

# 2007

## International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE)

The Permanent  
Secretariat



**[ 2007 Report of Activities ]**

Index:

- A- ICDE: The Association, its Business Bodies and the Permanent Secretariat
- B- Summary of activities

1. New Governance Structures and Business Bodies of ICDE
  - 1.1. Interim Board of Trustees (IBoT)
  - 1.2. Election Committee
  - 1.3. Election of the Executive Committee
  - 1.4. Personnel changes in the Permanent Secretariat
  
2. ICDE Member Activities and Conferences in 2007
  - 2.1. ICDE International Conference in Toluca, Mexico
  - 2.2. SCOP 2007 in Heerlen, The Netherlands
  - 2.3. Other future conferences and events
  - 2.4. Participation of ICDE officials in Conferences
  - 2.5. ICDE and Latin America
    - 2.5.1. ICDE Latin American Network: activities
    - 2.5.2. Publication by ICDE in collaboration with UNESCO LA
    - 2.5.3. CARTAE – new Blog for Latin America
    - 2.5.4. Publication by ABED and ICDE
  - 2.6. Project on open and distance learning and the universal right to education
  - 2.7. Open Praxis and Online Content
  - 2.8. The ICDE website
  
3. ICDE and UNESCO
  - 3.1. ICDE's General Delegate at UNESCO elected as the President of the NGO Conference and NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee
  - 3.2. ICDE Global Task Force on Open Educational Resources
  - 3.3. Dissemination of news from UNESCO

## **A- ICDE: The Association, its Business Bodies and the Permanent Secretariat**

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.

Following the decision of members, ICDE's new Constitution replaced the former one on 24<sup>th</sup> December 2006. In order to guarantee a smooth transition from the old to the new structures, ad hoc mechanisms were needed to implement the new Constitution. The "Interim Board of Trustees" (IBoT) was the first body to be established in February 2007. Due to the nature of this transition period, the work of the Interim Board of Trustees has been considerable in 2007. Under its responsibility for "promoting the interests of ICDE" it has been concerned with each and every area of ICDE's activities. Furthermore, the IBoT has facilitated the creation of the Election Committee, a 3 -member-body that determined a timetable, methodology and practices for the election of the Executive Committee.

The first election of an Executive Committee in accordance with ICDE's new Constitution, took place in the fall of 2007. Responding to the call for candidates, 18 candidates were presented from all continents to fill the 6 positions of the Executive Committee. The electoral process ended on December 1 2007. The new Executive Committee took office on January 1 2008 for a 4 year period. In accordance with the Constitution, the Chair of the Executive Committee also becomes the new ICDE President.

During this period, the Permanent Secretariat worked very closely with all these bodies as their implementation arm, in fact, many of the activities developed by the Permanent Secretariat in 2007 are related to tasks to facilitate setting in motion the new ICDE business bodies and its practices.

## **B- Summary of activities**

During the year 2007, ICDE was involved in a variety of activities:

- 2007 was a year with many in-house activities to establish new business and financial practices at the Secretariat and to get all the business bodies in operation. New structures, rules and procedures will make sure that the organisation as a whole runs in an efficient way.
- The Permanent Secretariat was involved in the planning and organisation of several conferences: some were held in 2007 (Toluca International Conference, SCOP 2007 in The Netherlands), while others are still in the planning process (23rd World Conference in Maastricht in 2009; 24<sup>th</sup> ICDE World Conference in Indonesia in 2011, SCOP in Shanghai in 2008, etc).
- ICDE continues working closely with UNESCO. In 2007, ICDE's permanent delegate to UNESCO, Dr Bernard Loing was elected President of the NGO Conference (the entity that embraces all NGOs recognised by UNESCO) and President of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee. ICDE Global Task Force on Open Educational Resources (OER), supported by UNESCO continued to develop its research on the subject and delivered a preliminary report to the SCOP conference in June and a final report at the beginning of 2008. OER is a prioritised area within the UN system and the European Commission for the coming years, so ICDE's developing of expertise at an early stage will reflect positively towards our members and contacts.

