

**Electronic Newsletter**

**ICEVI LATINOAMÉRICA**

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**Quality inclusive education: a task for all**

**By Rosario Galarza**

**Coordinator of the Andean Sub-region, ICEVI Latinoamérica**

The right to an education without discrimination and based on equal opportunities has been historically embodied for more than 25 years in different documents that are not regarded as legally binding, like the World Declaration on Education for All (1990), the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for People with Disabilities (1993) and the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (1994).

Even though it is true that those documents represent a theoretical basis for the comprehension and awareness about the right to an integral education in equal terms for people with disabilities, it is thanks to the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, specifically for its legally binding character, that the concept of inclusive education acquires a new dimension, explicitly referring to the quality of the service.

Thereon, the United Nations Agenda 2030 seeks to go further, devoting a full Goal -Goal 4- to guaranteeing an inclusive and equitable quality education for all, including people with disabilities, as well as promoting learning opportunities throughout lifelong.

Nevertheless, in order to deeply comprehend this Goal and to appropriately relate it with the work done by ICEVI Latinoamérica in benefit of the students with visual impairment of the region, it is necessary to analyse each of its targets and indicators in light of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, prioritising those related to the elimination of barriers that prevent these students from accessing a quality education.

In this light, the access to an inclusive and equitable quality education requires a permanent commitment from all stakeholders involved in the educative process: teachers, students, professionals, families and organizations of persons with disabilities, who must undertake an active role, acting with responsibility and working as a real team.

**EFA-VI to date**

*The Education for All Children with Visual Impairment (EFA-VI)* is a global campaign and program of the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) acting in partnership with the World Blind Union (WBU) and supported by UNESCO and UNICEF, whose goal is to ensure that all girls and boys with blindness, low vision, deafblindness or multiple disabilities enjoy access to education. In our region, this global campaign is proactively led by ICEVI Latinoamérica.

During the last semester, the annual meetings with the National Task Group (NTG) were held in the six countries where EFA-VI is being implemented: El Salvador (21st April), Guatemala (24th April), Paraguay (9th May), Honduras (22nd May), Nicaragua (24th May) and Dominican Republic (26th May), with the participation of Cristina Sanz, ICEVI Latinoamérica’s Regional Chair. Since the NTG are responsible for the day by day of the Campaign in each country, these annual meetings are the instances intended for evaluating what has been done and outlining future actions to continue and promote the education of children and young people with visual impairment, deafblindness and multiple disabilities.

In the great majority of the cases, during the meetings or after them, gatherings with professionals, families and representatives of other organizations were held in order to disseminate ICEVI Latinoamérica’s work and to promote more affiliations, and in this sense to strengthen our network and to improve the quality of their actions through our contributions.

In general, framed in these annual meetings, other events such as sessions or capacity building workshops, visits to institutions in the field of disability, or meeting with governmental authorities are organised. As we will see next, this was the case in El Salvador, Guatemala and Paraguay.

**International Sessions in El Salvador**

The International Sessions: “Disability and Sustainable Development in El Salvador: The challenges that inclusion in the 21st century entails” were held in the morning of the 19th April in San Salvador. The opening was carried out by the minister of Work, the minister of Public Works, Transport, Housing and Urban Development, Mr. Gerson Martínez, who is currently the Chair of the National Council for Integral Attention of the Person with Disability (CONAIPD), and Volmir Raimondi, Chair of ULAC.

The Sessions were structured based on two panels, the first of which was coordinated by Rubidia Cornejo and titled, “Development, realities and perspectives of education and employment in El Salvador and Latin America for people with visual impairment”. The first presentation was "Reality of the People with Visual Impairment in El Salvador”, made by Carlos Funes, representative of the civil society in the Technical Committee of the National Council for Integral Attention of the Person with Disability (CONAIPD). The second one was carried out by Cristina Sanz, Chair of ICEVI Latinoamérica, and dealt with the topic "Perspectives of the Education of People with Disabilities in the region". The third speaker was María Jesús Varela Méndez, General Director of FOAL, who addressed the topic "The Employment in the Sustainable Development".

