PROGRAMME

- ✎ The blind visually impaired children with additional handicaps might not benefit from the programme.
- ✎ The support from regular class teacher to the blind and visually impaired might be difficult in situations of large class enrolment.
- ✎ The mobility of the itinerant teachers who rely on push bikes is restricted and this limits the schedule of visits to the schools that is possible.
- ✎ Adverse weather conditions and the nature of the terrain of the catchment area might affect the performance of the itinerant teacher.

### CONCLUSION

The itinerant teaching programme in Malawi needs to be encouraged as results have indicated that more children with visual impairment can benefit from the service. More itinerant teachers should be trained and deployed to the existing programme districts to reduce the distances currently covered by the serving itinerant teachers, and with more teachers, extend the service to other remaining educational districts of Malawi.



## ICEVI - FACT SHEET

### Mission

The International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI), is a global association of individuals and organizations that promotes equal access to appropriate education for all visually impaired children and youth so that they may achieve their full potential.

### History of the Organization

Started 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	: 48 countries
Latin America Region	: 19 countries
North America and the Caribbean Region	: 15 countries
Pacific Region	: 14 countries
West Asia Region	: 26 countries

The current database of ICEVI has nearly 4000 professionals and organizations working for persons with visual impairment throughout the world.

### Networking with other organizations

ICEVI works closely with International Non-Governmental Development Organizations (NGDOs) and UN bodies such as UNESCO, UNICEF, and WHO.

### Publications

ICEVI, publishes a biannual magazine **"The Educator"** which is available in both audio and Braille forms besides the print version. The Educator is printed in Spanish language too and sent to nearly 4000 individuals and leading organizations in more than 150 countries around the world. ICEVI's online Newsletter 'Newsline' is published twice a year and reaches nearly 4000 persons and organisations.

### Website of ICEVI

[www.icevi.org](http://www.icevi.org)

## Research initiative of ICEVI

One of the goals of the Strategic Plan suggests that ICEVI should undertake formal research activities to identify best practice in the education of children with visual impairment in developing countries. The Research Task Force formed by ICEVI discussed this issue at length at a meeting on March 27, 2003 and decided to attempt to establish the variables contributing to the effective inclusion of children with visual impairment in regular schools. Given the vast scope of the topic, 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, Sight Savers International, Uganda as its members. The team has developed a research frame work. Sight Savers International has

agreed to meet part of the expenses incurred with this research study. ICEVI believes that such action oriented research studies can help Governmental and non-governmental agencies, increase educational opportunities for children with visual impairment in developing nations.

As a first step, the research team visited Uganda from 4 to 8 June 2003 and held a series of discussions with the officials in the Ministry of Education and voluntary organizations. They also visited a range of schools attended by children with visual impairment in and around Kampala. On the basis of their findings, ICEVI has formulated a detailed action plan for the research and data will be collected from July 2003 onwards. The study adopts a strong participatory approach and the results will be shared with the stakeholders such as the Government, Training Institutions, etc., in Uganda. The readers of The Educator will also be updated on this key development from time to time.

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## The Role of Schools for the Blind in Inclusive Education

*Phil Hatlen*

*Superintendent, Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired*

Before the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, schools for children with visual impairment in the USA were havens of the elite blind. Children with no additional disabilities were far in the majority, and academic programs were offered that were at least as good, and often better, than non-disabled students received in regular schools. Through most of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was significant upheaval in schools for the blind. As you know, and as we should have expected, most parents of blind children with no additional disabilities strongly preferred regular school enrolment for their child. This movement left many schools for the blind with rapidly diminishing populations.

However, as we became more sophisticated at diagnosing visual impairment, and as we gradually began to recognize our responsibility to visually impaired students with additional disabilities, many of the spaces vacant in schools for the blind were soon filled by a very complex, challenging population. I will not enter into a dialog with you at this time as to whether this was a good move for schools for the blind. I will state that, in my opinion, every child with a visual impairment, regardless of additional disabilities, benefits from educational services that address the visual impairment.

Beginning in the mid-1970s, it was my privilege to discuss the emerging role of schools for the blind in England, Germany, Australia, and Japan. Without exception my worst fears were confirmed. In other countries with growing emphasis on integration there was tension building between schools for the blind and advocates for regular school placement. In all instances, my message to colleagues throughout the world in schools for the blind was consistent. "Don't fight inclusion", I stated. "It is inevitable. Rather, embrace inclusion, and find positive ways in which you can encourage and support it. There is no reason that the champions of inclusion

cannot be leaders in schools for the blind". I wish I knew how seriously this message was received, but to this day I don't.

Perhaps there are three groups of us professionals. First, there is a vocal, but diminishing group who believe that all blind children should attend schools for the blind. Then there is an equally vocal group, who find themselves on the side of political correctness, who advocate for regular school placement for all visually impaired children. Then there is a third group, one that sees values in all placement options, and believes that services should match the needs of students. This third group has no political agenda. It simply believes that, for every blind and visually impaired child, there is an appropriate program, based on the individual needs of each child. Needs may change through the years, and often this means that placement should change

I should add that my "third group" has two fundamental beliefs:

1. Regardless of placement, all visually impaired children need a qualified teacher of the visually impaired who can meet their special needs.
2. The expanded core curriculum needs of visually impaired children must be considered when planning educational services.

