



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



ICEVI E-NEWS

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Contents

1. Message from the President and CEO.....	3
2. Development of Quadrennial Plans	4
3. Congratulations Praveena.....	5
4. Webinars on ICEVI.....	5
5. Feasibility of a global deafblind education campaign	6
6. 70th Year of ICEVI	6
7. Thematic Task Forces	7
8. Publication on Employment	7
9. ICEVI Handbook	7
10. Instructional videos on teaching Abacus	8
11. Working with Parents	9
12. Resources on STEM education.....	9
13. Coalition meeting of the GCE.....	10

Message from the President and CEO

Dear colleagues and friends,

Welcome to the first issue of the ICEVI E-News for 2022. This issue presents a snap-shot of the activities of ICEVI since our last issue in June 2021. As we write, the global pandemic continues to influence the way we live and interact. We look forward to preparing an E-News issue that does not include mention of COVID-19!

The pandemic continues to illuminate the inequalities in education and health services around the world, highlighting the importance of schooling for every child's social and emotional well-being and future opportunities. The ICEVI regional Presidents and Boards are responding to the identified needs of families and their children with blindness, low vision, deafblindness and multiple disability.

At the global and regional levels of ICEVI, the Executive Board and Regional Boards are formulating the priorities and actions for the 2022-2024 term. These priorities heed the call of the United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres, to "build back better" in education post COVID-19.

In this 70th year since ICEVI was established, we remain committed to the ICEVI Mission of promoting the right of children and young people with visual impairment to inclusive, equitable, and quality education. With the on-going limitations to in-person interaction and service delivery, we anticipate the ICEVI members and partners will continue to share information and work together using accessible digital technologies and online communication platforms.

We wish you and your colleagues and loved ones a healthy and prosperous 2022.



Frances Gentle
President



M.N.G. Mani
CEO

Development of Quadrennial Plans

Regional development is one of the key focus areas of ICEVI. The Executive Board of ICEVI opined that the priority goals established in the 2017 strategic review be extended for the 2021-2024 quadrennium. These goals and relation actions include supporting the strategies and plans of the seven ICEVI regions. Unlike the previous years, the ICEVI regions have ventured into the task of preparing plans listing their priority areas for the whole 2021-2024 quadrennial period, rather than annual plans. To date, the ICEVI regions of Africa, Latin America, North America and the Caribbean, Pacific and West Asia have prepared their quadrennial plans.

The **Africa region** proposes to focus mostly on the visionary learning technology initiative, influencing legislation, and representing ICEVI Africa region in various regional and international events.

The **Latin America region** will focus on skill oriented training activities that include Braille literacy and related topics, teaching of mathematics, universal design for learning and reasonable adjustments, low vision education and school settings, rehabilitation strategies, training on deafblindness and multiple disabilities, inclusive education, and training for parents, families and civil society stakeholders.

The **North America and the Caribbean** (NAC) region is proposing to focus on advocacy and capacity building. One of the key objectives of the quadrennium is formally establishing ICEVI NAC region as a legal entity.

The **West Asia region** is proposing to conduct capacity building programs in such areas as inclusion, use of technology, gender equity, climate change, and youth development. Special focus is on the country champions (youth leadership) program which is expected to happen in most of the countries within the region. Handling the COVID-19 situation and its impacts in the blindness sector will also be a focus area during the Quadrennium.

The **Pacific region** will be focusing on capacity building programmes and preparation of materials in accessible formats. Organising regional forums and influencing policy changes at the national levels will also be priority areas during the Quadrennium.

The **East Asia region** conducts one of the flagship programmes of ICEVI – the higher education project supported by The Nippon Foundation. The region will use the country contacts for the higher education projects to influence proactive policies in the blindness sector. The region will also strengthen its collaboration with the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation (SEAMEO) for organising national level capacity building programmes to benefit teachers, parents/caregivers and persons with visual impairment.

The regional Boards will be revising their quadrennial plans in consultation with the international and regional partner members of ICEVI in early 2022. Planned activities for the regions for 2022 have already commenced.

Congratulations Praveena

Dr. Praveena Sukhraj-Ely, Treasurer of ICEVI, has been appointed to the position of Chief Director: Governance and Compliance in the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities (DWYPD) within the Office of the Presidency of South Africa. Praveena will commence her new role at the DWYPD on 1st February 2022. ICEVI congratulates Praveena on her appointment. We have every expectation that she will further the rights of women, youth and persons with disabilities in the coming years.

