ICEVI

International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment

QUADRENNIAL REPORT

2021-2024

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Message from the President

As I step down from my role as President of the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI), I reflect with deep appreciation on the past eight years of service. It has been an honour and a privilege to lead an organisation so deeply committed to improving access to equitable, quality education for children and young people with visual impairments worldwide, in alignment with their basic human rights.

Over these two terms, ICEVI has continued to grow and evolve, facing new challenges while achieving significant milestones. These accomplishments would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of our dedicated office bearers, members, partners, and collaborators. I am deeply appreciative of your unwavering commitment and shared vision of an inclusive world, where every person—regardless of visual ability—can reach their full potential.

I would like to extend my profound thanks to Dr. M.N.G. Mani for his leadership and guidance as Chief Executive Officer for more than two decades. Thanks to his deep knowledge of visual impairment education and his ability to foster collaborative partnerships, ICEVI's networks have expanded. Our flagship higher education initiative in the East Asia region demonstrates what is possible when passionate, knowledgeable individuals come together to improve the lives of children and young people with visual impairments.

I also wish to express my sincere appreciation to the Principal Officers, members of the global Executive Board, Presidents and Boards of ICEVI's seven regions, and member organisations for their leadership in advancing ICEVI's mission. To our global and regional partners—especially those who have supported our capacity-building programs, inclusive education initiatives, and advocacy efforts—your support has been invaluable. Together, we have made strides in promoting educational equity and education systems that provide high quality programs for learners with visual impairments, ensuring no one is left behind.

As I hand over leadership to my successor, I am filled with optimism for ICEVI's future. With the exceptional talent, passion, and determination that exists within the organisation, I am confident that ICEVI will continue to expand its impact and push the boundaries of inclusion in education globally.

It has been a privilege to work alongside all of you, and I look forward to continuing to support this vital work in new capacities.

Thank you for your trust, dedication, and collaboration over the years.

Sincerely,

Dr Frances Gentle,
President (2016-2024)

Message from the CEO

Dear Colleagues:

I step down from the position of the Chief Executive Officer of ICEVI after 2 decades. Though I commenced my work as the Secretary General of ICEVI in 2002, my association with the organisation goes back to 1982 when I attended the 7th Quinquennial conference of ICEVI held in Nairobi, Kenya. Since then I involved myself closely with the regional activities of ICEVI in the combined Asia region. In 1990, midway through the Quadrennium, I was elected by the Asia regional board to take charge as the regional chairperson of Asia region which was a great learning experience. I continued as the regional chair until 2002.

I was fortunate to attend the strategy review meeting of ICEVI jointly organised by ICEVI, CBM and Sighsavers in Bensheim, Germany in February 2002 when the executive board decided to establish a Secretariat with the appointment of a full time Secretary General to expand the activities of the organisation. At the end of that meeting, Larry Campbell, President ICEVI, Christian Garms, the then Executive Director of CBM International and Dick Porter, CEO Sightsavers asked me to consider the possibility of taking over the position of Secretary General ICEVI. It was a pleasant surprise and there was little time left to take a decision. Back home I was holding a government aided job and serving as the Principal of the Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya College of Education, a premier institution of teacher education in India. It was a dilemma whether to continue my job back home or venture into international work. With the consent of my College and with the support of my family, I decided to join ICEVI and took charge at the 2002 Golden Jubilee Conference of ICEVI held in Amsterdam in front of over 700 participants and delegates drawn from all parts of the world and the long journey commenced.

The executive board and Larry Campbell in particular were of great help in contacting many funding agencies that aligned with the mission of ICEVI. With the introduction given by Grace Chan, the then Treasurer, the Lee Foundation came forward to help ICEVI in organizing a series of awareness activities for parents and general public and capacity building programs for teachers. Thanks to the boards of the developing regions of ICEVI that organised over 200 programs, which had direct impact on over 150,000 children with visual impairment and 9,000 teachers and parents. With the momentum built through this initiative, International partners came on board to work together that led to the launching of the Global Campaign on Education for All Children with Visual Impairment (EFA-VI).

“Start little; grow slowly and don't expect results overnight” was the approach in the campaign and it demonstrated inclusive education in over 30 countries in the developing regions of ICEVI. The campaign facilitated enrolment of an additional 115,000 children with visual impairment in schools and trained over 120,000 teachers, parents and general public on matters dealing with inclusion. CBM, Sightsavers, ONCE, Norwegian Association for the Blind and Partially Sighted, Perkins School for the Blind, Light for the World, Perkins School

for the Blind, Overbrook School for the Blind, RNIB, NextSense and the Royal Dutch Visio worked with ICEVI and provided financial and administrative assistance to make the EFAVI campaign successful. The campaign also influenced policy changes to reach the unreached children with visual impairment. The strategy review of ICEVI held in 2017 suggested the gradual transition of the campaign from service delivery to advocacy and this put more emphasis on regional development. Since then ICEVI regions have been doing significant work in this direction.

One of the principles of the EFAVI campaign was to create a demand for education and this warranted the need for developing role models among visually impaired children. ICEVI approached The Nippon Foundation with the higher education initiative to apply the use of technology to expand educational avenues for students with visual impairment. A small experiment that started in Indonesia in 2006 with the support of The Nippon Foundation culminated into one of the flagship programs of ICEVI till 2023. This program was slowly expanded to Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos and Mongolia and at the end of the project period, over 3000 students with visual impairment were assisted to pursue their university studies. The higher education project which added the employment component too in 2016 has helped over 450 graduates to secure employment. In order to strengthen mathematics education among visually impaired children from the primary level, the higher education project also facilitated the development of over 670 instructional videos in this area. Production of these math videos has been one of my exciting professional experiences in ICEVI besides serving as its executive head. Kudos to the visionary approach of Larry Campbell that made the higher education program possible and heartfelt gratitude to The Nippon Foundation for its continuous support to ICEVI for almost 18 years since 2006.

Besides the officers of ICEVI of the last several years, I also had the privilege to interact with many luminaries of the field of the yester years and they include Wolfgang Stein, Jeanne Kenmore, Stanley Bourgeault, Nattalie Barraga, Bill Brohier, Kevin Lassard, Susana Crespo, Victor Siaulys, Alan Johns, Heather Hewitt, Elizabeth Chapman, Susan Spungin, Kay Ferrell, Gladys Nyaga, Herman Gresnigt, Coen De Jong, Neville Lawson, Aubrey Webson, Rajendra Vyas, Ismail Salleh, H. E. Sheikh Abdullah M. Al-Ghanim, Tom Rogerson, P G Michael, Heather Mason, Lal Advani and N.K.Jangira. They gave professional guidance on various matters which I cherish for ever.

It was also a remarkable professional and administrative experience to have worked with three wonderful presidents of ICEVI. The first one was Larry Campbell who was not only a President for me but a mentor too in my professional growth. His long term vision for ICEVI and the blindness sector has helped in initiating some of these global programs that have helped thousands of visually impaired students. The second President with whom I worked was Lord Colin Low who is an expert in legal aspects. I learnt a lot from him particularly in constitutional matters of the global and regional bodies of ICEVI, dealing administrative issues with the Companies House of the United Kingdom, etc. The third one is Frances Gentle, who is one of the finest academicians in the education of visually impaired children. Working with her expanded my knowledge in this field particularly in the area of early intervention. Thank You Larry, Colin and Frances for guiding me all these years in ICEVI.

I served as the Secretary General and later as CEO of ICEVI from 2002 till 2024 when I had the opportunity to work with 35 regional boards of ICEVI comprising nearly 300 members and over 20 regional presidents. ICEVI work took me to all these regions and it was one of the greatest learning experience to understand the nuances of education and how they differ in various regions of the world. Many of these regional board members and the members of the executive board are still in contact and I really cherish their friendship. ICEVI has become an integral part of my family and I will carry the learning ICEVI has given to me for the rest of my life. At the Secretariat, I was ably helped by M.R. Visvanathan and N. Velmurugan in executing all administrative work all these years and B.M. Bagath Singh who assisted me in producing the instructional videos and I express my sincere gratitude to them.

I also plan to use my retired life for penning down the development of ICEVI since 2002 for institutional memory and in this context I may contact some of you for information. Therefore, the journey in ICEVI is likely to continue but in a different dimension. Thank you my friends and mentors of the past and the present for your friendship.

Regards

Mani, M.N.G.

Principal Officers for the Quadrennium

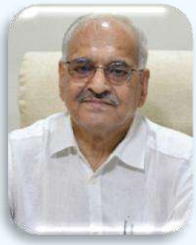
The ICEVI General Assembly of the last Quadrennium was organised on 29th June 2021 in the virtual mode for the first time due to the impact of the COVID-19 that struck the world in 2019-2020. Though elaborate arrangements were made for hosting a face-to-face joint General Assemblies of the World Blind Union (WBU) and the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment in Madrid, Spain in June 2020, with the support of the ONCE, it had to be postponed to June 2021 hoping that the conditions would be feasible for conducting the face-to-face Assemblies. As lockdowns and flight suspensions were the difficulties faced even in 2021, the organising committee decided to hold the Joint General Assemblies in the hybrid mode. This allowed some countries in Europe and Latin America to attend the event in person while the rest of the world participated in the virtual mode. The post-event assessment clearly revealed that the joint General Assemblies of ICEVI and WBU were productive, and presentations were of a high calibre. For the first time in ICEVI's history, the nomination process for office bearers was conducted in the virtual mode. For the Quadrennium 2021-2024, the following Principal Officers were elected. Their role is to act on behalf of ICEVI and the Executive Board during the Quadrennium, with administrative assistance provided by the ICEVI Secretariat.