- In the Permanent Secretariat, we are working on an ongoing basis on updating our website ([www.icde.org](http://www.icde.org)), as it is one of our main communication tools for keeping our members and contacts up to date with information regarding distance education, but also information about our activities and events. We have a Chinese and a Spanish version of our site. In 2007 the ICDE Latin American network developed its own blog to promote the exchange of ideas and further interaction in Spanish (<http://cartae.blogspot.com/>).
- In 2007 [Open Praxis](#) continued to be published in an electronic version, hosted by the Lillehammer University College. Two issues of Open Praxis were published in 2007, with articles from our members as well as presentations from ICDE conferences. In addition to these two publications, we published in March 2007 all the articles from the ICDE 22<sup>nd</sup> World Conference in Brazil. Approximately 350 articles from the conference were made available to our members.
- Our representatives visited a number of countries pursuing ICDE business during 2007, and held several keynote speeches at conferences in North America, Asia and Europe organised by cooperating associations and agencies in a coordinated effort to build bridges with other associations in the field.
- Several publications were produced under the ICDE umbrella such as: "Building the new agenda for Distance Education in Latin America (ICDE-UNESCO publication compiled by Prof. Marta Mena) and a Book of Best Practices of ODL in Brazil ( ICDE-ABED). Several new publications are being planned.
- In 2007, six international scientific journals, including ICDE's Open Praxis, launched a common call for papers on the theme « *distance education and the right - or access - to education* », with the objective of collecting a common set of references on research from all over the world in the field of distance education and of its impact on access to education. The final texts are available on ICDE's website in their original languages, and will be presented at a conference in UNESCO in October 2008.

## 1. New Governing Structures and Business Bodies of ICDE

The Constitution states that ICDE conducts its business through 3 Business Bodies, 2 senior officers (the Secretary General and the President) and the Permanent Secretariat.

During 2007, the new Business Bodies established by the ICDE Constitution had to be put in place in successive steps throughout the year. A meeting on the implementation of the new Constitution, chaired by Acting President Hoyer was held in Oslo on 2 February 2007. The purpose of the meeting was:

- to set in motion a process for creating the business bodies for ICDE
- to set in motion the drawing up of operational practices for ICDE
- to set in motion a process for maintaining the strategic and operational management of ICDE (including budget setting for 2007)
- to set in motion a process for keeping members informed.

### 1.1 Interim Board of Trustees

The creation of the Interim Board of Trustees was the major requirement for setting up the new Constitution. The role of the Board of Trustees might in general be described as one of benign

oversight. It has certain specific functions, particularly its responsibilities concerning personnel matters.

Composition of the Interim Board of Trustees (Feb. 2008 to 31 December 2008):

				
<p><b>Chair:</b>  <b>David Sewart</b> -            Former President of            ICDE, and Former            Director of Student            Services at the            Open University, UK</p>	<p><b>Vice Chair:</b>  <b>Svein Haaland</b> -            Former Rector of            the Lillehammer            University College,            Norway</p>	<p><b>Atwi Suparman</b>            - Rector of            Universitas            Terbuka,            Indonesia</p>	<p><b>Gabriel Ferrate</b> -            President of            Institut Cerdà, and            Former Rector of            Universitat Oberta            de Catalunya            (UOC), Spain</p>	<p><b>Nicholas Allen</b> -            Provost Emeritus            &amp; Collegiate            Professor,            University of            Maryland Univ.            College, USA</p>

The work of the Interim Board of Trustees has been considerable in 2007. Under its responsibility for "promoting the interests of ICDE" it has been concerned with each and every area of ICDE's activities, carrying out its business through one face-to-face meeting in June and 12 lengthy reports from the Chair to members which provided the basis for information, discussion and decisions of members. In addition the Chair, the Acting President and the Permanent Secretariat have normally been in weekly contact. The objectives have been to:

- bring the new Constitution into effect,
- establish appropriate working practices and procedures,
- provide documentation for the appointment of a new Secretary General,
- create a platform from which the new Executive Committee can build future policy,
- keep ICDE's membership aware of progress.

## 1.2 Election Committee

**The ICDE's Constitution, Article 9.1 establishes:**

"There shall be an Election Committee, the tasks of which are to verify the qualifications of potential candidates and propose candidates for the Executive Committee in a standard format and according to a set of criteria that shall take into account the association's policy and long term objectives and its cultural and linguistic diversity as well as its global representation".

The Election Committee has three members - one from a past Executive Committee, one who is a well known expert in ICDE's sphere of interest and one who represents the host country. The Interim Board of Trustees appointed two members of the Election Committee. In accordance with the ICDE Constitution, the Norwegian Government was consulted in terms of appointing the Chair of the Election Committee.

The Election Committee determined a timetable, methodology and practices for the election of the Executive Committee. These were made known to members. Work continues jointly between the Election Committee and the Interim Board of Trustees on matters associated with the appointment of a new Secretary General.

