

# The Educator



Volume XXXVII - Issue 2

January 2024

*Special Issue*

## ICEVI Strategic Review 2023



A Publication of



The International Council for Education of  
People with Visual Impairment

## PRINCIPAL OFFICERS

### PRESIDENT

#### **Frances Gentle**

Lecturer, NextSense Institute

361-365 North Rocks Road, North Rocks NSW 2151, AUSTRALIA

e-mail: [Frances.Gentle@nextsense.org.au](mailto:Frances.Gentle@nextsense.org.au)

### FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

#### **Bhushan Punani**

Executive Secretary, Blind People's Association (India)

132 Ft. Ring Road, Vastrapur, Ahmedabad 380 015, INDIA

e-mail: [bhushanpunani@gmail.com](mailto:bhushanpunani@gmail.com)

### SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT

#### **Sabine Fijn van Draat**

Secretary, Executive Board

NOVUM Foundation, Amersfoortsestraatweg 180, 1272 RR Huizen

THE NETHERLANDS

e-mail: [sabinefijnvandraad@visio.org](mailto:sabinefijnvandraad@visio.org)

### TREASURER

#### **Praveena Sukhraj-Ely**

Department of Justice and Constitutional Development,

Momentum Centre, 329 Pretorius Street, Pretoria, SOUTH AFRICA

e-mail: [treasurer.icevi@gmail.com](mailto:treasurer.icevi@gmail.com)

### IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

#### **Lord Low of Dalston**

Royal National Institute of Blind People

105 Judd Street, London WC1H 9NE, UNITED KINGDOM

e-mail: [colin.low@rnib.org.uk](mailto:colin.low@rnib.org.uk)

### CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

#### **Mani, M.N.G.**

No.3, Professors' Colony, Sri Ramakrishna Vidyalaya Post,

Coimbatore 641 020, Tamil Nadu, INDIA

e-mail: [ceo201922@gmail.com](mailto:ceo201922@gmail.com)

## REGIONAL PRESIDENTS

### AFRICA

#### **Gertrude Oforiwa Fefoame**

Sightsavers' Global Advocacy Advisor

Densu Point, P.O. Box KIA 18190, North Dzorwulu, Accra, GHANA

e-mail: [gofefoame@sightsavers.org](mailto:gofefoame@sightsavers.org)

### EAST ASIA

#### **Aria Indrawati**

President, Pertuni (The Indonesian Blind Association)

P.O.Box 386, Jl Pertanian Raya, No. 51 Jakarta, INDONESIA

e-mail: [aria.indrawati@gmail.com](mailto:aria.indrawati@gmail.com)

### EUROPE

#### **John Ravenscroft**

Professor of Childhood Visual Impairment, Moray House School of Education and Sport  
University of Edinburgh, Holyrood Road, EH8 8AQ, Edinburgh, UNITED KINGDOM

e-mail: [john.ravenscroft@ed.ac.uk](mailto:john.ravenscroft@ed.ac.uk)

### LATIN AMERICA

#### **Julio César Canizález**

Autopista a Comalapa Urbanización Los Héroes N° B-5, San Salvador,  
EL SALVADOR

e-mail: [presidencia@icevilatinoamerica.org](mailto:presidencia@icevilatinoamerica.org)

### NORTH AMERICA/CARIBBEAN

#### **Susan LaVenture**

North America and Caribbean Regional-ICEVI Office

C/O New York Institute for Special Education, 999 Pelham Parkway, Bronx, NY USA

e-mail: [laventuresusan506@gmail.com](mailto:laventuresusan506@gmail.com)

### PACIFIC

#### **Joanne Mosen**

Disability Inclusion Consultant, Director, Disability Inclusion PTY LTD.

PO Box 2123, Forest Hill 3131, Victoria, AUSTRALIA

e-mail: [joanne@disabilityinclusion.com.au](mailto:joanne@disabilityinclusion.com.au)

### WEST ASIA

#### **Birendra Raj Pokharel**

Action on Disability Rights and Development (ADRAD)

10/80 (Kha) Kopundole, Lalitpur, NEPAL

e-mail: [birendra.abilis@gmail.com](mailto:birendra.abilis@gmail.com)

## FOUNDING ORGANISATIONS

### **American Foundation for the Blind**

#### **Eric Bridges**

President & CEO

1101, Wilson Blvd, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Arlington, VA 22209, USA

e-mail: [ebridges@afb.org](mailto:ebridges@afb.org)

### **Perkins School for the Blind**

#### **Deborah Gleason**

Director, Asia and Pacific Region, Perkins International

Perkins School for the Blind, 175 North Beacon Street, Watertown, MA 02472, USA

e-mail: [deborah.gleason@perkins.org](mailto:deborah.gleason@perkins.org)

### **Royal National Institute of Blind People**

#### **Caireen Sutherland**

105 Judd Street, London WC1H 9NE

UNITED KINGDOM.

e-mail: [caireen.sutherland@rnib.org.uk](mailto:caireen.sutherland@rnib.org.uk)

## INTERNATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

### **Deafblind International**

#### **Mirko Baur**

Vice President, Dbl & CEO, Tanne, Swiss Foundation for Congenital Deafblindness

Alte Dorfstrasse 3d, CH-8135, Langnau am Albis, SWITZERLAND

e-mail: [mirko.baur@tanne.ch](mailto:mirko.baur@tanne.ch)

### **World Blind Union**

#### **Diana Stentoft**

President

68 Meadway, Sunnyhills, Auckland 2010, NEW ZEALAND

e-mail: [dis@blind.dk](mailto:dis@blind.dk)

### **International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness**

#### **Peter Holland**

Chief Executive Officer

4-108, 8 Devonshire Square, London EC2M 4PL, UNITED KINGDOM

e-mail: [pholland@iapb.org](mailto:pholland@iapb.org)

## INTERNATIONAL PARTNER MEMBERS

### **Norwegian Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted (NABPS)**

#### **Terje Iversen**

Director for International, Development Cooperation  
P.O. Box 5900, Majorstua 0308 Oslo, NORWAY  
e-mail: [terje.iversen@blindeforbundet.no](mailto:terje.iversen@blindeforbundet.no)

### **Organización Nacional de Ciegos Españoles**

#### **Ana Peláez**

Director, C/ Almansa, 66, 28039 Madrid, SPAIN  
e-mail: [apn@once.es](mailto:apn@once.es)

### **Overbrook School for the Blind**

#### **Todd Reeves**

CEO and Executive Director  
6333 Malvern Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19151-2597, USA  
e-mail: [todd.reeves@obs.org](mailto:todd.reeves@obs.org)

### **Perkins School for the Blind**

#### **Katherine Holland**

Regional Coordinator – Asia and the Pacific  
175 North Beacon Street, Watertown, MA 02472, USA  
e-mail: [katherine.holland@perkins.org](mailto:katherine.holland@perkins.org)

### **NextSense Institute**

#### **Frances Gentle**

Lecturer  
361-365 North Rocks Road, North Rocks NSW 2151, AUSTRALIA  
e-mail: [Frances.Gentle@nextsense.org.au](mailto:Frances.Gentle@nextsense.org.au)

### **Royal National Institute of Blind People**

#### **Caireen Sutherland**

105 Judd Street, London WC1H 9NE, UNITED KINGDOM  
e-mail: [caireen.sutherland@rnib.org.uk](mailto:caireen.sutherland@rnib.org.uk)

### **Sightsavers**

#### **Andrew Griffiths**

Head of Advocacy  
35 Perrymount Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH16 3BW UNITED KINGDOM  
e-mail: [agriffiths@sightsavers.org](mailto:agriffiths@sightsavers.org)

### **Visio**

#### **Marcel Janssen**

NOVUM Foundation  
Amersfoortsestraatweg 180, 1272 RR Huizen, THE NETHERLANDS  
E-mail: [MarcelJanssen@visio.org](mailto:MarcelJanssen@visio.org)

## International Partner Members

**Norwegian Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted (NABPS)**

[www.blindforbundet.no](http://www.blindforbundet.no)

**Organización Nacional de Ciegos Españoles**

[www.once.es](http://www.once.es)

**Overbrook School for the Blind**

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

**Perkins School for the Blind**

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

**NextSense Institute**

[www.nextsense.org.au](http://www.nextsense.org.au)

**Royal National Institute of Blind People**

[www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)

**Sightsavers**

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

**Visio**

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

## Organisational Members

**American Printing House for the Blind**

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

**Canadian National Institute for the Blind**

[www.cnib.ca](http://www.cnib.ca)

**Federazione Nazionale Delle Istituzioni Pro Ciechi**

[www.prociechi.it](http://www.prociechi.it)

**Hadley Institute for the Blind and Visually Impaired**

[www.hadley.edu](http://www.hadley.edu)

**LES DOIGTS QUI REVENT (Typhlo & Tactus)**

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

**Lions Clubs International Foundation**

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

**Round Table on Information Access for People with Print Disabilities**

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

## **Editor**

**Kay Ferrell**

Professor Emerita, Special Education  
University of Northern Colorado  
10806 Bear Cub Drive  
Broomfield, CO 80021  
USA

## **Associate Editors**

**M.N.G. Mani**

**Nandini Rawal**

## **Assistant Editor**

**Bhushan Punani**

## **Editorial Committee**

**Frances Gentle**

**Kay Ferrell**

**M.N.G. Mani**

## **Designing**

**ICEVI Secretariat**

No.3, Professors' Colony

S.R.K. Vidyalaya Post

Coimbatore - 641 020

Tamil Nadu, INDIA

Telefax : 91-422-2693414

e-mail : [ceo201922@gmail.com](mailto:ceo201922@gmail.com)



## Contents

<b>MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>SNAPSHOT OF ICEVI GLOBAL ACTIVITIES</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>ICEVI STRATEGIC REVIEW – TERMS OF REFERENCE</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>STRATEGIC REVIEW FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR EDUCATION OF PEOPLE WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT (ICEVI)</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>SECTION 1 : CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<i>1. Revision of ICEVI’s Mission, Values and Goals</i> .....	<b>28</b>
<i>2. ICEVI Functions and Structures</i> .....	<b>29</b>
<i>3. Complementary Mechanisms</i> .....	<b>37</b>
<i>4. ICEVI’s Sustainability</i> .....	<b>39</b>
<b>SECTION 2 : ADDITIONAL OUTPUTS FROM THE PROCESS</b> .....	<b>41</b>
<b>APPENDIX A - FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY (DETAILED)</b> .....	<b>46</b>
<b>APPENDIX B - KEY STEPS OF THE PROCESS</b> .....	<b>65</b>
<b>APPENDIX C - TERMS OF REFERENCE</b> .....	<b>66</b>
<b>ICEVI STRATEGIC REVIEW: RESOLUTIONS APPROVED BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD</b> .....	<b>72</b>

## Message from the President and CEO



Dear Readers,

This January 2024 issue of The Educator presents the ICEVI strategic review that was conducted by the Executive Board during 2023. We acknowledge with thanks the contributions of Mr Jonathan Dudding (UK), for his facilitation of the review process. The Board deliberated on the mission, values,



goals and structure of ICEVI, seeking to ensure that the organisation continues as a sustainable, focused, vibrant and influential membership network, dedicated to promoting the human right to quality education for children and young people with blindness, low vision, deafblindness and multiple disability.

The final report of the strategic review, presented in this issue, reflects the Executive Board's consideration of current and emerging trends in education. The Board has re-affirmed its commitment to the ICEVI mission of promoting access to inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all people with visual impairment. The importance of cooperation and networking was emphasised, including within ICEVI's membership, with regional and national partners, and with the global disability and education community.

We are pleased to advise that preparations are well underway for the 2024 ICEVI World Conference and General Assembly, to be held in the historical city of Ahmedabad, India, on 14 – 17 November 2024. The Conference is hosted by the Blind People's Association (India) and Sense International India, and the conference venue is the Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University, Ahmedabad. The conference will bring together leading experts from the field of the education of persons with visual impairment, including professionals, caregivers and persons with visual impairment. Keynote speakers will include Dr. Aubrey Webson, Ambassador of Antigua and Barbados to the United Nations; Ana Peláez, ONCE and Chairperson of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); Gertrude Oforiwa Fefoame, President ICEVI Africa and Chairperson of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD); Mirko Baur, President of Deafblind International; Richard Orme and Dipendra Manocha, DAISY Consortium; and Shrutilata Singh of Sense India. We invite you to visit the dedicated conference website, <https://icevi2024wc.org/>, for information about registration, accommodation options, and program updates. We look forward to welcoming you to the Conference.

**Frances Gentle**, President;

and

**M.N.G. Mani**, Chief Executive Officer

## Message from the Editor



Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Another issue of The Educator goes to rest, this one focusing on the strategic planning in which the Executive Board engaged over the past year. Please read this issue carefully, as there are some big changes planned for ICEVI. The next issue of The Educator will be especially important, as it will provide notice of the constitutional changes that will be necessary to implement the Executive Board's (EXBO) resolutions resulting from the strategic planning process. In this issue, I draw your attention to page 72, where the resolutions passed by the EXBO begin.

But there's more to this issue than ICEVI's strategic planning process. You will be impressed with the amount of activity that ICEVI was able to accomplish between October 2022 and December 2023, even while engaging in strategic planning! Excerpts from President Frances Gentle's report to the EXBO begins on the next page.

I especially wish to acknowledge the 17 years of support from the Nippon Foundation in the Higher Education Project. The partnership between ICEVI and the Nippon Foundation has encouraged approximately 3000 students with visual impairment to pursue higher education and assisted nearly 500 higher education graduates with their transition to employment. What an extraordinary achievement!

While I can promise one more issue of The Educator, our communication strategies are likely to evolve into something new and different during the next biennium, given the changes ahead in ICEVI's structure, membership, and officers. Let me acknowledge now the perpetual efforts of Dr Mani to produce The Educator—he is the true editor; my efforts pale in comparison to his. I also thank Nandini Rawal, our Associate Editor, who agreed to join me on this journey. I had always been mesmerized by her teaching skills, and this gave me a chance to learn even more about her. Thank you both, Mani and Nandini.

I'm hoping to see you in Ahmedabad for ICEVI's World Conference and General Assembly in November, 2024. Until then, lift up your students with visual impairment and challenge the assumptions that limit their lives and their education!

**Kay Alicyn Ferrell**

[kay.ferrell@unco.edu](mailto:kay.ferrell@unco.edu)

Broomfield, Colorado, USA

# Snapshot of ICEVI global activities

Presented below is a snapshot of ICEVI activities at the global level during the period of October 2022 and December 2023. The summary is drawn from the ICEVI President's report to the Executive Board dated 8<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

## Strategic Review

During its October 2022 meeting, the Executive Board (EXBO) resolved to carry out a full strategic review of the purpose, direction and shape of ICEVI, and to appoint an external facilitator/consultant to undertake the review process. The ICEVI President, in consultation with the Principal Officers, conducted online interviews with potential consultants. In early February 2023, the Terms of Reference were finalised and ICEVI entered into a Consultancy Agreement with Jonathan Dudding (UK).

