ICEB 2020 General Assembly Report
Public Relations

The Public Relations Committee was established following the 2016 ICEB General Assembly. It is charged with the responsibility of making known to the outside world the policies, decisions and activities of ICEB. The Committee is led by the Public Relations Officer and consists of one representative from each member country of ICEB. The Committee has operated as a Special Purpose Committee, however it is recommended that it be established as a Permanent Committee to reflect the important and ongoing nature of its work.

Members of the Promotions Committee for the 2016-2020 term were: Leona Holloway (Chair, Australia), Jen Goulden (Canada), Stuart Lawler (Ireland), Chantelle Griffiths (New Zealand), Reinette Popplestone (South Africa), Mike Townsend (UK) and Sue Reilly (USA). We were extremely saddened by the death of Reinette Popplestone in 2019. She was a long-time contributor to braille at an international level and possessed an eloquent writing style that was an asset to our Committee.

# Social Media

Over the last four years, ICEB has joined the world of social media, establishing Facebook and Twitter accounts to raise awareness about ICEB and to share news and events promoting braille.

## Twitter

The ICEB Twitter account @ICEBbraille was established in May 2016 at the commencement of the ICEB General Assembly. Since then, ICEB has tweeted over 300 times. Most tweets are replicating content shared on the ICEB Facebook page, with the addition of some re-tweets of braille-related material from other sources. ICEB has over 250 followers on Twitter.

## Facebook

ICEB established a Facebook page in February 2017. The ICEB Facebook page is located at <https://www.facebook.com/ICEBbraille/>. It has over 400 followers and its membership is growing slowly but steadily.

Typical posts reach around 150 people, however popular posts can reach more than 2,000. The most popular posts often relate to new braille technology (e.g. the Hable One portable braille keyboard, DotBook low cost refreshable braille display, Braille Buzz learning tool), new or updated rules for UEB, and braille in the mainstream (e.g. World Braille Day adopted by the UN, braille messages on Rice Krispie Treats, braille UNO cards).

Items from the ICEB Facebook page that are likely to be of long-term interest are archived on the ICEB website at <http://iceb.org/PRupdates.html>, grouped by subject matter.

## ICEB-announce

ICEB-announce is a one-way listserv on groups.io reserved for important announcements about ICEB activities such as updates to Unified English Braille and upcoming face-to-face ICEB meetings. It is also used for distribution of the ICEB newsletter.

ICEB-announce has over 150 subscribers.

While the majority of ICEB subscribers and followers across our various social media platforms are from ICEB member countries, there is also modest outreach to other countries including Botswana, Brazil, India, Finland, France, Japan, the Netherlands, Russia, Venezuela and Zimbabwe.

# Newsletter

The first ICEB newsletter was produced in December 2018. Since then, it has been produced and distributed quarterly in March, June, September and December. The newsletter is circulated through ICEB’s listserv and stored on the ICEB website. Each edition includes a mix of ICEB news, UEB FAQ and test-your-knowledge, news from the broader braille community, and upcoming events.

Production of the newsletter requires considerable work, with its success dependent upon collective effort. Thanks are extended to the many contributors of ideas, writing, proofreading and braille transcription that are combined to produce each newsletter.

# Website

The ICEB website at <http://iceb.org> serves as a public door to the work done by ICEB and as a repository for information and materials. New pages and information have been added to the website over the last four years, most notably:

* Quick links at the top of each page and a [site map](http://iceb.org/SiteMap.html) for easier navigation;
* Committee pages for the [Braille Music Committee](http://iceb.org/music.html), [Public Relations](http://iceb.org/PR.html) and the [Braille Signage Committee](http://iceb.org/signage.html) (archival);
* A new page for [UEB training and resource materials](http://www.iceb.org/ueb-training.html);
* Documents on Setting Up a Braille Authority and A Guide to Low-Cost Braille Production (2012);
* Materials from the 2016 General Assembly and the 2018 mid-term Executive meeting;
* The Home Page has been kept updated with current news.

While the content on the ICEB website has been significantly expanded and updated, it continues to be housed on an old platform. This means that posting materials to the website requires more time and technical knowledge than would be necessary were it to be updated. Nevertheless, the current platform allows full accessibility for the administrators and we have three people familiar with the site and able to create its content. An upgrade would involve considerable work and is not recommended unless additional functionality is required.

# ICEB Relationships and Outreach

Judy Dixon is ICEB’s representative on the World Braille Council. A renewed World Braille Council held its first meeting in Ottawa in May 2018. Judy Dixon was present, as were several other members of the ICEB Executive Committee. However, the WBC has not functioned as a committee since that time.

ICEB-produced documents on Setting Up a Braille Authority (a necessary precursor to becoming a full member of ICEB) and A Guide to Low-Braille Production (2012) are now available on ICEB’s website.

A poster promoting ICEB and its free resources was presented at SPEVI 2020, a conference for specialist vision teachers in the South Pacific region. To date, ICEB has made not been active in promoting itself at external conferences and events. This represents a future opportunity worth exploring.

# Conclusion

The work of ICEB is of importance to all countries using or teaching English and braille. The Public Relations Committee has been pleased to significantly expand the media through which we can share this work over the last four years. In particular, the establishment of social media channels, the iceb-announce listserv and the quarterly ICEB newsletter represent major achievements with measurable impact. We hope that these outlets will continue to be used in the future and that our members and followers will help to share ICEB’s rules, guidelines and resources for braille within their local braille communities.

Much work remains to be done, particularly in terms of outreach to non-member countries and collaboration with other organisations.

* Leona Holloway
Public Relations Officer
August 2020

# Appendix: Charges

The Braille Research Committee has had seven charges to address over the last four year term. Most, but not all, of these charges have been completed, as document below.

## BP3 Repository of PR items

Charge: Agree on a process for submitting material to the repository. Monitor the repository and edit and republish useful items as part of promotional activities. Particularly useful materials include good practice in UEB and transitioning to UEB. (2013)

Status: Complete. All ICEB members are invited to share their news items through the ICEB PR Committee. Items published through the ICEB Facebook page (except those that expire) are archived in a repository at <http://iceb.org/PRupdates.html>. The ICEB website also has a page listing free UEB training resources at <http://iceb.org/ueb-training.html>.

## BP7 developing countries UEB working group

Charge: Make contact with World Blind Union / World Blind Council both globally and at regional level to set up a joint “developing countries UEB working group for the development and promotion of braille”. (2013)

Status: Not done.

## BP8 publish low cost braille production report

Charge: Edit and publish Jean Obi’s report on low cost braille production. (2013)

Status: Complete. Available in Word and BRF from [iceb.org/PR.html](http://iceb.org/PR.html)

## BP12 identify outlets for publicity

Charge: Create materials and identify outlets for publicity and promotional materials including press releases. (2013)

Status: Still required.

## BP 13 ICEB Newsletter creation & BP14 ICEB Newsletter distribution

Charge (BP13): Create a newsletter at least twice a year. The newsletter should communicate the activities of ICEB and promote UEB especially in countries which are currently not members of ICEB.

Charge (BP14): Distribute the newsletter through as many existing channels as practical.

Status: Ongoing. The ICEB Newsletter was launched in December 2018 and has been published quarterly since then. The newsletter is distributed through the ICEB-announce listserv and promoted through the ICEB website and social media.

## BP15 Engage with WBC

Charge: Engage with the World Braille Council, emphasizing the utility of UEB where English is a second or regional language such as in the European Union or Anglophone Africa.

Status: Still required.