In order to accept my thesis regarding schools for the blind, you must understand certain fundamental beliefs that I have:

1. Schools for the blind are centers for the most experienced most expert professionals in education of the visually impaired.
2. The school for the blind should be the "hub" of educational services for blind and visually impaired children, regardless of where they go to school.

It is the professional responsibility of a school for the blind to share its expertise wherever it is needed. In order to truly share, there must be a significant shift of resources. In two of the United States, the schools have changed their names. The Wisconsin School for the Visually Handicapped is now The Wisconsin Center for the Education of the Visually Impaired. The same change has happened in Nebraska. In that state, the school for the blind was mandated by their legislature to take a significant role in the education of all visually impaired students in Nebraska.

This constitutes a significant evolution. While schools for the blind continue to serve children in a residential school, they are discovering ways in which they can enrich the education of all such children in regular schools. Let me tell you how one school is evolving—The Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI).

First, TSBVI remains committed to an on-campus educational program that offers either day or residential placement for as long as the child needs. These are a few of the advantages of such a program:

TSBVI currently has programs in place, with highly skilled and experienced staff to provide educational experiences, that include:

#### **1. Individualized academic, applied, and practical curriculum**

- *Small classes with opportunities for tutorial help*
- *Courses offered at a local high school*
- *Instruction in practical academics*
- *Educational experiences especially designed for students at several levels (basic skills, early concepts, practical academics, applied academics, academic)*

#### **2. Career education**

- *Community-based enclave work experience*
- *Paid work experience in basic jobs*
- *Career awareness*
- *Career investigation*
- *Career preparation*

- *Career specialization*
- *Transition*
- *Work experience, job training, supported employment*
- *Courses in introduction to work*

#### **3. Self-esteem**

- *Success in small classes with individualized curriculum*
- *Opportunities to succeed in music, sports, art, and drama*
- *Individual and small group counseling*
- *A staff trained in understanding the dynamics of vision loss*

#### **4. Extra-curricular activities**

- *Sports, including track, wrestling, and swimming*
- *Music, vocal and instrumental*
- *Drama*
- *Arts and crafts*
- *Photography*
- *Cheer-leading*
- *Field trips throughout greater Austin*

#### **5. Education for challenging students**

- *Small classes*
- *Skills infused in daily curriculum*
- *Communication systems, language, behavior, and experience-based instruction stressed*
- *Community-based instruction*
- *Community-based work experience*

#### **6. Summer Programs**

- *Social opportunities with other students with visual impairment*
- *Enrichment activities*
- *Specific instruction in Braille, abacus, orientation and mobility, career education, and technology*
- *Recreation activities*



## 7. Short classes

- *Provided during the regular school year*
- *Intensive instructional experience with only a short time away from home*
- *Teach disability-specific skills that are pre-requisite to success in the regular classroom*
- *Provide individualized instruction to meet specific learning needs of academic students*
- *Provide temporary removal of multiple demands experienced in local schools*
- *Address learning gaps caused by instructional overload*
- *Provide opportunity for professional collaboration regarding the individual needs of students*

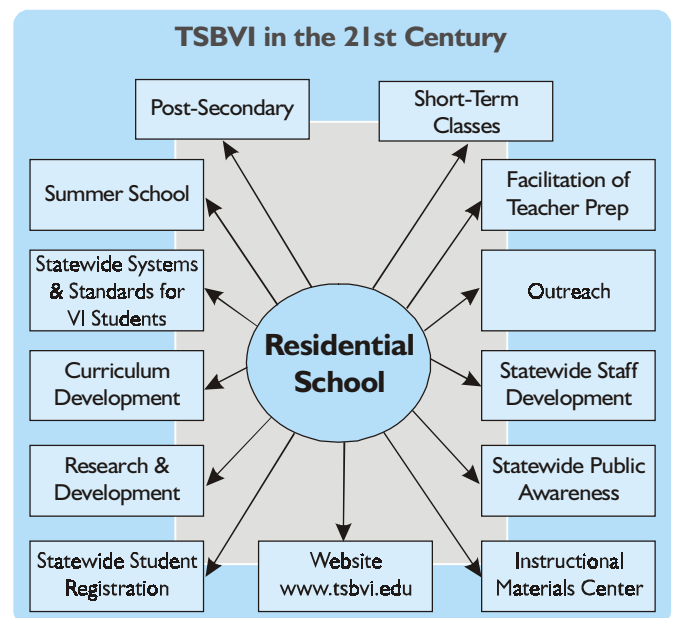
This list provides you with some idea about what TSBVI continues to offer to students in their on-campus, residential program. There are two movements of note in the evolution of this program. First, it is rare for a student to stay at TSBVI for more than three years. When a student is admitted to TSBVI, the local school district is informed that we will provide specific services based on needs that they have identified. When those needs are met, it is our intention to transition the student back to her local school. Second, please note that there is little reference to academic subjects in the list of services above. This is because local schools have become quite good at adapting and offering appropriate academic subjects. Reasons for referral to TSBVI are almost always for educational needs that are not related to academic courses.

However, over time it has become clear to many professionals that there are some academic subjects that are particularly difficult for braille-reading students. These are science, mathematics, and geography. Much of the learning material for these subjects are in spatial format, and braille is most efficient when read in a linear manner. TSBVI is beginning to offer algebra, geometry, biology, general science, and geography for students from local schools who cannot get these classes in an accessible manner in their local school district.