Under Jonathan Dudding's facilitation, members of the Executive Board and their respective organisations and ICEVI regional boards contributed to the review process through an online survey and individual and group meetings, culminating in voting on a series of proposed resolutions. The outcomes of the voting process were shared with EXBO members just prior to their meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2023. As noted in Jonathan Dudding's introduction to the voting process, the final details and implementation of the agreed changes will be carried forward into 2024 by the Principal Officers and self-nominating EXBO committees.

## Retirement of Dr MNG Mani, CEO of ICEVI

The December 2023 meeting of the Executive Board was the final official meeting of ICEVI's CEO, Dr MNG Mani, who is retiring after 21.5 years with the ICEVI Secretariat. Dr Mani leaves a rich legacy of effective governance and administrative structures, an organisational database spanning two decades, publications, projects, and strong global, regional and national networks and partnerships. Mani has worked tirelessly to progress the Mission and Goals of ICEVI. He has maintained his focus and commitment to improving the quality of life of children and young people with visual impairment. On a personal note, it has been a great pleasure and privilege to work with Mani. He is a caring, thoughtful, intelligent and respectful person and I wish him a fulfilling retirement from ICEVI and hope to continue drawing on his expertise and guidance as we prepare for the 2024 ICEVI World Conference and General Assembly.

**ICEVI Secretariat:** We are bidding farewell to Mani from the role of CEO and also to the ICEVI Secretariat. On behalf of members, I extend my sincere appreciation to Mr N. Velmurugan, Finance Officer, and Mr M.R. Visvanathan, Documentation Officer of

ICEVI. I wish them every success in the future and thank them for their 21.5 years of contribution to ICEVI.

### **ICEVI finances**

All EXBO members have a fiduciary duty to act in the interests of ICEVI. I acknowledge, with thanks, Dr MNG Mani, CEO, and Dr Praveena Sukhraj-Ely, Treasurer, for their efficient and effective management and oversight of the ICEVI finances and fulfilment of the audit and banking requirements of Companies House (UK) and HSBC (UK).

Praveena has effectively coordinated the transition to online banking with HSBC and has fulfilled HSBC's requirements, including their annual review of ICEVI records. The transition to online banking system enables Praveena to review and monitor the ICEVI accounts as required, rather than waiting for hard copy statements to arrive by post. As a result, Praveena has provided the Principal Officers with quarterly income and expenditure reports and accurate information on ICEVI finances to the EXBO.

Praveena, with support from Mani, has managed the audit process for 2022. She maintains meticulous records of global and regional transactions. As a result, the 2022 audit conducted by Lubbock and Fine (UK) went through smoothly and on time. Praveena and Mani have also maintained the web filing system and list of ICEVI Board of Directors registered with Companies House.

### **Meetings and events**

The ICEVI Principal Officers (POs) and Mani, CEO, initiated and/or attended a range of meetings and events on behalf of the EXBO during the period covered by this report, including the following:

- Monthly online POs meetings to fulfill our responsibilities on behalf of ICEVI and the EXBO.
- Regular meetings of the regional ICEVI Presidents to discuss regional plans, share information and ideas, and to promote collegiality and cohesion among the Presidents and their regional Boards.
- Meetings of the ICEVI task groups, in particular, the Gender Equality and Women's Rights Task Group, facilitated by Ana Peláez (ONCE); the Task Group on Children's Participation, also facilitated by Ana Peláez; and the Technology in Education Task Group, facilitated by Marcel Janssen and Christiaan Pinkster (Visio).
- Meetings of the Deafblind International (DbI) global committee and regional sub-committees for the DbI Deafblind Education campaign.

- ICEVI Regional Mathematics master training workshop for teacher educators in Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Cambodia and Laos, held in Manila Philippines, 15-17 November 2022.
- ICEVI Regional Youth Summit, Manila, Philippines, 3-4 December 2022.
- Vision Alliance meeting of ICEVI, WBU and IAPB, 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023.
- WBU Executive Committee meeting, Wellington New Zealand, 29 May to 2 June 2023
- 16<sup>th</sup> Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the UNCPRD, UN New York, 13-15 June 2023, plus side meetings with Mr Gopal Mitra, UNICEF; and Mr Aubrey Webson, Ambassador to the UN for Antigua and Barbuda.
- ICEVI East Asia Conference, Jogjakarta, Indonesia, 18-20 September 2023.
- ICEVI Africa Conference, Nairobi, Kenya, 10-12 October 2023, including side meeting with CEO of DAISY Consortium to discuss Visionary Learning through Education global initiative.
- ICEVI Regional Youth Summit, Manila, Philippines, 3-5 December 2023.
- International Conference on Education of People with Visual Impairment, Beijing China, 3-4 December 2023, including side meeting with China Braille Press to discuss Chinese translation of ICEVI publications.

In addition to the above meetings, Dr Praveena Sukhraj-Ely attended the following events in her capacity of ICEVI representative on the Executive Board of WIPO Accessible Books Consortium (ABC):

- Meetings of the WIPO ABC Board, Geneva, Switzerland, during the year.
- WIPO 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the Marrakesh Treaty, Geneva, 12 July 2023.

I refer you to the reports tabled by the regional Presidents for information about the activities and plans of the ICEVI Regional Boards of Africa, East Asia, Europe, Latin America North America/Caribbean, Pacific and West Asia.

### **Conferences**

The ICEVI East Asia and ICEVI Africa regions hosted in-person regional conferences during September and October 2023 in Indonesia and Kenya respectively. The high-quality conference programs and presentations addressed a range of pertinent VI education topics and attendance at both conferences was well above expectations. The ICEVI West Asia Board have postponed their regional conference in Bangladesh to February 2024.



Preparations for the 2024 ICEVI World Conference and General Assembly are well underway, with regular planning meetings of the Programme and Host Committees during 2023. A dedicated conference website has been established and includes conference information, call for papers, draft program, accommodation options, and online registration – go to <https://icevi2024wc.org/>. The second conference announcement will be sent out in the next week or two, with the due date for abstracts extended to the end of May 2024.

I am sure you will appreciate that our POs and Presidents are busy people, as evidenced by their employment/professional positions listed on the ICEVI website under each region. I extend my thanks to each and every one for their commitment to improving the quality of life of children with visual impairment, and their voluntary contributions to progressing ICEVI's Mission at global, regional and national levels.

### **Conclusion of ICEVI-Nippon Foundation higher education project**

Since the outset, the ICEVI-Nippon Foundation higher education initiative has been an important component of the ICEVI-WBU Education for All Children with Visual Impairment (EFA-VI) global campaign. The success of the higher education pilot project in Indonesia in 2006 led to expansion of the initiative to the Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos, and Mongolia.

The purpose of the higher education project is to promote access and inclusion in education and employment for young people with visual impairment. A range of school and higher education activities were provided to national project partners, participating schools and higher education institutions, employers, and participating students in the seven East Asia countries. Activities included arranging equipment for student use, establishing higher education resource centres, supporting preparation of accessible teaching and learning materials, training activities for students and staff, including soft skills and employment skills, instructional approaches to teaching mathematics to students with visual impairment, orientation programmes for employers, skills in influencing legislation and networking with government bodies, and country champions programs.

Dr Larry Campbell, Past ICEVI President, and Dr Mani, CEO, served jointly as the Project Directors from the project pilot in 2006 until 2020, when Larry handed over the Directorship to Mani. Since 2006, annual documentation and reports were published for the ICEVI Executive Board and The Nippon Foundation. With conclusion of the higher education initiative at the end of 2023, ICEVI, in partnership with The Nippon Foundation, will have assisted over 3000 students with visual impairment to pursue higher education, and nearly 500 higher education graduates were assisted with their transition to employment.

The 17-year commitment of The Nippon Foundation to the project is gratefully acknowledged. Their financial support has enabled ICEVI to facilitate meaningful and positive change in the lives of participating students with vision impairment.

### **ICEVI YouTube channels**

The ICEVI-Nippon Foundation higher education initiative included creation of two dedicated YouTube channels. With thanks to the work of Mani and contributing mathematics teachers, the ICEVI [Math Made Easy](#) YouTube channel now has 618 of instructional mathematics videos. These videos elaborate on the 2005 publication entitled “Mathematics Made Easy for Children with Visual Impairment”, jointly published by ICEVI and Overbrook School for the Blind (OBS). To date, there are 4300 of subscribers to the Math Made Easy YouTube channel.

The second YouTube channel, entitled [Partnerships for Change](#), presents case studies that elaborate on the 2021 publication entitled “Partnerships for Change: National strategies - regional collaboration”, jointly published by ICEVI and OBS ON-NET and The Nippon Foundation, and the 2022 publication entitled “Transition to Employment: Lessons from the Philippines, Indonesia and Vietnam, jointly published by ICEVI and The Nippon Foundation. To date, there are 44 videos in this YouTube channel.

### **Publications**

I acknowledge with thanks the contributions of Drs Kay Ferrell and MNG Mani in leading the preparation of the following ICEVI publications during 2023:

- The Educator, January 2023 issue
- E-News, March and August 2023 issues
- 2022 Annual Report
- 2022 Annual Report of the Higher Education Network
- Transition to Employment: Lessons from the Philippines, Indonesia & Vietnam (*ICEVI & TNF Publication*)

**ICEVI Messages**, prepared by the President and Principal Officers:

- World Braille Day, 4 January 2023
- International Day of Persons with Disabilities, 3 December 2023

### **Joint ICEVI-WBU position statements**

ICEVI and WBU are currently preparing four joint position statements addressing the following topics:

- Early Intervention and Early Childhood Care and Education
- The Right to Education, including Lifelong Learning



- Digital Learning Spaces
- Education in Emergencies for Persons with Visual Impairment

The initial release date for the position statements was 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2023, the UN International Day of Persons with Disabilities. However, the release date has been extended to 24<sup>th</sup> January 2024, the UN International Day of Education.

### **News of Executive Board members**

As a Board, we rarely pause to share information about the achievements and activities of individual members, or to acknowledge incoming and outgoing members and organisations. I am therefore taking this opportunity to acknowledge and following individuals and organisations.

Mr David Clarke, ICEVI Company Secretary and RNIB representative on the EXBO, left RNIB and ICEVI to take up the post of CEO of the British Paralympic Association. David has kindly agreed to continue as ICEVI Company Secretary until the next Secretary is appointed. We wish him every success in his new appointment.

Ms Ana Pelaez Narvaez, ONCE representative on the EXBO, was elected Chairperson of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in February 2023. In addition to her work with ONCE and CEDAW, Ana is Facilitator of the ICEVI Children's Participation task group, and Facilitator of the Gender Equality and Women's Rights task group.

Ms Gertrude Oforiwa Fefoame, Sightsavers representative on the EXBO and ICEVI Africa Regional President, was elected Chairperson of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in February 2023. Getty has served on the CRPD since 2018 and is a strong human rights advocate.

We are fortunate to be able to draw on the knowledge and experience of Ana and Getty when promoting the right to education for people with visual impairment.

### **Departure of international partner members**

Following the EXBO meeting in October 2022, CBM made the decision to change their membership status from international partner member to Africa regional partner member. CBM and ICEVI Africa have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to promote and enable collaboration to support and strengthen the work of ICEVI Africa. I extend my appreciation to CBM for their continued commitment to the mission of ICEVI and look forward to receiving updates on their collaboration with ICEVI Africa.

The Principal Officers have been advised that the Norwegian Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted (NAPBS) will discontinue its international partner membership at the end of 2023. ICEVI has benefited from contributions and wise counsel of Terje Iverson and Arnt Holte. I note in *The Educator* of July 2002 that Arne Husveg is

listed as the NABP representative – our partnership extends a long way back. On behalf of ICEVI, I wish Terje every success in his work as NABP Director of International Development and Cooperation.

The Principal Officers have also been advised that NextSense (Australia) will discontinue its international partner membership at the end of 2023. My organisation, NextSense, had made an eight-year (two term) commitment to supporting my position as ICEVI President. NextSense will continue its annual contribution to my travel costs as ICEVI President.

In concluding this report, I extend my sincere thanks to our members, partners and supporters around the world for their commitment to progressing the ICEVI Mission of equitable access to quality inclusive education for all children with blindness, low vision, deafblindness, and multiple disability. I look forward to reconnecting with the Executive Board in the New Year.

**Frances Gentle**, President, ICEVI

# ICEVI Strategic Review – Terms of Reference

4<sup>th</sup> February 2023

## 1. Background

The International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI), at its meeting of the Executive Board held on 4 - 6 October 2022, resolved to carry out a full strategic review of the purpose, direction and shape of ICEVI. The Executive Board resolved to commission an external facilitator to undertake the strategy review. It is anticipated the review process will be conducted between January/February and July 2023, with the majority of the Facilitator's work conducted online.

### Notes:

- ICEVI's organisational structure consists of an Executive Board (EXBO), Chief Executive Officer (CEO), and seven Regional Boards that, in some regions, include Sub-Regional and National Boards.
- The Executive Board consists of Principal Officers, Presidents of the seven regions, and Representatives of International Partner Member organisations, Founding Member organisations, and umbrella organisations of ICEVI.
- The International Partner Member organisations are CBM, Overbrook, ONCE, Perkins, NextSense, RNIB, Sightsavers, NABP, and Visio. The seven Regional Boards of ICEVI represent the world regions of Africa, East Asia, Europe, Latin America, North America and the Caribbean, Pacific, and West Asia.
- The mission, values and goals of ICEVI are presented in Section 7 below.

## 2. Purpose of the strategic review

The purpose of the strategic review is to reach consensus agreement among members of the Executive Board (and their respective member organisations and regional boards) about the medium to long term purpose, direction, and shape of ICEVI, as articulated through the mission, values, goals, and structure of ICEVI.

## 3. Review process

The review may be considered as a two-stage process:

**Stage 1:**

- Desktop research by the facilitator to gain an overall understanding of ICEVI.
- Members of the ICEVI Executive Board, supported by the facilitator, consider the current external environment of disability-inclusive education for children and young people with vision impairment, in relation to the role, relevance, value, and contribution of ICEVI, as articulated through our mission, values, and goals.

**Stage 2 Framing:**

- With consideration of the outcomes of Stage 1, how do we, as members, structure ICEVI and build capacity and sustainability within ICEVI to achieve its purpose, direction, and shape, as articulated through our mission, values, and goals?

The Consultant shall perform his duties independently and on his own responsibility in consultation with the President and CEO.

**4. Principles underpinning the Facilitator’s approach**

The facilitator will use the set of group facilitation methods known as the [Technology of Participation](#) (ToP). The core principles of ToP, as detailed in Section 8 below, are inclusive participation, teamwork and collaboration, individual and group creativity, ownership and action, and reflection and learning.

