



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



(FORMERLY ICEVI NEWSLINE)

OCTOBER 2012

Message from the President

After the organisational and sporting triumphs of the summer, it's been a busy September. I attended a number of meetings in the margins of the UN General Assembly in New York. First was a Civil Society CRPD Forum staged by the International Disability Alliance (of global and regional disabled persons organisations - CRPD refers to the recently negotiated UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities). I introduced the audience to our EFA-VI (Education for All Children with Visual Impairment) initiative and also to the loose Vision Alliance which we are developing with the World Blind Union (WBU) and the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB).

I said a little about the Vision Alliance at the end of my message in the latest issue of the Educator. It is really beginning to get into its stride now. At the end of September, our CEO, Dr Mani, led a very successful mission to Myanmar on behalf of the Alliance to make recommendations on what blind people need under the headings of prevention, education, employment and empowerment. This was a splendid example of the benefits to be gained by working together.

Next was a Global Partnership for Children with Disabilities meeting organised by UNICEF. This was disappointing in that the large number of people who had elected to join an education task force were only given three-quarters of an hour to come up with an agenda of actions for the next year. We found this impossible in the time, so asked UNICEF if they would facilitate further discussion by email. So far nothing has transpired, but on the last afternoon there was a sort of "market-place for partnerships" where it was possible to talk to representatives of about eight countries and make a number of potentially very useful contacts. This was certainly a valuable exercise.

From New York I went to Hyderabad, India, to represent ICEVI at IAPB's General Assembly, which they hold every four years. This was an impressively slick and professionally organised meeting, with a high standard of presentations mainly, but not exclusively, on matters to do with eye health. There were a number of presentations on the changing demography of eye disease, and the message to the conference was remarkably upbeat, with significant progress to report against Vision 2020 targets for the elimination of avoidable blindness. I

spoke at the opening session, and also at a breakfast meeting where leaders of ICEVI, WBU and IAPB introduced delegates to the Vision Alliance.

A prominent strand of discussion in all the meetings has been the framework to replace the UN's Millennium Development Goals when they run out in 2015 (MDG2 on universal access to primary education is of course of particular interest to ICEVI). One major concern is to secure a higher profile for disability than it has enjoyed to date. There is a ferment of discussion on the internet involving over 400 organisations which is intended to lead to a High Level Meeting in New York on 23 September next year. The Secretary-General has established a High Level Panel of Eminent Persons to report to this meeting, co-chaired by the UK Prime Minister, David Cameron, and the Presidents of Indonesia and Liberia. Consultations with civil society are taking place in each of these countries. The first of these will be in London at the beginning of November, and I am trying to get an invitation. But as there can only be 15 representatives from "the north" my chances are not high.

I have mentioned before the positive relationship we are developing with the previous UK Prime Minister, Gordon Brown. We sent him our strategy for taking EFA-VI to the next stage, and in August I got a message that he had made a submission to Sheikha Mozah of Qatar, who has many roles in the education field, asking her to support our work. As yet I have not heard anything, but I hope this bodes well for our EFA-VI initiative.

We're in the home straight now for the ICEVI/WBU joint assemblies in November. This will represent a step change in collaboration between our two organisations, and I think a really exciting programme has been put together. We are just putting the finishing touches to the detailed programme for the EFA-VI strategy day on 17 November, and I think this will be a particularly significant session for developing and raising the profile of EFA-VI. I am greatly looking forward to meeting lots of you in Bangkok,

C. M. Low

Colin Low
(ICEVI President)

Vision Alliance Stand at the General Assembly of IAPB

Vision Alliance is an initiative of the International Agency for Prevention of Blindness (IAPB), International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) and World Blind Union (WBU) to create greater synergy and collaboration between the three organizations at global, regional and national levels to improve services and programmes of each organization. On the occasion of the IAPB General Assembly held in Hyderabad, India on 17-20 September 2012, a Vision Alliance stand was arranged and the materials displayed there highlighted the concept of Vision Alliance, areas of synergy, information on ICEVI and WBU and literature on the Global Campaign on Education for All Children with Visual Impairment (EFA-VI). The stand attracted large number of visitors who were appreciative of the idea that such an alliance would contribute to the totality in eye care services including prevention, education and rehabilitation. Many speakers in various sessions of the Assembly also referred to the Vision Alliance network. Motivated by the positive response to the Vision Alliance stand, a similar stand will also be set up at the forthcoming joint event of the WBU and ICEVI in Bangkok in November 2012. Log on to the websites of IAPB (www.iapb.org), WBU (www.worldblindunion.org) and ICEVI (www.icevi.org) for more information on the concept of Vision Alliance.