President: Dr. Frances Gentle (Australia):

Dr. Gentle was elected for her second term as the President of ICEVI. She has contributed significantly to the field of education for children with blindness or low vision in Australia and internationally for the past three decades. Frances is a lecturer with NextSense and holds conjoint positions with Macquarie University and the University of Newcastle.

First Vice President: Dr. Bhushan Punani (India):

Dr. Punani has a long and active history within ICEVI. He is the General Secretary of the Blind People's Association (India), and has significant experience of advocacy on the rights of people with visual impairment.



Second Vice President: Ms. Sabine Fijn van Draat (The Netherlands):

Ms. Sabine Fijn van Draat is from the Royal Dutch Visio, one of the International Partner Members of ICEVI. She has led the work of the ICEVI Executive Governance Committee in the past Quadrennium, which has successfully completed its work.

Treasurer: Dr. Praveena Sukhraj-Ely (South Africa):

Financial management and accounting is one of the core job functions performed by Dr. Praveena Sukhraj-Ely on a daily basis with her employment with the National Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities in the Presidency in South Africa.

Regional Presidents for the Quadrennium

Africa region: **Ms. Gertrude Oforiwa Fefoame** from Ghana had contributed significantly for the growth of ICEVI Africa region. It was during her tenure that the Africa region became a legal entity. She also served as the Chairperson of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

East Asia region: **Ms. Aria Indrawati** from Indonesia was re-elected for the Quadrennium 2021–2024. Aria headed the region where one of the flagship programmes of ICEVI - The Nippon Foundation-supported higher education project was implemented until 2023. Aria was also instrumental in registering the ICEVI Indonesia network as a legal body.

Europe region: **Dr. John Ravenscroft** from Scotland is the regional president of the Europe region. He was elected at the Europe regional assembly that was held in 2022. He is a Professor of Childhood Visual Impairment, University of Edinburgh.

Latin America region: **Mr. Julio César Canizález** from El Salvador was elected as the new regional president of the Latin America region and ICEVI wished him great success in his position.

North America and Caribbean region: **Ms. Susan LaVenture**, who is an advocate of parents' moment at the global level, was elected as the regional president of the NAC region for the Quadrennium 2021-24. ICEVI believes that her new position would provide impetus for strengthening the parents' movement within ICEVI.

Pacific region: **Dr. Joanne Mosen** from Australia is from the disability development field. In 2021, Jo was elected regional president of the Pacific region. In 2024, **Dr Emily White** from Australia became president and will take the region forward in the next quadrennium.

West Asia region: The West Asia region had elected **Dr. Birendra Raj Pokharel** from Nepal as its regional president. Birendra is closely associated with ICEVI Nepal. Being an activist in the field, Birendra certainly brought new momentum to the ICEVI West Asia region.

ICEVI 70th Year Celebrations

The International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment, popularly known as ICEVI, is an evolving organisation. The purpose of ICEVI is to ensure that all children with visual impairment have access to quality education and the mission continues. The name of the organisation changed a few times, the office bearers changed between the General Assemblies, but the basic fabric of the organisation remains unchanged since its inception in 1952 in the Netherlands. The global body emerged at an international conference organised at the present Royal Dutch Visio premises in the Netherlands.

The organisation became 70 years old in 2022 and the commitment and passion of the people associated with its inception in 1952 continues with the individuals and institutions in ICEVI in 2024. This spirit is moving the ICEVI forward and it will continue to remain strong in the years to come.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, ICEVI organised its only face-to-face Executive Board meeting of the Quadrennium at the Royal Dutch Visio premises on 4-6 October 2022. The meeting included celebrations to mark the 70th year of ICEVI. This meeting and those present will feature in the history of ICEVI.

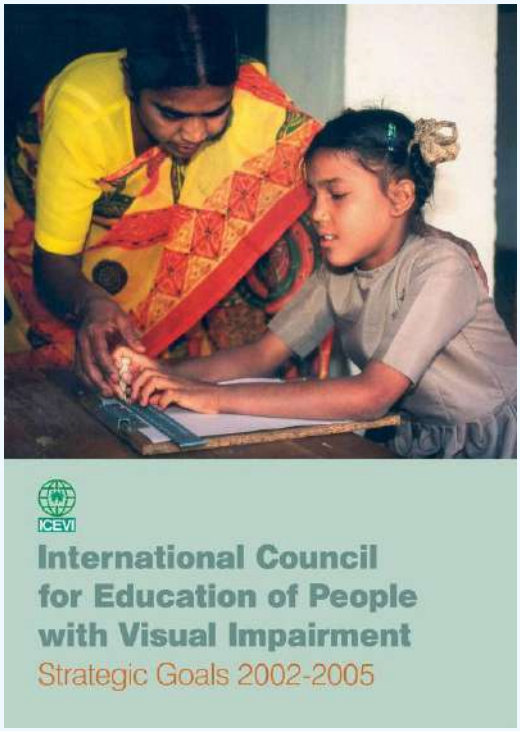
In addition to the celebrations that were attended by ICEVI members of the Executive Board and officials of the Royal Dutch Visio, the veterans of the organisation Larry Campbell, Hans Welling, Lucia Piccione, and Nandini Rawal representing various organisations and regions also joined the celebrations virtually and recalled their experiences when working with ICEVI.

Strategy Review of ICEVI

ICEVI is a dynamic organisation ever since its inception in 1952. The organisation had undergone significant changes from time to time. Until 1977, which marked the 25th year since inception, ICEVI was basically a networking organisation providing opportunities for professionals in the field and organisations working for people with visual impairment to assemble once in a Quinquennium to share information about new developments in the field of education of children and young people with visual impairment. At that time, the global events every five years were relevant as communication channels were not advanced and

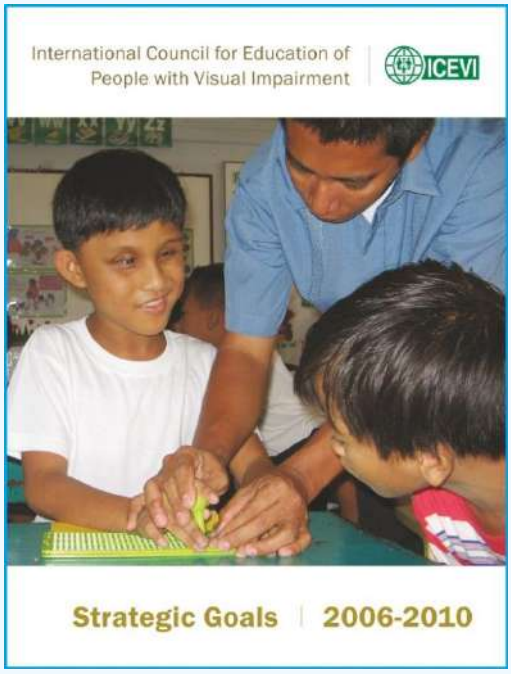
the global bodies used face-to-face meetings as one of the most viable methods to exchange ideas.

From 1977, global international organisations working in the field of visual impairment showed interest in directing ICEVI's priorities towards effecting changes in the field of education by directly involving members in implementing model programs. Until 2002, the organisations focused on regional development with the conduct of capacity building programs for teachers, awareness programs for parents, networking with global policy making agencies, etc.



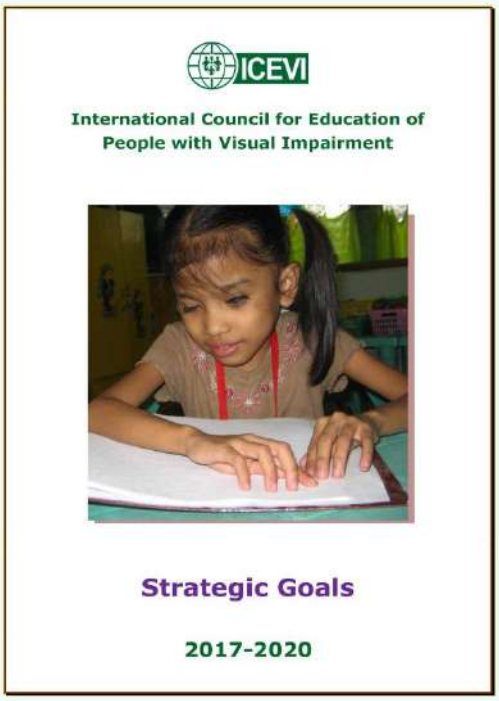
It was in the year 2002 when ICEVI members decided to have a full-fledged Secretary General to steer the implementation of its global and regional activities with specific reference to training, curriculum development, materials management, policy formulation, networking, publications, etc.

