



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



ICEVI E-NEWS

JANUARY 2021

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Message from the President and CEO

Dear Readers

Welcome to the first e-News for 2021. It has been one year since the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a public health emergency of international concern. The WHO reports that since January 2020, there has been 110.7 million cases of COVID-19 globally, and over 2.4 million deaths. In living history, there has not been such a time of upheaval that has affected in all corners of the world. However, there is cause for hope as the global health community collaborate to develop and deploy safe and effective vaccines. As the number of infections as deaths starts to decline, there is cause to reflect and value the people and activities that bring meaning to our lives.

Throughout the past 12 months, ICEVI members and partners have continued their efforts to promote disability-inclusive education systems and communities. New and creative measures have emerged to communicate and collaborate, and to continue global, regional and national events and activities. We are looking forward to the time when we can once again meet in person, and until that time, our ICEVI community will continue to serve children and young people with vision impairment and their families and communities.

In this issue we present an overview of the [World Blindness Summit](#) which will take place online on 28-30 June 2021, with events held during the preceding week. The World Blindness Summit is hosted by the ONCE Social Group, in partnership with ICEVI and the World Blind Union, and the program includes the General Assemblies of ICEVI and WBU together with webinars and regional meetings. This issue also presents an overview of the key activities undertaken by ICEVI members and partners during 2020. This issue of the E-News is a companion publication of the January 2021 issue of The Educator, which includes an overview of the COVID-19 initiatives of the ICEVI regions, and the constitutional amendments that will be tabled for adoption at the ICEVI General Assembly in June 2021.



Frances Gentle
President



M.N.G. Mani
CEO

World Blindness Summit: Joint WBU-ICEVI General Assemblies

The International Organising Committee (IOC) has held regular online meetings to prepare an exciting and innovative program for the World Blindness Summit on 28-30 June, 2021. This is the first virtual joint assembly of the World Blind Union (WBU) and ICEVI, and will be a unique experience for the office bearers and constituencies of the two global organisations. ICEVI's President and CEO have worked closely with WBU and ONCE Social Group leaders to ensure the event is a huge success.

We are pleased to present below the draft program for the World Blindness Summit. Each of the three days of the Summit will consist of a three hour format of joint Plenary and General Assembly sessions, and opening and valedictory functions. Although the overall outline of the program may not change, there may be slight changes to the titles of the technical sessions, and in particular, the titles of the thematic Webinars. We anticipate the final program and online registration will be available in mid-March 2021 on the World Blindness Summit website, <https://www.worldblindnesssummit.com/en/home>.

Please note the timing of the Program (below) is in Madrid Time (MT), which is two hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT).

Monday, June 28, 2021

11.00 – 12.00 INAUGURAL SESSION

- Welcome Remarks – President ONCE
- Welcome Remarks – President WBU
- Welcome Remarks – President ICEVI
- Inaugural Address (Government officials from Spain)
- Keynote Address 1 (To be invited)

12.00 – 12.30 Partnerships for Change – Book Launch

[A Book jointly prepared by ICEVI and the Overbrook Nippon Network on Educational Technology (ON-NET) highlighting the impact created by The Nippon Foundation on the lives of persons with visual impairment in the East Asia Region with the application of Technology]

About the book:

Larry Campbell, President Emeritus, ICEVI

Book release and Special Address:

Mr. Yohei Sasakawa, Chairman, The Nippon Foundation

Keynote address:

My education, my world - An Alumnus of the Higher Education Project

12.30 – 02.00 PLENARY

TITLE: Artificial Intelligence: Services Accessible Using the Voice, a new technological age for blind and partially sighted persons

02.00 – 10.00: THEMATIC WEBINAR TIME (Both WBU and ICEVI will coordinate)

The Webinar titles

Following are the titles of the 15 webinars that will take place between 2 - 10 pm (Madrid Time):