**5. Scope of Work**

Listed below are the tasks of the facilitator and a tentative timeline for the strategy review process. Throughout the review process, the facilitator will “check in” monthly (as required) with the President and CEO.

**December 2022 – January 2023**

- Meeting of the Principal Officers and facilitator to discuss the strategy review process and to reach agreement about the scope of the review, the role of the facilitator, how the process will be conducted, the projected hours of work required, and an estimate of the facilitator fee.
- The Principal Officers and facilitator will draft the Terms of Reference (ToR) and Contract for approval by the Executive Board.
- The Principal Officers will seek Executive Board approval during January, noting that some revisions to the draft ToR and Contract may result from Executive Board feedback prior to approval.

### **February 2023 -Stage 1 of strategic review**

- The facilitator will conduct desk research to gain an overall understanding of ICEVI's current organisational structure, members and partnerships, policies and position papers, publications, projects and achievements. The information reviewed will include the ICEVI global and regional websites and publications and the websites of similar non-profit organisations in other sectors. A synopsis of the documents used to inform the design of the first stage of the strategic review will be submitted to the Executive Board by email or verbally.
- The facilitator will gather information from members of the Executive Board using an accessible questionnaire or other data collection tool (e.g., Word and Google Docs, Google forms), allowing time for members to consult with their respective member organisations and the ICEVI regional boards (estimated time for completion is 2 weeks). The information gathered will be collated and a synopsis circulated to the Executive Board in order to inform the small group discussions of the mission, goals and values.

### **March – May 2023 – Stage 1 of strategic review (cont.)**

- The facilitator will meet online with members of the Executive Board (small group and/or individual meetings) to consider the current external environment of disability-inclusive education for children with vision impairment, and to gather information and members' perspectives and ideas about the medium to long term purpose, direction and shape of ICEVI, as articulated through ICEVI's mission, values and goals.
- Drawing on analysis and synthesis of the information gathered during the previous months, the facilitator will draft a set of statements outlining the recommended medium to long term purpose, direction, and shape of ICEVI, and the consequent changes required to the mission, values and goals of ICEVI. The draft statements will first be submitted to the President and CEO for review and revision (if required).
- The President and CEO will (a) circulate the draft set of statements to the Executive Board for review and (b) schedule an online Board meeting for discussion and affirmation of the draft statements.

### **June - July 2023 – State 2 of the strategic review (Framing)**

- Following Executive Board affirmation of the set of statements, the facilitator may conduct a second desk review to investigate compatible organisations in other sectors.
- The facilitator will undertake a second round of online meetings with members of the Executive Board (small group, individual), to gather

individual, organisational and regional perspectives on how best to structure ICEVI and build capacity and sustainability within ICEVI to achieve the agreed-upon purpose, direction, and shape of ICEVI.

### **July 2023**

- A final Executive Board meeting will be held with the facilitator to complete the strategic review process.

## **6. Key Deliverables – Stages 1 and 2 of strategic review process**

- a) Desk research completed to develop an understanding of ICEVI's mission, values, goals, organisational structure, membership, partnerships, publications, projects, and achievements. A synopsis of the documents used to inform the design of the first stage of the strategic review submitted to the Executive Board by email or verbally.
- b) Environmental scan completed of global disability-inclusive education context, including education for children and young people with vision impairment.
- c) Information gathered from Executive Board members, member organisations and regional boards, using a questionnaire or other collection tool.
- d) Online meetings conducted with Executive Board members (phase 1 of review process), following the principles of inclusive participation, teamwork, and collaboration.
- e) Draft set of statements prepared and circulated to the Executive Board outlining the recommended medium to long term purpose, direction, and shape of ICEVI, and the consequent changes required to the mission, values, and goals of ICEVI.
- f) Online meetings conducted with Executive Board members (phase 2 of review process), to facilitate consensus and ownership of decisions regarding ICEVI's structure, and how to build capacity and sustainability to achieve the purpose, direction, and shape of ICEVI, as articulated through the mission, values, and goals.

### **Notes:**

- At this point in time, a decision has not been made as to whether to hold the meeting online or in person. The decision regarding a final online or in-person meeting will be made by April 2023, as the design of Stage Two will be informed by the nature of the meeting.

## 7. Mission, Values and Goals of ICEVI

### Mission

ICEVI is a membership organisation with a mission to promote access to inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all people with visual impairment.

The Mission of ICEVI is aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 4 for Education, with an emphasis on education for children and young people with visual impairments.

### Values

ICEVI believes that all children and young people with visual impairment and their families have the right to:

- provision of a full range of educational services and to be included in the educational programs of their respective countries and communities;
- receive early intervention, early childhood development, care and pre-primary education;
- support by teachers and other professionals who are properly trained;
- educational materials, teaching methods and programs that are of a high standard, conform to best practices, and to meet their needs;
- live in environments that are free of barriers, social stigmas, and stereotypes; and
- lead productive lives, according to their aspirations and capabilities.

### Goals for 2022-2024

- Promote access to quality education for people with visual impairment (VI).
- Influence governments and relevant stakeholders to implement the SDGs and UNCRPD.
- Facilitate networking, information sharing, and collaboration at national, regional, and global levels.

## 8. Principles underpinning the strategic review process

The Facilitator will use the following set of group facilitation methods known as the [Technology of Participation](#) (ToP).

### Inclusive Participation

Inviting and sustaining the participation of all members of a group and building respect for any ideas generated. This value is particularly important when working with people who are visually impaired, ensuring that the process, whether in-person or online, enables all participants to participate equally.

Online, this extends to the use of appropriate technology which is accessible to people of low or no vision (for example, being compatible with screen readers).

### **Teamwork and Collaboration**

Recognising the “whole is greater than the sum of the parts” and building processes and structures that reflect and value the contribution made by team cohesion and allow participants to build and develop consensus based on all the ideas.

### **Individual and Group Creativity**

Bringing out the best of each person’s rational and intuitive capabilities by making explicit the emotional aspect of human behaviour and its importance in both positive (creativity, intuition) but also negative (anger, frustration) ways.

### **Ownership and Action**

Building a sense of ownership of decisions amongst the group members, positioning them to take action, and ensuring that participants are sufficiently committed to the agreed results to convert them into practice and action.

### **Reflection and Learning**

Ensuring that, in any developmental process, the group has sufficient time and opportunity to reflect on what they have decided so far, to examine the implications of those decisions and to revisit them if necessary.



# Strategic Review for the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI)

## Introduction

The purpose of this strategic review is to reach consensus agreement among members of the Executive Board (and their respective member organisations and regional boards) about the medium to long term purpose, direction, and shape of ICEVI, as articulated through the mission, values, goals, and structure of ICEVI.

The review took place between February and July 2023. This report describes the process, highlights the main findings and results and draws a series of conclusions and recommendations for consideration by the ICEVI Executive Board (EXBO).

As part of the consensus-building process, the draft final report was circulated to all members of the EXBO on the 31st July 2023, with any comments/feedback invited by the 31st August. Seven responses were received, most of which were implicitly or explicitly supportive of the recommendations, primarily adding in suggestions or further detail. Further, the report has been reviewed and discussed by the ICEVI Principal Officers, in preparation for fuller consideration, discussion and decisions by the EXBO.

All the comments received in August 2023 have either been incorporated into the text of the appropriate sections, or added as individual feedback.

*The report is laid out as follows:*

## Section 1: Conclusions and Recommendations

### Key Recommendations

1. ICEVI's Mission, Values and Goals
2. ICEVI's Functions and Structures
3. Complementary Mechanisms
4. Sustainability

## Section 2: Additional Outputs from the Process

Appendix A: Findings from the Survey (detail)

Appendix B: Key Steps of the Process

Appendix C: Terms of Reference

## Section 1 : Conclusions and Recommendations

Several themes emerged during the process that are worth consideration as the conclusions and recommendations are discussed by members of the ICEVI Executive Board:

1. There is a direct link between the strength and influence of ICEVI and the level of commitment of its members. The overall impression is that ICEVI is an organisation highly valued by its members and recognised for the relevance of its role in the education of people with visual impairment.
2. There is also a sense of commitment to ICEVI amongst EXBO members and a readiness to give their time to consider ICEVI's future form and direction. Members have, even when being critical, responded constructively and thoughtfully to the questions raised by the review, and have been active in involving other ICEVI colleagues in the discussions around the survey and the EXBO meetings.
3. The process and the participants' willingness to engage illustrates that often the provision of space and time for discussion of a specific topic is enough to generate solutions. The conclusions and recommendations outlined here come largely from the collective wisdom of the EXBO members.
4. The ideas submitted in the initial survey and emerging from the subsequent discussions demonstrate both consistency and a significant level of agreement. While there are still differences of opinion, there is a sense of growing consensus amongst ICEVI EXBO members about many of the key issues. This is a cause for optimism, although there is still some way to go in clarifying some of the suggestions and putting them into action.
5. A key theme that emerged during the process was the importance of feasibility. There are potentially many options for a membership network interested in strengthening itself, but one of the criteria for the recommendations in this report was that they should be "do-able". While some of the recommendations do require financial resources, many don't, and depend more on the energy and commitment of network members.
6. While the Terms of Reference for the Strategic Review pointed to the need to review the ICEVI structures, the survey results and the discussions identified the need to think beyond just structures, and really focus on the wider question "How can ICEVI gear itself up to maximise its contribution to its mission?" This required looking at functions, roles, processes and systems and, crucially, sustainability—how any future shape and form could be maintained into the future.

7. The **vision** that is emerging for ICEVI is that of a sustainable, focused, vibrant and influential membership network, driven by the needs of its target audience and responsive to the changing demands of its context. Largely guided and made effective by members, the network is supported by a small, professional administration working with creative and engaging systems. The recommendations in this report build towards such a vision.

## **Key Recommendations**

### **1. Adoption of the revised Mission, Values and Goals**

### **2. ICEVI Functions and Structures**

- 2.1 Clarification and agreement on the core functions of ICEVI at global, regional, and national levels
- 2.2 Structures:
  - 2.2.1 Review of EXBO membership
  - 2.2.2 Reconsideration of the global management post, its title, job description, and terms and conditions
  - 2.2.3 Review of the functions and capacity of the regional entities
  - 2.2.4 Formalisation of National Focal Points and inclusion in the ICEVI structures
  - 2.2.5 Review of the current membership scheme and categories with a view to expansion and diversification

### **3. Complementary Mechanisms**

- 3.1 To update and improve ICEVI's website
- 3.2 To strengthen ICEVI's presence on social media
- 3.3 To make better use of collective communication tools

### **4. Sustainability**

- 4.1 To develop and grow income from membership dues (linked to 2.2.5)
- 4.2 To diversify income streams
- 4.3 To build fundraising capacity within ICEVI

## 1. Revision of ICEVI's Mission, Values and Goals

These suggestions emerged from the survey and the first round of discussions, after which the draft revisions were re-circulated for further feedback and then considered by the Principal Officers before being finalised. The overall effect of the revisions is to affirm the previous statements, but to bring greater clarity to ICEVI's role, target group, and use of terms.

Prior to the circulation of the report in July 2023, further changes were recommended by some respondents. These changes are noted below, but ICEVI (the Principal Officers) may like to consider whether further refinements are appropriate at this stage, or whether these comments might be better held for a future review.

### 1. MISSION STATEMENT

The International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) is a membership network with a mission to promote access to inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all people with visual impairment.

### 2. VALUES

We believe that all people with visual impairment and their families have the right to:

- provision of a full range of educational services and to be included in the educational programs of their respective countries and communities (*extra comment from EXBO member: Delete "of their respective countries and communities"*);
- receive early intervention, early childhood development, care and pre-primary education;
- support by teachers and other professionals who are properly trained;
- provision of reasonable accommodation for their needs, including accessible educational materials, enhanced technology, and teaching methods and programs that are of a high standard and conform to best practices;
- live in environments that are free of barriers, social stigmas, and stereotypes;
- lead productive lives, according to their aspirations and capabilities, without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity (*extra comment from EXBO member: Add "Are able to" at the beginning of the sentence*).

### 3. GOALS

**Goal 1:** Promoting access to quality education for people with visual impairment including those with partial sight/low vision, blindness, deaf blindness, and additional disabilities.

*Extra comments from EXBO members:*

1. *"People with visual impairment including those with partial sight/low vision, blindness, deaf blindness, and additional disabilities have access to quality education"*
2. *Change "Promoting access to quality education" to "Promote quality and accessible education"*
3. *Replace "Promoting" with "Campaigning for"*

**Goal 2:** To influence governments' and relevant stakeholders' implementation of the SDGs and UNCRPD in the area of education of people with visual impairment by marshalling ICEVI structures, members and collaborative partnerships.

*Extra comments from EXBO members:*

1. *"Governments and other relevant stakeholders implement the SDGs and UNCRPD in the area of education of people with visual impairment"*
2. *"Influence governments' and relevant stakeholders' implementation of the SDGs and UNCRPD in the area of education, to ensure no one is left behind, and in particular to ensure that ICEVI structures and members are part of a collaborative partnership that ensures the educational needs of people with visual impairment are met."*

**Goal 3:** Improving networking, information sharing, and collaboration at national, regional, and global levels.

## 2. ICEVI Functions and Structures

### 2.1 ICEVI Functions

- 2.1.1 The agreement emerging from this review is that ICEVI should be regarded as, and see itself as, a membership network, concerned primarily with the sharing, promotion and dissemination of knowledge and expertise (including for advocacy with external stakeholders, such as multilateral institutions and governments); convening conferences and meetings where feasible (*i.e.*, taking account of time and funds required for this activity); making/facilitating connections within and

beyond the network; and building, coordinating, and supporting the membership (including raising the profile of ICEVI). Such functions would need to be carried out in ways that also meet the criteria of being sustainable, of engaging with and raising the voice of members, and of finding an appropriate balance between digital and in-person.

- 2.1.2 Key to these functions being effectively carried out will be appropriate division between the global or international ICEVI structures, the regional structures, and members. Indications from the review are that there may well be similar functions, but with a different focus. Advocacy at the global level, for example, would be targeting global bodies, international agencies, etc. whereas advocacy at the regional level would be directed more at the regional, sub-regional, or national levels. Campaign resources could also be produced at the different levels, encouraging use of different languages, context-specific-messaging, relevant case studies, etc. This is elaborated further in the current ICEVI Advocacy strategy.
- 2.1.3 While previously ICEVI was also regarded, at least by some, as an implementer of projects, the feeling now is that this should be left to members, who could work alone or together with others. While ICEVI may still identify the need for particular projects to support the three main goals, especially in the arena of global research or in countries where there is no ICEVI member of sufficient capacity, the emphasis would still be on working with members, either singly or collectively.
- 2.1.4 The implications of a move away from project implementation are a reduction of burden on the ICEVI administration (at the global and regional levels); a change in the competencies and compensation required for the CEO, away from project management towards networking, communications, coordination; avoidance of competition with (specifically) International Partner Members who may be seeking funding from the same donors for similar work.

