



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



ICEVI E-NEWS

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Message from the President and CEO

Dear colleagues and friends,

In this July 2022 issue of the ICEVI E-News, we present an overview of the recent activities of ICEVI members and partners. The initiatives presented reflect the strong focus on collaborative partnerships and information sharing at the global level and across our seven world regions. We have continued to use online platforms for communication, networking and training and anticipate this will continue in the year ahead.

In October this year, our Executive Board will hold its first in-person meeting since October 2019. We will take this opportunity to recognise the seven decades of contributions of members and supporters since ICEVI was established in 1952. Our Mission is just as important today as it was seven decades ago. This is evident in the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in limiting education access for children with disabilities in many regions of the world, constraining their opportunities to develop essential literacy and numeracy skills for learning at school and the world of work.

ICEVI members and partners are committed to making a difference to the lives of children and young people with blindness, low vision, deafblindness and multiple disability. Our open access publications, teacher training curriculum, and online instructional videos support educators and parents/carers in providing equitable access to educational opportunities, commencing with early childhood through to higher education and transition to employment.

In closing, we thank the ICEVI Secretariat for preparing this issue of ICEVI E-News.



Frances Gentle
President



M.N.G. Mani
CEO

Meeting of the ICEVI Executive Board

After a long gap of three years since the ICEVI Executive Board met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in October 2019, an in-person meeting of the Board will be held at the Royal Dutch Visio, the Netherlands on 4 - 6 October 2022. This much awaited in-person meeting will include deliberation on a number of administrative and academic matters concerning ICEVI. As a part of the strategic development of ICEVI, a series of discussions were initiated by the Principal Officers of ICEVI with the International Partner Members (IPMs) that led to the formation of a number of task groups that will initiate publications and activities on specific thematic issues. In all, more than 10 thematic issues have emerged during Board discussions. The Principal Officers, in consultation with Board members, have prioritised the five themes of advocacy, technology, inclusive education, gender equity and children's participation for task group initiatives in 2022. The Terms of Reference and priorities will be established by each task group in the coming months and will include global and regional activities.

On the basis of the outcomes of the five working groups, ICEVI will establish working groups to address the additional priority themes of climate change, teacher preparation, higher education, parent partnerships, low vision, rehabilitation, etc., in the years 2023 and 2024. ICEVI is anticipating the creation of strong position papers on each of the identified themes by the end of the current Quadrennium. These papers will guide strategic planning in the subsequent Quadrennium beginning 2024.

In addition to the working groups, the Executive Board meeting in October 2022 will include deliberation on the governance and administration of ICEVI, including the positive impact of the ICEVI regions becoming legal entities, CEO transition planning in preparation for Mani's retirement in late 2023, and organisation of the next general assembly in conjunction with hosting of an international conference in 2024.

ICEVI 70th Year Celebrations

2022 is the 70th year of ICEVI. The Executive Board meeting in October 2022 will take place at the same campus of Royal Dutch Visio where ICEVI was started in 1952. One of the agenda items is to discuss the year-long celebrations to observe the 70th year globally and in the ICEVI regions. To mark the beginning of the 70th year celebrations, the Executive Board is planning a celebratory function from 3.00 to 4.30 pm GMT on 4th October in conjunction with the Executive Board meeting. There will be brief presentations by ICEVI and Visio leaders to mark the seven decades of services of ICEVI. The audience for this function will include the staff of Visio and members of the ICEVI Executive Board. The Executive Board has also

invited some of the stalwarts of ICEVI who have made significant contributions at various points of time. These individuals will join online and recall their connections with ICEVI. They will be highlighting ICEVI's growth during their time and will consider the vision for the organisation going forward. The function will be videographed and posted on the ICEVI website for the benefit of the broad ICEVI constituency. The function, in conjunction with the Executive Board meeting, marks the commencement of the 70th year celebrations. We invite well-wishers of ICEVI to will join the 70th year celebrations in various parts of the world which will conclude at the end of 2023. We shall provide details of how and where the festivities will happen through our publications.