The second panel was titled "Human Rights: Realities and Challenges in El Salvador and Latin America", and was coordinated by Volmir Raimondi, Raquel Caballero de Guevara, from the Attorney for the Defence of Human Rights in El Salvador, and Oscar Alexander Guerra, Secretary of the Board of the National Association of Blind People of El Salvador (ANCIESAL) and Substitute Councillor of CONAIPD.

In the following link you can find some photographs taken during these Sessions:

<https://goo.gl/qQHVvz>

**Guatemala: persons with disability and risk management in disaster situations**

On the 24th and 25th April, in the facilities of the hotel Holyday Inn in Guatemala City, the Workshop on Capacity Building on Inclusion of People with Disabilities and Elderly Adults in the Disaster Risk Management was held. It was organized by the National Association of Blind People of Guatemala (ANCG), the Nicaraguan Federation of Organizations of People with Disabilities (FECONORI) and the Association of Workers and Samaritans form Germany (ASB), and it was facilitated by the consultant Bachelor Edwin Garzona.

The goals of this workshop were the following:

* To strengthen the ownership of knowledge and tools for disaster risk management from an inclusive approach.
* To validate the communal guide on Inclusion of people with disabilities and elderly adults in the disaster risk management in Central America.

The axes of the capacity building were: prevention, mitigation, preparation, answers and recovery/reconstruction.

Cristina Sanz was specially invited to participate in the Workshop during the morning of the 25th, and she was pleasantly impressed by the quality of the contents, and celebrated this initiative supported on the fact that the active participation of people with disabilities is essential for the plans of disaster risk management to be truly inclusive.

In the following link to our Facebook page you can find some images of the Workshop, thanks to Otto Mazariego:

<https://goo.gl/DWBvs6>

**Paraguay: celebrations and shared work**

During her annual visit to this country, the Chair of ICEVI Latinoamérica, Cristina Sanz, was invited by the staff of the Rehabilitation Centre for the blind to a working meeting, held the 8th May in the morning. During this meeting they exchanged experiences and analysed cases presented by the technical team of the Centre. Here are some images of the meeting: <https://goo.gl/fBZSrA>

During that day’s afternoon, in Asunción, the 60th Anniversary of the Centre of Resources Santa Lucía was celebrated. The emotional ceremony included the performance of the Choir of Blind People of Paraguay, a tribute to the professors that worked there along the 60 years, and the delivery of awards recognizing people and institutions that had an important role for the Centre, among which was ICEVI Latinoamérica. Cristina Sanz warmly thanked the recognition after receiving the award which is a small wooden statue, sculpted by Sergio Jara, with the shape of an open eye on a base; the rings shaped by the wood grains suggest the retina, and the combination of the sphere and curves facilitates the tactile recognition of an eye, which symbolizes the institutional mission of educating people with visual impairment. In the following link you can find some photographs of the celebration and awards: <https://goo.gl/BVPYDX>

Finally, on Tuesday 9th May, ICEVI Latinoamérica, embodied by its Chair, visited the School Don Luis Braille for Children and Youngsters with Deafblindness and Multiple Disabilities in Asunción. Sanz had the opportunity to get to know the modern and comfortable facilities, constructed by the Municipality with the guidance of the School, and which were inaugurated in April 2017. The occasion was also favourable for meeting the staff and a group of very warm and committed parents.

**Brief News**

**Congress on Independent Living in Argentina**

During the 1st and 2nd August 2017, in the facilities of the Professional Council of Economic Sciences in Buenos Aires, the 1st Congress on Independent Living of People with Deafblindness and/or Multiple Disabilities of a Sensory Basis was held. It was organized by the Civil Association of Parents of People with Deafblindness and Multiple Disabilities of Argentina (APPSMA), on the occasion of its 25th anniversary, and was accompanied by Perkins, Fátima, Zott and CIC.