**It is recommended that ICEVI's functions as a membership network are clarified and affirmed by the Board.**

## **2.2 ICEVI Structures**

Within the context of the ICEVI Mission and functions, the review found that the current structures are largely fit for purpose, but with some reservations:

### 2.2.1 The EXBO

This is currently made up of five main groups: International Partner Members (IPMs), Principal Officers, Regional Presidents, Founding Members and umbrella bodies. While such a range of representation is welcome, it may be worth ICEVI considering whether:

- a) Founding members is still a meaningful category for EXBO membership. While it may have been appropriate for the Founding Members to be on the EXBO in the early days of ICEVI, it is questionable how valuable that status remains now, over 70 years into ICEVI's existence, when all the individuals involved in those early days are well into retirement and when the external context has changed so much.
- b) Currently 2 out of the 3 Founding Members (RNIB and Perkins) are IPMs and active in their commitment and participation, while the 3<sup>rd</sup> Founding Member, the American Foundation for the Blind, took no part in the review.
- c) A similar question might be asked of the umbrella organisations. Of the three represented, two played a small role in the review, one was very active. There is little question that having such strong relationships with other networks is important and valuable, but whether that should extend to membership of the most senior decision-making body within ICEVI is perhaps more questionable. At least one of the representatives was reluctant to participate as they did not feel it appropriate that they should be contributing to such internal decisions.
- d) Should the above suggestions be accepted, some alternative ways of involving Founding Members and umbrella bodies are:
  - a. A separate body (perhaps similar to the Partnership Committee that used to exist) could be set up which would bring together ICEVI and its key external partners on a regular basis to share and learn from each other and, potentially,
    - i. identify specific areas of collaboration, which would be governed by a separate agreement (such as the current Vision Alliance); and
    - ii. explore linkages between the regional and national level representatives of the different networks
  - b. Setting up specific membership categories for:



- i. “Emeritus” or “Honorary” members—people and/or organisations who are recognised for their contribution to ICEVI and/or its area of focus;
- ii. “Network members” for relevant umbrella bodies (who could still be invited to EXBO meetings as observers) with whom ICEVI wants to retain ties (see Section 2.2.5 below).

*One additional comment from an EXBO member on this recommendation was that, when discussing future composition of membership and the EXBO, we need to look into how collaborations and networks among ICEVI leadership and other global and regional organisations can be maintained and strengthened. In other words, ensuring the EXBO not only serves as a decision making body of ICEVI but also creates networking opportunities for those participating. If changes are made I believe it is very important to ensure alternative (and attractive) possibilities are formed, as otherwise ICEVI could lose its presence in other organisations which would be very unfortunate.*

- e) Such changes would potentially release around six places on the EXBO which, it is proposed, could be filled with further representation of members, thus creating more links between the EXBO and regional or even national level membership.

## **2.2.2 The Post of Chief Executive Officer**

The upcoming retirement of MNG Mani after a long period of service meant that the question of whether and how to replace him was uppermost in many participants’ minds during the review and it was discussed at length in the July meetings of the EXBO.

There is little question that members want a global post retained, taking care of any compliance issues for the organisation, supporting the EXBO and Principal Officers, coordinating any Task Groups, ensuring a level of consistency across regions, and managing communications with the network and its members. Many regard the post as core to ICEVI’s existence and focus, and the ratio of salary to work product was appreciated. It was also clear that the consistency and stability brought by having a permanent post made that preferable to any idea of rotating the post through IPMs, for example.

Alongside the recommendation that a global post be retained, it was also felt that ICEVI, especially if it is moving away from any project management, should move away from a “Chief Executive Officer” and



move towards a “Network Manager” (or similar), a title that both points towards a different status and set of competencies, but also to lower remuneration.

Currently, ICEVI does not have any employees: All paid positions are filled with external contractors. This reduces risk and allows greater flexibility, but it is recommended that a review of this approach is included with the overall review of the posts.

ICEVI has the advantage of being a global network, so has the choice of where to base any administrative support—the advent and growth of remote working means that different posts/roles can be in different countries and still function effectively. ICEVI is registered in the U.K., so awareness and ability to ensure compliance with the U.K. legal requirements will be important (several of the recommendations in this report may require constitutional changes, for example), but that would not necessarily mean the need to locate the administration in the U.K.

It is recommended that the EXBO explore these options. Given the different interpretations often attached to job titles (such as Chief Executive Officer, Network Manager, *etc.*) it is suggested that such an exploration begins with clarifying the tasks needed at the global level, and working from them in order to identify the various posts needed. Such an approach would also allow consideration of other current roles (such as the President, the Secretary, *etc.*), showing how the roles can work together to ensure the key outreach and support functions are covered.

An extra comment from an EXBO member was:

*Appointment of an ICEVI Global Advocacy Officer (instead of CEO) with legal, communication and advocacy skills, to coordinate the focus and voice of ICEVI globally and across all regions. This could commence as an approximately 60% position if full time funding wasn't available. This may be more attractive to paying member organisations as there is a direct link with their funding, outputs, and outcomes. In addition, a 40% administration role could be funded to support communication across ICEVI regions.*

### **2.2.3 Regional Entities**

ICEVI needs to find a balance between the “bottom up” process of listening to and representing voices from the national and regional levels with the “top down” process of sharing of global trends and developments, ICEVI decision-making, and priority-setting. The regional offices are, in many ways, the meeting point of these two dynamics and

therefore crucial to ICEVI being able to take advantage of any synergies and manage any tensions. Currently the seven regions each have a President and a Board which represents at least some of the countries; some are registered as legal entities, some are not (and do not have legal systems that allow such registration); all are managed by volunteers, with an overall sense that the time and energy they have to offer is well below what is required.

No change to the regional structure is being proposed. Whether the regional entities are registered or not may not be significant (unless a donor requires it or where the cost of maintaining such registration is so high that it is taking resources away from activities). However, a number of actions may help reduce the pressure on the regions and help them be more effective:

- a) A review of ICEVI functions (as recommended in 1 above) to clearly identify those functions needed at the regional level in pursuit of ICEVI goals.
- b) Introduction of a paid post (initially part time) at the regional level to support the Regional Presidents and the regional activities, including expanding membership, building networks, National Focal Point liaison, etc. Such positions will depend on the necessary funding being raised, but can be filled on a flexible basis—not formally employed but contracted for the time that can be afforded and sufficient for the tasks. As income streams develop (Section 4), further funding could be invested.
- c) Increased use of social media and other digital tools (including a new website) in order to automate as many functions as possible (see section 3 below).
- d) Establishment of National Focal Points in every country (see 2.2.4 below).

#### **2.2.4 National Focal Points (NFPs)**

Currently ICEVI's main connection at the country level is through its members—either international organisations with a programme or office in-country, or through national level organisations. This still leaves many countries without any connection to ICEVI and therefore without access to the impact that ICEVI can bring through its knowledge, expertise, and connections.

From the review it is proposed that ICEVI establish National Focal Points, individuals or organisations who take on the responsibility of both

raising the profile of ICEVI in their countries, expand membership, and who also can inform the regional body about particular issues or trends within the context of education for people with visual impairment. This would both expand ICEVI's coverage to countries where there are currently no members but also enable ICEVI to understand better the situation in a country and to be able to reach more people both through the NFPs and through the various communication mechanisms they could be connected to (see Section 3 below).

Some regions have already moved towards this idea by having national representatives on their regional boards, and this proposal builds on that development by suggesting that the NFPs should be a formally recognised part of the ICEVI structure, with their own clear roles and responsibilities. This could include ensuring NFP representation on the EXBO. It also recognises that it will not be feasible for all NFPs to be on the Regional Board, but setting up mechanisms for communication between NFPs and the regional offices and/or the global administration can ensure that all parties develop and maintain mutual awareness and understanding.

### **2.2.5 Membership**

The membership is vital to ICEVI's sustainability for two main reasons:

- a) For the income it generates (see Section 4); and
- b) For the credibility, connections, expertise, knowledge, and action that members bring.

It is recommended that ICEVI adopt an explicit strategy to expand the number of members at all levels (global, regional, and national) as a way to broaden ICEVI's knowledge and action base and to bring ICEVI closer and more accessible to more people. As the membership grows, so will it contribute more to ICEVI's mission, generate more funds, create more connections, be a stronger voice, and provide greater benefits/value for money to both target audience and the members themselves. Current members could play a key role in implementing such a strategy.

Currently there are three types of membership: International Partners, Organisational, and Individual. Increasing the number of types of membership (and associated fee structure) will attract more people and organisations at all levels, in ways that are relevant, affordable and appropriate for the level of commitment/benefit they want and which will be of benefit to ICEVI. Such diversification (which could be the task of the new network manager) will also

enable members operating at different levels to find an entry point which is relevant and comfortable for them, and which will also lead them to new and different connections.

A brief review of other networks show that most offer more opportunities for people and organisations to join as members. Possible examples of different categories (as used by some other networks) are:

- i. Supporting Members, organisations or individuals who want to support the mission of ICEVI and are ready to donate towards that, without necessarily expecting the same benefits in return;
- ii. Honorary or Emeritus membership (as mentioned in 2.2.1 above), for people and organisations who ICEVI would like to recognise for their particular contribution to ICEVI and/or education for people with visual impairment. This could include Founding Members, past office bearers, etc;
- iii. Network members, for related umbrella bodies (such as International Association for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB), DeafBlind International (DBI), and World Blind Union), but extending to include other international, regional, and national networks;
- iv. Library members—this is an idea from DBI—inviting universities and libraries to join ICEVI for access to resources, but also enabling other members to connect with them.

Extra comments from EXBO members in August put forward two separate suggestions:

1. *There are different levels of membership:*
  - a. *Group A (or other name) pay US\$20,000 and secure a place on the board. These could also have their logo etc., on the ICEVI web page.*
  - b. *Group B with a contribution of, for example, US\$10,000. This group holds elections among themselves to elect representatives (maybe 2 or 3) on the board.*
  - c. *Group C costs maybe US\$3,000. This group has elections and selects maybe one representative to the board. This is a bit like the same system as IAPB has. Amounts could be different as well as number of representatives elected to represent on the board.*
  - d. *(perhaps) Group D for institutions like universities, libraries etc.*

2. *To source members at the national and regional level, ICEVI needs more to offer than it currently does or needs more professional input through a global advocacy officer type position rather than a CEO. Then all national members, regional presidents, global President and members (listed above) can all feed key points through to a paid ICEVI Global Advocacy Officer position. This would help ICEVI with its focus. For example international days such as World Sight Day, IDPWD, etc., could be promoted with an ICEVI position statement. Key campaigns could have an agreed focus and strategic events could be represented. An advocacy officer could be recruited with legal, communication, and advocacy skills of relevance to ICEVI. This would then enable key stakeholders to centralise communication points in a professional manner suitable for promoting the vision of ICEVI.*

### **3. Complementary Mechanisms**

While ICEVI continues to convene successful conferences, there is a general feeling that ICEVI has not moved sufficiently in response to the rapid developments in digital communications over the past few years. As a result, communication systems either don't work as well or reach as far as they could, or they require significant time and effort from already-busy people to make them effective. It is a key recommendation of this review that these systems be reviewed, enhanced, updated, and expanded.

The key intent of these changes is to:

1. Find an appropriate balance between digital and in-person communications and activities.
2. Improve communication both among ICEVI members and among ICEVI members and the leadership (at all levels).
3. Enable members to make connections, address issues, access, and share resources, without going through the ICEVI formal structures or using up volunteer time.
4. Expand ICEVI's reach to beneficiary groups (teachers, parents, policy makers) through establishing stakeholder networks.
5. Raise ICEVI's presence and profile through this increased activity and improved website.

More specifically, the changes could include:

**3.1 To update and improve ICEVI's website** to make it more interactive and more accessible, both in terms of widening its reach (including, for example, having translation facilities for different languages), describing activities, and being user friendly for people with visual impairment (e.g., larger fonts, screen reader-friendly). It can also act as an entry point to ICEVI's wider communication systems for members and stakeholders. An expert in network websites could be contracted to work on this.

A consideration for the website is to include a "members only" area which enables access to wider resources and connections (e.g., members' contacts). This would offer an immediate incentive for individuals and organisations to join ICEVI, help expand the membership, and provide some differentiation between beneficiaries and members (this connects to Sections 2.2.5 and 4.2d).

**3.2 To strengthen ICEVI's presence on social media** (e.g., Twitter, LinkedIn), giving ICEVI a more public face, and building wider support by attracting a wider audience and raising awareness of ICEVI's focus.

**3.3 To make better use of collective communication tools** (e.g., WhatsApp, Slack, Discord, etc.) to establish and maintain, for example, stakeholder networks, communities of practice, internal communications (at and among national, regional, and global levels). The International Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) usefully refers to these as "Network Spaces," offering a wide range of opportunities for members and stakeholders to connect, engage, share, learn, and collaborate.

With all of these mechanisms or "spaces" care will need to be taken to:

- Ensure accessibility for all users.
- Minimise any extra burden on the ICEVI staff. It is acknowledged that some initial investment of time and effort will be needed to set up the various tools and to attract and support people to use them. If set up well, such mechanisms (with the possible exception of the website, which will need reviewing and updating regularly) can be self-sustaining, with any management role being played by the users.
- Emphasise the importance of members engaging with these tools. Such tools can only be effective if they are known about, seen as valuable and easily accessible. For member organisations it may be appropriate to have a named person within the organisation who can be responsible for raising awareness about ICEVI with colleagues and partners, ensuring that programmes/departments working with education of people with visual impairment have direct access to the resources that ICEVI offers. This will have a knock-on effect in-country, where project staff can be



connected to fellow ICEVI members/stakeholders. Again this may take the form of an initial campaign after which individuals can choose to join discussion groups, etc., or may even wish to become members in their own right.

## 4. ICEVI's Sustainability

A recurring theme during the review was that any proposals for change should be feasible or “do-able” within the reality of the ICEVI financial situation. While some of the recommendations made so far come with little or no financial implications, nevertheless it is recognised that ICEVI would benefit from boosting the number and size of its income streams.

A desk review of other similarly sized networks reveals that few, if any, are able to survive on membership fees alone. Indeed, membership fees often account for less than 20% of the income these networks require to do what they need/want to do. The rest comes from other sources, including, in some cases, ongoing funding from the major institutions which had set up the networks originally.

With ICEVI, the heavy reliance on membership dues (and particularly on IPMs' contributions) has led to:

- a) An overall shortage of funding for ICEVI to function to full effect;
- b) A tension between funds that are needed to maintain the global management position, and the funds required at the regional level for their activities;
- c) A heavy reliance on people giving their time and energy for the work that ICEVI wants to do, usually over and above their regular jobs; and
- d) Questioning of the high membership fees (\$20,000) for IPMs in relation to the added value and return on investment that ICEVI provides.

