



2006 Report of Activities

**International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE)
The Permanent Secretariat
Oslo, Norway**

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A- ICDE: Association, Permanent Secretariat, Acting President

Established in 1938, The International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE) is a non-governmental, non-profit, self-governing educational association, registered in Norway. ICDE is the global association for flexible learning and teaching.

ICDE's Permanent Secretariat is in Oslo, Norway, hosted and supported by this country on a permanent basis since 1988.

As the elected President Jim Taylor (Australia) had resigned from his position as President of ICDE due to ill health in summer 2005 it was agreed that Rector Professor Dr.-Ing. Helmut Hoyer (Germany) should function as ICDE Acting President until appropriate new elections can be held under the new constitution.

B- Summary of activities

During the year 2006, ICDE was involved in a variety of activities:

- Planning and organisation of several ICDE conferences, some were held in 2006 ([22nd World Conference in Rio de Janeiro](#), [Tianjin International Conference](#), [SCOP 2006 in Norway](#)), while others are still in the planning process. ICDE also spent some time analysing a number of conference proposals and negotiating with the interested institutions. Besides, we worked on the design of a set of conference guidelines to be used for potential conference organiser institutions, which standardise and guarantee the quality of ICDE conferences.
- ICDE continues working closely with UNESCO in a number of fields. At the end of 2006, ICDE launched its Global Task Force on Open Educational Resources (OER) at the UNESCO HQ in Paris with strong support from UNESCO. The group is chaired by Fred Mulder, Rector at the Open Universiteit Nederland. OER is a prioritised area within the UN system and the European Commission for the coming years, so ICDE's positioning and developing of expertise at an early stage will be beneficial towards our members.
- In the Permanent Secretariat, we are working on an ongoing basis on updating our [website](#), and put great effort into it in 2006. A Chinese version of the ICDE website was launched in 2006, with the Shanghai Radio and TV University as the host. There is a Spanish version as well that allows ICDE to reach the Latin American Higher Education sector in their language.
- New services were established to approach our membership (regular newsletters, notice board, etc). With these efforts, we expanded our reach to potentially new members and other relevant contacts in our field. Major membership campaigns took place during the autumn 2006.
- In 2005 we decided to launch [our journal Open Praxis in a digital format](#) and entered in an agreement with the Lillehammer University College that is cooperating with us in that endeavour. Open Praxis went digital and in 2006 we published a number of issues.
- ICDE representatives visited a number of countries pursuing ICDE business during 2006, and held several keynote speeches at conferences in Asia and Europe organised by cooperating associations and agencies.
- A considerable amount of time was spent on the work on the Constitution, that from 24th December 2006 was in place. New structures, rules and governing bodies will help to improve the performance of the organisation as a whole. The new Constitution is available to members at the Members Only section.

1. ICDE Conferences in 2006:

1.1. ICDE International Conference, Tianjin, China



[The ICDE International conference in Tianjin, China](#) took place 20-22 April 2006. The conference was hosted by the Tianjin Municipal Educational Admission and Examinations Authority (TAEA) in cooperation with the Ministry of Education of China and the Tianjin Education Commission.

[Tianjin](#) is one of the 4 municipalities directly under the Central Government of the P.R. China, and the third largest city in China only after Beijing and Shanghai. Tianjin Economic-Technological Development Area is one of the first state-class economic-technological development areas in the country.

The theme of the conference was: "**The Key Factor of Distance and ICT-based Education: Quality**". This conference aimed at raising discussions about the quality of distance and ICT-based education, possibilities for exchanges and collaboration among TV & radio universities, network colleges and self-taught examination systems, the different learning modes of distance and ICT-based education. More than 200 participants from all over China and selected international guests participated.

ICDE invited Ms. Berit Johnsen, from the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research to give the keynote speech. The idea was to present the areas of responsibility of the Ministry of Education and an overview of the structure of the higher education sector in Norway, which is quite different from the Chinese one.

As a result of this International Conference, ICDE got many new contacts and some new members from China. The 22nd World Conference followed relatively close after this conference in Tianjin, which is likely to be one of the reasons for the many Chinese participants at the Rio Conference as well. Moreover, several rectors from different prestigious Chinese universities participated at this year's SCOP meeting in Heerlen. It has been a long-term strategy for ICDE to foster further collaboration with our Chinese members, and we can conclude that the ICDE conference in Tianjin was an important step in this direction.