Now, what about the ways in which TSBVI is a state-wide resource? Remember, I believe that, because of

the expertise of staff at a school for the blind, these educational institutions should be the center, or “hub” of services to all students in their geographic area. For TSBVI, this means the entire state of Texas. While normal school-year enrollment at TSBVI is about 150 students, there are another 6,500 visually impaired students in the state. TSBVI believes, and the state legislature agrees, that it has some degree of responsibility for all of the blind and visually impaired students in Texas.

The following chart illustrates new programs at TSBVI. They do not detract from the fundamental role of the school, that of a residential school for the blind. Rather, they add to the vital and effective role of the school in sharing expertise with all regular schools in the state:



I will provide just a few sentences now for each box that help explain why TSBVI has become a vital state-wide resource for all blind and visually impaired students in Texas.

### Post-Secondary

Beginning in September, 2002, TSBVI began offering a collaborative program with our state rehabilitation agency for high school graduates. Young people who have spent their entire school lives in regular schools will have first priority, because it is often very difficult for local schools to offer instruction in non-academic areas, such as living skills, social skills, career education, assistive technology, etc. This may not be a new idea in Europe, but it is in the U.S.

### **Summer School**

Each year TSBVI offers enrichment classes for students who spend the academic year in their local schools. Usually about 300 students are served.

### **Statewide Systems and Standards for VI Students**

With the assistance of an outside consultant, TSBVI has developed "Quality Programs for the Visually Impaired" (QPVI), a system that local schools use to determine the effectiveness of their programs for blind and visually impaired students.

### **Curriculum Development**

TSBVI's Curriculum Department works with the entire school to determine the need for new curriculum guides. These are developed first for the teachers at TSBVI, secondarily for teachers throughout Texas, and finally for the entire world.

### **Research and Development**

TSBVI welcomes external researchers who have worthwhile projects and need students and/or staff as subjects. Internal research and development is continual through the Curriculum Department.

### **Statewide Student Registration**

Ten years ago the Texas Education Agency asked TSBVI to take responsibility for the identification and registration for all blind and visually impaired students in the state.

### **Website**

The TSBVI website began as a project to share information and resources statewide. Now [www.tsbvi.edu](http://www.tsbvi.edu) has become a world-wide resource.

### **Instructional Materials Center**

In its efforts to act as a statewide resource, TSBVI is now the distributor of instructional materials for all educational services in Texas.

### **Statewide Public Awareness**

TSBVI recognizes and accepts its role in sharing with all citizens of Texas the accomplishments and the capability of blind and visually impaired persons.

### **Statewide Staff Development**

TSBVI provides professional development for all teachers in the state, including those in local schools, as well as those at the school.

### **Outreach**

The Outreach Department at TSBVI is well-known throughout the U.S. as a model in providing technical assistance to students, teachers, parents, and administrators. There are two teams in the Outreach Department. One specializes in visual impairment, and the other in services for deafblind students.

### **Facilitation of Teacher Preparation**

Texas, like all states in the U.S., has suffered from a chronic shortage of teachers for visually impaired students, and orientation and mobility instructors. In response to this problem, the Texas State Legislature designated TSBVI as the lead agency in facilitating efforts to minimize the shortage of teachers. TSBVI contracts with universities in the state in order to accomplish this. Also, TSBVI has developed a mentor program for new teachers.

### **Short-Term Classes**

TSBVI did not originate the idea of providing short-term classes during the school year, but we have improved and expanded the concept. Students enrolled in local schools have the opportunity to come to the TSBVI campus for a short time (two days to one week) and receive intensive instruction in a particular area. By providing some tutorial help during the student's time at TSBVI, we can assure local school districts that the student will not fall behind in classes taken in the regular school.

I would like to emphasize to you that none of these outside boxes existed 15 years ago. TSBVI did not assume these responsibilities in order to survive. Rather, TSBVI carefully analyzed the current status of education for blind and visually impaired students, attempted to project into the future, and developed programs designed to provide every child in Texas an equal opportunity to education. If TSBVI does not accept this challenge, who will?

◆◆◆◆◆

## Inclusive Education in India - Policies and Practices

M.N.G. Mani

### Inclusion is not a programme but an ideology:

Inclusive education is an ideology and not a programme. It is a concept of effective schools where every child has a place to study and teachers become facilitators of learning rather than providers of information. Inclusion is the general goal in developing nations and the ways of facilitating inclusion are many.

### What is the need for Inclusion in India?

In addressing the issue of “why inclusion”, the reality in Indian context should be reviewed. Some of the important facts in the Indian scenario are as follows :

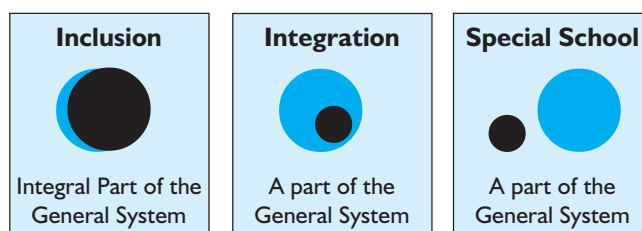
1. More than 90% of disabled children are found in the rural areas in India. The special schools as well as integrated education programmes are only a few in number and cannot serve all disabled children. Therefore, inclusive education is needed to provide equal educational opportunities to all disabled children in their own locations.
2. As far as the standardised models of integration are concerned, one specialist teacher serves 8 to 10 disabled children of the same category. This approach is not practical in rural areas. In most villages of the country, disabled children of different categories are present. Therefore, the disabled child has to depend on the general school for education. As a result, inclusion is inevitable for these children from rural areas.
3. The extent of disability in each category ranges from mild to severe and profound cases. The mild and moderate cases are more in number than the severe and profound cases and they depend on the general education system. This calls for the involvement of general education so that the children who are currently left out of schools or those who are at risk can be served.