### 4.1 Membership

In addition to the credibility, connections, expertise, knowledge, and action that members bring (Section 2.2.5), the membership is vital to ICEVI's sustainability for the income it generates.

While there is some income from organisational and individual members, this is relatively insignificant when compared to the income in fees from the IPMs. This gives added impetus to the recommendation that ICEVI expands its membership and diversifies its membership categories for financial reasons, as much as for building the network. In addition to increasing income overall, such an approach could reduce the level of dependence that ICEVI has on the IPMs'

contributions and, over time, allow them to be reviewed. More money coming in will also help create more choice as to where funds can best be deployed.

## 4.2 Diversifying Income Streams

In addition to the proposed expansion of the membership scheme, ICEVI can consider a number of other options for developing other types of income stream:

- a) Providing opportunities to donate to ICEVI (*e.g.*, adding a lump sum when paying membership dues, having a donate “button” on the new website)
- b) Running a legacy/endowment campaign: With over 70 years of existence, credibility and working in an area which still requires significant attention, ICEVI is well placed to ask people and institutions to bequest funds to the network. While such a strategy requires care and sensitivity and tends to be a “slow-burner,” over time it can develop into a useful and sustainable source of funding.
- c) Seeking grant funding. This is not a new activity for ICEVI, and it remains a viable option, provided the capacity to implement it is built into ICEVI and provided it is clearly not in competition with any IPM fundraising efforts (see Section 4.3 below).
- d) Develop marketable products for sale. ICEVI should be more confident in the service it provides and has the potential to generate income through, for example:
  - i) Using its knowledge and expertise to produce policy papers, guidance, etc., for paying customers;
  - ii) Selling promotional space for relevant companies on the website, etc.,—a much more attractive proposition if there is a high level of visitors to the site;
  - iii) Including a “members only” area on the website;
  - iv) Extra comments from EXBO members suggested:
    - *ICEVI could also have a knowledge base/shop for suppliers that sell relevant teaching equipment etc. These suppliers are approved by ICEVI in order to be marketing their things through ICEVI and pay a fee to ICEVI for this. Members of ICEVI could then contact approved suppliers through this base/shop.*
    - *Another income stream could be ICEVI/ICEVI Regions partnering for grants, etc., with INGOs, etc., with ICEVI offering particular technical expertise. This could also be the case with research partnerships.*
- e) Attracting in-kind donations/sponsorship for conferences and other events.



### 4.3 Building Fundraising Capacity

ICEVI's current fundraising capacity is low. Proposals require significant, dedicated time from unpaid people who are already busy and not necessarily well-experienced in the task. Even when a proposal is well developed, there is no certainty that it will be funded.

While ICEVI does have some reserves that can be drawn on to finance some short-term investments, it would be unwise to rely on such finance for anything beyond the very short-term, unless there is already a medium-long term plan for bringing in additional funding and the capacity to implement it.

It is recommended, therefore, that ICEVI looks at establishing fundraising capacity as part of its core support, capacity that would focus on bringing in sufficient funds to complement any membership income and sufficient to finance ICEVI's core:

- a) The Network Manager (replacing the CEO) and any support staff required to manage the ICEVI's digital presence and communications (*Extra comment from EXBO member: "or Global Advocacy Officer and Administration Officer"*).
- b) Paid support at the regional level to support the Regional Presidents and the regional activities, including expanding membership, building networks, National Focal Point liaison, etc.
- c) Themselves (*i.e.*, the fundraiser, on whatever basis ICEVI decides to recruit them).

In addition to raising core funding for ICEVI to work effectively, having fundraising capacity within the ICEVI administration would also be able to work with implementing partners/regional offices in responding to opportunities for ICEVI projects (such as global research, work in underserved countries, etc.).

## Section 2 : Additional Outputs from the Process

### Phase 1

1. The full report on the **survey** is in Appendix A. The survey attracted 33 responses, with 51 people involved. The key findings of the survey were:
  - a) **The External Environment (within education for people with visual impairment)**

There is now greater global recognition of the importance of inclusion, both in society and, more specifically, in education. Progress is influenced by: The changing nature of vision impairment (increasing numbers of cases of mdvi); developing technology; human resource capacity; national and

regional differences (policy and economic environments). Trends and issues that were identified included: continuing development of technology; inclusion is a growing imperative; a growing risk of losing specialist teachers; potential increase in home schooling and/or distance learning; competing priorities (with other demands, crises); increased collaboration and networking; increasing numbers of MDVI children.

b) **ICEVI's contribution/relevance/importance to education for people with vision impairment**

ICEVI's contribution derives from its single focus and its status as a membership organisation. It acts as a source of knowledge and expertise and amplifies the voice and standing of its members, children with vision impairment, and other stakeholders. It facilitates international collaboration, convening of global and regional gatherings. and wider networks and offers practical support/implementation on the ground.

These characteristics, together with ICEVI's reputation and the authenticity brought both by expertise and lived experience, also enable ICEVI to add value to the agencies and networks it engages with.

c) **For Members, ICEVI adds value** through its networks, the connections it enables, its voice and influence, the access to knowledge (resources and expertise, best practices), technical and financial support for projects, and enhanced impact.

d) **In order to stay relevant over the coming years**, most felt ICEVI's purpose is still relevant, but others pointed out areas for emphasis/development for ICEVI's effectiveness:

- **Clarifying and Strengthening its role as a Membership Organisation** by enabling members to connect around a mission; providing a strong voice with/for members; provision of support for members and their projects; expanding the membership;
- **Widening the network, growing partnerships** and
- **Continual programme and organisational improvement** by addressing staffing, clarifying focus, increasing funding, raising the profile.

2. The **key outputs from the ensuing discussions** (involving 21 EXBO members) were:

- a) Revised Mission, Values and Goals statements (see Recommendation 1, page 4).
- b) Key Insights and Questions for Phase 2:

- The need to clarify and streamline the role(s) and functions of ICEVI—who is ICEVI, what are its main functions, where should the responsibility for these functions lie (global, regional, members)?
- There seems to be a growing consensus around ICEVI acting primarily as a network, (convening, coordination/administration/management, advocating and providing expertise) with and for members. This need not exclude ICEVI implementing programmes (especially when such programmes provide evidence to support specific campaigns), but this approach would point to such programmes being implemented more by members.
- The desire to raise the voice of members more. Recognition that ICEVI's power comes from members, the extent to which ICEVI can play a role in convening them and to offer a space in which members can connect with each other and with acknowledged experts in the field. This would include, for example, linking them with experts in other relevant fields (like technology), opening access for their voice to be heard in global forums, developing a common language, etc.
- The issue of representation in ICEVI decision-making. The importance of reflecting the values of inclusion and equity, as well as the breadth and depth of members' experience and expertise in the field. This would include ensuring that ICEVI's target demographic is adequately represented (e.g., how well are educators of children with visual impairment represented currently?)
- The disconnect between what ICEVI claims (often very eloquently) to do (as expressed in the mission, *etc.*) and the capacity (especially at the regional level) to do what needs to be done to contribute meaningfully to that mission, especially with the high level of dependence on volunteers.
- A number of questions were raised about financing, essentially questioning the current business model: the need to review sources of income; the level of resources required by current structures (in relation to their effectiveness); how money can be distributed equitably, addressing the imbalance between regions.
- The transition to a new CEO. There is little appetite for the post to disappear, but questions were raised in relation to the key roles of the postholder (and what they should be called), the financing of the post, the implications for other roles should the CEO role change.

## **Phase 2**

### ***Meeting 1 (10<sup>th</sup> July, 15 EXBO members)***

From the group and plenary discussions, the core functions of ICEVI can be clarified as:

1. **Dissemination of Knowledge Resources:** sharing of experience and expertise between and beyond members; speeding knowledge and experience to the people who need it most; making knowledge available to support and guide members' initiatives, programmes and campaigns (e.g., research and innovation, inclusive development, leadership development, national-level advocacy).
2. **Convening and connecting people with a shared concern for ICEVI's mission:** developing mechanisms by which members' voices can be heard within and beyond the network; convening interest groups of members and/or non-members (e.g., teachers, parents, policy makers, youth); resurrect the earlier ICEVI Partnership Committee?
3. **Building and supporting the ICEVI network of members:** consulting members to discover and act on topics and issues relevant to them (so increasing engagement); creating network connections at the local/national, regional and international levels (e.g., national focal points, regional and international level coordination) allowing member engagement at the level they are comfortable with; building cohesion across the network, supporting and enabling collaboration; facilitating mechanisms (digital and in-person) to provide structured and regular communications; paying attention to the contribution of volunteers and providing opportunities for their benefit (e.g., exchange visits, learning and sharing opportunities); making clear the line between ICEVI roles and activities and members' roles and activities: what differentiates the two, how to avoid undue risk for members, duplication and competition (also considering countries where members have no presence).

Several cross-cutting themes also emerged:

1. **Sustainability:** How to ensure that ICEVI develops as a network in a way that is self-supportive; link with existing structures (e.g., universities, other institutions) and networks rather than creating new ICEVI structures; review extent of dependency on volunteers and consider implications; keeping the network of value and relevance to members; ensuring things are "doable" within existing constraints; how best to mobilise resources to support the network.
2. **Balancing use of the virtual and the in-person:** Creative use of ICT; developing an attractive, interactive website; considered use of social media; weighing up virtual vs in-person meetings, conferences; having access to the necessary skills to implement this.
3. **Governance, Management and Accountability:** Are separate structures required or could members take on specific responsibilities for agreed periods;

whether a CEO is needed; rotating leadership; which structures are required to be formal and legally based, which can be more informal; how ICEVI measures success (proven action, proven outcomes).

4. **Raising the ICEVI profile:** working with members and others to ensure they understand the role of ICEVI; providing specific mechanisms for members and others to engage with ICEVI; strengthening links between ICEVI and other global bodies (UNICEF, IDDC, *etc.*); working with larger member organisations to ensure ICEVI is known, valued and utilised throughout the member organisation itself and its partners; developing ICEVI's public-facing profile to attract interest and engagement.

***Meeting 2 (17<sup>th</sup> July, 16 EXBO members)***

The notes from this meeting are included in the Conclusions and Recommendations as the participants addressed the questions of structures, mechanisms and financing directly.

## Appendix A - Findings of the Survey (detailed)

### Coverage

The survey was sent to all members of the ICEVI Executive Board (27 members), as well as the CEO and one ex-President. Respondents were encouraged to involve others in their responses to the questions (including colleagues within the same organisation, members of Regional Boards, etc.)

*The following table shows the levels of representation in the responses\**

Categories of Response	No. of responses	No. of people involved
International Partner Members	8	8
Principal Officers (including CEO)	4	4
Umbrella Partners	2	4
Regions	16	32
Founding Members	2	2
Individuals	1	1
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>51</b>

*\*It should be noted that:*

- a) There is some overlap between membership categories (some International Partners also being Founding Members; Principal Officers also being from International Partners; International Partners active in regions, etc.)
- b) Some respondents responded as individuals, rather than representative of their organisation or region

The results can be divided into 6 main sections:

Topic	Page
The Major Changes and Developments taking place in education for children and young people with vision impairment	48
Trends and issues emerging in the next few years	50
ICEVI's contribution/relevance/importance to education for children and young people with vision impairment	53
ICEVI's added value to members	57
ICEVI's contribution to the agencies and networks it engages/collaborates with	59
How the purpose of ICEVI needs to change in order to stay relevant over the coming years	60

## Q1. WHAT ARE THE MAJOR CHANGES AND DEVELOPMENTS TAKING PLACE CURRENTLY IN EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH VISION IMPAIRMENT?

There is now greater global recognition of the importance of inclusion, both in society and, more specifically, in education. Special Education is emerging as rights based, and disability-inclusive education is on the agenda of world leaders and companies, and promoted and supported by (as mentioned by respondents) the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) with Article 24 focusing particularly on education; The Marrakesh Treaty; Global Summit on Disability. There is also more awareness among the community regarding the importance and need of education.

Despite the recognition, there are a number of developments identified by respondents which affect progress:

- a. **The changing nature of Vision Impairment.** While the overall number of children who are blind or partially sighted may be in decline, there is an increase in the numbers of cases of children with MDVI (Multi Disabilities and Vision Impairment) and CVI (Cerebral Vision Impairment).

There is a clear shift towards inclusive education, retaining running of special schools for children with severe or multiple disabilities, and there is a shift towards preparing such children for their inclusion in education. However, in many countries levels of awareness of these conditions remain low, and in countries where awareness levels are higher, they bring challenges associated with assessment and educational programming, both for the children but also for the professionals teaching and supporting them. One respondent also noted a trend away from applied research.

- b. **Developing Technology:** Respondents noted several different types of changes happening in technology:

- Innovations in assistive and instructional technology are becoming more mainstream. Very appropriate and affordable technology is now supporting educational initiatives. Examples include in-built accessible options in iOS and Android devices and free or low cost accessibility apps for persons with VI and other print disabilities (e.g., NVDA screen reader app, magnification apps, Be My Eyes app).
- The COVID-19 pandemic speeded up the shift to digital education and the digital classroom. With schools closed, learning in many countries became entirely online.
- The continuing decline in the use of paper braille, but a potential increase in the availability of digital braille technology.



- Potential increase in the availability of accessible formats due to the adoption of the Marrakesh Treaty.

Respondents also noticed that, while technology can be a gamechanger, innovative and opening up new opportunities, it can also be exclusive, with digital tools often more visual and inaccessible.

c. **Human Resource Capacity:** Several issues were identified in relation to the capacity of teachers and others to support disability-inclusive education:

- The growing challenges of recruitment and retention of highly trained and qualified staff (worldwide).
- Significant lack of expertise/lack of trained teachers to serve children with MDVI.
- The shift from segregated to inclusive education leading to teachers having less skills and knowledge about blindness/vision impairment.
- The need for educators, parents, and school administrators to now learn about online learning platforms and methods, ensure they are fully accessible, and to develop sufficient skills to ensure the students with disabilities had equitable access to learning.
- The rise in prevalence of CVI calls for extensive training not just for teachers but also for paediatricians, therapists in occupational health, speech and language, orientation and mobility.

d. **National and Regional Differences:** Regional and National respondents highlighted two main factors that influence the successful roll-out of disability-inclusive education at those levels:

- **The Policy Environment**

Many respondents emphasised the progress made by Governments in establishing disability-inclusive education policies and national policies on the promotion of education, noting that advocacy on the UN CRPD can make a material difference to how well disability-inclusive education is implemented; how policy formation can play a role in ensuring equitable access and support across a country; where policies are not supportive of disability-inclusive education, specialised schools are still being employed. However, many countries have not implemented legislation in consonance with UNCRPD to ensure access of education to all including children with visual impairment.