The successful conference in Tianjin and its positive results also led to the decision of organising a new conference in China. Thus, in 2008, the SCOP meeting will take place in Shanghai, hosted by Shanghai TV University.

1.2. SCOP 2006 meeting, Lillehammer, Norway



The [ICDE Standing Conference of Presidents, Rectors, and Chief Executive Officers \(SCOP\) in 2006](#) took place in Lillehammer, Norway, 11-13 June 2006. [Lillehammer University College](#) was the host of the conference as it was the case 10 years earlier in 1996 where they arranged a very successful SCOP meeting.

The Minister of Education, Mr. Øystein Djupedal, [opened the conference](#). The [Norwegian Ministry of Education](#) was the main patron and sponsor of the meeting.

The Conference Theme was: "Borderless University Teaching – Cooperation and Competition". ICT- based learning and teaching across borders is positioning itself at the centre of the international education scene. Universities worldwide experience a stronger need for collaboration and sharing of knowledge and expertise, and at the same time are facing tough competition from old and new actors and emerging conflicts. This SCOP meeting focused on different aspects of cooperation as well as competition/conflicts arising from export and import of university teaching.

Among the Keynote speakers were:

- UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information, Dr. Abdul W.Khan
- President Susan C. Aldridge, University of Maryland University College, USA
- Vice-Chancellor Brenda Gourley, Open University, UK
- Executive Director Sally M. Johnstone, WCET, USA
- Director Jan Atle Toska and President Jan Olav Fretland, Norway Opening Universities, Norway

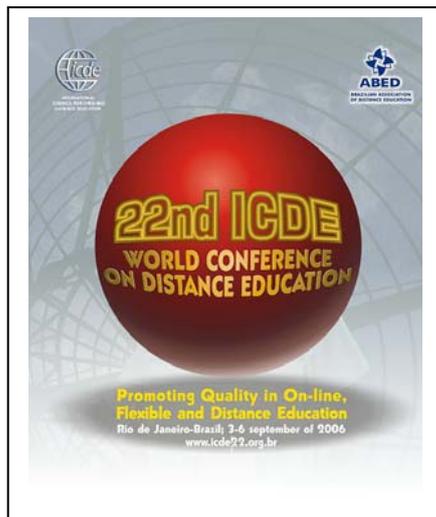
The SCOP 2006 meeting resulted in a new initiative for ICDE:

During this SCOP meeting it became evident that the Open Educational Resources (OER) Movement is an important movement the SCOP participants found especially interesting and significant. After discussions with UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information, Dr. Abdul W.Khan, ICDE decided to launch a new initiative: the establishment of a **Global ICDE Task Force to deal with Open Educational Resources**, involving members from different continents, cultures and education approaches.

Showing its support to this initiative, UNESCO invited this Task Force to hold its Kick-off meeting at UNESCO's Headquarters in Paris in November 2006. Information about the results of this meeting and other documents relating to OER are available to members in ICDE's electronic journal [Open Praxis](#). More detailed information about this initiative is described later in this report (Point 2.2)

1.3. 22nd ICDE World Conference, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, September, 3-6 2006

The [Brazilian Association for Distance Education](#) (ABED) hosted the [22nd ICDE World Conference](#) in the city of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil from 3-6 September 2006.



The Conference Theme was: **"Promoting Quality in Online, Flexible and Distance Learning"**. Approximately 650 papers, from 60 different countries were received and evaluated by the International Program Committee.