Therefore, the reality in India focuses the need for inclusive education. However, the general education system is yet to be fully sensitised to the educational needs of children

with disabilities and therefore, the general system needs the assistance of specialist teachers for occasional help to make inclusive education work. *With the inclusion of special education inputs in general teacher preparation, the pre-service teachers in the future are likely to be equipped with skills to teach children with disabilities too in addition to their general classroom teaching. Therefore, presence of a specialist teacher in the inclusive setting in Indian context would be vital for another decade.*

### How is Inclusion different from Integration?

In special school concept, the special education component is APART from the general education system, whereas in integrated approach, it is A PART of the general education. Inclusive education goes one step further. In this approach, the special education is an INTEGRAL PART of the general education system.



Therefore, the transition from ‘Special School Concept’ to ‘Inclusive Education’ can be treated as an evolutionary process in the services for children with disabilities.

### To what extent the education documents in India emphasise Inclusive Education?

Introduction of education of children with disabilities in India can be traced back to the dawn of 19<sup>th</sup> century. Special school services in the country were initiated mostly by foreign missionaries. The concept of inclusion has been finding its reference in many national education documents in the post-independent period. The article 45 of the Constitution of India is assuring better services to persons with disabilities. The Education Commission Report (1964-66) recommended placement of the disabled child, ‘as far as possible’ in ordinary schools. The National Policy on Education (NPE) (1986).

Included a full chapter on 'Education of the Handicapped' and formulated guidelines for action. The NPE strongly emphasised the need for the expansion of integrated education programmes. The centrally sponsored scheme of integrated education for disabled children (IEDC) which was introduced in 1974 got a fillip as a result of the NPE. Therefore, efforts for inclusion were persistently made.

### **To what extent is inclusion promoted through the Persons with Disabilities Act 1995?**

The issue of the services for children with disabilities is treated as human resources development with the introduction of the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act 1995. As a result of this Act, services for children with disabilities is no more considered a welfare activity; rather it is treated as the right of the disabled child.

The main purpose of the PWD Act is to define responsibilities of the central governments and state governments with regard to services for disabled persons. The Act also ensures full life to disabled individuals so as to make full contribution in accordance with their disability conditions. Blindness, Low Vision, Leprosy-Cured, Hearing Impairment, Locomotor Disability, Mental Illness, and Mental Retardation are the seven disability conditions covered under the Act. As per the Act, the central and state governments shall ensure that every child with disability has access to free and adequate education till the age of 18. Introduction of non-formal education, functional literacy schemes, provision of aids and appliances, education through open schools and universities, etc., are also stressed in the Act. It also indicates that the Government should create adequate teacher training facilities to prepare teachers for special education. Development of research on assistive devices is also envisaged in the Act. Many schemes are being evolved at the national and state levels to implement this Act. Therefore, the PWD Act 1995 is strongly encouraging inclusive education concepts wherever possible.

### **What is the role of the Rehabilitation Council of India in Inclusion?**

In 1992, the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) Act was passed in the Parliament. The Act was created by the then Ministry of Welfare (presently known as the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment) to regulate the

manpower development programmes in the field of education of children with special needs. Though RCI does not deal directly with the promotion of services at the school level, it has projected the need for massive manpower for facilitating education for all disabled children. The RCI has so far developed more than 50 courses and recognised more than 100 institutions to offer special education and rehabilitation manpower development programmes in India. Institutes working in the area of disability are encouraged to develop manpower development programmes in specific categories, and recognition to the institutions is accorded when they comply with the norms prescribed by the RCI. The enactment of RCI Act 1992 goes a long way in accrediting special education manpower development programmes in the country and bringing professionalism in serving persons with disabilities. The RCI's manpower projection is made with the purpose of facilitating education to all disabled children. Therefore, the inclusive education policy is supported by the RCI too.

### **What will be the role of special schools when inclusion expands?**

Special school concept is still an accepted model of education for children with disabilities in India and it will continue to be so in the years to come. Presently there are about 3000 special schools addressing persons with different disabilities. It is estimated that there are 900 schools for hearing impaired, 400 schools for visually impaired, 1000 for mentally retarded and 700 for physically disabled children (UNISED Report, 1999). The exact number of special schools is not fully known as there are many NGOs who run these schools and are not yet included in the lists available. However, the responsibilities of special schools are likely to change in the future. Some of the desired changes are :

1. *They are expected to become resource centres to facilitate inclusive education.*
2. *They are in a better position to serve children with multiple disabilities. In the growing concept of inclusion, the special schools have a vital role to play. Though inclusion is open to everyone, experiences in India reveal that some children may not cope with the inclusive setting. Children with additional disabilities, orphans, etc., need some alternative settings and special schools may equip themselves to serve these children.*



### What types of Services are provided in Inclusive Education?

In inclusive education programmes in India, three types of services are directly or indirectly required by the disabled child.