Cristina Sanz participated on the first day of the Congress in the panel about “International Organizations that support people with disabilities”, together with Graciela Ferioli (Deafblind International), María Laura Tommei (APPSMA) and Gloria Rodríguez (Perkins). There were also exhibitions from professionals and parents, and life experience sharing from Argentina, Latin America and Spain.

**Argentinean women with visual impairment meet in Tucumán**

On the 8th and 9th September, the 1st Argentinean Meeting of Women with Visual Impairment was held in San Miguel de Tucumán. It was organized by the Argentinean Federation of Institutions of Blind and Partially Sighted People (FAICA), and it dealt with topics related to the CRPD, the Convention Against Discrimination, rehabilitation, employment and reproductive health, among others. The Chair of ICEVI Latinoamérica, Cristina Sanz, participated in this meeting and had the chance to present the topic “Women and Education”.

**Open Discussion in Uruguay**

On the 2nd October 2017, between 2:30 and 5pm., the discussion “Students with visual impairment: educative passage from High School to University” was held. It was conducted in the facilities of the Training Centre of the Spanish Agency of International Cooperation to Development (AECID) in Montevideo, within the framework of a Seminar on University and Inclusion organized by this Agency. The discussion was moderated by Lic. Cristina Sanz, Chair of ICEVI Latinoamérica, and included the participation of Isabe María Martínez Lozano, Commissioner for University, Youth and Special Plans of the ONCE Foundation (Spain); María de los Ángeles Ortega Gareta, Responsible of the Inclusive Education Space of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of the Republic (Uruguay); and Beatriz Santiago, Coordinator of the Resource Centre for Blind and Partially Sighted Students of the Council of High School Education (Uruguay).

**Joint and coordinated work in Latin America:**

**Memorandums and Actions**

ICEVI Latinoamérica, true to its mission, principles and Action Plan, continues to stake on the joint work and the coordination of efforts as the best way to take advantage of the limited human and material resources available, to achieve its main goal of contributing to the improvement of the life quality of people with visual impairment in our region. That is why, in the last semester, we signed three memorandums of understanding with other organizations involved in the disability area: the Latin American Union of the Blind (ULAC), the Latin American Network of Non-Governmental Organizations of People with Disabilities and their Families (RIADIS) and the ONCE Foundation for the Solidarity with the Blind People of Latin America (FOAL).

As in the past, Cristina Sanz, Chair of ICEVI Latinoamérica, was invited to participate in the meeting of the Board of Directors of ULAC, this time in El Salvador, on the 19 th, 20 th and 21 st of April. During this meeting, Cristina Sanz and the Chair of ULAC, Volmir Raimondi, signed, on behalf of their organizations, the previously mentioned Memorandum of Understanding.

One of the first results of this memorandum was the conformation, in July, of a Joint Work Commission which aims to outline, for both organizations, some guidelines and strategies to approach the recovery of large and small units of Braille production in Latin America. Indeed, the progressive and overwhelming decline of the number and quality of Braille presses, together with the level of Braille teaching, concerns both organizations, so they have committed to carry out actions that allow this situation to be reverted. The Commission is formed of Julio Canizález and Norma Toucedo representing ICEVI Latinoamérica, and Lucía Nieves and Lucía Pestana representing ULAC.

Likewise, in this semester, ICEVI Latinoamérica and ULAC have disseminated the call for countries interested in becoming hosts of the quadrennial events both organizations will jointly celebrate in 2020.