Webinars on ICEVI

Since the World Blindness Summit was conducted in June 2021, the ICEVI Principal Officers have held a number of meetings with the international partners of ICEVI and the Presidents and Board members of the regions. One of the observations made during these meetings is that many national-level project partners are not fully aware of the resources and services that can be made available by ICEVI for the benefit of expanding educational opportunities for children with visual impairment worldwide. Keeping this in view, ICEVI will be organising a series of webinars beginning in March 2022 to raise awareness on the existing resources and services of ICEVI and how members and partners can engage with them to advocate for the educational rights of children and young people with visual impairment. The webinar schedule and registration details will be widely shared with the ICEVI constituency in the near future. ICEVI plans to organise at least five webinars between March and July 2022. Based on the outcomes of these webinars, ICEVI may also organise additional webinars on specific thematic areas.

Feasibility of a global deafblind education campaign

the important area of education for children and young people with deafblindness and multiple disabilities emerged as one of the priority areas during the 2021 meetings with the international partner members and presidents of the ICEVI regions. ICEVI and the Deafblind International have entered into discussions to raise awareness and bring synergy into the area of deafblind education. During discussions the idea emerged of a global campaign similar to the Education for All Children with Visual Impairment (EFA-VI) campaign of ICEVI and the World Blind Union. It is proposed that Deafblind International will be the lead partner in spearheading the deafblind education campaign, with ICEVI providing the required support through its regional networks and technical expertise. The officers and the Board of the Deafblind International and the Principal Officers of ICEVI have expressed interest for such a campaign during a joint DbI and ICEVI meeting. It was decided to share this idea with the respective Executive Boards of both the organisations to get their views about the feasibility of such a campaign. The ICEVI Executive Board endorsed the idea and suggested forming a small working group consisting of members of DbI and ICEVI to prepare a concept paper that can be further reviewed by the Boards of ICEVI and DbI before making any concrete action plans.

70th Year of ICEVI

ICEVI was established in 1952 and will be completing its 70th year in mid-2022. For a professional organisation, seven decades of services is significant, and ICEVI wants to celebrate this milestone through a series of events at national, regional and global levels. The ICEVI Principal Officers will lead discussions on how the 70th year of ICEVI can be observed and will table their recommendations with the Executive Board. One of the emerging recommendations is that ICEVI global and the seven regions may plan a range of year-long celebrations over the 12 month period at various levels to raise awareness of the Vision, Mission and history of ICEVI. The ICEVI constituency is invited to offer suggestions for the 70th year celebrations. The plans will be fine tuned and posted on the ICEVI website and also disseminated at all levels. On the occasion of the 70th year, ICEVI gratefully remembers all the loyal and hard-working officers and members who have served as pillars in the development of the organisation over the 70 years.

Thematic Task Forces

An important component of the ICEVI global Action Plan for 2022-2024 is the establishment of task groups to address the priority areas of early childhood, low vision education, ICT in education, inclusive education, gender rights, children, parents, youth empowerment, deafblindness, and climate change. The work of these groups will include developing concept papers, publications and webinars, and also influencing policies at the global and regional levels. The Executive Board has tasked the Principal Officers to contact members of the Executive Board and researchers and practitioners who have expertise in these specific areas. The ICEVI President and CEO will lead the process of preparing the terms of reference for each task group. The ICEVI constituency will be updated on the development of the task groups in mid-2022.

Publication on Employment

ICEVI, in collaboration with our higher education partners in the East Asia region, will bring out a publication that is supported by The Nippon Foundation. The broad theme of the publication is Employment, which includes three sections, namely 1) preparation of visually impaired individuals through STEM - Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics - Curriculum, 2) development of soft skills and 3) improving accessibility and employment promotion. Considering the unique experiences of our higher education project partners, the Resources For the Blind (Philippines) is preparing the component dealing with the STEM curriculum. Pertuni (in Indonesia) is focusing on soft skills and the Sao Mai Centre (in Vietnam) is dealing with accessible materials and employer awareness. Each component of the publication includes a description of the theme, how it is done in the partner countries, and presentation of case histories pertaining to relevant topics. The partners have already outlined the major topics that should feature in each component of the publication and in the meantime, videos are being prepared to supplement the publication. The work is expected to be finalised by end of April 2022 and the publication is likely to be released at a global function around mid-2022. Updates on the publication will be posted on the ICEVI website.