**Essential Services:** The most essential services in an ideal inclusive setting are to be provided by the general classroom teachers, non-disabled children and parents as well. The concept of child-to-child learning, cooperative learning approaches, etc., have demonstrated that true learning can happen through interaction between the disabled child and all entities in the general school.

A sample list of essential services is as follows :

- ✧ *Planning instructional strategies for children with disabilities.*
- ✧ *Teaching content to them*
- ✧ *Maintaining attendance for curricular and plus curricular activities.*
- ✧ *General discipline in the classroom*
- ✧ *Checking home assignments*
- ✧ *Conducting examinations*
- ✧ *Evaluation*
- ✧ *Facilitating child-to-child learning*
- ✧ *Taking progress of the child*
- ✧ *Consulting with special teachers about the plus-curriculum needs of disabled children.*
- ✧ *Interacting with parents of disabled children.*

In an ideal inclusive setting, the general classroom teachers provide these services to disabled children. The terminology 'essential services' is used here because the disabled child cannot function well in inclusive setting without these vital services. When these vital services are provided by general classroom teachers, the child would be able to get education in the local school itself even if there is no specialist teacher to attend to him/her.

**Support Services:** The second type of service required in inclusion is the support service given by the fully qualified special teachers. These teachers provide necessary material support and occasional academic support to children with disabilities and also provide the needed consultancy to regular classroom teachers. **The support materials are compulsory but providing academic support by**

**specialist teacher need not be made mandatory.** The support services include the following :

- ✧ *Identifying children with disabilities in the community*
- ✧ *Teaching skills peculiar to disability wherever necessary*
- ✧ *Assisting general classroom teachers if needed*
- ✧ *Arranging assessment for children with disabilities*
- ✧ *Arranging learning materials for children with disabilities*
- ✧ *Arranging aids and appliances*
- ✧ *Monitoring the progress of the child through classroom teachers*

**Peripheral Services:** The third type of services are the one-time peripheral services which are adhoc in nature. Agencies such as hospitals, rehabilitation centers, and non-governmental organizations etc., can provide one-time services such as identification, assessment, counselling, etc. The types of peripheral services are as follows :

- ✧ *Issuing medical reports*
- ✧ *Providing social benefits*
- ✧ *Arranging sponsorship to educational activities*
- ✧ *Counselling to parents*

These peripheral services are to be arranged by the heads of institutes of inclusive education programmes.

### What factors are vital for the success of inclusive education?

1. **Capacity building in the general education:** For the effective implementation of inclusive education for all types of disabled children, general classroom teachers need training on understanding the educational needs of these children. It is ideal to teach about special needs children in the pre-service teacher preparation course itself. The curriculum framework of the National Council for Teacher Education (1998) indicates that the pre-service teacher preparation course should include content on special needs children. Teachers, thus trained, will be in a position to take care of the educational needs of disabled children too in general classrooms if appropriate disability specific assistive devices are made available. The work of the general classroom teachers may be occasionally assisted by specialist teachers.
2. **Adopting need-based instructional strategies :** Inclusive education does not mean just enrolling a child

with disability in the regular classroom. The child should be given help to cope up with the regular classwork. Therefore, child-centred approach is needed. The ideal inclusive setting would enrol disabled children of all categories and also of different levels of disability. All of them may not require the same kind of assistance. Some may require guidance rarely whereas some others need continuous help. The children in inclusive education may be classified as follows:

- a. *Children with mild disabilities who can be handled by general classroom teachers with minimal training.*
- b. *Children with mild/moderate disabilities who need counselling services*
- c. *Children with moderate/severe disabilities who need resource assistance including corrective aids and periodical help in academic areas.*
- d. *Children with severe disabilities who require direct attention/preparatory assistance from the special teachers.*

Therefore, need-based instructional strategies are imminent in the inclusive setting. The children under category (d) may require the assistance of special teacher to a large extent at the beginning to learn plus curricular skills. Therefore, the extent of assistance should be decided on the basis of the instructional needs of the child. With the proper understanding of need-based instructional strategies, inclusive education will be successful.

### 3. **Exchange of manpower and material resources:**

The success of inclusive education depends on how effectively all departments concerned in the State and local levels can be involved in the total development of the disabled child. Inclusive education is a community involved programme and therefore, its quality depends upon the extent of interaction between the different functionaries of community development. The District Rehabilitation Centres, local hospitals, braille presses, special schools, etc., are to be closely involved in the programme implementation.

### 4. **Enlisting parents' and community's participation:**

Ideal inclusive education programmes strongly insist on the importance of parental involvement in education. Parent-interact groups are important for augmenting the quality of inclusive education. The parental

involvement not only enriches inclusion but also brings attitudinal changes about disability in the community.

**5. Improving child-to-child learning :** Though general classroom teachers and special teachers are available for providing services to children with disabilities in any locality, the influences of non-disabled children on the educational achievement of disabled children and vice-versa are noteworthy. In fact, the non-disabled children are the best teachers for enabling disabled children to develop proper concepts. The child-to-child learning also becomes relevant in India where the size of the classroom is fairly large. Inclusive settings should tap the child-to-child learning strategy effectively to improve the achievement of all children including that of disabled children.