1. The future of work: new working environments post COVID-19
2. Sustainability and disability: how to promote partnerships between organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) and the private sector
3. Accessibility and urban development: the challenges of thinking inclusive and accessible human settlements
4. COVID-19 lessons learnt for a more inclusive and accessible world: how to build back better
5. Global Disability Summit: commitments and participation in Norway 2022
6. Social responsibility and leadership, the private sector and OPDs collaboration
7. Audio description: more than access to information, promoting autonomy and independence
8. New forms of consumption: accessibility in online shopping platforms
9. WBU and the Sustainable Development Goals: Pakistan, Kenya and Rwanda

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10. UN World Braille Day: a powerful advocacy tool for all
 11. Youth Leadership
 12. Technology: what is new when we talk about accessibility?
 13. Humanitarian action and emergency relief
 14. WIPO Marrakesh Treaty
 15. Inclusive and sustainable employment: a pathway for social inclusion

General Information on webinars:

1. The duration of each webinar is 90 minutes.
2. The time slots of the webinars are as follows:
 - Slot 1: 28-6-2021 -2.30-4.00 pm Madrid Time (MT) 12.30-14.00 GMT
 - Slot 2: 28-6-2021 -4.30-6.00 pm Madrid Time (MT) 14.30-16.00 GMT
 - Slot 3: 28-6-2021 -6.30-8.00 pm Madrid Time (MT) 16.30-18.00 GMT
 - Slot 4: 28-6-2021 -8.30-10.00 pm Madrid Time (MT) 18.30-20.00 GMT
 - Slot 5: 29-6-2021 -2.30-4.00 pm Madrid Time (MT) 12.30-14.00 GMT
 - Slot 6: 29-6-2021 -4.30-6.00 pm Madrid Time (MT) 14.30-16.00 GMT
 - Slot 7: 29-6-2021 -6.30-8.00 pm Madrid Time (MT) 16.30-18.00 GMT
 - Slot 8: 29-6-2021 -8.30-10.00 pm Madrid Time (MT) 18.30-20.00 GMT
3. Each webinar will be moderated and will include three presentations of 15 minutes duration, followed by Question and Answer time.
4. Each webinar is likely to have a maximum of 100-120 participants and this will provide ample time for questions and answers.
5. Considering the global time zones, participants may have challenges in attending their preferred live sessions. The organisers will record all webinars and post them on the World Blind Summit the following day. This will offer the opportunity to view the full range of webinars in your own time.
6. Registration to attend particular webinars will involve selecting the desired webinars on the World Blindness Summit, once registration is opened in mid-March 2021. The organisers will provide the necessary Zoom Links and passcodes to join.

Tuesday, June 29

WBU and ICEVI will organise parallel business sessions from 11.00 to 02.00 pm (Madrid time)

Program Outline for WBU

11.00 – 12.30:

- Welcome by WBU president
- Presentation of reports, resolutions, constitutional amendments, budget and other business adopted in the week of June 21/25
- Obituaries
- Presentation of election results
- Any other business

12.30 – 02.00:

Regional Reports by WBU Regional Presidents

- ABU
- AFUB
- EBU
- WBU-AP
- NA-C
- ULAC

Program Outline for ICEVI

11.00 – 12.30: Regional Meetings and Special Interest Groups

12.30 – 02.00: ICEVI GENERAL ASSEMBLY

02.00 – 10.00: THEMATIC WEBINARS

Following are the titles of the 15 webinars that will take place between 2-10 pm (Madrid Time):

16. Building Organizational Capacity
17. Gender and Disability

18. Parental involvement – Moderator: Susan LaVenture, ICEVI
19. MDVI – Moderator: Nandini Rawal, ICEVI
20. Inclusion – Moderator: Praveena Sukhraj-Ely, ICEVI
21. Early childhood education and care - Moderator: Frances Gentle, ICEVI
22. Teacher Preparation - Moderator: Kay Ferrell, ICEVI
23. SDGs and Vision Impairment education - Moderator: Andrew Griffiths, Sightsavers
24. Higher Education of persons with visual impairment - Moderator: Aria Indrawati, ICEVI
25. Mathematics Education - Moderator: MNG Mani, ICEVI
26. Low vision - Moderator: Penny Rosenblum, American Foundation for the Blind
27. Impact of COVID-19 on education of persons with visual impairment – Moderator: Bhushan Punani, ICEVI
28. Braille Literacy – Moderator: Sriram Mittal, Member of ICEVI on World Braille Council.
29. Climate Change and Education of visually impaired children – Moderator: Sian Tesni, CBM, in collaboration with Sightsavers
30. Accessible Learning Materials – Moderator: Richard Orme, DAISY Consortium, in collaboration with the Accessible Books Consortium and Benetech