On the other side, as we have mentioned in the previous issue, ICEVI Latinoamérica is part of FOAL’s Board, which meets regularly twice a year. The first meeting of 2017, held in June, was the right occasion to sign a memorandum of understanding between both institutions. Indeed, on the 22 nd June, in Madrid, ICEVI Latinoamérica, embodied by its Chair Cristina Sanz, and FOAL, embodied by the President of the ONCE Foundation, Mr. Alberto Durán López, signed a Memorandum of Understanding, as a *“regulatory framework of the inter-institutional relationships” ,*in consideration of the goals they both share. The Memorandum sets de general criteria of action, the commitments of both parties, and the mechanisms of execution and following up. It establishes that both organizations *“will strengthen their own activities through the institutional relationship established by this Memorandum, at the same time mutually respecting the autonomy and Independence of each achieving their respective goals*”. It was also agreed upon that *“Both entities will develop their activities from an approach of human rights of people with visual impairment, taking into account at all times the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and advocating for the fulfilment of what is stated in the Agenda 2030”.* A Commission of Following Up of this Memorandum was also conformed with representatives of both entities.

After the meeting of FOAL’s Board in Madrid, the Chair of ICEVI Latinoamérica travelled to Seville to participate in the meeting of FOAL’s volunteering, held on the 24 th June. The volunteers are professionals that work or have worked with ONCE and who are willing to share their knowledge through projects in Latin America. Since last year, the representatives of ICEVI Latinoamérica and ULAC on FOAL’S Board, have been involved, and Cristina Sanz told us about her excellent experience with what she described as "A beautiful and committed group of people".

In the morning of Thursday 10th August, in Guatemala, and during a well-attended meeting convened by the National Council of Disability, the memorandum between ICEVI Latinoamérica and RIADIS, both represented by their Chairs, Cristina Sanz and Ana Lucía Arellano was signed. The opening was conducted by the President of CONADIS, Jorge Enríque Yat Max, and then the guidelines of the Memorandum were outlined by Julio Canizález, Sub-regional Coordinator for Central America and Caribbean of ICEVI Latinoamérica. After signing, the Chairs of both organizations expressed their satisfaction with this achievement, and the mutual commitment to carrying it out.

Next, two panels organized by RIADIS were conducted, and there was also time devoted to sharing with the attendants. The first panel was named "A quick glance at the CRPD at the beginning of the second decade from its enactment ", and the Officer of Human Rights, Rosario Galarza, the Vice-president, Juan Ángel Goubea and the Treasurer, Otto Amílcar Mazariego were the speakers. The second panel dealt with "TheAgenda 2030 as the main tool for implementing the CRPD” and the speakers were Rosario Galarza and Otto Mazariego.

In the following link there are some photographs taken in the morning of the 10th August:

<https://goo.gl/5Y2SZA>

**Distance training for the whole region**

Efforts from different organizations were combined and coordinated for another action, the distance training provided during the last semester. Indeed, two free training courses welcoming every interested person in the Latin American region were conducted. The first one was organized by the World Blind Union (WBU), the Latin American Union of the Blind (ULAC) and the Latin American Network of Non-Governmental Organizations of People with Disabilities and their Families (RIADIS), with the support of the International Disability Alliance (IDA); and for the second one ICEVI Latinoamérica joined in the organization. The facilitators were Rosario Galarza, Officer of Human Rights of RIADIS, and José María Viera, at that time Advisor on Human Rights for WBU.

The first course dealt with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the United Nations Agenda 2030, and consisted of 4 webinars of one hour, carried out the 29th April, 6th, 13thand 20th May.

In September 2015, the General Assembly of United Nations embraced the Agenda 2030 as a guideline to promote the sustainable development in the next 15 years. It is a political commitment subscribed by the 193 States members of ONU and includes 17 Goals. This training was conceived to allow the participants to learn about the Agenda 2030 and to design and execute effective advocacy actions, with the interdisciplinary approach of the SDG and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

The second training included two webinars of an hour and a half in length, conducted on the 16th and 23th September, on the topic "Implications of the Right to an Inclusive Education in the Framework of the United Nations Agenda 2030”. Indeed, Goal 4 of the Agenda 2030 refers to guaranteeing a lifelong quality inclusive education. This virtual training proposal, conceived in a practical and dynamic way, had the aim of providing teachers, professionals and other stakeholders involved in the education of students with disabilities with the important elements for utilizing efficiently the international tools for monitoring the fulfilment of this paramount right. This training proposal allowed the participants to learn the milestones of Goal 4 of the Agenda 2030 related to people with disabilities, as well as to deepen the concepts of the article 24 of the CRPD, extensively explained in the General Comment 4 published in 2016 by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Both sessions had a large number of participants from different countries in our region, and they were both conducted in a very accessible and interactive platform, which permitted a fluent communication with the facilitators and among participants.