- **The Economic Environment**

Even where policies are in place, implementation can be patchy due to financial constraints, either where the facilities are in place but support

for families to access them is not forthcoming, or through limited budget allocation to disability-inclusive education and the associated support and investments needed (curriculum, teachers, equipment, technology, infrastructure, etc.). Conversely, examples were given of governments working in partnership with NGOs and private companies to address constraints in public finance.

## **Q2. WHAT TRENDS AND ISSUES DO YOU SEE EMERGING IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS?**

*Respondents identified seven key areas which they feel will be significant in the near future.*

### **1. Continuing Development of Technology**

Technology will continue to play a significant role in disability-inclusive education, especially as children and young people with vision impairment seek to keep up with their peers. More and more visually impaired students are turning toward the use of technology, especially computers, tablets and smartphones. Future development and integration of virtual reality, augmented reality, and artificial intelligence is envisaged in the shift to the digital classroom and the growth of paperless education.

The effect of this increase in the use of digital technology will be a decline in the use of books and paper. This decline would include braille books, which would slowly become less important and less preferred by not only children and young people, but teachers and parents as well. This in turn is already leading to a decline in the number of courses teaching hard braille.

Alongside the growth in use of technology, there are emerging questions of accessibility. There is a risk that, for example, virtual platforms can leave many people behind for different reasons: limited access to computer equipment (especially outside major centres), affordability, connectivity issues, usability for people with vision impairment.

### **2. Inclusion is a Growing Imperative**

Respondents foresee a growing recognition of and commitment to inclusion, with greater awareness amongst people, greater commitment by Governments (e.g., through the UN CRPD) and a gradual embedding of inclusive practices. At the same time, in some countries there are changing expectations, with people demanding to have more of a say in the design and delivery of services and expecting that children will be able to keep up in an inclusive environment.

In education, “education for all” which was merely a slogan shall become reality; there will be greater awareness amongst parents and community as regards educational initiatives and opportunities, leading to them being more open/demanding about ensuring their children are educated, more trained educators, more partnerships between Government, NGOs and Private Sector, more resources being allocated. As more employment opportunities are emerging, the need for education shall increase manifold.

It also recognises that young people will need the support of orientation and habilitation specialists to learn the skills of daily living and the transition into adulthood. Currently the number of such specialists is in decline.

### **3. A Growing Risk of Losing Specialist Teachers**

A concern raised is that as schools seek to provide an effective education to children with vision impairment through a disability-inclusive approach, there is a risk that the specialist support that VI children need will be provided by unqualified teacher assistants. This may be due to insufficient recognition of their importance or done as a cost-cutting measure. This would not only lower the quality of the education but will also lead to reduced employment of qualified teachers of students with visual impairment (QTVI) and/or a change in their role from providing in-person 1:1 specialist support to online consultative support. This in turn could affect the numbers of specialist teachers coming into the profession, which is already an issue in some places.

There was also concern that an alternative approach, requiring the training of mainstream teachers in how to work with children and young people with vision impairment, is not always well promoted or resourced.

### **4. Potential increase in home schooling and/or distance learning**

Respondents see a growth in popularity for home based and virtual education among children and young people, especially in the developed countries and urban areas where internet connectivity and online infrastructure are well-equipped. This change came about and was speeded up by the recent pandemic. Even though some people are not comfortable with such a change, a growing number has begun to accept and acknowledge the positive impact, provided it is alongside the subjects and co curriculum which require face to face and physical movement (such as physical education subjects, swimming, outdoor sports).

## **5. Competing Priorities**

While at the global level education and inclusion are likely to remain development priorities, retaining both of these at the national level may be more challenging. National governments should allocate more funds and more resources for promoting education but they are facing financial demands to address, for example, struggling health care systems (as they adapt to population growth, changing demographics, increasing multi-morbidity, more complex needs), climate change, and climate-related disasters and emergencies. In different countries, further pressure comes from the debt crisis, the increasing cost of living, inflation, war in Ukraine. All of these can divert funding away from disability-inclusive education.

## **6. Increased Collaboration and Networking**

Increased collaboration and networking between organisations supporting persons with disabilities, including the organisations and networks that ICEVI is currently linked with. An example of this new trend is the recent Call To Action (CTA) for Disability Inclusive Education that was submitted to the UNESCO Transforming Education Summit in September 2022. The CTA was jointly developed by the International Disability Alliance (IDA), the International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC), and the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), and signed by over 30 other organisations working in the field of disability. The Visionary Learning Initiative in Uganda is another example, bringing together different development agencies to distribute assistive devices and carry out training of stakeholders.

## **7. Increasing Numbers of MDVI Children**

Increasing identification of children with MDVI is anticipated, together with increasing recognition of prevalence of cortical/cerebral visual impairment (CVI). This is currently the leading cause of VI in children in the United States, with emerging recognition in many low and lower middle income countries (but still significant lack of expertise/training for both medical and educational professionals).

This trend will both challenge those segregated institutions where the number of MDVI children is already overtaking the numbers of those without additional disabilities, and influence the approach to integration in mainstream schools.

### Q3. WHAT IS ICEVI'S CONTRIBUTION/RELEVANCE/IMPORTANCE TO EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH VISION IMPAIRMENT?

In the context described above, respondents identified the key characteristics and roles of ICEVI that contribute the most to the education of children and young people with vision impairment:

1. With its **Single Focus** on education for children with blindness, low vision, deafblindness, and children with VI and multiple disabilities, ICEVI can influence and support the global agenda and priorities; can lead by example in understanding the needs of ALL children with VI; and can play a meaningful global role, despite the differences among regions.
2. As a **Membership Organisation**, with members which include a number of organisations with diverse and specialised expertise and reach, ICEVI can offer a focus to its members, sharing common goals towards reaching quality and accessible education for children and youth with vision impairment; it can promote networking, sharing of information, best practices and learning among member organisations; it can link its members with external sources of expertise or information (and vice-versa); it can support and inform the implementation of programmes by members; it can recruit new members.
3. As a **Source of Knowledge and Expertise**, recognised by Governments and others, ICEVI can:
  - a. Coordinate and collect research articles and studies to keep abreast of developments and challenges in education, access and opportunities for PVI learners and teachers.
  - b. Make knowledge available on law (making) or good practices. To be shared, not to be developed by ICEVI.
  - c. Offer resources in multiple languages.
  - d. Develop accessible content for the online library.
  - e. Maintain and grow a network of experts in the field of education of students who are blind or partially sighted.
  - f. Provide technical expertise/resource persons available on educational matters for the vision impaired (e.g., curriculum development, distance education methodology, skills for transition).
  - g. Set standards on an international level as to what the minimum services/equipment/assistance that all disabled children should receive within the school system.

- h. Disability specific knowledge and sharing of resources focused on vision impairment/blindness inclusion.
  - i. ICEVI has developed material on teaching mathematics to children with visual impairment, it needs to develop this and such other material in different languages.
4. **By amplifying the voice and standing among its members, children with vision impairment and other stakeholders.** Examples from respondents of how this can be done:
- a. Being the representative voice for inclusive, equitable and quality education of children with vision impairment and MDVI on global, regional and national platforms.
  - b. Being present when relevant, important discussions are taking place.
  - c. Building a network of expertise to influence effective inclusive education, changing perceptions of persons with vision impairment and of the professionals supporting them.
  - d. Playing a key advocacy role for mainstreaming effective inclusive education, the changing needs and rights of children with vision impairment and with disabilities, the rights of the parents raising children with vision impairment.
  - e. Developing position statements that can be used by groups advocating for children and teachers (for example, to put pressure on WHO to formally recognize cerebral vision impairment and so achieve its inclusion in more training courses in ophthalmology programmes).
  - f. Ensuring that ICEVI members and partners seize every opportunity to ensure that the specialist supports needed by children with vision impairment are included in education and social policies, position statements, etc., which are produced by UN agencies, peak disability bodies, and national governments.
  - g. At the community level, supporting ICEVI members in influencing community members and schools, in enlightening educators on how to serve students and helping to promote accessibility of the classroom.
  - h. Convincing key decision-makers of the value of educating children with vision impairment, demonstrating their subsequent contribution to society and the economy.
  - i. Strengthening the voice of member organisations at UN and national levels where possible.
  - j. Promoting full implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty.

- k. Raising awareness of the importance of education for children with vision impairment, so that they may reach their full potential and contribute to their communities and countries.
- l. Launching nationwide campaigns on creating awareness about educational opportunities, entitlements and facilities available as regards education of such children in respective countries.
- m. Sensitising parents and regular teachers as regards specific needs of children with vision impairment.
- n. Promoting holistic approaches to the support of children with vision impairment, not only in formal education, but in preparation for independent living, employment, good social skills, self-determination, and advocacy.
- o. Supporting ICEVI regions to be effective influencers, knowledgeable of current approaches to VI education and with the skills needed to influence leaders and decision makers in government and education systems; to be a catalyst for development of educational access and mainstream in schools.

**5. Through International Collaboration, Convening of Global and Regional Gatherings, Facilitating wider Networks**

- a. Collaborating/working in partnership with umbrella bodies with complementary areas of focus. For example, currently ICEVI has Memorandums of Understanding with the International Agency for Prevention of Blindness (IAPB), World Blind Union (WBU) and Deafblind International (DbI).
- b. Cooperation with other relevant organisations (*e.g.* working for the establishment of systems for distribution of technical aids).
- c. Coordinating with other similar international organisations to influence education related laws and policy in such countries which have so far not taken such initiatives.
- d. Convening experts (including those involved in policy, in academia, in teaching, and with lived experience of disability, either individually or as a parent), practitioners, parents. and other stakeholders. who are concerned with education for children and young people with vision impairment.
- e. Holding Global and Regional conferences, providing valuable opportunities for networking and sharing among stakeholders across the VI/blindness education sector.



- f. Facilitating cooperation of professionals to promote good practices (e.g., in inclusion and MDVI education), discuss complex needs, share experiences, solutions and innovation, consider specific support for (e.g., individuals with complex needs).
- g. Supporting or facilitating networks both within regions and across regions. These networks also need to collaborate with other sectors and 3rd sector organisations but with genuine purpose and focus.

## 6. **Practical Support/Implementation on the Ground**

There are a number of perspectives on this topic. Respondents' answers can be broken down into:

- a. There is significant expertise and funding available for implementation through the International Partner Members (IPMs), Governments and other NGOs, so ICEVI should not compete with them for funding or be involved in the implementation of projects. ICEVI should not be a service provider, getting involved in designing interventions, training, developing methods, etc. It is appropriate for IPMs to take the lead, with ICEVI's contribution limited to, for example, providing technical expertise, convening.
- b. Advocacy efforts on their own are often insufficient to persuade officials and others to adopt a new course of action—the influencing work needs to be backed up with practical demonstration of the change on the ground. In this way both “proof and solution” are offered, the evidence of the need for change and a locally-relevant model to convert any policy change into action. In this context, ICEVI is well placed to implement (or at least provide funding for) such projects, effectively as part of a wider campaign.
- c. In situations where policy change has been introduced, there is often a clear need for different stakeholders (teachers, parents, officials, etc.) to be trained to better understand and have the skills to implement the new policy. ICEVI, with its broad technical expertise, is well placed to carry out such training through workshops, dialogues, forums, etc.
- d. Where disability-inclusive education has already been implemented, there may be a need to improve the quality of the education. Ongoing capacity building of teachers and other educators in (for example) ICT, accessible education systems, barrier-free environments, accessible transportation, and universal design infrastructure. ICEVI is also well placed to provide access to affordable, appropriate and cost

effective technologies and assistive devices; to train and support children to use new ICTs.

#### **Q4. WHAT ADDED VALUE DO YOU/YOUR ORGANISATION GAIN FROM BEING MEMBERS OF ICEVI?**

Being part of ICEVI gives us, both as organisations and individuals, a global, cross-cultural view and:

- The perspective, profile, understanding and weight of an international organisation.
- Access to, connection, collegueship, sharing and exchange with a community of experts in the field of education for students who are blind or partially sighted, including a network that extends from the global to the regional to the national level.
- We are heard, trusted, and empowered.
- Access to online library, book share.
- The opportunity to have greater impact and to influence more by working/collaborating with others.
- Technical and financial support for projects, for example, to convert a book into accessible format. Examples cited include the ICEVI Higher Education Project, which has been running for 16 years, helping convince the public and government that to develop inclusive higher education, develop policy, opening up employment opportunities for young people with vision impairment after they graduate from universities, and build capacity of ICEVI country partners to make changes; Lee Foundation Grant; EFAVI initiatives; Champions Programme that ICEVI for youth with visual impairment; Leadership Training programme.
- A lot of opportunities for us to network and learn from each other about special education and education for all, especially at the regional and international levels.
- A chance to contribute to the global discourse on disability-inclusive education for children with vision impairment; to improve the quality of life of children with blindness, low vision, deafblindness, and multiple disability; to change the life trajectory of individual children with vision impairment who may have otherwise lived lives of marginalisation, disadvantage, and disempowerment.
- A strong international convener connecting all those involved with promoting the education of children with visual impairments in sharing knowledge, new developments, how to deal with challenges, strategies to combat those challenges.

- Updated information about approaches that work in the classroom environment for teachers to teach children and young persons with vision impairment, practical skills in leadership, communication, developing the capacity of teachers and developing leadership quality of young boys and girls with vision impairment.
- Understanding from ICEVI on students and partners' vulnerabilities and how to address them.
- Contact and exchange of experiences at Conferences, knowledge of good practices and adjustment of expectations. We are concerned that remaining in a national vision reduces the possibilities of learning and collaboration in a global world.
- The opportunity to host regional conferences and national conferences of ICEVI, giving us a lot of experience in respect of managing such events.

In addition to these answers, three respondents questioned the value that ICEVI brings to them/their organisations:

- We have felt that we have not gained all that much value from the membership and have considered to drop out from ICEVI. We decided to continue for 2023 and take a new consideration during the year.
- Not enough. We are committed to ICEVI, but we neither make enough use of the network, nor are we able to advance much of our work through it. As an IPM, we do not directly implement any of our projects (we always work through partners), so some of the engagement opportunities are not relevant for us. If ICEVI wants to be an organisation that adds value to IPMs there needs to be greater reflection on how IPMs operate—one idea could be to convene IPM country staff who could share experiences and focus?
- I suppose the answer is something like comprehensive networking, and the ability to share practice. But this doesn't really happen as a consequence of ICEVI. It happens more because of the individual staff and lead persons within specific organisations.

#### **Q5. WHAT IS UNIQUE/APPRECIATED ABOUT ICEVI'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE AGENCIES AND NETWORKS IT ENGAGES/COLLABORATES WITH?**

ICEVI brings:

- A focus on the special needs of children with a visual impairment within broader campaigns on disability; representing the specific goal advocating for the education of children who are blind, low vision, and those with additional disabilities; providing solutions for specific target groups.