Wednesday, June 30

11.00 – 12.30 PLENARY SESSION

Title: Collaboration and Networking

Keynote speaker: (To be finalised)

Plenary speakers: (To be finalised)

12.30 – 02.00 VALEDICTORY SESSION

- Welcome Remarks – President ONCE
- Welcome Remarks – President Elect, WBU

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- Welcome Remarks – President Elect, ICEVI
 - Introduction of new regional presidents of WBU and ICEVI
 - WBU Awards
 - Valedictory Address (To be invited)

Information for ICEVI participants of the World Blindness Summit

As the forthcoming World Blindness Summit is a virtual event, ICEVI will be altering some of its usual in-person General Assembly events to accommodate the online format. In the most recent joint General Assembly of WBU and the ICEVI, held in Orlando USA in 2016, ICEVI participants had the opportunity to present technical papers. For the postponed Madrid 2020 joint General Assembly, ICEVI received more than 120 presentation abstracts. Unfortunately, due to the virtual nature of the 2021 joint General Assembly and the challenges of world time zones, ICEVI is unable to accommodate the technical papers. Instead, ICEVI will be organising 13 of the 30 webinar sessions that will take place during the 2021 World Blindness Summit.

There are three major ICEVI events during the World Blindness Summit. The first event is the General Assembly meeting, during which any governance issues and election of Principal Officers for the next quadrennium takes place. The General Assembly will also include a review the activities of ICEVI during 2016-2020. The 12 nominated delegates from each region of ICEVI are finalised by the respective regional Committees and the finalised delegate list will be provided to the Host Committee of the World Blindness Summit.

Each nominated regional delegate is requested to select the “delegate” option when registering on the [World Blindness Summit](#) website. All other participants are requested to select the “participant” option. This is an important distinction, as the nominated regional delegates have voting rights during the ICEVI General Assembly meeting.

The second set of key ICEVI events during the World Blindness Summit are the Regional Meetings which take place on Day 2 of the Summit, 29th June from 11am to 12:30 PM Madrid time. The meetings are open to all delegates and participants from each of the seven global ICEVI regions.

The Presidents of the ICEVI regions will be organising the agenda and meeting preparations.

The third set of key ICEVI events during the World Blindness Summit are the thematic Webinars. Once registration for the Summit opens in mid-March 2021, you are encouraged to register early, as each webinar can accommodate only 100-120 participants on a first come first served basis.

In summary, the nominated “delegates” for each region have access to all three key ICEVI events during the World Blindness Summit. These are the General Assembly meeting, the regional meetings and the thematic webinars. “Participants” are eligible only for the regional meetings and the thematic webinars. Therefore we request ICEVI members and partners to register as participants unless you are sure that you are one of the 12 delegates nominated by the respective regions.

January 2021 issue of The Educator

You may be aware that ICEVI has been publishing two thematic issues of its magazine, The Educator, each year. The January 2021 issue will be a special issue, as it is published prior to the June 2021 General Assembly. As per the Constitution of ICEVI, any resolutions proposed by the ICEVI Executive Committee (EXCO) should be promulgated widely to the ICEVI global constituency prior to the General Assembly meeting.

The ICEVI EXCO formed a Governance Committee in 2018 which was tasked with developing a governance framework that would strengthen and guide collaboration and networking between global and regional bodies of ICEVI. The framework was considered important, especially in view of the ICEVI regions becoming registered legal bodies. To date, ICEVI Africa, ICEVI Europe, ICEVI Latin America and ICEVI Pacific are registered legal bodies in their respective regions and have opportunities to collaborate with international bodies for regional development.