ICEVI Handbook

The success of ICEVI's activities across its seven global regions is, to a large extent, determined by the contributions of its Office Bearers. For

this reason, we are keen to ensure that our Principal Officers, members of the Executive Board, Presidents of the ICEVI regions and regional Boards have all the information they need to carry out the ICEVI Mission and to advocate on behalf of children and young people with visual impairment, their families and educators. With this purpose, a Handbook on ICEVI has been prepared which is a compilation of essential information that we hope will answer all questions and enable officers to work with maximum effectiveness within ICEVI. The handbook includes such information as ICEVI's history, global and regional structures, its membership base, and the responsibilities of Officers and Presidents of the regions. The Handbook also includes the documents underpinning ICEVI's governance, and current policies and publications. The handbook is a dynamic document that will undergo revisions from time to time. The handbook has been shared with the ICEVI members of the Executive Board. Others who are interested in this document may write to the Secretariat at officevi@gmail.com.

Instructional videos on teaching Abacus

ICEVI established a dedicated Math Made Easy YouTube channel in late 2019 - <https://www.youtube.com/c/ICEVIMathMadeEasy/playlists>. During 2019 and 2020, ICEVI uploaded 175 instructional videos on teaching mathematics to visually impaired children. The subscription to this channel is steadily increasing and currently we have more than 2800 subscribers. The maths initiative is one of the components of the higher education project of ICEVI being supported by The Nippon Foundation. One of the wishes expressed by teachers is that we should have a series of videos on teaching Abacus to visually impaired children. In many teacher training courses, teaching Abacus is a full semester course and we realised that adequate resources on Abacus learning are not available. As a result, we have prepared and uploaded 150 instructional videos illustrating the teaching of mathematical operations - addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of higher levels. These 150 videos involve a variety of exercises that develop expertise in using an Abacus. The videos have been presented in such a way that no teacher assistance is necessary to learn the techniques, as the videos are fully self-instructional in nature and include captioning. Currently, there is a total of 325 instructional videos on teaching mathematics and Abacus and we hope to add another 300 videos by 2023.

Working with Parents

ICEVI is committed to working with the organisations of parents of children with visual impairments. ICEVI was instrumental in the commencement of the International Association of Parents of Children with Visual Impairment (IAPVI) at the ICEVI world conference held in Kuala Lumpur in July 2006. ICEVI has also been supporting the annual parents conference organised by PAVIC (Parents Advocates for Visually Impaired Children) in the Philippines. Mr Paul Manning, a parent representative, became the President of ICEVI Pacific region in 2012 and currently Mrs Susan LaVenture, a parent activist, has become the President of the North America and Caribbean region. ICEVI is in discussion with the IAPVI regarding promoting strong parent networks in the different regions of the world and more updates will be available soon. Parent organisations that are interested in strengthening the international network are requested to contact the ICEVI Secretariat at officevi@gmail.com, or Susan LaVenture, President, ICEVI North America and the Caribbean region at laventuresusan506@gmail.com.

Resources on STEM education

ICEVI, in collaboration with The Nippon Foundation and higher education partners, has been promoting the area of STEM education, including accessible materials focusing on science, technology, engineering and mathematics. ICEVI strongly believes that STEM education should become an integral part of the school curriculum for students with visual impairments and other disabilities. STEM education is a significant contributor to the securing of employment by young adults with visual impairment once they have completed their education. Mathematics is an important component of all STEM subjects and ICEVI's instructional videos on teaching Abacus and mathematical concepts are available via ICEVI website, <https://www.youtube.com/c/ICEVIMathMadeEasy/playlists>.

ICEVI invites teachers and teacher educators to share audio and video materials on the STEM subject areas that are being prepared by them, for potential posting on the ICEVI website for wider dissemination. Those interested in sharing their instructional videos may contact the ICEVI Secretariat at officevi@gmail.com. Appropriate videos, after scrutiny, will be posted on the ICEVI Maths Made Easy YouTube channel under a dedicated playlist titled "Resources on STEM Education".

Coalition meeting of the GCE

ICEVI is a member of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE). The next coalition meeting of GCE for discussing Global Education Monitoring Report shall be held on 1st February, 2022 at 9 a.m. ET. Dr. Bhushan Punani, 1st Vice President will attend this meeting representing ICEVI.

Hope to meet you soon in person:

Thank you to our members and partners for your support of children and young people with visual impairment during this challenging time of the global pandemic. ICEVI hopes to reconvene its face-to-face global and regional events when the pandemic situation improves. Until then, we wish you and your colleagues and loved ones a safe and healthy period ahead.

ICEVI E-News comes to your mailbox 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.

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