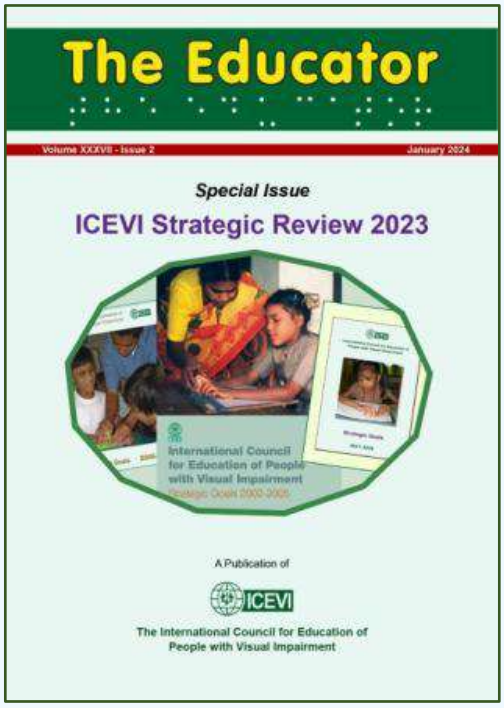
Funding organisations such as the Lee Foundation and The Nippon Foundation, together with contributions from International Partner Members, supported key flagship activities of ICEVI such as the Global Campaign on Education for All Children with Visual Impairment (EFA-VI), in partnership with the World Blind Union; the Higher Education program for visually impaired youth in the East Asia region; development of a wide range of instruction materials with reference to mathematics; to name a few.



ICEVI has revisited its strategies every 4 years since 2002 and the Executive Board has reviewed the programs of the Quadrennium, making suggestions and formulating strategies for the forthcoming four years. In the Quadrennial review of 2017, there was a major shift in the governance of ICEVI, whereby the ICEVI global body encouraged the regions to become legal entities. This paved the way for the regions to become initiators of activities through local funding and resource mobilisation, with the ICEVI global body retaining its focus on coordination and networking. The results were positive and many regions including the vast Africa region became legal entities and started formulating the regional activities including regional conferences.

Towards the middle of the Quadrennium 2017 – 2020, ICEVI formed a Governance Committee that developed a governance framework, giving emphasis of ICEVI global body on networking rather than being involved directly in implementing project activities at the regional level. The global Executive Board suggested that ICEVI may provide the required administrative assistance to the regions and provide support in connecting the Regional Board s with ICEVI's International Partner Members and other organisations that work at the regional level to take up direct projects.





Several international partners opined that direct funding to programs in regions from ICEVI may have ramifications in terms of technical and legal compliances with the growing fiscal management stipulations globally. With this emerging shift in approach, ICEVI undertook a strategy review of its mission, goals and structure in 2023 with the support of a facilitator who interacted with the various types of members of ICEVI, including the International partner organisations, regional presidents, umbrella organisations, and founding members of ICEVI.

The facilitator, with the endorsement from the ICEVI Executive Board, suggested a strategy that retained the regional focus of ICEVI and implementation of activities. The strategy also encouraged more networking with international partners and the wider ICEVI constituency using the strength of social media, and increased involvement of ICEVI Regional Board s in the implementation of specific activities with the support of local bodies and funding agencies.

The strategy review implementation will start in a full-fledged way from the forthcoming Quadrennium 2024 - 2028 and ICEVI will acquire a lot of learning experiences going forward in implementing the new strategy.

Meetings of ICEVI Executive Boards

During the Quadrennium 2021-2024, three meetings of the global ICEVI Executive Board were conducted and they are listed below:

- December 2021 - Virtual – Minutes
- October 2022 - Amsterdam – Minutes
- December 2023 - Virtual – Minutes

During the meetings, the Executive Committee took key policy decisions pertaining to the longstanding growth of ICEVI. In the December 2021 meeting, the need for strengthening regional development was stressed and, in this respect, the Board endorsed the quadrennial plans prepared by the seven Regional Board s of ICEVI. The Executive Board at this meeting also appreciated the idea of forming Thematic Task Forces on Inclusion, Technology, Advocacy, Children development and Gender and opined that the concept papers thus developed by the respective Task Groups could be used as guidelines for implementing service programs in these areas.

At the meeting held in October 2022, the central focus was on the work undertaken to date by the Governance Committee in addressing the transition of the CEO position by 2023/24. Members highlighted the CEO qualifications, job descriptions, etc., as discussed by the Governance Committee. Members reviewed the various options available for supporting the CEO position and at the same time assisting the ICEVI regions to continue their capacity building and advocacy initiatives.

Two side meetings of the International Partner Members (IPMs) were held to further discuss the CEO transition and overall strategy of ICEVI. After detailed deliberations, the Executive Board recommended a thorough review of the ICEVI strategy and functions before proceeding further with the CEO transition.

The members acknowledged that times have changed and recommended to revisit the vision, mission and priorities of ICEVI in the present context as a way of determining the future structure of ICEVI including that of the Executive Board and the position of CEO. This led to the Strategy Review of ICEVI that was facilitated by Mr. Jonathan Dudding. He delivered a detailed presentation to the Executive Board in 2023.

The Executive Board meeting of December 2023 reviewed the final report and recommendations of the strategy review. The Board decided that, in view of Mani's retirement from the position of ICEVI CEO, a selection committee could proceed with the process of appointing a Secretary General at the earliest. The Board also endorsed hosting the International Conference and General Assembly of ICEVI to be held in Ahmedabad, India in November 2023.

The ICEVI Executive Board meetings were always considered to be important events for the exchange of knowledge and the building of collaborative partnerships for strengthening ICEVI and progressing its mission. Due to changing times, physical meetings of the global and Regional Board s of ICEVI are becoming costly and therefore, the future meetings are likely to be in virtual mode unless a physical meeting is deemed necessary.

Effective use of accessible digital technology has become vital, and the discussions of the Executive Board and the Principal Officers of recent times have included deliberation on improving the digital communication system of ICEVI during the next quadrennium.

ICEVI networking with Global bodies

ICEVI is working with several global networks and international organisations for promoting and supporting educational opportunities for persons with visual impairment. The collaborations that took place during the Quadrennium 2021-2024 are as follows:

IDDC and the Task Group for Inclusive Education

ICEVI has been working with the International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC) since 2010 as a member of its task group on inclusive education. Most of the international partners of ICEVI were also on the Board of IDDC and therefore addressed concerns dealing with the education and disability rights of persons with visual impairment were shared by the international partners themselves. In 2022, the ICEVI Executive Board took a decision to become a full-fledged member of IDDC in 2024. After having a series of discussions with the management of IDDC, ICEVI has become a voting member on the IDDC board. ICEVI also took part in the General Assembly of IDDC held in Brighton, United Kingdom in the month of May 2024. It is of the opinion of both the organisations that using the networks of IDDC and ICEVI worldwide will contribute significantly to strengthening advocacy as well as educational activities for persons with disabilities in general and persons with visual impairment in particular.

WIPO Accessible Books Consortium

The WIPO Accessible Books Consortium (ABC) has been one of the key alliance partners of ICEVI and during the Quadrennium, ICEVI was made a full member on the Executive Board of the ABC. ICEVI records its special thanks to Dr Praveena Sukhraj-Ely, who represented ICEVI on the ABC board and also explored opportunities for ABC and ICEVI to work together in different regions. Some of the higher education partners of the ICEVI in the East Asia Region were also linked to the project activities of ABC. ABC was also requested to take part in the meetings of the regional presidents of ICEVI to share the opportunities for potential collaboration for popularising accessible books in member countries where there is sufficient bandwidth for Internet.

The ICEVI regions also organised several programs on the Marrakesh VIP Treaty and therefore collaboration with the ABC has become an important means of raising awareness with local governments about the need to provide accessible books for visually impaired children as an essential part of their total inclusion in the education system. The ABC is represented on the ICEVI Technology in Education Task Group, and we anticipate will continue its active role in the Group in the forthcoming Quadrennium. ICEVI believes that such strategic partnerships with organisations like the ABC will go a long way in promoting the human right to equity and equality in education for children with visual impairment, with a focus on low- and middle-income countries.

United Nations

ICEVI being a key nodal organisation focusing on education of children with visual impairment over many decades, it uses every opportunity to develop concept papers and make statements on the subject in the meetings organised by the United Nations. Being a

member of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (UN-ECOSOC), it uses meeting opportunities to physically attend or make appropriate statements on various themes that are on the agenda of the ECOSOC meetings. When ICEVI was implementing the Global Campaign on Education For All Children with Visual Impairment (EFAVI) during 2005 till 2016, many presentations were made in UNESCO and UNICEF events. In fact, ICEVI played a key role in UNESCO's Flagship Program on Inclusion and continues to use every opportunity to work with UNESCO and its national partners.

During the Quadrennium, members of the ICEVI Executive Board contributed to the following United Nations events:

- Inscription submission for the 14th Session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (COSP14), United Nations Headquarters, New York, June 2021
- Contribution to the WHO-UNICEF Global Report on Assistive Technology (GReAT), October 2021
- Written statement submission to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) High Level Segment, UN New York, July 2022.
- Participation and presentation of an inscription at the 16th Session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (COSP14), United Nations Headquarters, New York, June 2023
- Participation in the UN Civil Society Conference, Nairobi, Kenya, May 2024
- Participation in the UN High Level Political Forum, UN New York, July 2024
- Participation in the UN Summit of the Future and Action Days, UN New York, September 2024

The ICEVI Executive Board members attending the United Nations meetings in New York take the opportunity to have side meetings with UNICEF staff, ICEVI partner members, and other disability organisations attending the high-level events. These meetings provide opportunities to discuss shared priorities in the field of education for children and young people with visual impairment or other disabilities.