- A voice for effective inclusive education: Issues of visual impairment are diminishing in the larger disability discourse as the issues of the other minority groups is gaining attention.
- A leading reputation in the field and the authenticity brought both by expertise and lived experience, by persons with vision impairments being in leadership positions.
- Globally recognised body in VI education with a membership base that includes world leaders, nationally recognised leaders and researchers drawn from a range of fields, including vision impairment, disability, education, public policy, law, etc.
- Specialised expertise of ICEVI members in the field of vision impairment and their willingness to share their knowledge and skills with other agencies and networks (e.g., IDA, IDDC, GCE, WIPO, ABC).
- Connections to the frontline to turn progress at the global level into achievements on the ground and indirectly linking global institutions with local organisations, a connection that neither party may not otherwise have.
- Access to ICEVI's extensive global, regional and national networks through the seven regional boards and the global executive board.
- A mechanism for information sharing by member organisations, for example, members can reach approximately 4000 subscribers to ICEVI E-News, and members can distribute information through the networks of the Principal Officers, global and regional Presidents, and partner member networks.
- Networking–ICEVI connects organisations and individuals with ICEVI members and partners in specific locations, from the national, continental and global levels.
- A strategic philosophy for inclusive education, based on an understanding of the historic and present trends and proposing future prospects.

*In comparison, some respondents are less certain about the contribution of ICEVI at this level:*

- ICEVI has contributed in global forums but it is unclear how much ICEVI is recognised as a contributor on global level.
- ICEVI provides a community for many who work on visual impairment and education. It is clear that the regions are thriving because of that, but more needs to be done to use the reach of the network to influence at a global level.

- Unknown, I am sure it is appreciated, but it is unclear exactly what contribution ICEVI has made in these areas. The website is outdated, the information is often incorrect and this is also true for ICEVI Europe as well.

## **Q6. HOW DOES THE PURPOSE OF ICEVI NEED TO CHANGE IN ORDER TO STAY RELEVANT OVER THE COMING YEARS?**

Participants in the survey answered this question in a number of ways. Seven respondents answered the question directly, whereas others concentrated more on what ICEVI needs to do in order to be more effective at fulfilling its purpose. This is useful input not just for the review of the mission, values and goals, but also for the subsequent conversation about structure.

For the seven participants who answered the question directly, there was a feeling that the purpose of ICEVI remains relevant. There were two supplementary comments:

ICEVI's relevance is, in my opinion, tied with understanding, and responding to, the current context, challenges, and advances that are taking place in disability-inclusive education at global, regional, and national levels. ICEVI continues to research the current needs and changes, especially appreciating the new trends in political, economic, technological, and other changes in the area of education for persons with visual impairment.

In the final analysis, organisational success is a simple calculus of what has been gained and what has been lost in the lives of the people we serve. Everything else is just details and the differing opinions of reasonable people. I foresee people judging ICEVI by its concrete outcomes, in contrast to many organisations that judge themselves by their intentions and activities. In that context, I believe ICEVI will remain relevant in the coming years.

Other respondents highlighted areas they feel need attention / emphasis / improvement for ICEVI to best fulfil its purpose:

### **Clarifying and Strengthening its role as a Membership Organisation**

#### **a. Enabling members to connect around a mission**

- ICEVI is a non-profit, international membership organisation with a specific purpose which involves connecting people (organisations and individuals) together around its mission of promoting access to inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all people with visual impairment.
- ICEVI members include fee-paying organisations and individuals, and office bearers who either volunteer their time and expertise, or who are employed by their organisations. Members join ICEVI because they

believe in the organisation's purpose, and because they gain value from the collegueship, information sharing and learning that membership provides.

- Be more active in networking among the members.

**b. Providing a Strong Voice with/for Members**

- Using the expertise and experience etc. from the member organisations, offer a platform to share knowledge with the rest of the world (use the ICEVI website, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.).
- Members believe that the collective ICEVI "voice" has greater impact in some circumstances than their individual organisations working in isolation, for example, when speaking or advocating to UN agencies and decision makers in national governments and education sectors.
- ICEVI needs to do advocacy, to make sure global resources are distributed more fairly, including for education support. The current huge global issues, such as climate change, wars, global economic competition, have turned people's attention from education issues of people with disabilities.
- ICEVI is required to intervene in a change of social mentality, influencing the change from an individualistic and materialistic mentality to a cooperation and mutual support mentality.
- ICEVI needs to play a visible and active role and represents the voices of the unheard CWVI who are not accessing equitable, quality inclusive education.
- Engage more in high level campaigns and partnerships.
- Collate human interest stories and upload on social media to spread the message as regard importance and achievement of education.
- Become a reservoir of successful initiatives on promotion of appropriate education.

**c. Provision of Support for Members and their Projects**

- Enhancing capacity building work for practitioners and stakeholders for improving and expanding access to inclusive, equitable and quality education of children and youth with visual impairments/children with disability.
- The purpose of ICEVI needs to engage more and support member organisations in terms of equipping them with more resources for effective campaign activity influencing educational policy to the benefit of children with visual impairment.



- Work more in depth with actual service providers providing support.
- A knowledge-sharing platform should be created, which, instead of a scientific approach and research, provides more opportunities to get to know practical issues, good practices that can be used in everyday life, to exchange experiences, and possibly to visit each other's institutions.
- Look for ways to let students with visual disabilities access education in an inclusive, efficient, and effective way. For this, research is required on tools that favour the learning of braille and access to technology for students with visual disabilities.
- Providing funding or direct support for education related projects for visually impaired learners through local blindness organisations.
- Finding appropriate ways of ensuring effective teaching and use of braille as a major access to information for learners with visual impairment while considering audio as supplementary/alternative without jeopardising the use of braille.
- Being the platform entity to form and define the best routes with greater rigour, technical, scientific that promote, maintain-encourage innovative inclusive educational practices for students with visual disabilities in the continuous changes of education in each of its key actors, (students, parents, and teachers).

**d. Expanding the Membership**

- ICEVI could connect with stakeholders (*e.g.*, potential members) which are providing education for children with VI and other disabilities who are displaced or refugees as a result of war/conflict, climate change, and other emergencies.
- ICEVI could increase its membership and project funding by connecting with stakeholders that are prioritising education for girls with disabilities, indigenous children with disabilities, and/or children with deafblindness or multiple disability.
- It is necessary to find new ways to attract young practitioners and students to become involved and motivated to continue forming a community of professionals for mutual enrichment. This will address the difficulty in finding national representatives who can invest their time in ICEVI and the lower participation due to the ageing of the organisation.
- ICEVI has to respond to the decline in interest (especially in Europe) in contributing to this great project. The existence of large organisations in many countries such as Germany, France and Spain give enough support to their professionals, which is why they do not seek other experiences outside of which to learn.



## **Widening the Network, Growing Partnerships**

- Connect national, regional, international members with other organisations like IDDC, UN, UNESCO.
- ICEVI has to network with many relevant organisations and focus on the high level lobby work without forgetting that policies should be implemented on the ground.
- It needs to coordinate with national organisations, national Governments and national level stakeholders in respect of all its campaigns, programmes, and initiatives.
- Technology will be more and more important in the future. ICEVI could partner with DAISY and other technology organisations, for example, to offer webinars, position papers, etc. in digital technology for persons with vision impairment. This is happening to some extent through the creation of ICEVI task groups for technology in education, advocacy, gender equity, children's participation, and deafblindness.
- ICEVI needs to get closer to disabled people organisations—of people with vision impairment as well as disability alliance.
- It would be useful to organise seminars, webinars, short online or offline courses involving experienced professionals.
- One of the ways to improve ICEVI's work is by actively engaging national organisations of the blind. Instead of putting a separate structure, it is better to be embedded within the already established national structures of the blind.
- Sending quarterly newsletters and creating WhatsApp platforms where different people from different countries are brought together to share their thoughts and understand what is ICEVI is doing will go a long way.
- We consider that the current objective should be to reach the new generations, to motivate new professionals to form a global support community. In order to achieve this, we think we should analyse the way in which new professionals collaborate and exchange information: improve participation in social networks, online communication, dissemination through modern tools such as Instagram or Tic-toc or those that may appear.
- It would also be necessary to advance in the organisation of workshops in different languages, and the simultaneous translation of events and publications.
- ICEVI needs to increase its collaboration, coordination and networking footprint in the underserved areas of the globe.z

- Be more proactive at the local and regional levels. ICEVI has done very well at the international level.

## **Continual Programme and Organisational Improvement**

### **a. Addressing Staffing**

- ICEVI is run by volunteers. There is a small secretariat.
- ICEVI has limited human and financial capacity to respond to current and emerging trends in VI education.
- ICEVI has to remember that it has no staff and that might give it less “weight” internationally. It is crucial to find a suitable person to take over from Mani as the CEO (that is not employed by ICEVI).
- ICEVI needs to cooperate more with WBU and its regional branches.
- ICEVI needs to involve more people with vision impairment within the organisation. Nothing About Us Without Us is not only a slogan, but also needs to be implemented.
- ICEVI prides itself in its technical expertise in VI education. There needs to be a focus on recruiting and training office bearers at global and regional levels so that they have the required knowledge and skills to promote and support VI education, including providing appropriate advice for leaders and decision makers in national governments and education sectors, and delivering webinars, information, position papers, etc. on the specialist area of VI education.
- Funded Regional President roles to ensure expertise at leadership level.
- Strengthen functioning of its regional committees and motivate them to implement innovative programmes.
- The main issue that I think faces ICEVI and ICEVI Europe is that it is trying to be a leader in the field based on volunteers, who are committed individuals, but are extremely busy in their full time jobs—often at organisations that support children with VI. Most volunteers are of retirement age.

### **b. Clarifying Focus**

- ICEVI needs to sharpen focus on the needs of all age groups.
- Doing less better – ICEVI has the potential to be a key influencer on inclusive education, but it needs an honest evaluation of its strengths and where limited capacity is best focused.

- ICEVI needs clarity in how it views disability, not just visual impairment.
- Climate change is the biggest threat to education in the next 50 years –what can ICEVI do to convene on this?
- ICEVI should FOCUS! ICEVI is not a project organisation and should therefore not waste time and money on projects. This could be done in the regions (although still I think it should be the members taking on projects, with support of ICEVI, not the other way around), but certainly not by ICEVI World.
- ICEVI and ICEVI Europe need to understand exactly what its role is. It needs to be clear, and it needs to have active involvement and members.
- Retain focus on vision impairment/blindness inclusion in education.
- Communicating focus and being clear about focus in all regions.
- Promote and strengthen the concept of EFAVI (Education for All children with Visual Impairment).
- ICEVI needs to shift its focus from regional development to national development. As most initiatives, programmes and laws are national specific, the unit of action and promotion of activities should be at national level.

**c. Increasing Funding**

ICEVI is reliant on the membership fees of a small number of organisations and, as a result, is tied to the priorities and interests of its fee-paying members. The ICEVI Executive Board should consider ways of increasing its funding base (developing a fundraising strategy), for example, increasing the number of members and seeking project funding; exploring the option of gaining INGO status and receiving direct funding/grant funding for project implementation.

**d. Raising the Profile**

ICEVI needs to promote itself more. It needs to become more widely known in the education and disability sectors. It needs to participate more in global discourse, including engagement with social media to reach a larger (and younger) audience, rather than relying on the old system of information sharing and communication via its website, online publications, and email list. ICEVI needs more visibility at the national and sub national level.

If ICEVI was more widely known and understood, members would be invited to participate in UN meetings and contribute to UN publications.

Increased visibility would result in invitations to members to speak at disability and education conferences, and to actively contribute to the growing consortia of disability organisations which are lobbying UN agencies and national governments and producing joint statements, etc. promoting disability inclusive education.

## Appendix B - Key Steps of the Process

*The process was divided into two main phases:*

1. After some initial desk research, the process began with an online survey to all EXBO members. This gathered information and ideas on the current environment of disability-inclusive education for children and young people with vision impairment; the perceived contribution/relevance/importance of ICEVI; the value of ICEVI to its members.

The survey was followed by online discussions with the key representative groups from the EXBO: International Partner Members; Principal Officers; Regional Presidents; Umbrella Organisations; Founding Members. These discussions built on the findings of the survey and addressed specifically the suitability of the current mission, values and goals. This resulted in a revised version being developed, to the point where the Principal Officers see it as ready for approval by the EXBO.

2. Phase 2 built on the outputs of Phase I and addressed the overall question of how ICEVI can be geared up to maximise its contribution to the mission and goals. Two meetings with the whole EXBO took place in July 2023, with the first addressing questions relating to roles and functions, EXBO members' voices, and other criteria for any structures and the second meeting looking at future structures, mechanisms and processes, and financing.
3. The first draft of the report was produced at the end of July 2023, with EXBO members and Principal Officers being given the chance to comment before the final version was produced in October 2023.

# Appendix C - Terms of Reference

4<sup>th</sup> February 2023

## 1. Background

The International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI), at its meeting of the Executive Board held on 4 - 6 October 2022, resolved to carry out a full strategic review of the purpose, direction and shape of ICEVI. The Executive Board resolved to commission an external Facilitator to undertake the strategy review. It is anticipated the review process will be conducted between January/February and July 2023, with the majority of the Facilitator's work conducted online.

### Notes:

- ICEVI's organisational structure consists of an Executive Board (EXBO), Chief Executive Officer (CEO), and seven Regional Boards which, in some regions, include Sub-Regional and National Boards.
- The Executive Board consists of Principal Officers, Presidents of the seven regions, and Representatives of International Partner Member organisations, Founding Member organisations, and umbrella organisations of ICEVI.
- The International Partner Member organisations are CBM, Overbrook, ONCE, Perkins, NextSense, RNIB, Sightsavers, NABP, and Visio. The seven Regional Boards of ICEVI represent the world regions of Africa, East Asia, Europe, Latin America, North America and the Caribbean, Pacific, and West Asia.
- The mission, values and goals of ICEVI are presented in Section 7 below.

## 2. Purpose of the strategic review

The purpose of the strategic review is to reach consensus agreement among members of the Executive Board (and their respective member organisations and regional boards) about the medium to long term purpose, direction, and shape of ICEVI, as articulated through the mission, values, goals, and structure of ICEVI.

## 3. Review process

The review may be considered as a two-stage process:

### *Stage 1:*

- Desktop research by the Facilitator to gain an overall understanding of ICEVI.

- Members of the ICEVI Executive Board, supported by the Facilitator, consider the current external environment of disability-inclusive education for children and young people with vision impairment, in relation to the role, relevance, value, and contribution of ICEVI, as articulated through our mission, values, and goals.