Participation of Officers in Meetings

Dr Frances Gentle, President, organised a series of meetings with ICEVI international partners and also the Presidents of the ICEVI regions. She also attended a number of meetings connected with the RaisedMath project. The Principal Officers attended various meetings at the global and regional levels. Dr. Bhusan Punani, ICEVI First Vice President, represents ICEVI on the Global Campaign for Education (GCE). He also contributed to various policy making meetings in India and in the West Asia region. Mrs Sabine Fijn van Draat, ICEVI Second Vice President, represents ICEVI on the Inclusive Education Task Group and the United Nations Task Group of the International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC). Sabine contributed to the IDDC, IDA, GLAD, GCE Call to Action statement: calling on the TES Secretariat, UN Member States, civil society partners and other education actors to uphold the rights of children and youth with disabilities, ensuring the promise of Leave No One Behind. Dr Praveena Sukhraj-Ely, ICEVI Treasurer, represents ICEVI on the Executive Board of the WIPO Accessible Books Consortium and the International Disability Alliance (IDA) Inclusive Education Task Group. Dr MNG Mani, ICEVI CEO, represented ICEVI at the Governing Board meeting of the International Agency for Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) and also many meetings with the President ICEVI.

We are extremely pleased that Ms Gertrude Oforiwa Fefoame, President of ICEVI Africa, has also been re-elected to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and Ms Ana Peláez Narváez, ICEVI Executive Board member and ONCE representative, has been re-elected as Vice Chair of the CEDAW Committee, UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

Transition planning for CEO position

ICEVI has been functioning with a full-time CEO and Secretariat since 2002, which was the golden jubilee year of ICEVI. The current CEO, Dr MNG Mani,

has offered to step down from the position of CEO before the end of the current Quadrennium. The Governance Committee of ICEVI has commenced the process of exploring various options for appointing a new CEO and continuing the functions of the Secretariat. The Governance Committee is also reviewing the priorities of ICEVI going forward, especially in the light of many of the ICEVI regions becoming legal regional entities with the capacity to organise collaborative projects with the support of ICEVI member organisations and regional partners. In consideration of these regional developments, the roles and responsibilities of the incoming CEO will be defined on the basis of the recruitment process. The ICEVI constituency will be kept informed of the developments in the course of time.

Vision Alliance

The blindness sector, in general, addresses the three dimensions of human rights, education and prevention. Three umbrella organisations, the World Blind Union (WBU), The International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI), and the International Agency for Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) primarily address these three areas respectively with specific focus. However, there are many connections between these three dimensions. The education of children with visual impairment, for example, includes assessment which requires the intervention of the eye health sector – IAPB. The right to access quality education is the concern of WBU, and how to provide quality education is primarily the domain of ICEVI.

The Vision Alliance represents a collaborative partnership network of IAPB, ICEVI and WBU. The Alliance was initiated in 2009 and represents the three organisations on various world fora. Members of the Alliance have issued joint statements concerning education, human rights, advocacy, natural disasters, etc. The current administrators of IAPB, ICEVI and the WBU have decided to provide more thrust to the network by strengthening collaboration at the global and regional levels of the three organisations. Their presidents and CEOs have held conference calls in the recent past to revitalise the Vision Alliance. More concrete plans will emerge post the October 2022 Executive Board meeting of ICEVI and we shall update the constituency through the ICEVI website and publications.

Meeting of Higher Education Coordinators

The higher education project of ICEVI, supported by The Nippon Foundation, is being implemented in Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Mongolia. Until 2019 the coordinators of the higher education countries had annual meetings to review the progress of the project activities and also to bring synergy into the work by exchanging expertise between the countries. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, face-to-face coordinators' meetings

were not held during the last three years. The first face-to-face meeting since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic was held in Jakarta, Indonesia, on 2-4 August 2022.

In addition to the discussions and review of the project activities in the respective countries, there was a meeting of the employees who were facilitated with employment through the higher education partner, Pertuni (Indonesian Union of the Blind). The officials from ICEVI and The Nippon Foundation were also present at the meeting along with the higher education country coordinators. They interacted with the employees to gain insights in order to strengthen the employment focus of the higher education project. The meeting also included a visit to the Think.Web digital company where the higher education graduates were recruited as employees and have been working for more than four years.

UNICEF has initiated a special drive to recruit persons with visual impairment on its staff in the Jakarta office. We are pleased to advise that the first such person recruited by UNICEF is a graduate of the ICEVI- supported higher education project. The officials from The Nippon Foundation and ICEVI also visited the UNICEF office in Jakarta. The case studies of these employees will be videographed and posted on the ICEVI website in the near future. The coordinators had a productive meeting and this opportunity was also used for focused planning of the 2023 activities of the higher education project.

Book Release on Transition to Employment

In a previous E-News, we had already informed our constituency about the 2021 release of the book "Partnerships For Change: National Strategies-Regional Collaboration" which was prepared by ICEVI and the Overbrook Nippon Network on Education Technology (ON-NET) and highlighted the impact created by The Nippon Foundation on the lives of persons with visual impairment in the East Asia region. The book, which was released at the World Blindness Summit held on 28 - 30 June 2021 is available for free download in PDF, ePub and Daisy formats on the website of ICEVI www.icevi.org.