Vision Alliance

The Vision Alliance is an initiative of the World Blind Union (WBU), the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) and the International Agency for Prevention of Blindness (IAPB). Formed by a Letter of Understanding in 2009, the purpose

of the Alliance is to enhance synergy, collaboration and information sharing between the three organisations, and to create common platforms where persons with visual impairment, parents and other stakeholders can work together to plan services for persons with visual impairment.

Some of the tasks initiated by the Vision Alliance in the past have included contribution to the World Health Organisation's World Report on Vision that was released on World Braille Day, 4th January 2019, joint statements by WBU, IAPB and ICEVI on the situation for children and adults with visual impairment in refugee camps, inputs for the population-based measures for disability developed by WHO and the Washington Group on Disability Statistics.

The Presidents and CEOs of the three organisations aim to meet on a regular basis, either in person or virtually. During the Quadrennium, informal meetings were organised with the following objectives:

1. Development of mechanisms to ensure a systematic exchange of information between the three organizations.
2. Identification of shared areas of concern on which the three organizations can work together through joint advocacy.
3. Creation of digital platforms where stakeholders such as parents, people with visual disabilities, voluntary organizations, educators and ophthalmologists can work together in planning comprehensive services for people with visual disabilities.

The above objectives will be reinforced in the forthcoming Quadrennium 2024-2028 and there will be significant collaborative activities between ICEVI and the World Blind Union. Engagement with the IAPB will also be strengthened during the next quadrennium.

Regional Development

The Quadrennium 2021 - 24 witnessed solid growth in development across the seven regions of ICEVI. During the Quadrennium, the regions prepared Quadrennial plans, with a shift away from annual planning that featured in the previous quadrennium. It is customary for the Presidents of each region to present the status of regional activities during the fiscal year during the annual meeting of the ICEVI Executive Board, and to submit their plans for the ensuing fiscal year for consideration by the Board.

At end of the Quadrennium 2017-20, the regional Presidents proposed that the preparation their Regional Board s of a long-term plan with specific priorities for their regions, so as to ensure continuity in activities. As a result, the ICEVI Principal Officers and the CEO worked with every Regional Board to prepare Quadrennial Plans that could be implemented during the Quadrennium and beyond, as required.

The purpose of preparing long term plans was to explore the possibility of grants from the International Partner Members and other funding sources which have a focus on specific regions. Development of the plans involved discussion with members of the Regional Board s, experts from various countries within the region, the Principal Officers, and

representatives of International Partner Organisations. All the regions developed their own plans, and the details were submitted at the meeting of the ICEVI Executive Board that took place in December 2021. This was the first Executive Board meeting held after the virtual joint General Assemblies of the ICEVI and the World Blind Union. The Executive Board approved the quadrennial plans in principle and suggested that the progress of implementation could be reported at every meeting of the Executive Board during the Quadrennium.

The Executive Board recognised the importance of mobilizing resources for implementation of each region's quadrennial plan and acknowledged the value of collaboratively developing a broad plan and key priorities in each region. ICEVI global has provided funds for administration in each region, with the expectation that the Regional Board s will seek and acquit funds for regional initiatives. Following is a summary of the region-wise priorities and what has been achieved during the Quadrennium 2021-2024.

The **Africa region** focussed on training, nurturing partnerships with International Partner Members and other regional players, establishing membership with the Accessible Books Consortium to strengthen the Visionary Learning through Technology initiative and also in the conduct of campaigns to influence implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty in member countries.

The region, being a legal entity, entered into partnership with CBM International for implementing capacity building programs for teachers, especially in the context of the Visionary Learning through Technology initiatives in Kenya, Burkina Faso, and Tanzania. The region conducted its first ever full-fledged regional conference in October 2023 in Nairobi, Kenya, that attracted a record number of over 400 participants. The various plenary sessions were also sponsored by Government and Private Organisations including the African Development Bank. With the momentum built at the regional conference, the region hopes to enter into partnership with different organisations in the Quadrennium 2025-28.

The **East Asia region** was involved in the training of teachers on adapting learning materials and teaching approaches in mathematics, technology applications and capacity building programs in education of deafblind children, implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty, awareness activities on accessibility standards, transition of visually impaired graduates to employment through the higher education project, and strengthening collaboration with the WBU Asia Pacific Regional Board.

East Asia region is a privileged ICEVI region as it received a designated grant from The Nippon Foundation to implement the flagship higher education program of ICEVI since 2006-2007. The program has facilitated higher education studies for over 3000 students with visual impairment in seven countries, namely Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos and Mongolia. Therefore, the East Asia regional activities centered around higher education and networking among the partners with these 7 countries taking lead in implementing regional orientation programs, awareness activities, etc.

The Regional Board collaborated with the Special Education Centre of the South East Asia Ministers of Education Organisation (SEAMEO-SEN) and involved them in activities in the region when feasible.

With the higher education program preparing graduates, the region focused on Youth Development. Country level Champions programs were organised involving motivated young visually impaired persons. Many of these young persons have had an impact on the policy process in their home countries. During the Quadrennium 2021-2024, the region organised two regional youth summits involving over 100 visually impaired higher education graduates of whom many were in

employment. The region also organised a regional conference in Yog Jakarta in September 2023 that was attended by over 200 participants drawn from the region and different parts of the world. This conference provided an opportunity to raise the profile of ICEVI in the East Asia region. Another unique distinction of the East Asia region is the presence of a strong parents' group in the Philippines, named Parents Association of Visually Impaired Children (PAVIC). ICEVI has been collaborating with PAVIC in organising regional conference once every 2 years. The higher education project also involves parents to a large extent in promoting education and employment opportunities for persons with visual empowerment. The ICEVI East Asia region supported two conferences organised by PAVIC. In summary, the East Asia region demonstrated some of the key concepts advocated by ICEVI, aiming at empowerment of persons with visual impairment through the joint efforts of different stakeholders.

The **Europe region** was the first region of ICEVI to become a legal body. The region has its own structure, constitution and membership drive. Many organisations that are associated with the global ICEVI are also members and partners with the Europe region in furthering the cause of education and rehabilitation of persons with visual impairment. During 2021-2024 the region organised national conferences and focus group meetings in which professionals met to deliberate on the updates in the field that will promote the blindness sector and support VI professionals in organising suitable training programs for teachers. In addition to these programs the region also led a LEGO Foundation research study that dealt with use of braille Lego bricks to teach braille to visually impaired learners in focus countries.

Dissemination of information is also one of the key activities of the Europe region and it is done through the ICEVI Europe website, https://www.icevi-europe.org/, and the ICEVI Europe digital magazine. On the humanitarian front, the region also plays an active role in assisting persons with the visual impairment in war affected regions, particularly in the Ukraine. The region will be holding its next regional conference in Italy in 2025 when the new officers for the region will be elected.

Unlike other regions of ICEVI, the Europe region is also focusing on rehabilitation as the population of persons with blindness in the region is significantly changing with elderly people with visual environment requiring more assistance. To embrace this growing population, the nomenclature of the organisation also includes the word “rehabilitation” and as a result, ICEVI Europe is called International Council for Education and Rehabilitation of Persons with Visual Impairment without changing the acronym “ICEVI”. The Europe region is recognised for its sustainability, administrative structure and activities.

The **North America and the Caribbean (NAC) region** of ICEVI has strong collaboration with the Regional Board of the World Blind Union, as demonstrated through many joint activities conducted in the region. The NAC Regional Board undertook a thorough assessment of human resource requirements early in the Quadrennium 2021-24. As a

result, the Regional Board and decided to organise a series of capacity building programs for parents and teachers in the Caribbean sub-region, with two such programs organised during the Quadrennium. These programs strengthened the skills of the participants and also motivated the local governments and voluntary organisations to become involved in improving the quality of education for persons with visual impairment.

The parents' movement in the NAC region is gaining momentum and the parents' body is meeting on a regular basis to promote its global advocacy for the betterment of the lives of persons with visual impairment. The North America region mobilizes resources through the support of regional organisations that pay membership subscription to the ICEVI NAC region. These resources, mobilised through membership, are enabling the Regional Board to contribute to the expenses incurred for the Caribbean capacity building programs. The detailed plan of the region for the present as well as the future Quadrennium includes advocacy, training and capacity building of parents as the prominent priorities.

The Regional Board is thankful to the New York Institute of Special Education (NYISE) for housing the Secretariat of the NAC region. The Regional Board is also engaged with the Association of Education and Research (AER) in the USA and is hopeful of increased collaboration in the forthcoming Quadrennium. Although the region is not registered as the legal entity, the Regional Board after detailed deliberations opined that the present networking and collaboration, with secretarial support provided by the NYISE, is more than sufficient to mobilize and acquit local resources. The Board decided that the present arrangements are more advantageous than pursuing legal entity status for the region. This stand will be further reviewed going forward to arrive at an appropriate decision on the region becoming a legal entity.