**The Sub-regions report**

**Southern Cone**

Between the 30th July and 4th August, Norfa Frez Cárdenas, Coordinator of this Sub-region of ICEVI Latinoamérica, conducted a work visit to Uruguay. During these days, she participated in different meeting with authorities of elementary education, with the teacher in charge of the Program of Inclusive Education in High School Education and with parents and families of children with visual impairment. She also visited three special schools, two of them in Montevideo and the third in Maldonado, carrying out work visits with the three Principals and with support teachers.

On the 3rd August, in the facilities of School No. 198 in Montevideo, it was held a round table and its thematic axis were the dissemination of ICEVI Latinoamérica’s work and a glance at the CRPD from the perspective of parents and families. The Coordinator encouraged them to create, as soon as possible, a new parents’ association, with the goal of learning, promoting and advocating for the rights of their children to a full and real inclusive education, an idea that was already latent. 44 individuals participated in this meeting: 25 of them were parents and family, and 19 of them were members of ICEVI Latinoamérica, teachers, technicians, professionals and institutional authorities, all of them related with the visual impairment topic. Here you can find some images of this work visit:

<https://goo.gl/W7ZPUC>

**Mexico**

Lic. Crystal Vargas, Coordinator of this Sub-region, reports that during the month of July in the Sub-region Mexico of ICEVI Latinoamérica a capacity building on the Didactics of Mathematics for People with Visual Impairment was held, conducted by the well known Costa Rican professor José Eduardo Badilla. This activity took place in the city of Villahermosa, Tabasco State, in the School of Specialization "Graciela Pintado De Madrazo", which is a university that trains teachers who will serve children and youngsters with different types of disabilities. It was conducted with the support of FOAL, in the framework of a Project of teacher updating, and its main axes were: operating the unified mathematic Braille code, recognizing and elaborating didactic materials specific for mathematics and printing of Braille graphics. 25 students of the School participated, as well as some members of ICEVI Latinoamérica in this Sub-region, with the mission of replicating this training with other teachers of the country.

Here are some links in which you can find photographs and videos from the course:

<https://goo.gl/ahciqu>

<https://goo.gl/H7Ldfe>

<https://goo.gl/BJrN21>

Likewise, again thanks to FOAL’s support and coordinated by this sub-region of ICEVI Latinoamérica, there were held in Villa Hermosa, two capacity buildings in Orientation and Mobility, conducted by the rehabilitation technician Prof. Roberto Fernández, FOAL’s volunteer. They took place from the 17th to the 21st July, and from the 24th to the 28th July, also in the facilities of the School Graciela Pintado De Madrazo, and we are hoping to replicate them very soon.

**If we unite we are stronger.**

**By Julio Canizález**

**Coordinator of the Sub-region Central America and Caribbean**

**ICEVI Latinoamérica**

As a parent, teacher, rehabilitator or professional, we always want to leave a legacy of our work. That is why, we seek to carry out a great number of actions towards achieving this goal; with this mission ICEVI Latinoamérica is born, with the desire of sharing concrete, real and positive experiences that improve the processes of education and rehabilitation of the blind and deafblind people in the region.

In ICEVI Latinoamérica, we have the opportunity of being part of a family that contributes to a collective construction of the future. We seek to improve the processes of teaching-learning with strategies and innovative techniques, and we pretend to teach other parents how to overcome the grieving stage, with the expertise that only the daily living with a child brings, and to support them so they learn how to take advantage of the available opportunities and resources.