Vision Alliance Mission to Myanmar

A Vision Alliance Team consisting of representatives from the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI), World Blind Union Asia Pacific (WBU AP), CBM, Nippon Foundation, Perkins School for the Blind, Norwegian Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted (NABP), and Overbrook Nippon Network for Educational Technology (ON-NET) visited Myanmar on 24-27 September 2012 to get first hand information on the status of services for persons with disabilities in general and persons with visual impairment in particular. The team headed by ICEVI had a meeting with important stakeholders in Myanmar on the 25th followed by a meeting with the officials of the Ministry of the Social Welfare on the

26th. The team provided important recommendations covering prevention, education, employment and empowerment and some key points are given below:

1. Strengthening the Vision 2020 campaign
2. Including disability management in the training of medical professionals.
3. Conducting vision screening process.
4. Including education of children with disabilities in the national EFA initiative.
5. Training of the general classroom teachers for the success of inclusion.
6. Encouraging Universities to prepare special education teachers.
7. Including ICT skills in the training of students with disabilities.
8. Addressing gender issues in educational programmes.
9. Promoting higher education among students with visual impairment.
10. Developing comprehensive procedures for examinations.
11. Identifying jobs for visually impaired persons in the public and private sector industries
12. Creating awareness in the civil society to understand the skills of persons with disabilities for successful employment.
13. Emphasizing inclusive development in all sectors
14. Recognizing organisations of persons with disabilities.
15. Hastening the enactment of Disability Law in Myanmar

The Vision Alliance Team requested the Myanmar National Association of the Blind (MNAB) to capitalize on the momentum built through this visit and follow-up with the Government for making further plans for services for children with visual impairment. The MNAB will come up with a draft plan for the way forward which will be further discussed in Bangkok so that a quadrennial plan of action can be formulated for implementation beginning January 2013. Further meetings of small teams of the Vision Alliance or specific International Partners may be arranged in Myanmar to have theme based discussions with the Government, other players such as the World Vision, Save the Children, etc., in planning and implementing various services for persons with visual impairment.

WBU-ICEVI Joint Event Update

We are getting closer to the historic WBU-ICEVI Joint Event to be held from 10 to 18 November 2012 in Bangkok. The pre-registration for the event is over and nearly 900 participants have registered so far. Those who have not registered till now can do onsite registration too and we have already received a number of queries from individuals and organisations that they would be doing onsite registration. We are expecting more than 1000 participants for this event and they will be attending various segments of the joint event namely the Diversity Forum, WBU General Assembly, WBU-ICEVI Joint Workshops, EFA-VI Strategy Day and ICEVI General Assembly. The programme schedule has already been finalised and sent to all registered participants and speakers. We are also pleased that record number of exhibition stands will be there at the event displaying latest assistive devices in the areas of visual impairment, strategies in services for persons with visual impairment, etc. The exhibition will also be opened to local institutions working in the disability sector. The host committee has made elaborate arrangements for making this historic event a grand success and WBU and ICEVI are looking forward to an action packed ten days at this joint event. The abstracts received so far for various sessions of the event have also been posted on the websites of ICEVI and WBU and the Joint Event. Log on to <http://www.wbu-icevi2012.org/> for more details of the logistics of the event.

EFA-VI Strategy Day – Directions for the future

One of the very important days of the WBU-ICEVI Joint Event is the EFA-VI Strategy day to review the current status of the Global Campaign on Education for All Children with Visual Impairment and also to discuss future strategies. The Global Campaign launched by ICEVI in 2006 acting in partnership with the World Blind Union has created a significant demand for education and brought together local governments and International Non-Governmental Developmental Organisations (INGDOs), in addressing the need for education for all children with visual impairment. With the support of all stakeholders, the enrolment of children with visual impairment in the focus countries where the Campaign is underway has increased to nearly 50,000. The

Campaign has demonstrated that by increasing awareness at all levels, it is possible to enroll the unreached visually impaired children in mainstream schools. Though ICEVI and WBU are proud of the current status, there is an increasing demand that this campaign should work with the larger initiatives on education for all and also work in close collaboration with national governments. It is also stressed that the education for all children with visual impairment should feature in the Beyond 2015 initiatives too. These issues will be part of the EFA-VI Strategy Day discussions which address the following key objectives:

1. Through interactive discussion, to lay the foundation for developing detailed plans for implementing the EFA-VI Strategy. To this end,
 - 2.1 To share and reflect on lessons learned to date in implementing EFA-VI; and
 - 2.2 To identify critical issues and effective strategies for resolving them. In order to
 - 3.1 Ensure inclusion of the need for all children with visual impairment to receive a quality education in all national EFA plans and programs,
 - 3.2 Develop guidance on how the strategy should be rolled out at national level,
 - 3.3 Effect a strengthening in ICEVI's infrastructure, particularly at regional level,
 - 3.4 Generate additional resources for EFA-VI in a manner which is compatible with ICEVI acting as a catalyst for EFA-VI activity on the part of others and,
 - 3.5 Develop stronger links with mainstream education and wider disability organisations, governments, INGO's and Vision 2020, as well as organisations of and for the blind.