The NAC region has demonstrated the positive impact of close collaboration between ICEVI and WBU at the regional level, particularly in addressing the training needs of the Caribbean sub-region.

The **Latin America region** has a strong sub-regional structure within ICEVI and the Quadrennial activities are summarized as follows:

- ICEVI Latin America had its constituent assembly in April 2016, and was legalized before the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Uruguay in November 2016 being the second regional ICEVI Global to obtain its legalization after Europe.
- ICEVI Latin America has always translated the Educator into Spanish for Spanish-speaking people.
- ICEVI Latin America held the virtual regional conference in April 2021, where the authorities for the period 2021-2025 were elected that include 1 president, 1 former president, 5 subregional coordinators (Southern Cone, Andean, Mexico, Brazil, Central America and the Caribbean).
- 17 national and 5 subregional conferences were held between 2022 and 2024, with only the regional conference pending by statute, which will take place in Sao Paulo, Brazil, in April 2025, where the authorities of ICEVI Latin America will be elected again for the period 2025-2029.
- To date, there are 647 members in 17 of the 19 countries that make up Latin America.
- Between 2021 and 2024, 14 virtual courses were held on topics such as deafblindness, low vision, IT, UDL, Gamification of learning, among others, from which 364 professionals from Latin America have benefited.
- 11 talks were delivered in the 5 regions, attended by almost 550 people. Participation of different members of the Board of Directors was facilitated in more than 30 virtual discussions / meetings developed by different organizations in Latin America and Spain, (Aniridia Association, Latin American Ophthalmology Council, San Carlos University, ULAC, Tecnológico de Monterrey, etc.), between the years 2021 and 2024.
- 6 virtual issues of our biannual newsletter were published. Interaction on the website and social networks of X, Instagram, Facebook and YouTube channel was also facilitated.
- Prepared Rehabilitation Manual for People with Disabilities in Latin America in collaboration with FOAL of Spain and the Latin American Union of the Blind.
- Virtual preparation and distribution of 2 technical educational documents aimed at Physical Education and Mathematics Teachers were made.
- Two Specialized Groups were formed, one for deafblindness in 2021 and another for Low Vision in 2024, to identify training and guidance actions for professionals in these areas.
- Two work groups with visually impaired children from the region were formed, where they expressed their needs, interests and, most importantly, to make

their voices heard by expressing their feelings and thoughts, through videos and conversations where they have an outstanding activity.

In summary, the Latin America region of ICEVI has carried out significant flagship activities at the national level benefitting thousands of visually impaired individuals, teachers and parents and this professional work will continue with more vigour in the years ahead.

The **Pacific region** conducted a Scoping Study of VI education in Pacific Island Countries early in the quadrennium. The Regional Board also developed an Advocacy brochure promoting access to education for people who are blind or vision impaired in the Pacific. The brochure was translated into two Pacific languages and distributed across the Pacific in 2023-2024. For the effective conduct of capacity building training for teachers, the region has also developed Inclusive education fact sheets that include - Inclusive education strategies, inclusive technology and parent information.

The Regional Board works with other disability related networks in the Pacific region. During the Quadrennium, for example, the regional president Dr Joanne Mosen served as Returning Officer for the Pacific Disability Forum's 2022 elections. The Board works closely with the South Pacific Educators in Vision Impairment (SPEVI). Pacific Island "hubs" were established in Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Kiribati to connect with the SPEVI Conference held on 18-20 January 2023.

Dr Joanne Mosen and Dr Emily White have served as Regional Presidents during the ICEVI quadrennium. Emily will continue as Regional President in the next quadrennium.

The ICEVI **West Asia region**, after clear deliberations at the beginning of the Quadrennium that it was not feasible to make the region as a legal entity due to difficulties in financial transfers within the countries of the region. However**,** The ICEVI India is a legal entity registered as Public Charitable Trust and a Society with registered office at Ahmedabad

The West Asia region organised four virtual meetings of its Regional Board during the quadrennium and the topics discussed primarily included Advocacy, Technology, Gender equality and women's rights which align with the Global Task forces formed by ICEVI.

The ICEVI West Asia has a dedicated website and social media presence, with the following URLs:

Website: https://iceviwestasia.in/

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/iceviwestasia - 871 Friends - scope for increasing friends up to 5,000

Twitter: https://twitter.com/iceviwestasia - increased number of followers

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYhWTwscXr_926PffVSVTdw with growing number of subscribers

The region organized two Youth programs during the Quadrennium that helped over 50 visually impaired students. The training included guidance on leadership qualities, stress management, legal provisions for visually impaired persons, time management, grooming, need and techniques of language proficiency, role of Assistive Technology in the development of blind and low vision persons, modern methods and resources of education,, guidance on how to prepare for competitive exams, new career opportunities, and accessible devices.

ICEVI West Asia also conducted Workshops on Women Empowerment in 2023 that assisted 25 women with visual impairment. One of the premier management institutes of India, the Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad, also conducted a "Leadership Development" program for women with visual impairment who are involved in the management of NGOs. The program was conducted on the request of All India Confederation of the Blind. Three officials of ICEVI India, Dr Bhushan Punani, Ms Nandini Rawal, and Ms Kinnari Desai, were invited as key speakers of this program. Besides these programs, the ICEVI India and Blind People's Association (BPA) organised four events related to capacity building initiatives of persons with visual impairment. ADRAD, Nepal and ICEVI WA also jointly designed appropriate content, methodology, and delivery of teaching pedagogy in modules designed for capacity building training of teachers engaged in visual impairment. This also built the possibility of piloting and refining teacher training modules for applying UDL approach to education.

The West Asia region also organised programs to show-case digital accessibility to visual impairment students and teachers for the use of Evo E11 DAISY player and also a school monitoring program to facilitate digital accessibility.

ICEVI Nepal has been demonstrating the power of digital literacy and provision of born accessible books. They are focusing on all processes which are involved in preparing a digital book for the benefit of persons with visual impairment and other print disabilities, including Epub, Word, BRF and DAISY.

An extensive orientation workshop was organised on the subject of accessing textbooks and curriculum, with provision of accessible formats like EPUB and DAISY for persons with print disabilities using devices like computers and DAISY players in July 2023.

The Regional Board also organised a Regional Conference in Bangladesh in February 2024 that was attended

in-person by Dr. Frances Gentle, President ICEVI. The participants who attended in-person were mostly from Bangladesh, whereas participants from India, Sri Lanka and Nepal joined virtually.

Regional Youth Summit

Two regional youth summits of the higher education project were organised in 2022 and again in 2023. In 2022, it was a mini summit of 30 visually impaired persons organised in Manila, The Philippines and in December 2023, a full-fledged summit was organised that was attended by over 70 persons with visual impairment. The two summits were participated by visually impaired persons who were mostly employed from Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Laos, Mongolia, Cambodia and Myanmar that served as the participating countries of the higher education project of ICEVI implemented with the support of The Nippon Foundation. The second consecutive summit was organised by the Resources for the Blind Inc. (RBI) from December 3 to 5 at the Sequoia Hotel Manila Bay, Parañaque City, Metro Manila, Philippines. As an integral component of the Higher Education Project, this initiative is a collaborative effort between ICEVI and the Nippon Foundation, underscoring the commitment to advancing education and fostering collaboration among visually impaired youth on a regional scale.

Delegates from various countries discussed challenges faced by visually impaired youth and highlighted the role of family support, advocacy, education, technology, and employment opportunities. The Achievements Report showcased the positive impact of ICEVI and the Nippon Foundation, with countries celebrating advancements in education, increased tertiary education, accessibility, and enhanced employment opportunities for young people with visual disabilities.

Participants also focused on delegates' employment journeys, addressing challenges and emphasizing the need for self-advocacy and a supportive environment for personal and professional growth despite obstacles.

The summit also outlined key points for attendees to implement in their respective countries, fostering a palpable sense of collective commitment to advancing goals and creating a positive impact in their communities.

End of Higher Education project cycle

The Higher education project, a flagship activity of ICEVI for over one and half decades in collaboration with The Nippon Foundation implemented higher education project for visually impaired children in the East Asia region which helped more than 3000 students with visual impairment to graduate. A small experiment that was initiated in Indonesia in 2006-2007 was gradually expanded to Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos and Mongolia and the results are significant.

The need for higher education project evolved in addressing one of the four principles of the Global Campaign on Education for All Children with Visual Impairment (EFA-VI). The Global Task Force of the campaign highlighted the need for creating a demand for education and in this context there was a need to develop role models among visually impaired youth who could inspire their fellow brothers and sisters and also inspire parents to send their children to schools. Many organisations were approached for such an initiative and finally The Nippon Foundation was convinced that such an initiative would make long term systemic changes in the blindness sector.