As teachers and rehabilitators, the creativity that entails developing abilities and skills fills us with an indescribable satisfaction, with every accomplished goal with our students. Even though it is true that in the majority of the countries of our region more resources are needed, it is the sum of our efforts what will lead to governments making the necessary investments to meet their obligations related to education and rehabilitation. Only organizing ourselves and fighting together can change the existing reality, in the direction established by a series of international legal rules that our counties have ratified and you surely are aware of. That is why we invite you to become a part of our family through your membership, contributing to the existence of a National Delegation of ICEVI Latinoamérica in every country that works towards changing the reality of education and rehabilitation of people with visual impairment and deafblindness.

Even though this membership costs 30 dollars per year, think of how you contribute, not only with your daily and specific actions where you work, but also sharing your knowledge and improving your training through the opportunities ICEVI Latinoamérica offers through the Global Campaign EFA-VI or the established alliances with FOAL, RIADIS or ULAC.

The structure of our ICEVI is formed of delegations of 5 persons per country, but our intention is to have at least 20 before 2018, so among them 5 representatives can be chosen, who will later elect the sub-regional and regional authorities. Do not hesitate: ICEVI Latinoamérica offers a space for making your knowledge and experiences useful for other people in our region. We need you. Become a member. Fill the on-line application form and contribute to de development of the visually impaired, deafblind or multi-disabled children of Latin America:

<https://goo.gl/aXtbe2>

**Internationals**

**ICEVI Global**

After the sudden decease of Dr. Elly Macha, the World Blind Union has appointed Mr. A. K. Mittal, from India, as its representative in the Executive Committee of ICEVI. Mittal is currently the WBU’s General Secretary and in the last two periods he was Treasurer. He has an extensive training and a great interest in the education of blind and partially sighted students, and he will undoubtedly be an enthusiastic and committed member of ICEVI’s team.

**United Nations**

Since last 20th June, the Chilean blind lawyer María Soledad Cisternas Reyes is the Special Envoy from the General Secretary of the United Nations for the Rights of the Persons with Disabilities. She has an extensive and fruitful track working with United Nations, she was one of the experts who contributed with the writing of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and she also chaired the Committee of this Convention. Her appointment is recognition to a woman with strong principles, a restless fighter, an excellent professional and academic. It is, undoubtedly, a privilege for the people with disabilities all over the world, to have her in this position. Here you can find more information: [https://goo.gl/fLERbM](https://lm.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fgoo.gl%2FfLERbM&h=ATNhr5aqJirSNJK6cbPRtH4AjxFiYKjVU-w2Pc5sEcKO5cYpxrVU5zFjfJ01pg5crL2C1Il6L6VPK3cLtFD323uJ7GJWXtgPsEHiwzx7Dslb8jQAZuwZdDSBi73u7NgoPMsu0wl-vQ84&enc=AZOmR2XLKR7ZZFnSn7QrG_sV0KONgQEdBiMxNfXWrTeBsr3t9YTKbxzwZMKgmVJynvcQMfvWncHUlSa8A0jyggn2Y8_6lISFFzrJudELxqqgRa0vZz_ARxlqo4raMJcZtKqhHN1I6cWj39HYhvhwgEAoGBl2dE0V9YEFVwnJG5isRawkFbupj2KU-baA9jZL9Ow9kQn6l2hYdRgNo2Dy7wZF0McllpFOpt9wu6IvRY0f5nTxzcMguliztvgGz9CCGDnHHnH8bH293UUBbu11-17IXadQNVEzZjAESy_cFayBkUuNPz5lxdl0dJWyiwJ0oveUAaN-zb52ZfpkPHTSKbCFx3zaoolOVXjEZ4p8AfgsJ7YLi02JEDy3DTsvsIaLilTxGVoW51LJW2CGv2pvB3prgVIiSCBoBQJfnygLFId2wAwyoV4uEjmiZT2BUrLvTYREggXxQ7-4rmz8xKAm-HxQRuk_iWc0tEmRpMUYuwKG3rLuUti_ZRfUMjz9G_Vfk2GPUyugtU6gjAI7JRCPVGCVpmWiOJsXdRKpl2re4i3cqbP23Pe2rIno8Cjarzyv2nSq-8bpqCVzMh-4agllqMQNDoFAajdC70eSznIN4u_7QkImTcOFsf7xvFEB_MnTsY9uKzi1P2jvbYej_fBp9D1V-Sgbr8xazLXTCtSlHFbQMrD7KtzbjkIr47vRh_60vNFhpmixFm0K4CjoyILK_1N26eXkX_OTZU8p5hvNsirNHtx4bx_d5D-G8LCy2vmBQgBNQyxFA82P_Z-dei4nsux3W28FJEjSvpciYB0xmsvGMA-Fmb81LcJS9yty8T-MCpiAC8wjsLYBzXEtguvQLrcJk9pr_LcYF4Mxg6JTAYGNA9OD8EPRldBzUHHBhpG46AopKSPKu-2GEJb6-VQhxG_YGO6TAkxlHlVRUjJ4upe3TA&s=1)