**6. Making the programme for children with disabilities an integral part of the general educational system :** As stated earlier, the ideal inclusive education in India would be possible only when all general education teachers are capable of serving children with disabilities. Till then, presence of a specialist teacher for a cluster of schools is inevitable. If inclusion is to be successful, the specialist teacher should also be treated as a part and parcel of the general system.

### **What are the existing practices of Inclusive Education in India?**

Both full-fledged inclusive education programmes and quasi-inclusive programmes are being practised in various forms by different organisations in India. At present, at least 7 implementing strategies of inclusive education are observed in India.

*They are listed as follows:*

1. Resource models where children with disabilities study in general schools and stay in hostels meant for non-disabled children.
2. Resource models where children with disabilities study in general schools and stay in hostels of the nearby special schools.
3. Resource models where children with disabilities study in general schools and stay with parents at home.
4. Semi-resource models or cooperative models where children with disabilities are taught only by the resource teacher in a separate class in a general school.

5. Itinerant model where a resource teacher visits the child in his/her local school and the child stays with parents.
6. Multi-category resource model where disabled children of different kinds are educated in a general school by the regular teachers and a specialist teacher.
7. Multi-category itinerant model where one special teacher attends to the needs of disabled children of different categories in a particular locality.

An ideal inclusive education concept aims at facilitating total integration of the child in the community. *The upcoming inclusive education programmes in India are avoiding separation of children with disabilities from their families for the purpose of education.*

**Tangible Experiences:** The Centrally sponsored scheme of Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) being implemented through government and non-government organizations in the country has mainstreamed nearly 150000 children with disabilities in general schools. The UNICEF through the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), sponsored a programme called Project Integrated Education for the Disabled (PIED) during the period 1987 to 1994 in 10 selected blocks in the States of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Nagaland, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Mizoram, Haryana, Municipal Corporation Delhi and Municipal Corporation Baroda. The main objectives of the PIED were to prepare general education system to achieve the goal of education for all children including those with disabilities, develop an attitude of acceptance of children with disabilities in the classroom and improve the achievement of all children including the ones with special needs. The PIED emerged as the first indigenous inclusive education programme in India. The District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) of the Government of India implemented in the States also as a special focus to serve children with disabilities in mainstream schools.

The initiatives of international non-governmental development organizations in promoting mainstream education too are also stupendous in India. The CBM International, Germany, one of the leading International Non-Governmental Organisations initiated inclusive education in South India in the year 1980. It organised a series of orientation programmes for general classroom teachers and administrators about inclusive education. This enabled hundreds of general schools to enrol children with

disabilities, mostly visually impaired children. The CBM also helped local organisations in India to develop mechanisms for providing support services in the form of preparation of Braille books, supply of aids and appliances, teaching aids, etc., to enrich the educational experiences of children with disabilities. Similarly Sight Savers supported many itinerant programmes for visually impaired children in the northern part of the country. Many voluntary organizations in the country are implementing resource models for serving children with visual impairment.

*A few projects in South India are also attempting to provide inclusive education and comprehensive rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities through grass-root level community level workers.*

### **Education For All (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan - SSA) – The Latest Campaign**

As per the guidelines issued by the Government of India, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is an effort to universalize elementary education by community ownership of the school system. It is a response to the demand for quality basic education all over the country. The SSA programme is also an attempt to provide an opportunity for improving human capabilities of all children, through provision of community owned quality education in a mission mode.

### **Aims of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan**

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is to provide useful and relevant elementary education for all children in the 6 to 14 age group by 2010. There is also another goal to bridge social, regional and gender gaps, with the active participation of the community in the management of schools. SSA realizes the importance of Early Childhood Care and Education and looks at the 0-14 age as a continuum.

### **Specific Objectives of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan**

- ✧ All children in school, Education Guarantee Centre, Alternate School, 'Back to School' camp by 2003.
- ✧ All children complete five years of primary schooling by 2007
- ✧ All children complete eight years of elementary schooling by 2010.
- ✧ Focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life.
- ✧ Bridge all gender and social category gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education level by 2010.
- ✧ Universal retention by 2010.

Though the above targets are set forth for the general education system, concepts such as “Education Guarantee Centre”, “Alternate School”, etc., are more relevant to achieve education for all disabled children. If all disabled children are brought to school, the SSA scheme would be achieving its target as it is always difficult to bring this group under the umbrella of education. Recognizing this fact, substantial financial allocation has been made under the SSA for the inclusion of disabled children in the mainstream education. The local district is the implementing agency and it is allowed to adopt flexibility to maximize educational opportunities for disabled children at all levels. The Government is collaborating with non-governmental organizations in the country to reach the out of school disabled children. Each block of the district can appoint special teachers based on the number of disabled children.

The SSA has already made significant progress in the last one year. Though no up-to-date national data on enrollment of disabled children are available at present, experiences in many states in the country reveal that general schools are opening doors for children with disabilities and as a result, more children are currently enrolled. It is projected that the SSA programme is likely to result in a quantum leap in the years to come in providing education for all children with disabilities in India, and with this momentum, India will be able to achieve the goal of EFA for all children with disabilities by 2015.