*Stage 2 Framing:*

- With consideration of the outcomes of Stage 1, how do we, as members, structure ICEVI and build capacity and sustainability within ICEVI to achieve its purpose, direction, and shape, as articulated through our mission, values, and goals?

The Consultant shall perform his duties independently and on his own responsibility in consultation with the President and CEO.

#### **4. Principles underpinning the Facilitator’s approach**

The Facilitator will use the set of group facilitation methods known as the [Technology of Participation](#) (ToP). The core principles of ToP, as detailed in Section 8 below, are inclusive participation, teamwork and collaboration, individual and group creativity, ownership and action, and reflection and learning.

#### **5. Scope of Work**

Listed below are the tasks of the Facilitator and a tentative timeline for the strategy review process. Throughout the review process, the Facilitator will “check in” monthly (as required) with the President and CEO.

##### **December 2022 – January 2023**

- Meeting of the Principal Officers and Facilitator to discuss the strategy review process and to reach agreement about the scope of the review, the role of the Facilitator, how the process will be conducted, the projected hours of work required, and an estimate of the Facilitator fee.
- The Principal Officers and Facilitator will draft the Terms of Reference (ToR) and Contract for approval by the Executive Board.
- The Principal Officers will seek Executive Board approval during January, noting that some revisions to the draft ToR and Contract may result from Executive Board feedback prior to approval.

##### **February 2023 - Stage 1 of strategic review**

- The Facilitator will conduct desk research to gain an overall understanding of ICEVI’s current organisational structure, members and partnerships, policies and position papers, publications, projects and achievements. The information reviewed will include the ICEVI global and regional websites

and publications and the websites of similar non-profit organisations in other sectors. A synopsis of the documents used to inform the design of the first stage of the strategic review will be submitted to the Executive Board by email or verbally.

- The Facilitator will gather information from members of the Executive Board using an accessible questionnaire or other data collection tool (e.g., Word and Google Docs, Google forms), allowing time for members to consult with their respective member organisations and the ICEVI regional boards (estimated time for completion is 2 weeks). The information gathered will be collated and a synopsis circulated to the Executive Board in order to inform the small group discussions of the mission, goals and values.

### **March – May 2023 – Stage 1 of strategic review (cont.)**

- The Facilitator will meet online with members of the Executive Board (small group, and/or individual meetings) to consider the current external environment of disability-inclusive education for children with vision impairment, and to gather information and members' perspectives and ideas about the medium to long term purpose, direction and shape of ICEVI, as articulated through ICEVI's mission, values and goals.
- Drawing on analysis and synthesis of the information gathered during the previous months, the Facilitator will draft a set of statements outlining the recommended medium to long term purpose, direction, and shape of ICEVI, and the consequent changes required to the mission, values and goals of ICEVI. The draft statements will first be submitted to the President and CEO for review and revision (if required).
- The President and CEO will (a) circulate the draft set of statements to the Executive Board for review and (b) schedule an online Board meeting for discussion and affirmation of the draft statements.

### **June - July 2023 – State 2 of the strategic review (Framing)**

- Following Executive Board affirmation of the set of statements, the facilitator may conduct a second desk review to investigate compatible organisations in other sectors.
- The facilitator will undertake a second round of online meetings with members of the Executive Board (small group, individual), to gather individual, organisational, and regional perspectives on how best to structure ICEVI and build capacity and sustainability within ICEVI to achieve the agreed-upon purpose, direction, and shape of ICEVI.



## July 2023

- A final Executive Board meeting will be held with the Facilitator to complete the strategic review process.

### 6. Key Deliverables – Stages 1 and 2 of strategic review process

- a. Desk research completed to develop an understanding of ICEVI’s mission, values, goals, organisational structure, membership, partnerships, publications, projects, and achievements. A synopsis of the documents used to inform the design of the first stage of the strategic review submitted to the Executive Board by email or verbally.
- b. Environmental scan completed of global disability-inclusive education context, including education for children and young people with vision impairment.
- c. Information gathered from Executive Board members, member organisations and regional boards, using a questionnaire or other collection tool.
- d. Online meetings conducted with Executive Board members (phase 1 of review process), following the principles of inclusive participation, teamwork, and collaboration.
- e. Draft set of statements prepared and circulated to the Executive Board outlining the recommended medium to long term purpose, direction, and shape of ICEVI, and the consequent changes required to the mission, values, and goals of ICEVI.
- f. Online meetings conducted with Executive Board members (phase 2 of review process), to facilitate consensus and ownership of decisions regarding ICEVI’s structure, and how to build capacity and sustainability to achieve the purpose, direction, and shape of ICEVI, as articulated through the mission, values, and goals.

#### Notes:

- At this point in time, a decision has not been made as to whether to hold the meeting online or in person. The decision regarding a final online or in-person meeting will be made by April 2023, as the design of Stage Two will be informed by the nature of the meeting.

### 7. Mission, Values and Goals of ICEVI

#### Mission

ICEVI is a membership organisation with a mission to promote access to inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all people with visual impairment.

The Mission of ICEVI is aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 4 for Education, with an emphasis on education for children and young people with visual impairments.

### **Values**

ICEVI believes that all children and young people with visual impairment and their families have the right to:

- provision of a full range of educational services and to be included in the educational programs of their respective countries and communities;
- receive early intervention, early childhood development, care and pre-primary education;
- support by teachers and other professionals who are properly trained
- educational materials, teaching methods and programs that are of a high standard, conform to best practices, and to meet their needs;
- live in environments that are free of barriers, social stigmas, and stereotypes; and
- lead productive lives, according to their aspirations and capabilities.

### **Goals for 2022-2024**

- Promote access to quality education for people with visual impairment (VI).
- Influence governments and relevant stakeholders to implement the SDGs and UNCRPD.
- Facilitate networking, information sharing and collaboration at national, regional, and global levels.

## **8. Principles underpinning the strategic review process**

The Facilitator will use the following set of group facilitation methods known as the [Technology of Participation](#) (ToP).

### **Inclusive Participation**

Inviting and sustaining the participation of all members of a group and building respect for any ideas generated. This value is particularly important when working with people who are visually impaired, ensuring that the process, whether in-person or online, enables all participants to participate equally. Online, this extends to the use of appropriate technology which is accessible to people of low or no vision (for example, being compatible with screen readers).

### **Teamwork and Collaboration**

Recognising the “whole is greater than the sum of the parts” and building processes and structures that reflect and value the contribution made by team

cohesion and allow participants to build and develop consensus based on all the ideas.

### **Individual and Group Creativity**

Bringing out the best of each person's rational and intuitive capabilities by making explicit the emotional aspect of human behaviour and its importance in both positive (creativity, intuition) but also negative (anger, frustration) ways.

### **Ownership and Action**

Building a sense of ownership of decisions amongst the group members, positioning them to take action, and ensuring that participants are sufficiently committed to the agreed results to convert them into practice and action.

### **Reflection and Learning**

Ensuring that, in any developmental process, the group has sufficient time and opportunity to reflect on what they have decided so far, to examine the implications of those decisions and to revisit them if necessary.

# ICEVI Strategic Review: Resolutions approved by the Executive Board

**December 2023**

## **Context**

In many ways the crucial question that emerged from the Strategic Review concerns the role that ICEVI should play and what functions should be included in that role. From this flows all of the other decisions about the role of the successor to Dr MNG Mani (the current CEO), the nature and size of the membership scheme, the gearing up of internal and external communications and, crucially, how to make ICEVI sustainable.

To explore the question of functions further, two meetings of the ICEVI Executive Board (EXBO) were held on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> November 2023, with most EXBO members attending. By focusing our discussions on specific examples from campaigning, research and partnerships, members were able to further clarify the future nature of ICEVI and to enrich the review report with new perspectives.

*There was a level of urgency to bring this review to a conclusion, brought by:*

- a) Imminent retirement of Dr MNG Mani, CEO;
- b) The departure of some International Partner Members (IPMs), which will result in a fall in ICEVI's income levels, given the reliance on membership fees; and
- c) A growing sense that ICEVI needs greater clarity on its future in order to continue to have an impact on the education of people with visual impairment globally.

## **Voting**

For the above reasons, the following resolutions were proposed for EXBO members to consider and to vote on during December 2023. Please note:

- a) EXBO members were asked to vote on the basis of principle, recognising that the final details and the implementation will be carried forward by the Principal Officers and self-nominating EXBO committees to implement agreed changes.
- b) Before each resolution, the relevant sections of the Strategic Review report were referenced, and any additional points from the November 2023 EXBO meetings were added.
- c) Members had three options for voting after each resolution: Fully agree; I can live with it; Disagree. For the "I can live with it" category, space was provided to add a comment on what needs to change to bring the Board member to full agreement. These additional comments will be used to inform implementation.

## **Voting results**

All seven resolutions were carried by the Executive Board, with 23 of the 24 Board members participating in the voting process. A range of additional comments and suggestions were provided by Board members, and these will be taken into consideration when implementing the outcomes of the strategic review process. The results of the voting will determine the nature and shape of ICEVI in the medium term, while specific activities and programmes will continue to be determined in quadrennial planning.

The ICEVI Executive Board held its annual governance meeting in December 2023. It was agreed by the Board to form the following committees to commence work on the priority outcomes of the review.

### **Committee 1: Appointment of Person to Serve ICEVI Following Retirement of MNG Mani**

Timeline: January to March 2024

### **Committee 2: Constitutional Amendments Committee**

Timeline: January – May 2024 (NB: Proposed constitutional changes required to be published in July 2024 issue of The Educator)

### **Committee 3: Membership Scheme Committee**

Timeline: January – March 2024 (as implications for work of Constitutional Amendments Committee)

## **RESOLUTION 1: Mission, Values and Goals**

(Report Section 1)

*ICEVI's Mission, Values and Goals are:*

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) is a membership network with a mission to promote access to inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all people with visual impairment.

### **VALUES**

We believe that all people with visual impairment and their families have the right to:

- provision of a full range of educational services and to be included in the educational programs of their respective countries and communities;
- receive early intervention, early childhood development, care and pre-primary education;
- support by teachers and other professionals who are properly trained;

- provision of reasonable accommodation for their needs, including accessible educational materials, enhanced technology, teaching methods and programs that are of a high standard and conform to best practices;
- live in environments that are free of barriers, social stigmas, and stereotypes; and
- lead productive lives, according to their aspirations and capabilities, without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity.

## GOALS

- Goal 1** : Promoting access to quality education for people with visual impairment including those with partial sight/low vision, blindness, deaf blindness, and additional disabilities.
- Goal 2** : To influence governments' and relevant stakeholders' implementation of the SDGs and UNCRPD in the area of education of people with visual impairment by marshalling ICEVI structures, members, and collaborative partnerships.
- Goal 3** : Improving networking, information sharing and collaboration at national, regional and global levels.

## RESOLUTION 2: The Main Functions of ICEVI

(Report Section 2.1)

*From the November meetings: The overall sense from the two recent EXBO meetings is that members want to see ICEVI, in addition to the service and support it gives as a membership network, maintaining a strong presence globally, regionally and nationally, providing leadership, influence, and collaboration within the scope of its mission, values, and goals. This would involve providing the structures and connections for networking and collaborating not only with members but also with other organisations and networks who can be helpful in furthering ICEVI's mission. While ICEVI should continue to have programmes (e.g., research, partnerships and advocacy), ICEVI should ensure each programme is assessed carefully in terms of mission, feasibility, and risk. ICEVI's role in such programmes would primarily be to guide, advise, and facilitate collaboration with members or other organisations.*

### Resolution

Within the context of its Mission, Values and Goals and of ICEVI's priorities and sustainability, the main functions/roles of ICEVI are to:

- Provide leadership and governance to the network, both at the global and regional levels.

- b) Provide management and support to members through networking, communications, facilitating collaboration, and convening (e.g., conferences, seminars, meetings).
- c) Identify programmes (e.g., research, partnerships, advocacy) of value to ICEVI's target audiences, bringing expertise and playing a guiding, facilitative role, supporting implementation through collaboration with members and non-members.
- d) Occupy a position of leadership and influence in the field of education for people with visual impairment.

### **RESOLUTION 3: Internal ICEVI Capacity and Competence**

(Report Sections 2.2.2 and 2.2.3)

*From the November meetings: There was a clear message that members want a strong leader at the global level, able to support regional boards and Presidents, expand and guide the network; make connections; support and lead/guide ICEVI programmes; and maintain a credible and influential presence.*

#### **Resolution**

In support of the core functions, ICEVI should develop capacity and competence, at both global and regional levels, in:

- a) Network leadership, governance, strategy, and financial management;
- b) Risk management;
- c) Network orchestration, coordination and management;
- d) Enabling two-way support and development between ICEVI global, regional and national representatives;
- e) Identification and oversight/management of ICEVI programmes (e.g., research, campaign, partnerships);
- f) Internal (network) and external-facing communications;
- g) Taking care of the ICEVI brand and reputation;
- h) Making and maintaining connections;
- i) Advocacy (including collection and collation of data/evidence);
- j) Fundraising/organisational sustainability; and
- k) Sufficient knowledge and experience in the field of education of people with visual impairment to engage with experts, identify and guide programmes, and represent ICEVI at the global and regional levels.

How these functions are divided between different ICEVI post holders, the nature of the contract between ICEVI and the post holders requires more detailed work by a



designated EXBO committee, informed and supported by appropriate advice and expertise.

#### **RESOLUTION 4: National Focal Points**

(Report Section 2.2.4)

The role of National Focal Points within ICEVI should be formalised and included in ICEVI structures.

#### **RESOLUTION 5: ICEVI Membership Scheme**

(Report Sections 2.2.5, 4.1, 2.2.1)

*From the November meetings: In addition to the points in the report, the point was raised that, in the event of ICEVI growing, the level of liability attached to membership of the EXBO could increase. Any overall review of the membership should consider ways of addressing this, and for example, explore how a member ready to contribute financially but not ready to take on the liabilities could still be accommodated within ICEVI.*

#### **Resolution**

The current ICEVI Membership scheme should be reviewed with a view to diversification and expansion, both to generate increased income and to strengthen ICEVI's credibility, connections, reach, expertise, knowledge, and action that members bring. This should include a review of EXBO membership and member liabilities.

#### **RESOLUTION 6: ICEVI's Internal and Outward Facing Communications**

(Report Section 3)

ICEVI's internal and outward facing communications systems (including the website, social media and other collective communication tools) should be reviewed, enhanced, updated, and expanded.

#### **RESOLUTION 7: ICEVI's Funding and Income Streams**

(Report Section 4)

*From the November meetings: There was a broad sense that ICEVI needs to raise additional funds just to be able to operate as a network, supporting both the global and regional levels. With the departure of some IPMs, the predicted membership revenue for 2024 will not cover the core costs required. Additional funding may also be required to contribute to programme work. A clear concern was raised about any associated increase in members' liabilities or risks, requiring consideration of this as any fundraising takes place.*