**International Disability Alliance**

The Guatemalan lawyer Silvia Quanes is, since last July, the Main Advisor on Human Rights for the International Disability Alliance (IDA). Between 2011 and 2016, Silvia was an expert in the United Nations Committee of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and Vice-president of this Committee during the last two years. She has been involved in all the process of the CRPD, including its drafting, implementation, ratification, and work related to capacity buildings and following up in Latin American region. This is a new challenge for her, which represents a well-deserved personal recognition and a gift, not only for people with disabilities, but for the entire society. <http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/news-staff-silvia-quan>

**World Blind Union**

The Argentinean José María Viera was appointed as the new Executive Director of the WBU, after the retirement of the Canadian Penny Hartin, who has been in this position since 2006.

José Viera has a large and fruitful track at national, regional and international levels. He is currently the Chair of the Argentinean Federation of Institutions of Blind and Partially Sighted People (FAICA), and Advisor on Human Rights in the WBU until he takes up this position in February 2018. He was previously Secretary of Professional Training and Employment of ULAC from 2012 to 2016. He is Bachelor in International Relations and has a Master degree in Developing Planning. He worked as Latin American Coordinator for the Promotion of the International Rights of Disability and was Advisor of the Secretary of the Committee of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). During the last ten years, he also worked as Associate Professor in the Department of International Relations of the University XXI in Cordoba (Argentina).

From these pages we congratulate José María and we wish him great success in his position, given his strong training and experience.

The WBU has disseminated a Call for the position of Advisor on Human Rights, which José Viera is leaving. Its deadline is on the 20th January 2018. You can find the complete Call here:

<http://worldblindunion.org/Spanish/News/Pages/Oportunidad-Laboral-UMC--Asesor-de-Política-de-Derechos-Humanos.aspx>

**Publications**

The two following books are available for free download in their Spanish versions: “The multi-disciplinary team in the service of partially sighted students as an educative practice towards the inclusion" (Word and PDF formats) and "Visual impairment: learning materials".

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0ByihJc4ptQNJR21haVlvVE5Ocmc>

We would like to remind you that “The Educator”, published by ICEVI Global in English and translated to Spanish by ICEVI Latinoamérica, is available to download from this link:

<http://icevi.org/publications/index.htm>

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Visit our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/icevilatinoamerica>

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The complete list of authorities and referents of ICEVI Latinoamérica with their contact details is available for downloading here:

<https://goo.gl/SRg5b2>

The Statutes are available for download here:

<https://goo.gl/5JTgqq>

Remember you can complete on-line the application form for becoming a member of ICEVI Latinoamérica:

<https://goo.gl/aXtbe2>

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