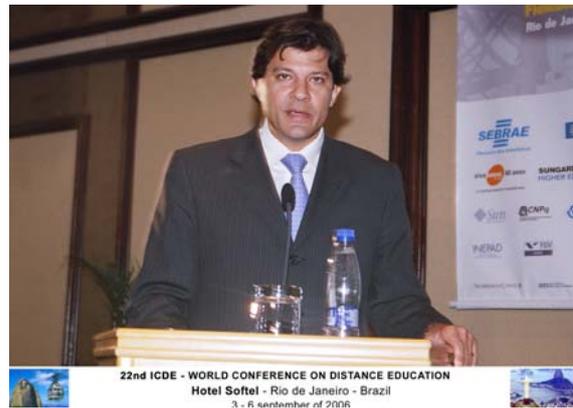
Brazil is the largest and most populous country in Latin America, and the fifth largest in the world in both area and population. Brazil has the ninth largest economy in the world at Purchasing Power Parity and tenth largest at market exchange rates. The field of distance education is under great expansion in Brazil, with strong strategic support from the Brazilian government that aims at using distance education for capacity building. Universities and institutions are main actors, together with major companies and trade unions that have massive undertakings to boost capacity building at private level.

The 22nd ICDE World Conference was very successful, and it generated a lot of interest in Brazil; universities, companies, institutions involved with distance education, ministers and government officials and the press (TV, radio and newspapers) followed the conference closely.

Keynote speakers at the Opening Ceremony included the Brazilian Minister of Education, Dr. Fernando Haddad, the representative for the Norwegian Ministry of Education Berit Johnsen and Dr. Abdul Khan, Assistant Secretary General at UNESCO.



Ms. Berit Johnsen, Norwegian Ministry of Education



Dr. Fernando Haddad, Minister of Education of Brazil

In the course of the Opening Ceremony, the Minister of Education of Brazil Dr. Haddad announced the creation of the [Universidade Aberta do Brasil](#) (The Brazilian Open University).

[UNESCO](#) was one of the co-sponsors of the Conference, assisting ICDE in bringing together professionals and the general public interested in distance education in order to present, debate and analyse current initiatives in Brazil and globally, in all segments of education – elementary, middle, high school and university level, as well as technical, professional and corporate – in the academic, corporate, public and free sectors. Being one of the keynote speakers, Dr. Khan highlighted that distance learning has become part of the daily life and it has become basic in order to assure that the global objectives of education will be reached.

The 22nd conference attracted 1500 prominent scholars, researchers, public officers, CEOs and decision-makers from 73 countries of the world, covering all the continents. The three-day program of the conference consisted of informative and interesting plenary sessions touching the issue of quality in open and distance education through aspects such as course design development and delivery, institutional organization and management, and national/international policy/programs.

The plenary sessions were followed by a wide range of parallel sessions, divided by themes and language. There were **348 presentations** in parallel sessions and around **190 posters**. The participants could also enjoy a number of interesting pre-conference seminars and workshops.

The papers presented at this conference are available to ICDE members at the Members Only section of our website.

1.4. 2007 and beyond

- The annual SCOP meeting in Maastricht (The Netherlands), took place in June 2007, with the [Open Universiteit Nederland](#) as the host.
- There will be an International Conference in Toluca, Mexico in October 2007, with the ITESM (Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey) as the host.
- [Shanghai Radio and TV University](#) will host the 2008 ICDE SCOP in October (after the Summer Olympic Games).
- The 23 ICDE World Conference will be held in Maastricht, The Netherlands, in June 2009. The host will be the [Open Universiteit Nederland](#).

1.5. ICDE Conference Guidelines

ICDE holds a number of conferences every year in different world regions, working with several types of institutions and their cultural context. ICDE felt that there was a need for establishing a set of criteria that would help conference organisers to foresee the elements and requirements that are necessary to take into account when planning an ICDE conference. From our side, the guidelines developed by ICDE ensure that our conferences hold the same quality standards no matter when or where they are held. These guidelines consider aspects regarding infrastructure, organisation, marketing, information, conference program, website, budgets, sponsors and general requirements.

2. ICDE and the UN

2.1. UNESCO and ICDE:

ICDE is one of the ten most central NGOs at [UNESCO](#), and was very active in [the organisation of UNESCO's World Summit on Information Society](#) (WSIS, Tunis December 2005). More than 19,000 participants from 174 countries attended the Summits and related events. Professor Bernard Loing represented ICDE at the Summit and the follow-up activities in the year 2006.