In continuation of the 2021 publication, ICEVI has created a 2022 publication, "Transition To Employment: Experiences of Philippines, Indonesia and Vietnam" which highlights the basic ingredients that should be in place for facilitating employment opportunities for persons with visual impairment. The first section of this new book deals with the importance of access to the school curriculum areas of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) in preparing students with visual impairments for STEM-related studies at higher education level. The second section deals with the need for soft skills in combination with academic studies to prepare

individuals with visual impairment for the successful transition to the employment sector. The third section deals with the importance of accessibility in terms of materials as well as physical environment and also the awareness and support of employees for the successful recruitment of persons with visual impairment. A number of case studies of individuals narrating their experiences in the employment sector clearly provide direction for other employment seekers with visual impairment. The individuals share the kind of preparedness one should have, the skills they should develop for knocking at the door of employment in the public sector, and how to retain the employment by demonstrating their employability skills.

The book was released by Madam Amanda from the Human Resources for Placement, Government of Indonesia in the presence of Mr. Yousuke Ishikawa from The Nippon Foundation and officials from ICEVI. Ibu Sri Sudarsono, the Chairperson of ICEVI Indonesia Network received the first copy of the book and spoke on her association with ICEVI over many years. We hope the book will serve as a useful resource for organisations and individuals who prioritise and support the employment of persons with visual impairment. The book will be available in PDF, ePub and Daisy formats and will be posted on the ICEVI website for free download.

More videos on teaching Abacus

Members are aware of the ICEVI Math Made Easy YouTube channel - <https://www.youtube.com/c/ICEVIMathMadeEasy/playlists>. The channel now has more than 325 instructional videos on teaching concepts in mathematics, including teaching the abacus. ICEVI is pleased to advise there are currently 3200+ subscribers and the rate of subscription is steadily increasing. The viewership of the instructional videos has also exceeded 400,000. ICEVI has initiated the process of preparing an additional 150 instructional videos on teaching the abacus, with 50 videos to be uploaded on the YouTube channel before the end of August 2022 and another 100 videos uploaded latest by the end of November 2022.

ICEVI believes that these open access, online instructional videos are a quality resource for individuals with visual impairments, parents and teachers, and promote children learning and enjoying mathematics. In the years ahead, ICEVI will also be gathering similar instructional materials prepared by teachers from around the world and placing them on the website of ICEVI based on quality and relevance. The study of mathematics is essential for the successful inclusion in education of all children. However, in many parts of the world, children with visual impairment are not provided with access to the mathematics curriculum and as a result, have limited knowledge and skills to enrol in STEM studies. We hope the mathematics

instructional videos are a step forward in the right direction to improve the provision of quality, inclusive education for children with visual impairment.

Case study videos on ICEVI website

The publication "Partnerships For Change" released by ICEVI in June 2021 embedded more than 50 videos of various activities of the higher education project, together with case studies of youth advocates, employees, employers, and good practices. The case study videos may be accessed through QR codes and YouTube links provided in the book. For the benefit of those who are interested in just viewing the videos, we have created a YouTube channel called "Partnerships for Change" that has been posted on the homepage of ICEVI website – go to <https://icevi.org/partnerships-for-change/>. We shall be sending some of these case studies to the Project ASPIRO of the WBU for posting on their website. This section of the website will be updated with more upcoming videos of individuals and good practices particularly in the employment sector.

East Asia Regional Conference

The first regional conference for the current Quadrennium (2021-24) will be held in Indonesia in September/October 2023. The title of the conference will be "Reasonable Accommodation and Accessibility" and the exact dates and venue of the conference will be decided in the near future. The Host Committee is headed by Ibu Sudarsano, Chairperson of Indonesia Network, and technical support will be provided by Ms Aria Indravati, President ICEVI East Asia region and ICEVI officials. The Committee met on 3rd August to discuss the logistics of this event. The first announcement of the conference will be released in September 2022 followed by the Call For Abstracts. The Host Committee is expecting around 300 to 400 delegates, mostly from the East Asia region.

The ICEVI East Asia region has conducted four regional conferences in the last 15 years. This has increased the visibility of ICEVI in most of the countries within the region. Conference invitations will be extended to the UN-ESCAP, other UN bodies in the region, the South East Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), and other national networks. Subsequent announcements on the conference and the Call for Abstracts will also be posted on the ICEVI website in November 2022.