The Governance Committee brought out a number of suggestions to improve the overall governance structure and enumerated specific roles and responsibilities for the ICEVI officers. These high-level guidelines were reviewed by the Executive Committee during its 2019 and 2020 meetings, and the EXCO members recommended that necessary amendments to the Constitution of ICEVI should be prepared and tabled

for adoption by the voting delegates at the June 2021 General Assembly meeting.

The proposed Constitutional amendments will be published in the January 2021 issue of The Educator for dissemination to the ICEVI constituency. Any ICEVI member who wishes to propose any further amendments to the Constitution may do so through the ICEVI regional Presidents or nominated delegates of their region. These proposed amendments will also be taken forward for voting the General Assembly.

The January 2021 issue of The Educator will include the existing Constitution of ICEVI, which consists of the Articles of Association (AOA) and the Memorandum of Association (MOA), together with the proposed amendments. These documents will also be sent to the voting delegates by email well in advance of the June 2021 General Assembly.

In addition to the publication of the Constitution and the proposed amendments, the January 2021 issue of The Educator will include a series of initiatives undertaken by the ICEVI regions in addressing the challenges of the COVID 19 pandemic. The Executive Committee places on record its appreciation to the presidents of the ICEVI regions who have maintained the momentum of ICEVI activities during these difficult times. You will find the January issue informative and we extend our appreciation to Dr Kay Ferrell, the Editor of The Educator, for creating an informative issue of the publication.

Summary of ICEVI activities in 2020

As this is the first opportunity for the President and the CEO to communicate with the ICEVI partners and colleagues in 2021, we are pleased to share with you a summary of global and regional activities organised by ICEVI during 2020. We had already shared this information with our International Partner Members and Organisational Members who are extending their fullest support for achieving the mission and vision of ICEVI. We invite you to share the summary with your networks across the seven global regions of ICEVI.

Summarised below are the key activities undertaken by ICEVI members and partners during 2020.

- Meetings of the Executive Committee (EXCO), Principal Officers, and Regional Presidents have successfully moved to online format. Meetings during 2020 included EXCO meetings in June and December, and quarterly meetings with the Principal Officers and the Presidents of ICEVI's seven global regions. The online format has proven an effective way of maintaining member communication and ensuring ICEVI's governance and management requirements were addressed during the year.
- ICEVI appointed a technical committee, headed by Katie Holland of the Perkins School for the Blind, to develop resource material for families and community workers supporting children with multiple disabilities and/or deafblindness, with a focus on answering the question "Where do I begin?" A publication, entitled 'Include Me', was developed by the working group, and translated into more than 20 world languages. It is available for download from the ICEVI website at <https://icevi.org/include-me-mdvi-deafblindness-publication/>
- In continuation of the 'Include Me' publication, a working group headed by Nandini Rawal, ICEVI Treasurer, has commenced work on preparing a companion publication on Braille for children with multiple disabilities and/or deafblindness. The working group are aiming to release the publication during the WBU-ICEVI General Assembly in June 2021.
- ICEVI, in partnership with WBU, contributed to the development of the Inclusive Education Report of the International Disability Alliance (IDA). ICEVI appreciates the substantive contribution of Dr Praveena Sukhraj-Ely, 1st Vice-President of ICEVI, who represented ICEVI and WBU on the IDA Inclusive Education Task Group. The report, entitled 'What an inclusive, equitable, quality education means to us', is available for download from <https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/ida-inclusive-education-2020>
- The higher education projects of ICEVI, supported by The Nippon Foundation, swiftly responded to the pandemic by transitioning to online delivery of capacity building programmes, ICT training,

counselling, etc. The project outcomes for 2020 have exceeded all expectations.