Through its representative at UNESCO (Prof. Loing), ICDE plays an important role in the overall activity of the UNESCO/NGO Liaison Committee, and over the two last years was in charge of the following activities:

- [the work of the Joint Programme Commission \(JPC\)](#) on Communication and New Technologies;
- [The follow-up of the World Summit on the Information Society](#) in which UNESCO is heavily engaged. ICDE was a regular and active participant in the two sessions of the Summit (Geneva December 2003 and Tunis November 2005)

The JPC meets regularly 3 times a year to treat a specific subject with the help of an invited expert. Each session is attended by about 30 members, all representatives of NGOs accredited at UNESCO. A high member of the UNESCO staff from the Communication sector always attends our meetings. With him, a report is made of the advancement of the work done at international level to apply the decisions of the Summit, both on the status of the Internet, and on the financing of the Information Society, as well as related subjects such as Information as applied to Education.

A short overview of the latest sessions in 2006 and 2007:

- **September 20 2006.** A report is made, followed by a discussion, on UNESCO's [Information For All Programme](#) (IFAP), a programme launched in 2000 to help develop the Information Society at global level. The expert invited is Mr **Daniel MALBERT**, former president of the programme.
- **November 22 2006.** The session is devoted to the theme: [ICTs for Education: UNESCO achievement](#). **Bernard LOING** makes a presentation of his report on UNESCO's activities on the subject (programmes, conferences, publications etc) over the 2000-2005 period. A discussion follows, completed by information from René CLUZEL, in charge of education programmes at the Communication sector of UNESCO.
- **February 14 2007.** The subject of the meeting is [Media Education](#) which had already been treated by the JPC in 2003 by a teacher specialised in teaching media at secondary schools. This time the approach is more theoretical; the expert invited is Sorbonne Professor **Divina FRAU-MEIGS** specialist in the sociology of media. She has been editing an important "[Media Education Kit](#)" for UNESCO which she presents in detail.
- **April 25 2007.** The theme of the meeting is [The New Media of diffusion and Production](#). The expert invited is **Christian DAURIAC**, General Director of Canal France International, the international French system for cooperation in the fields of radio and television. He describes the new approach to production and distribution of programmes, especially with the advent of the Internet.

There will be two more meetings of the JPC in 2007, one devoted also to the new mass media, and the other probably to the new developments of “peer-to-peer systems” and their possible influence and role in education processes.

2.2. ICDE Task Force on Open Educational Resources supported by UNESCO

During the SCOP meeting held in Lillehammer, UNESCO and ICDE discussed the idea of establishing a task force to deal with the issue of Open Educational Resources and thus lead the way in this new arena. Negotiations went on and at the 22nd ICDE World Conference in Rio de Janeiro ICDE announced the formation of the ICDE Global Task Force on Open Educational Resources. The launching meeting took place at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris in November 2006, with strong support from that organisation.

The mandate of the Task Force is to develop a report on Open Educational Resources. This report is aiming at contributing to the global movement of OER, adding specific ‘ICDE’ flavour and value by adopting the self-and-distance-learning perspective rather than the current mainstream content-in-classroom perspective.

This initiative has been very well received by the ICDE membership.

Members of the Task Force are:

- Fred Mulder (Chair), Rector, Open Universiteit Nederland, The Netherlands
- Nick Allen, Provost, University of Maryland University College, USA
- Susan d'Antoni, Programme Specialist, IIEP, UNESCO
- Stuart Hamilton, CEO, Open Universities Australia, Australia
- Helmut Hoyer, Rector, FernUniversität, Germany, and Acting ICDE President
- Sally Johnstone, Vice President, Academic, Winona State University, USA
- Fredric M. Litto, President of ABED, Brazil
- Bernard Loing, ICDE Permanent Delegate to UNESCO, France
- Frits Pannekoek, President, Athabasca University, Canada
- Paulina Pannen, Director, SEAMEO Regional Open Learning Centre (SEAMEO SEAMOLEC), Indonesia
- Barney Pityana, Vice Chancellor, University of South Africa, South Africa
- Tarek Shawki, Chief of Section, Information Society and ICT in Education, Science and Culture section, UNESCO
- Atwi Suparman, Rector, Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia
- David Vincent, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Strategy Planning and External Affairs, The Open University, UK

The ICDE Secretariat did an Inquiry on Open Educational Resources (OER) in the middle of October 2006. A good number of ICDE members representing different world regions responded to the Inquiry. The ICDE OER Task Force will produce a report available to ICDE members during the autumn 2007.