Therefore, the EFA-VI strategy day on the 17th November is likely to provide directions for the implementation of EFA-VI in the next quadrennium (2013 to 2016).

EFA-VI Review of the Africa Region

A meeting of the CEO - ICEVI, Wilfred Maina - Regional Chairperson, Tigabu Gebramedin - Deputy Regional Chairperson and Martin Osangiri

Okiyo - Regional Coordinator, EFA-VI Africa Region was conducted on 1-2 August in Nairobi, Kenya to review the current status of the EFA-VI in Africa region and also to suggest strategies for the future, which can be discussed at the WBU–ICEVI joint event in Bangkok. The team placed on record the support being extended by the International Partners in spreading the campaign and they thank in particular CBM, Sightsavers and the Light for the World for supporting the EFA-VI Regional Secretariat in Africa. Though the members are pleased with the present EFA-VI work, they opined that the full potential of the Campaign in the Africa region is yet to be realised. There will be presentations on the Campaign at the joint event and that opportunity will be used to get the views of the international community about the future strategies for expanding the campaign in Africa.

Latin America EFA-VI Workshop

Key members of the Latin America Region of ICEVI will be attending the WBU-ICEVI Joint Event in Bangkok and ICEVI wants to take advantage of their presence to deliberate on the future strategies to expand the EFA-VI Campaign in the Latin America Region. A meeting of 13 delegates and International Organisations working in Latin America Region will be organised on 19th November in Bangkok.

Employment training for Higher Education Partners

The readers of ICEVI E-News are aware of the higher education programme being implemented by ICEVI in Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, and Vietnam with the support of the Nippon Foundation. This programme is providing support to students with visual impairment, particularly in the areas of technology. More than 900 students have been benefitted so far through this programme and many of them are also placed in industries. The project partners felt that more training on employment strategies may be given to the key staff so that they can organise workshops to the higher education students on transition to employment. Dr. Karen Wolffe from the US will organize a two day workshop for the partners on 19-20 November

in Bangkok and ICEVI believes that this exposure workshop will enable our partners to build the employment concept into their overall higher education programme. The outcomes of this event will be posted on the website of ICEVI.

ICEVI-DbI West Asia Conference in April 2013

The Deafblind International and ICEVI are working together on many fronts. DbI is one of the members on the Executive Committee of ICEVI and ICEVI also serves on the Executive Committee of DbI. ICEVI and DbI organised joint conferences in the West Asia region in 2000 (Ahmedabad) and 2005 (Delhi). These conferences were highly successful and it is gratifying to note that many programmes for deaf-blind children and those with multiple disabilities have come up in the region in the last 10 years. ICEVI and DbI will be organising its 3rd West Asia Regional Conference in Ahmedabad, India on April 5-7, 2013. The first announcement has already been made and the second announcement with the call for papers will be released soon. The West Asia Regional chairperson Dr. Bhushan Punani is coordinating this regional conference and he can be contacted at blinabad1@bsnl.in for further information about the event. The first announcement has also been posted on ICEVI website. ICEVI is hopeful of conducting similar conferences in other regions too in the future.

IDPP – New Organisational Member of ICEVI

The ASEAN Institute on Disability and Public Policy which is an initiative of the American University, Mahidol University, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy and Rochester Institute of Technology is functioning in Thailand. IDPP is assisting persons with disabilities to get involved in public policy by offering a masters programme on this subject. You may log onto <http://aseanidpp.org/masters-program> to know about the IDPP programme and fellowship opportunity. IDPP has just become an Organisational Member of ICEVI and we are looking forward to strengthen collaboration between the organisations in the future. Welcome IDPP to the ICEVI family.

ICEVI General Assembly

ICEVI General Assembly will be organised on the 18th November 2012 in Bangkok, Thailand. The 110 voting delegates have already been contacted by the Regional Chairs and the ICEVI Secretariat. Those who are not able to attend the General Assembly may give their proxy vote to the Regional Chairs concerned, which can be used in the case of any elections for the positions of Principal Officers. The Nominations Committee chaired by Dr. Kathleen M. Huebner, Regional Chairperson, North America and Caribbean Region will be proposing nominations for the positions of President, First Vice President, Second Vice President and Treasurer. The General Assembly will also discuss ICEVI organisational matters. Participants of the Joint event, other than the 110 official delegates, are also welcome to attend the General Assembly as observers.

Potential topics for The Educator

ICEVI has been focusing on thematic issues such as inclusion, teacher preparation, technology, early intervention, low vision, Braille literacy, etc., for The Educator and the past issues can be accessed through the website of ICEVI www.icevi.org. Those who have suggestions with the new topics for The Educator may contact Aubrey Webson (Aubrey.Webson@perkins.org), Editor or MNG Mani (sgicevi@vsnl.net), Associate Editor.

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

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