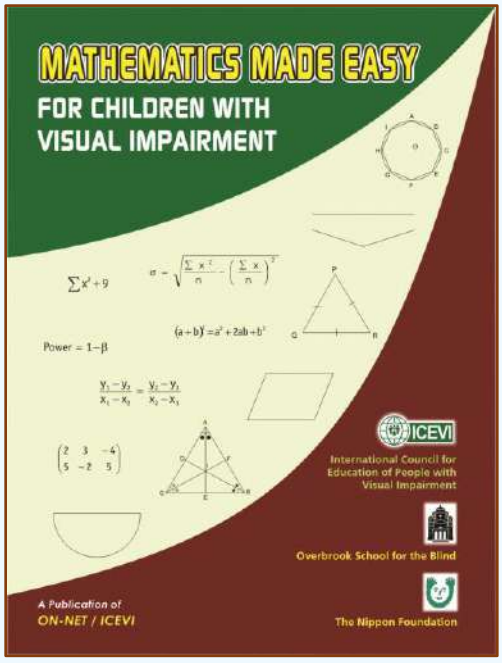
ICEVI requested the Nippon Foundation to support the program for 1 year to find out how well the initiative could influence the higher education system. The results of the experimentation of the first year in Indonesia was noteworthy. Visually impaired students were admitted into higher education Institutions where the project facilitated resource support to develop technology skills and in turn visually impaired students could actively participate in classrooms using technology. With the positive outcome of the project, ICEVI requested The Nippon Foundation to support the extension of the project to Philippines and Vietnam in 2008.

Evaluation of the program in three countries Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam revealed significant impact in all three countries that enabled ICEVI to gradually extend the program to Cambodia in 2010, Myanmar in 2014, Laos in 2015 and finally to Mongolia in 2017. The project not only supported the higher education projects in the member countries but also funded the administrative support at the ICEVI Secretariat. From 2016 onwards the project gradually focused on employment issues that created wide ranging opportunities for visually impaired individuals to secure employment in various sectors.

The implementation of the higher education project for about 15 years ended in 2023 marking a long standing partnership of ICEVI with The Nippon Foundation. Though the project has officially ended with ICEVI, The Nippon Foundation continues to support a project on employment with the higher education project partners in Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam from 2024. ICEVI wishes this project success and hopes it will continue to make impact in the field of employment similar to the ICEVI initiative that could make a significant impact in higher education.

Resources in teaching Mathematics

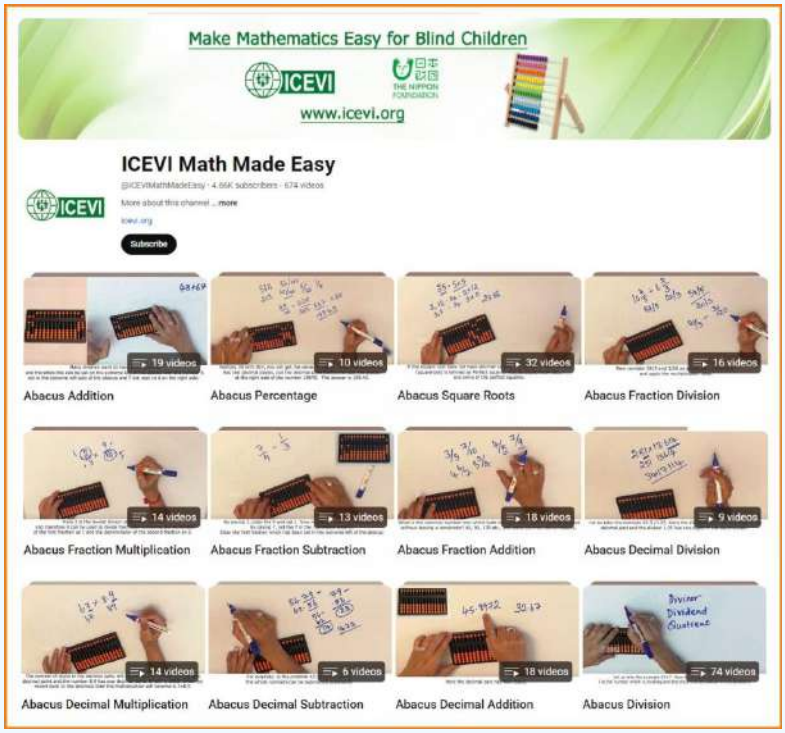
ICEVI is recognised as one of the credible world organisations specialised in the field of education of persons with visual impairment. ICEVI publishes a magazine by name The Educator for the past several decades and this is being referred in the field as one of the resources to know up to date information on education of children with Visual impairment worldwide. ICEVI has also come up with a model curriculum for training teachers and brought out many publications and research reports. In this front, the contribution of ICEVI in the development of instruction materials for mathematics education is significant. At the beginning of the current century, lack of expertise in teaching mathematics to visually impaired children were considered as one of the stumbling blocks for the effective inclusion of them in mainstream schools. Mathematics was considered as a visual subject and therefore, visually impaired children too found it a challenge. As soon as the Global Campaign on Education for All Children with Visual Impairment (EFA-VI) by ICEVI acting in partnership with the World Blind Union and also with the support of many international organisations, discussion on strengthening curricular areas came up in addition to the increased enrolment of visually impaired children in schools.



Review of the situation clearly indicated that something had to be done to infuse confidence in teachers that mathematics education is indeed possible for visually impaired children. ICEVI, in collaboration with the Overbrook Nippon Network on Education Technology (ON-NET) and The Nippon Foundation (TNF) organised master training programs in this area with a technical team headed by Dr. MNG Mani, the then Secretary General of ICEVI who was also a mathematics professional. In 2005 the initiative brought out a publication by title “Mathematics Made Easy for Visual Impaired Children” was brought out that provided clear description on how to teach mathematics. This free publication, which is available on the ICEVI website deals with the methodology of teaching mathematics, systematic teaching of Mathematics Braille codes, teaching of abacus, using low-cost materials for developing mathematical concepts and also on content analysis and adaptation techniques to convert visual ideas into non-visual experience for visually impaired students. This Publication was well received not

only by teachers of visually impaired children, but general education teachers too found that useful. It is gratifying that this publication has been translated into various world languages.

ICEVI, as a part of the higher education project supported by The Nippon Foundation organised as series of workshops on the subject and took a mammoth initiative of preparing video packages for teaching numerous concepts provided in the mathematics publication. Initial attempt was to make it a teacher tool but interactions with the teachers and visually impaired learners motivated the team to make the videos as learning tools for students too. As a result, the descriptions provided in each video follows simple explanation which everybody could understand, repetition of concepts wherever necessary and demonstration of ideas through three dimensional materials, etc. 475 videos were prepared in the first phase of the Mathematics Project initiative, and this exceeded the target set forth by the team.



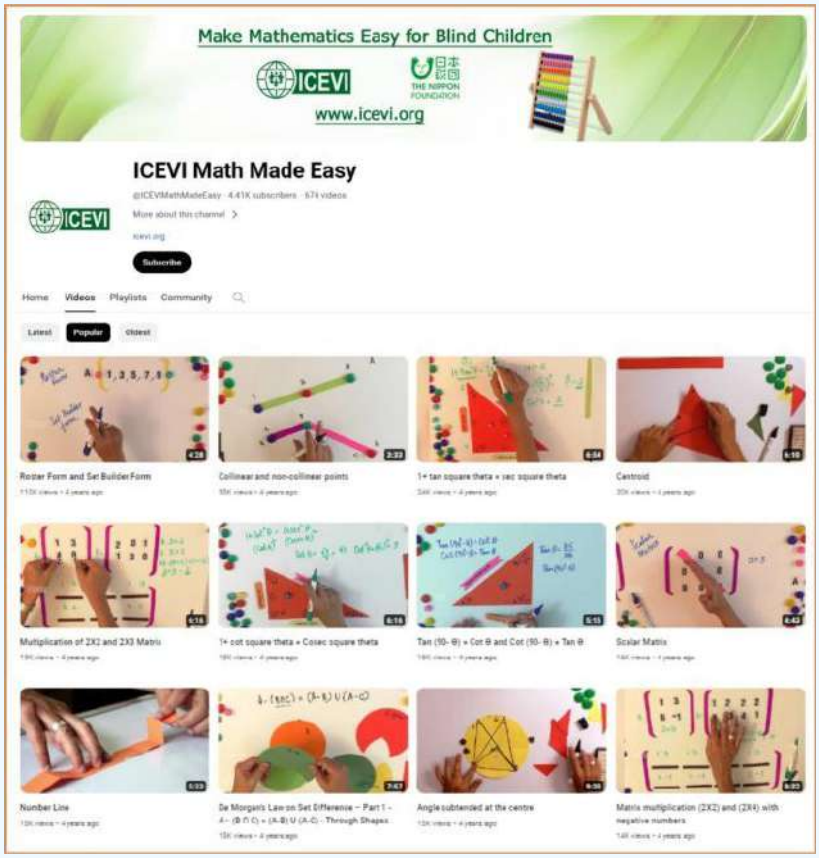
Teaching Abacus was one of the challenges expressed everywhere and therefore, the package included a series of videos on teaching various mathematical operations using abacus. These videos are available on a dedicated YouTube channel by name “ICEVI Math Made Easy” and there are more than 4500 subscribers to date.