As a result of this Task Force, a lot of content dealing with OER has been published in [Open Praxis](#). ICDE members have access to several reports on the subject, as well as an interview ICDE had with the head of the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) Virtual Institute, Susan D'Antoni (the IIEP is UNESCO's centre for training and research specialising in educational planning and management). Mrs. D'Antoni is collaborating with ICDE in a numbers of activities related to OER.

As expressed earlier, OER is a priority area within the UN system and the European Commission for the coming years, so ICDE's positioning and developing of expertise at an early stage will reflect positively towards our members.

3. ICDE and China

3.1 Chinese Version of the ICDE website

The [ICDE website \(www.icde.org\)](http://www.icde.org) was re-structured in 2005-6. A new graphic design and a better-organised navigation system were put in place. ICDE has developed a section called “members-only” that aims at providing a useful tool for interaction to its members and others with interest in the field of e-learning.

ICDE also has an ICDE Latin American site in Spanish and another newly established site in Chinese as well.



ICDE has been working in China for more than a decade. Several conferences, meetings and projects had China as the host country. We perceive an increased interest from the Chinese Higher Education sector towards ICDE. Taking that development into account, in the autumn of 2006, the ICDE website (www.icde.org) was translated into Chinese and is now published at <http://www.icde.org.cn/>, hosted by the Shanghai TV University. We believe that this new channel will foster more comprehensive collaboration, learning more from each other experiences and perspectives.

The Chinese site, as well as the Latin American one, is a mirror site that reflects what's on the English version but contemplates some necessary cultural adjustments. Furthermore, colleagues are encouraged to publish in their mother language and then it will be translated to the English site as well. In this way, we hope to reach vast regions that up to now have been a little peripheral in ICDE, due to language and cultural barriers.

3.2 Book on best papers

Aiming at bridging the gap between Chinese and other international distance education professionals, ICDE has entered into a new initiative with the Shanghai TV University. ICDE and Shanghai TV University will publish a book on best papers on Distance Education. Selected speeches, papers, and other written materials from ICDE will therefore be translated into Chinese and published, and in this way, relevant content produced in the context of the ICDE conferences will be available in the enormous Chinese education market. There will also be an English electronic version produced in 2008.

4. Open Praxis and Online Content

ICDE's journal Open Praxis was published for several years in printed format but in 2005 ICDE decided to modernize the journal introducing it in digital format only. ICDE and the Lillehammer University College developed the new digital [Open Praxis \(www.openpraxis.com\)](http://www.openpraxis.com) that was launched on the ICDE website in 2005. Open Praxis has a number of correspondents around the world that contribute regularly to the publication with news, trends and in-depth studies about our field. During 2006 several issues were published. The first issue for 2007 was published in January, the second issue was published in June.

Besides our journal, regular newsletters were sent to members once a month, containing information about ICDE events, projects, news and other subjects of general interest.

Papers from ICDE conferences are published in Open Praxis. The best papers from the Rio-conference were published in the first issue of 2007 (prepared in December 06), but all of the papers (more than 300) are available to our members in the Members Only section of our website. This content that ICDE distributes to its members is papers focusing on different cultural and political aspects dealing with distance education. All parts of the world are represented and thereby introduce new and different ideas, experiences and challenges to our readers.

5. Participation of ICDE officials in conferences:

ICDE representatives visited a number of countries pursuing ICDE business during 2006, and held several keynote speeches at conferences in Asia and Europe organised by cooperating associations and agencies.

Among other conferences:

- 29th Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) High Officials Meeting, held 22-24 November 2006 in Bangkok, Thailand.
- First International Forum on Online Education: Quality Assurance, at the China World Hotel in Beijing Oct. 14-15 2006, keynote lecture on "Seeking Quality in Global Online Education – Some Observations on Cultural Differences and Their Influence".
- Seminar on Distance Education and Flexible Learning organised on October 26th by the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education on Quality Assurance about cooperation in the Nordic countries regarding Quality assurance. Follow-up seminar in Tromsø May 2006.
- NADE-NFF conference on November 16 -17 in Oslo- on "Learning with Technology: Flexibility and Collaboration".