Regional Youth Summit

In 2017, ICEVI organised its first country champions programme in the Philippines where key topics connected with education, employment and empowerment of persons with visual impairment were discussed. The entire

forum was organised by persons with visual impairment who were graduates of the ICEVI – The Nippon Foundation supported higher education programme. In addition, 90% of the speakers for the various sessions were graduates of the higher education project. The outcome of the Philippines programme was the formation of youth forum in the Philippines that is going strong to the present day. The experiences of Philippines programme motivated other participating countries of the higher education project to conduct country champions programmes in their respective countries. This idea was later taken up by other ICEVI regions and currently this is one of the dimensions of ICEVI's global strategic plan.

Members of the higher education project are proposing to organise a Regional Youth Summit of the higher education graduates at the Resources for the Blind, Philippines in conjunction with the World Disability Day on December 3, 2022. This mini regional summit will be used as a springboard for organising a larger summit of youths drawn from various countries in the East Asia region and will be held in conjunction with the ICEVI East Asia Regional Conference in 2023.

Thrust on Marrakesh Treaty implementation

The strategic planning of many regions of ICEVI has included the priority of raising awareness of the WIPO-administered Marrakesh Treaty. Many partners, for example, in the Africa and East Asia regions are actively involved in the global campaign promoting implementation of the Marrakesh treaty. ICEVI and WBU officials have discussed this issue and decided that a formal network of the presidents of ICEVI regions and the WBU may be created to organise joint programmes on the Treaty in the member countries. This issue will be further discussed with the Presidents of the ICEVI regions when they meet in Amsterdam, the Netherlands in October 2022. Ms Diana Stentoft, WBU Secretary General and WBU representative on the ICEVI Executive Board, will discuss the importance of joint efforts of WBU and ICEVI with the presidents of the ICEVI regions. We anticipate this networking will serve as a strong base for influencing policies at national levels. More updates will be shared with the ICEVI constituency through publications and emails.

Teacher Training in Trinidad and Tobago

One of the main priorities of the ICEVI North America and Caribbean (NAC) region for the current quadrennium is provision of educational workshops and awareness activities promoting the education rights of children with blindness and low vision through online and in-person networking and collaborative partnerships with national governments, organizations, educators, people with visual impairment and their families. In July 2022, members of the

ICEVI North America and Caribbean region conducted teacher training for education of students with visual impairment, in collaboration with the Trinidad and Tobago Blind Welfare Association (TTBWA) and the Trinidad and Tobago Ministry of Education. Approximately 120 teachers, student aids, diagnostic specialists, parents, and TTBWA service providers participated. The program was an introduction to teaching students with visual impairments and included presentations on access technology, human rights and advocacy, parent perspectives and the perspectives of Trinidad and Tobago teachers. Half of the 120 participants attended in-person and the other half attended online.

The TTBWA has recently become an organizational member of ICEVI NAC. Kenneth Suratt, their Executive Officer, is very interested to continue the collaboration to promote the education of Trinidad and Tobago children who are visually impaired. The organization is planning to build a Training Center for the Caribbean countries. This is the beginning for ICEVI NAC Region's collaboration with their organization and we look forward to supporting future training programs in advocacy, capacity building, parent education and teacher training.

Leadership Training Program for Women with Visual Impairment

ICEVI and the Blind Peoples' Association (BPA) India conducted a 15 days Leadership Training Workshop from 15th June to 30th June, 2022 with the objectives of collectively discussing various issues pertaining to physical and mental health of women; developing basic soft skills such as communication, body language, etc. and understanding about contemporary technology; and sensitize participants about their basic rights as women and special rights as women with disabilities

20 women with visual impairment were from diverse backgrounds and so were their needs. However, the schedule was designed in a flexible manner so that need based changes could be made. The aim of the workshop was to make them ready to face the competition in the Global world. The focus of each session was to empower them so that they could fight against the discrimination based on gender and disability.

Various sessions included importance of yoga, spoken English, learning basic computers, information technology, image building & grooming, health & hygiene, understanding various legislations on protection of their rights, effective communication and leadership.

They learnt the importance of good posture, soft skills and grooming for better acceptance in the society. Truly a very successful program ably

coordinated by Kinnari Desai under the guidance of Nandini Rawal former Treasurer of ICEVI.

The Educator and other publications

Following the World Blindness Summit, a special issue on the Summit was published in July 2021. The Educator focused on higher education in the January 2022 issue. The Publication Committee has decided to focus on thematic issues in the future and will avail the services of guest editors for these issues. This will enable publication of articles pertaining to specific themes with contributions from across ICEVI's regions. Special feature columns on parents, technology, sports, etc., will also be featured in each issue.

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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