In short, the policies of inclusion in India are sound. The practices too are flexible, need-based and context-specific. The process of expansion of services has started from the perspective of human rights of disabled children. The much cherished goal of education for all disabled children can be achieved when the philosophy of inclusion is fully absorbed in the general education system.

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## International Updates

William G. Brohier

### 1. **World Bank Conference On Disability, Washington D.C., Dec.3, 2002:**

This was the first major conference ever held by the World Bank in this area, and the focus was on disability within the context of poverty alleviation. The World Bank is requiring the inclusion of disability into its national reports and is instituting data collection on persons with disabilities. NGOs are encouraged to contact World Bank officials at national and regional levels to explore ways of networking.

Contact Ms Judith E Heumann:

[jheumann@worldbank.org](mailto:jheumann@worldbank.org)

Website: <http://www1.worldbank.org/sp/>

### 2. **5<sup>th</sup> Session of UNESCAP Thematic Working Group On Disability-Related Concerns (TWGDC), December 10, 2002, Bangkok**

The TWGDC played a significant role in developing the "Biwako Millennium Framework for Action Towards an Inclusive, Barrier-Free and Rights-based Society for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific" (BMF) to guide governments during the implementation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Asian & Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003 – 2012. The BMF will be adopted at the Commission Session scheduled for the latter part of April, 2003.

Contact Ms Kay Nagata: [nagata@un.org](mailto:nagata@un.org)

Website: [www.unescap.org/decade/twg-index.htm](http://www.unescap.org/decade/twg-index.htm)

### 3. **Disability Rights Meeting At The World Bank, Feb.13, 2003:**

The meeting discussed crucial international disability rights issues and initiatives. Venus Ilagan of the Philippines, the newly elected Chair of Disabled Persons International (DPI), was the keynote speaker.

Contact Ms Joelle Balfe: [jbalf@ncd.gov](mailto:jbalf@ncd.gov)

### 4. **The United Nations Assembly, by its resolution 56/116, has proclaimed *the United Nations***

**LITERACY DECADE (UNLD): Education for All** for the period 2003 – 2012 and an official international launching ceremony took place at the UN in New York on Feb.13, 2003.

Website: [http://portal.unesco.org/education/e v . p h p ? U R L \\_ I D = 5 0 0 0 & U R L \\_ D O = D O \\_ T O P I C & U R L \\_ S E C T I O N = 2 0 1 & r e l o a d = 1 0 4 7 5 5 4 5 2 6](http://portal.unesco.org/education/e v . p h p ? U R L _ I D = 5 0 0 0 & U R L _ D O = D O _ T O P I C & U R L _ S E C T I O N = 2 0 1 & r e l o a d = 1 0 4 7 5 5 4 5 2 6)

**The UNLD Launch of Thailand** was held in Bangkok on 2 April, 2003. ICEVI was represented by Mr Pecharat Techavachara, President, Foundation for the Employment Promotion of the Blind, Bangkok.

### 5. **DPI e-news: <http://www.dpi.org>**

Disabled Peoples' International (DPI) launched its first weekly update on February 28. Members are encouraged to send comments or suggestions that would help to make the site as useful as possible.

### 6. **9<sup>th</sup> National / 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Abuse of Children & Adults with Disabilities - "Working Together to Make the Difference":**

The Conference, which was sponsored by the *Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) & the California Office of Criminal Justice Planning*, was held from March 10–12, 2003 at the Riverside Convention Center, Riverside CA.

Website: [www.disability-abuse.com/cando/conf/](http://www.disability-abuse.com/cando/conf/) [www.arcriversideca.org](http://www.arcriversideca.org)

### 7. **ICEVI held a very successful Executive Committee Meeting on Mar. 28 and 29 in Stellenbosch, South Africa. Amongst several important decisions was the unanimous adoption of the ICEVI/WBU Joint Position Paper on Inclusive Education of Children with Visual Impairment (See page 21). The above meeting was preceded by the first African sub-regional ICEVI Committee meeting.**

The President, Secretary-General and Treasurer of ICEVI also participated in the

11th International Mobility Conference, which followed from Mar.30 to Apr. 5 in Stellenbosch. ICEVI has renewed its membership in the NGO Committee of UNICEF for Year 2003.

Contact Dr. M N G Mani: [sgicevi@vsnl.net](mailto:sgicevi@vsnl.net)  
Website: [www.icevi.org](http://www.icevi.org)

- 8. The Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability (APCD)** is a regional center on disability, which will be fully established in Bangkok towards 2004 as a legacy of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993 – 2002, through the joint collaboration of the Government of Japan and the Government of Thailand. The overall goal of the APCD is to promote the empowerment of people with disabilities and a barrier-free society in developing countries in the Asia and Pacific Region.

Website: [www.apcdproject.org](http://www.apcdproject.org)

**The Asia Pacific Disability Forum (APDF)**, aims to promote the drafting of the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The BMF, has postponed its foundation assembly in Bangkok on April 30, 2003 in view of the SARS virus.