6. Project on open and distance learning and the universal right to education

Through our journal Open Praxis, ICDE launched in October 2006 a call for research and "good practices" papers to be published in 2008 concerning distance education and the right to education (in particular reference to article 26 of the Universal Declaration of the Human Rights):

- What is the role of distance education in the implementation of the right to education?
- How is distance education involved when education is seen as a right?
- What is its position in educational policy, as a factor of quality and an instrument for liberty?

This theme can be approached from multiple points of view, pedagogical, sociological, economical, political, legal, etc. Open Praxis has launched this call in collaboration with five other scientific journals with international influence and leadership, among others, in Europe, North America, and Asia:

- Asian Journal of Distance Education: <http://www.asianjde.org/>
- Distances et savoirs: www.cned.fr/ds, <http://ds.revuesonline.com>
- EURODL: <http://www.eurodl.org/>
- Journal of Asynchronous Learning Network: <http://www.sloan-c.org/publications/jaln/>
- IRRODL: <http://www.irrodl.org/>

The abstracts selected by each journal will be published in their original language on a common website, with open access; they will also be published in printed version as well in 2008. Authors will benefit from a wide international dissemination, and their work will be presented to a UNESCO international reference regarding distance education and the universal question of the right to education in October 2007. ICDE is deeply involved in that work and in the organisation of the conference. We have received a good number of papers mostly from Asia and Latin America.

Members of this committee is as follows: Terry Anderson (ORRODL), John Bourne (JALN), Ana Perona (Open Praxis), Svein Haaland (Open Praxis), Ramesh C SHARMA (AsianJDE), Alan Tait (EURODL) and Martine Vidal, Monique Grandbastien, Pierre Moeglin (D&S).

7. New Constitution

During more than two years, a group of expert people from ICDE have worked on a proposal of a new ICDE constitution. This group was led by David Sewart, former ICDE President, and Helmut Hoyer, Acting President, and received considerable support from the Norwegian representatives Jan A. Toska and Svein O. Haaland. The proposal presented to the members for voting was the result of discussions, which have involved members (individual and institutional) in Africa, Asia, Oceania, Europe, Latin America (particularly at the recent ICDE World Conference in Brazil) and North America. The proposal was supported by a great majority of the members, and hence the new Constitution came into force on December 24th. It is believed that with this new constitution ICDE is better equipped to meet the challenges of the future with a modern, clear and workable governance structure.

ICDE has now in place clear structures and rules with respect to:

- Management activities and responsibilities
- Decision-making procedures
- Voting processes
- Representation of different regions, cultures, and languages in its membership
- Conditions on its host country

In order to guarantee a smooth transition from the old to the new structure, *ad hoc* mechanisms are needed to implement this new Constitution. All business bodies from the former Constitution have ceased to have responsibilities. There are only two senior officers (the Acting President and the Secretary General) remaining in office.

The first new body established at the beginning of 2007 is a temporary Board of Trustees. This business body is called "Interim Board of Trustees" and consists of 5 members. It will perform its tasks until it is replaced by the Board of Trustees, which takes up office from 1 January 2009 to 31 December 2012.

The following people compose the Interim Board of Trustees:

Chair: Prof. David Sewart (United Kingdom)
Vice Chair: Prof. Svein O. Haaland (Norway)

Members:
Dr. Nick Allen (USA)
Dr. Gabriel Ferraté (Spain)
Prof. Atwi Suparman (Indonesia)

The Interim Board of Trustees will begin the process of appointing the members of the Election Committee. Once in office, the Election Committee will undertake its tasks in the process of electing the Executive Committee that will come into office on 1 January 2008.

The term of office of the Acting President Helmut Hoyer, who came into office after resignation due to ill health reasons of the then President, will come to an end on 31 December 2007.

The Chair of the Executive Committee which comes into office on 1 January 2008 will become the new ICDE President in accordance with the new Constitution. The President and the Secretary General (after consultation with the Executive Committee) will then invite membership of the Board of Trustees that will take office on 1 January 2009. At this point the new Constitution will become fully operational. The new Constitution is available for members at the Members Only section.