Since 2018, the higher education project also took up the task of preparing master trainers from Philippines, Vietnam and Indonesia who could also be involved in preparing mathematics instruction videos at the school level in their countries. That effort also added significant results. The teachers, after undergoing a master training program organised in November 2022 by MNG Mani, who was also the project director of the higher education project started preparing instructional videos. The resource persons from Philippines also trained teachers and specialists and succeeded in preparing 74 videos on various topics of teaching school level mathematics.

Indonesia developed 80 videos in both English and Bahasa. With the addition of these instructional videos the ICEVI YouTube channel has 675 videos on teaching various concepts of mathematics right from primary to secondary level. In order to make use of the videos for hearing impaired learners too, close captioning facility has also been facilitated for every video.

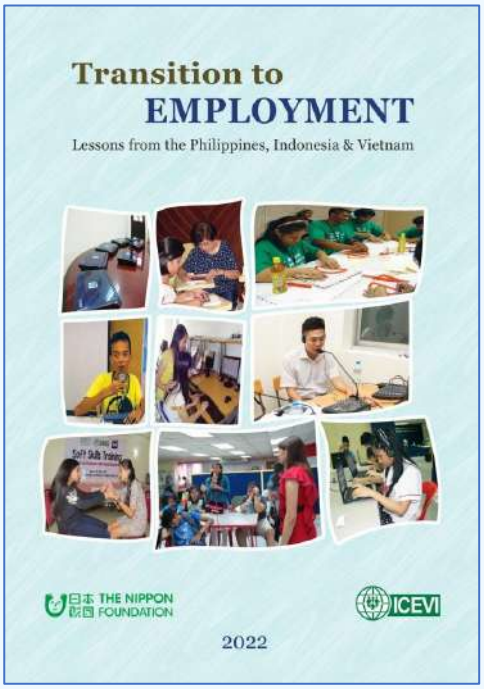
Feedback from many practitioners indicate that these videos are of great help in developing activities of teachers in teaching the subject and also develop the knowledge of visually impaired learners. Many parents acknowledged that the videos on the mathematics education that were available on the ICEVI YouTube channel were useful resources to teach their children especially at a time countries experienced long time locked downs due to the COVID 19. Therefore, contribution to mathematics education is one of the milestones of ICEVI that had come out of the requirements projected by the Global Campaign on Education for All Children with Visual Impairment. While tremendous technological developments are evident in the field in preparing tactile materials, very few initiatives are in vogue to develop basic mathematics learning concepts and in this context the contribution of ICEVI to the blindness sector is noteworthy.

Recently the need for translation of the mathematics resources of ICEVI into Chinese, particularly the instructional videos, has been expressed by China Braille Press. After a series of interactions on copyrights, acknowledgements, etc., ICEVI has given permission to the China Braille Press to translate these videos without changing the contents. ICEVI hopes that teachers of visually impaired children from China will find the translated versions useful for strengthening mathematics education in the blindness sector.



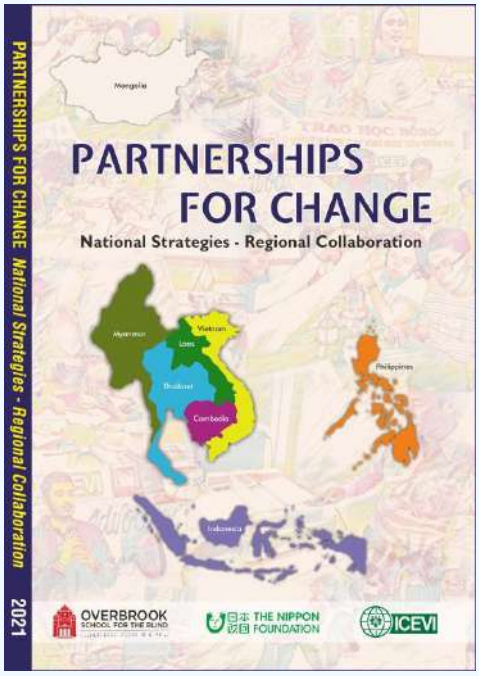
Publication on Employment ICEVI

The higher Education project has been documenting good practices on employment for persons with visual impairment in Philippines, Vietnam and Indonesia. The ICEVI and The Nippon Foundation proposed in late 2021 to bring out a publication entitled **Transition to Employment: Lessons from Philippines, Indonesia and Vietnam.**



The publication, which was released on 3rd August 2022 highlights the key ingredients that should be in place to expand employment avenues for persons with visual impairments. A series of deliberations arranged with the project partners, visually impaired individuals, employers, etc., helped the publication team to focus on three areas namely STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) curriculum as a foundation for employment, soft skill development, accessible materials and influencing proactive policies for employment.

The book was released by Ms. Amanda Yulina Putri, Senior Expertise on Job Placement, Directorate of Domestic Job Placement, Ministry of Employment, representing the Government of Indonesia in the presence of Yousuke Ishikawa from the Nippon Foundation. This is the second publication in subsequent years released by the higher education project the first being the **"Partnerships for Change"** that was released at the virtual General Assembly of ICEVI in June 2021.



These publications are available for free download on the website of ICEVI https://icevi.org/higher-education-programme-publications/

ICEVI Task Forces

Frances Gentle, President ICEVI and Mani, CEO held discussions with the International Partner Members since the beginning of the Quadrennium. Most of them expressed the need for key task forces on early intervention, low vision education, deaf blindness, gender, youth development, climate change, advocacy, etc., to develop concept papers and also influence policies at the global and regional levels.

The strategic activities for the ICEVI 2021-2024 Quadrennium included formation of a number of task groups that address priority areas in VI education, as identified by Executive Board of ICEVI. Of the 10 priority areas identified by members, the following five task groups were formed in 2022/2023.

- **Advocacy/Influencing task group** – Facilitated by Andrew Griffiths (Sightsavers).
- **Gender Equality and Women's Rights and Children's Participation Task Groups** – Facilitated by Ana Peláez (ONCE).
- **Technology in Education task group** – Facilitated by David Clarke (RNIB) in 2022, and Marcel Janssen (Royal Dutch Visio) and his colleague, Christiaan Pinkster from 2023.
- **Deafblindness and Multiple Disability task group** – Facilitated by Mirko Baur, President Deafblind International.

The output of the five groups varied during 2023 due to a range of factors, including the demands of the strategic review process and competing commitments of the task group facilitators. It is anticipated that any position papers developed by the task groups will reflect the stand of ICEVI on specific thematic areas in the global blindness sector and will help guide the selection of activities for implementation at regional and national levels of ICEVI. Some task groups will organise specific concurrent sessions at the World Conference of ICEVI in 2024.

Going forward, the ICEVI EXBO will review other identified priority areas of inclusive education, early childhood, low vision, parent participation and parent-professional partnerships, and climate change and humanitarian action.

ICEVI Global Conference 2024

The International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) will hold its World Conference and General Assembly in Ahmedabad, India on 14 – 17 November 2024. The World Conference is hosted by the Blind People's Association (BPA) and Sense International India, in collaboration with Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University, Ahmedabad, which is renowned for its higher education program promoting "Education for All". The University campus is the venue for the conference. The Blind Peoples' Association has extensive experience in organising international events and it also organised many regional conferences of ICEVI in the past.

The broad theme of the conference is **"Inclusion in Diversity: Equity and Accessibility for All"**.

Following is the tentative schedule:

Day 1	**14th November 2024**	Official inauguration, Plenary session and parallel sessions
Day 2	**15th November 2024**	Plenary sessions and parallel sessions
Day 3	**16th November 2024**	Plenary sessions and Closing session
Day 4	**17th November 2024**	**Forenoon** : Regional Meetings of the Delegates from ICEVI's seven regions and Regional Elections
		Afternoon : ICEVI General Assembly

The Conference will feature pre-conference workshops and a dedicated exhibition area for trade displays and service providers. Nearly 350 participants from over 60 countries have registered for the conference and there will be over 120 presentations on various themes. The keynote speakers for the conference include Dr. Aubrey Webson, Former Chief of UNICEF and currently Ambassador of Antigua and Barbados to the United Nations; Ms Ana Peláez (ONCE), Chairperson of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women; Dr Frances Gentle, President ICEVI; Ms Gertrude Oforiwa Fefoame, Chairperson of UNCRPD Committee; Mr Mirko Baur, President, Deafblind International; Mr Richard Orme, CEO and Dipendra Manocha, DAISY Consortium; Ms Shrutilata Singh, Senior Specialist Network Support, Sense India; and many other internationally renowned speakers. The plenary sessions will focus on Human Rights, Technology, Gender, Multiple disabilities and Youth development.

The Program Schedule of the conference can be found on www.icevi2024wc.org – a dedicated website for the World Conference and General Assembly. The program is also available on the ICEVI website, www.icevi.org, and on the ICEVI West Asia website, https://iceviwestasia.in. The conference host committee has already obtained permission from various Ministries of the Government of India and Government of Gujarat to conduct this conference and the participants have also been informed of these permissions that would facilitate them to obtain Visas on time.

ICEVI has earmarked funds for each region to support the participation of key presenters and delegates from the region. In most cases, the sponsorship is partial. The Regional Presidents of the respective regions of ICEVI have already finalised the list of delegates who will be entitled to vote at the General Assembly.