- The Nippon Foundation has approved the continuation of ICEVI's higher education project in 2021. The seven project countries are the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, and Mongolia, and most of the project activities during the 2021 cycle will address soft skills and employment creation.
- The first draft of the publication highlighting the substantive impact created by The Nippon Foundation on the lives of persons with vision impairment has been completed, in collaboration with the Overbrook Nippon Network on Educational Technology (ON-NET), and sent to The Nippon Foundation for approval. It is anticipated that the publication will be released during the opening ceremony of the virtual WBU-ICEVI General Assembly in June 2021.
- Considering the difficulties encountered by teachers and children with vision impairments due to the COVID-19 pandemic, ICEVI's dedicated YouTube channel, Math Made Easy, has proven an invaluable resource. The YouTube channel includes 175 instructional videos on teaching mathematics to children with vision impairments, and has over 1500 individual and organisational subscribers. Recent data provided by Google indicates that viewership has increased to over 120,000 during 2020.
- The first edition of mathematics transcripts for 50 instructional videos has been finalised and posted on the ICEVI website. The purpose of the transcripts is to facilitate organisational or country-level translation of the videos into local languages. The second edition, consisting of transcripts for another 50 instructional videos, is currently being prepared and is likely to be posted on the ICEVI website by March 2021.
- ICEVI's Regional Committees organised webinars on a range of topics, including COVID-19 safety and mobility procedures for persons with vision impairment, digital literacy and accessible technology interventions, collaboration and parent-professional partnerships, and mathematics education. A dedicated section of the ICEVI website has been established for the regions to share

COVID-19 information and related activities - <https://icevi.org/icevi-covid-19-response/>

- ICEVI Africa, in collaboration with the DAISY consortium, is progressing the implementation of the ICEVI Visionary Learning project. The project aims to empower blind and low vision students through technology to learn alongside their sighted classmates and to equip them with the essential digital skills to succeed at school, higher education, and the world of employment.
- ICEVI West Asia organised a series of webinars during 2020 in partnership with Bookshare. The webinars have been well received in the region and will be continue in 2021. ICEVI West Asia also organised its regional conference in collaboration with SENSE India in Kathmandu, Nepal in February 2020. The conference attracted more than 300 participants from the region and was the last International face-to-face conference organised by ICEVI prior to the COVID-19 lockdowns.
- A virtual meeting of the WIPO Accessible Books Consortium (ABC) and the Presidents of the ICEVI Regions was held in October 2020. The purpose of the meeting was to explore how the ICEVI regions can support the ABC in addressing the book famine for people with vision impairment or other print disabilities. Discussion included how ICEVI can promote the establishment of ABC Book Service “authorised entities” in each region, and motivate ICEVI partners at the national level to make effective use of the services of the ABC.
- ICEVI has entered into discussions with the DAISY Consortium regarding the establishment of a joint Memorandum of Understanding to promote global and regional collaboration, and to augment educational opportunities for children with vision impairment through the application of accessible technologies.
- ICEVI has commenced discussions with Deafblind International and the International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC), to establish a ‘Communication Alliance’ that aims to promote international and national awareness, entitlements and corresponding quality services for persons with complex communication needs. The Terms of Reference for the Communication Alliance are currently being drafted and will be

tabled with the ICEVI Executive Committee for approval in early 2021.

- We are pleased to advise that one of our project partners, Sao Mai Centre for The Blind in Vietnam, has been selected for the Zero Project Award 2020 for innovations in technology. We are also pleased to advise that our higher education partner, Ms Gerel Dondovdorj from the Mongolian National Federation of the Blind, has been elected as a member of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- The ICEVI Executive Committee recently extended its congratulations to Ms Ana Peláez Narváez of ONCE for her election as one of the Vice Chairs of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Stay safe until we meet Face-to-face

The last meeting of the ICEVI Executive Committee in the face-to-face mode was in October 2019 in conjunction with the Africa Forum in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It is for the first time since 2002 that the Executive Committee has not met face-to-face for nearly 30 months. However we conducted two virtual meetings of the Executive Committee in 2020 that kept up the spirit of the organisation. The General Assembly in the virtual mode too is first of its kind and we have been waiting for opportunities to meet face-to-face through official meetings, regional conferences and global events. Until then we request all of you to stay safe but stay connected through the digital world. It is indeed a New Normal for ICEVI too.

We look forward to meeting you soon through the virtual General Assembly!

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

For further details, contact:



ICEVI Secretariat

3, Professors Colony
Sri Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya Post
Coimbatore - 641 020
Tamil Nadu

INDIA

Telefax : +91 422 2693414
E-mail : ceo201922@gmail.com
Website : www.icevi.org