- 9. UNESCO Expert Meeting - Development Of A Concept Paper "ICTs In The Service Of Persons With Disabilities" at UNESCO/ Paris Headquarters, May 20 – 21, 2003**

This concept paper will serve to provide a coherent framework for UNESCO's efforts to enhance more equitable participation in the knowledge society for persons with disabilities. It is being finalised by Ms Anudhara Mohit, who is the Special Rapporteur Disability, National Human Rights Commission, India, for use at the forthcoming World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) to be held in Geneva in December 2003.

Contact Mr Renè P Cluzel: [r.cluzel@unesco.org](mailto:r.cluzel@unesco.org)

- 10. 10<sup>th</sup> International Conference On Mobility And Transport For Elderly And Disabled People (TRANSED)**

This Conference, scheduled to be held in Hamamatsu City, Japan from May 23 – 26,

2004, will serve as a forum to introduce new strategies for implementing economically sustainable accessible transportation and encourage continued research into this field.

Website: [info@transed.jp](mailto:info@transed.jp) or <http://transed.jp>

- 11. UNESCO International Literacy Prizes 2003:**

To achieve the goals of Education for All, UNESCO is inviting its partners to submit their nominees no later than April 30, 2003, for one of these prizes whose objectives are to promote Literacy in all spheres and at all levels of education.

Further information:

Email: [n.aksornkool@unesco.org](mailto:n.aksornkool@unesco.org)

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Fax: +33 1 45 68 56 26/27

- 12 The 2<sup>nd</sup> UN Ad Hoc Meeting to consider proposals for a comprehensive and integral international convention to promote and protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities** will be held in New York from June 19 – 26, 2003.

Website: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/rights/adhoccom.htm>

Meanwhile, the UNESCAP Regional Meeting and Workshop on the above proposed Convention to be held in Beijing, scheduled for April 8 – 11, 2003, has been postponed, in view of the SARS outbreak, to possibly mid-June in Bangkok.

Contact: Jerrold W Huguet  
[escap-esid-psis@un.org](mailto:escap-esid-psis@un.org)

Website: <http://www.unescap.org/sps/disability.htm>

A regional seminar and workshop took place from 9-11 April 2003 in Quito, Ecuador, in connection with the proposed Convention, on "Preparations for the Americas regional seminar and workshop on norms and standards related to the rights of persons with disabilities".

Contact: [facilitator@worldenable.net](mailto:facilitator@worldenable.net)

## News - Here and There

### The UN Decade on Literacy and Education

Pecharat Techavachara, the country representative of ICEVI Thailand, attended the launching of the UN Decade on Literacy and Education Campaign held in Bangkok in April 2003. ICEVI has dedicated 39 projects being implemented in various regions to the Literacy and Education Decade of the UN.

### Asian Development Bank and Disability

The Asian Development Bank has started a poverty alleviation programme in four countries - Cambodia, India, Sri Lanka and The Philippines. This programme has funding to provide vocational rehabilitation and education. This provision can be used by organizations in these countries for the benefit of persons with visual impairment.

### New Members of the EXCO of ICEVI

During the period January to June 2003, the Asian Foundation for the Prevention of Blindness (AFPB) and the Organizacion Nacional de Ciegos Espanoles (ONCE) became members of the Executive Committee of ICEVI by agreeing to an annual contribution of at least \$20,000 to support the global campaign of ICEVI to create equal educational access for all children with visual impairment. With this addition, ICEVI EXCO now has four NGDO members, the other two being Christoffel Blindenmission and Sight Savers International.

### 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 that seeks to achieve education for all children by 2015 and ICEVI is determined that this declaration should apply to the education of children with visual impairment. ICEVI is working through its Regional and Sub-Regional Committees to influence policy changes at government level in the respective member countries. A position paper to this effect is being prepared by ICEVI. ICEVI is currently undertaking a needs assessment, in order to prepare a comprehensive position paper which can be used by its members 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.

### Handbook on Implementation of Lee Foundation Grant

In order to help the Regional Chairpersons of ICEVI to implement projects under Drs. Richard Charles and Esther Yewpick Lee Foundation Grant effectively, a handbook of implementation procedures has been developed by ICEVI.

### ON-NET/ICEVI Mathematics Project in the offing

Mathematics is often considered a difficult subject by teachers of children with visual impairment. Being aware of this problem world over, ICEVI and the Overbrook-Nippon Network on Educational Technology (ON-NET) have come up with a joint project to prepare "master" trainers in the East Asia Region to teach mathematics to visually impaired children. The technical input for this project is provided by the Secretary General of ICEVI and Ms. Aree Plernchaivich from the Thailand. The first meeting of the project was held at Bangkok on May 24, 2003. The team is currently developing a mathematical package which will be field tested with teachers and visually impaired learners and then master trainers will be trained using this package. After trialing the mathematical learning package for a period of nearly one year, it will be further refined and published probably by the end of June 2003. This initiative of ON-NET and ICEVI is likely to help other countries too once the learning package is finalized.

### ICEVI-LCIF Collaboration

The President of ICEVI and the President of the Lions Clubs International Foundation had a meeting on April 29, 2003 and discussed possible collaboration between the organizations to help education of children with visual impairment. ICEVI is in the process of preparing a major proposal for this collaboration. In the meantime, ICEVI has requested its regional chairpersons to explore the possibilities for LCIF affiliated programmes in their region. ICEVI hopes this collaboration will be fruitful in addressing yet another goal of international collaboration. More news about this collaboration will be made available in subsequent issues of The Educator.