The Host Committee is headed by Dr. Bhushan Punani and Ms. Sian Tesni is heading the Program Committee.

Appointment of new Secretary General

With Dr Mani's decision to retire from the position of ICEVI Chief Executive Officer (CEO) during 2024, the Executive Board of ICEVI determined to recruit a Secretary General to oversee the Secretariat and support the functions and structures of ICEVI in the next Quadrennium. After a comprehensive and diligent selection process, the Executive Board is pleased to advise the appointment of **Dr Shawn Piantoni** as Secretary General of ICEVI. It is anticipated that Shawn will commence in the position in late 2024.

Dr Shawn Piantoni brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in the disability field and a strong commitment to promoting the right to quality education for children and young people with vision impairment. Shawn has over 20 years' experience working with individuals with vision impairment, deafness, deafblindness, and multiple disabilities, and their families. Her areas of experience include systems change, policy development and improvement, strategic planning and implementation, research and evaluation, training and capacity building, and establishing relationships and connections. Shawn attained a Doctor of Education at the University of Northern Colorado. She is a Fellow of the National Center for Leadership in Visual Impairment (USA), and her specialisations are in sensory disability and public policy.

In addition to network leadership, governance and strategy, Shawn will have a specific mandate to develop a sustainable funding model for ICEVI. We are fortunate to have Dr Mani in the position of CEO until Shawn's commencement. Mani has generously offered to volunteer his time to support Shawn's transition and to assist ICEVI's Treasurer, Dr Sukhraj-Ely, with the annual audit and preparations for the ICEVI World Conference and General Assembly in November 2024.

We acknowledge the work of the ICEVI Recruitment Committee and thank them for their dedication and thoroughness throughout the selection process. Their efforts have been instrumental in identifying a candidate who embodies the values of ICEVI and has the requisite knowledge and skills to fulfil the organisation's core functions.

The ICEVI Executive Board extends a warm welcome to Shawn as she steps into this critical role. The Board looks forward to working closely with Shawn to advance the mission of ICEVI and promote the right quality education for children and young people with blindness, low vision, deafblindness, and multiple disability.

Audit Report of ICEVI 2023

Summary

The audited accounts of 2023 will be submitted to the Companied House before the end of September 2024. Our Auditors who are based in the UK – Lubbock Fine are handling the audit process since 2006 and they are satisfied with the accounting system of ICEVI. As per the audit report, the opinion of the auditors on financial statements is given as follows:

OPINION OF THE AUDITORS ON FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the company's affairs as at 31 December 2023 and of its loss for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

OPINION ON OTHER MATTERS PRESCRIBED BY THE COMPANIES ACT 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit, the information given in the Executive Committee Members' Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and the Executive Committee Members' Report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements. The summary of the audited accounts is as follows:

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

	2023 $	2022 $
INCOME	468,170	480,308
Administrative expenses	(561,615)	(514,040)

OPERATING LOSS	(93,445)	(33,732)-
LOSS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR	(93,445)	(33,732)

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Note	2023 $	2023 $	2022 $	2022 $
CURRENT ASSETS					
Cash at bank and in hand	5	619,200		722,624	
		619,200		722,624	
CREDITORS: Amounts falling due within one year	6	(14,439)		(24,418)	
NET CURRENT ASSETS			604,761		698,206
Total Assets less Current Liabilities		604,761		698,206	
NET ASSETS			604,761		698,206
CAPITAL AND RESERVES					
Profit and Loss Account			604,761		698,206
			604,761		**698,206**

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime and in accordance with the provisions of FRS 102 Section 1A – small entities.

These financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Executive Committee Members and were signed on its behalf by:

Frances Gentle
President

Praveena Sukhraj-Ely
Treasurer

Company Registration Number: 04521195

Notes to the Financial Statements

1. General information

International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment is a limited liability company, limited by guarantee, incorporated in England and Wales under the Companies Act. Its registered office and principal place of business is 105 Judd Street, London, WC1H 9NE.

2. Accounting policies

2.1 Basis of preparation of financial statements

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention unless otherwise specified within these accounting policies and in accordance with FRS 102. The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland and the Companies Act 2006. The disclosure requirements of Section 1A of FRS 102 have been applied other than where additional disclosures required to show a true and fare view

The preparation of financial statements in compliance with FRS 102 requires the use of certain critical accounting estimates. It also requires management to exercise judgment in applying the Company's accounting policies.

The following principal accounting policies have been applied:

2.2 Income

Income comprises membership subscriptions from subscribing organisations and individuals as well as voluntary donations and grant income. Donations and grant income towards specific projects are classified as designated funds.

Subscriptions are accounted for on a receivable basis.

Donations and grant income are recognised as income when received, except in circumstances where the donor specifies the time period that the donation relates to, in which case they are recognised as income in that period.

Donations in kind are where possible valued and included in income to the extent that it represents goods or services which would otherwise be purchased. An equivalent amount is charged as expenditure.

Investment income is recorded on a receivable basis.

2.3 Going Concern

The Executive Committee Members consider it appropriate to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis. This assumes that the company will continue in operation existence for the foreseeable future and for at least 12 months after the signing the financial statements.

2.4 Debtors

Short-term debtors are measured at transaction price, less any impairment. Loans receivable are measured initially at fair value, net of transaction costs, and are measured subsequently at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less any impairment.

2.5 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash is represented by cash in hand and deposits with financial institutions repayable without penalty on notice of not more than 24 hours. Cash equivalents are highly liquid investments that mature in no more than three months from the date of acquisition and that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value.

2.6 Financial instruments

The Company only enters into basic financial instrument transactions that result in the recognition of financial assets and liabilities like trade and other debtors and creditors, loans from banks and other third parties, loans to related parties and investments in ordinary shares.

Financial assets that are measured at cost and amortised cost are assessed at the end of each reporting period for objective evidence of impairment. If objective evidence of impairment is found, an impairment loss is recognised in the Profit and Loss Account.

For financial assets measured at amortised cost, the impairment loss is measured as the difference between an asset's carrying amount and the present value of estimated cash flows discounted at the asset's original effective interest rate. If a financial asset has a variable interest rate, the discount rate for measuring any impairment loss is the current effective interest rate determined under the contract.

For financial assets measured at cost less impairment, the impairment loss is measured as the difference between an asset's carrying amount and best estimate of the recoverable amount, which is an approximation of the amount that the Company would receive for the asset if it were to be sold at the balance sheet date.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset and the net amount reported in the Balance Sheet when there is an enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

2.7 Creditors

Short term creditors are measured at the transaction price. Other financial liabilities, including bank loans, are measured initially at fair value, net of transaction costs, and are measured subsequently at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

2.8 Foreign currency translation

Functional and presentation currency

The Company's functional and presentational currency is USD.

Transactions and balances

Foreign currency transactions are translated into the functional currency using the spot exchange rates at the dates of the transactions.

At each period end foreign currency monetary items are translated using the closing rate. Non-monetary items measured at historical cost are translated using the exchange rate at the date of the transaction and non-monetary items measured at fair value are measured using the exchange rate when fair value was determined.

3. INCOME ANALYSIS

Name of Organisation	Designated Funds 2023 $	Undesig-nated Funds 2023 $	Total Funds 2023 $	Total Funds 2022 $
Subscriptions				
Koninklike Visio	-	20,000	20,000	20,000
Norges Blindeforbund	-	20,000	20,000	20,000
ONCE	-	20,000	20,000	20,000
Other Subscriptions	-	6,021	6,021	9,048
Overbrook School for the Blind	-	20,000	20,000	20,000
Perkins School for the Blind	-	19,995	19,995	19,995
New York Institute of Special Education	-	-	-	1,500
Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind	3,250	20,000	23,250	20,000
Royal National Institute of the Blind	-	20,000	20,000	20,000
Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind	-	20,000	20,000	20,000
CBM International	-	-	-	20,000
Subscription Total	**3,250**	**166,016**	**169,266**	**190,543**
Donations				
Other	-	-	-	438
The Nippon Foundation	298,904	-	298,904	289,327
Total	**302,154**	**166,016**	**468,170**	**480,308**

4. Employees

There were no employees in the year (2022 - None) other than the Executive Committee Members who did not receive remuneration.

5. Cash and cash equivalents

	2023 $	2022 $
Cash at bank and in hand	**619,200**	**722,624**

6. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2023 $	2022 $
Other creditors	-	7,116
Accruals and deferred income	14,439	17,302
	14,439	**24,418**

7. Company status

The International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment is a private company limited by guarantee and consequently does not have share capital.

Every member of the company undertakes to contribute such amount as required exceeding £1 to the assets of the company in the event of its being wound up while he or she is a member, or within one year after he or she ceases to be a member.

Administrative Expenses

Item of Expenses	2023 $	2022 $
Hotels, Travel and Subsistence	30,212	16,048
Auditors' Remuneration	11,619	11,876
Bank Charges	3,736	4,155
Difference on Foreign Exchange	592	1,535
Sundry Expenses	75	384
Secretary General's Office Expenses	146,262	139,060
Meeting Expenses	-	2,811
Project Expenses	369,119	338,171
Total	**561,615**	**514,040**

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Second Vice President
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Treasurer
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Immediate Past President
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