The Members of the Election Committee:

		
<p>Chair:  <b>Ingeborg Bø</b>, former Executive Director of the Norwegian Association for Distance and Flexible Education (NADE), Norway</p>	<p><b>Gary E. Miller</b>, Executive Director Emeritus, Penn State University World Campus, USA</p>	<p><b>Tian Belawati</b>, Vice Rector for Academic Affairs, Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia</p>

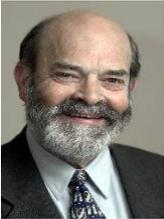
### 1.3 Election of the ICDE Executive Committee

The new Constitution very clearly places decisions for policy in the hands of the Executive Committee. "There shall be an Executive Committee responsible for making policy decisions in accordance with ICDE's mission and constitution" (Article 6.1). The President, whom the Executive Committee appoints, has a particular role. "The President has oversight of and responsibility for policy matters and is responsible to the Executive Committee and its members" (Article 6.12). The Board of Trustees does not have any direct responsibility for policy. It may have a tangential contact with policy through its monitoring of officers. And its responsibility for "advising the Executive Committee proactively and reactively on particular matters" (Article 7.1) may also mean some reference to policy. But policy making is the responsibility of the elected members of the Executive Committee under the leadership of the President. The Executive Committee is also responsible for all other matters not specifically allocated to another business body or the Secretary General (Article 6.2.). And it is the body to which the Secretary General will bring matters of an unusual kind, matters of great importance and matters with substantial financial implications (Article 8.4).

So it might be said that the Executive Committee has an inward looking and an outward looking role. It will consider on a regular basis the financial situation of ICDE including funding from membership fees, funding from the Norwegian Government and funding from other sources and will receive regular reports from the Secretary General on the operation of the Permanent Secretariat. But it will also look outwards to the members, their needs and the world of Open and Distance Learning in general. And it will do so to no small extent through the portfolios which are agreed for the individual members of the Executive Committee which together will support the strategy which it has determined (Article 6.15).

Elections for the positions at the Executive Committee were held in November/December 2007. Candidates represented the following countries: South Africa, UK, Brazil, Canada, New Zealand, Argentina, Singapore, China, Portugal, USA, Korea, Israel, France and Romania. There were two candidates representing Scandinavia.

ICDE Executive Committee (term of office: 1st January 2008 - 31st December 2011)

					
<p><b>President:</b>  <b>Frits Pannekoek</b>,  President of Athabasca University, Canada.</p>	<p><b>Denise Kirkpatrick</b>, Pro Vice Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) at the Open University, UK.</p>	<p><b>Nyameko Barney Pityana</b>, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University of South Africa (UNISA), South Africa.</p>	<p><b>Marta Mena</b>, General Coordinator of PROCAE, Cabinet of Ministers, Argentine Government, Argentina.</p>	<p><b>Fredric Litto</b>, President of the Brazilian Association for Distance Education - ABED, Brazil.</p>	<p><b>Paul Grimwood</b>, CEO of the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand, New Zealand.</p>

#### 1.4 Personnel changes in the Permanent Secretariat

When the former Secretary General resigned from his position on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2007, Ana Perona was appointed as the Acting Secretary General in the Permanent Secretariat. The process of appointing a new Secretary General, which involves the Interim Board of Trustees and the Election Committee, is now underway.

## 2. ICDE Member Activities and Conferences in 2007:

### 2.1. ICDE International Conference in Toluca, Mexico



The ICDE International Conference in Toluca, Mexico took place 3-5 October, 2007. The conference was organised in cooperation with the ITESM (Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey), and hosted by their Toluca Campus.



The Tecnológico de Monterrey was founded in 1943. Today, it is a university with 33 campuses and a Virtual University which provides an international platform; they offer high-quality educational programs in Mexico, Latin America and beyond.

The University is also present all over the world, by means of learning networks and advanced information technologies.

The conference provided an excellent platform to capitalize on networking opportunities, discover new alternatives in cooperative work, get new ideas regarding research developing in the field of education and to exchange knowledge, experiences, and opinions with various experts in this field.

The conference aimed at bringing together the Americas with the rest of the world around the theme: "The Metamorphosis of Distance Education for the third Millennium. Institutions, Programs, Technologies and Roles... the same thing?" (the conference report is attached). The sessions were held in English, Spanish and Portuguese with simultaneous translation. Some sessions were televised to several countries in the region and Southern Europe. All sessions were available on the Internet allowing the participation at a distance of more than 150 colleagues.

The following Sub-themes were debated during the conference:

- a) The different stages of development in distance education in various contexts: Social, Cultural and Economic.
- b) The new profile of distance education programs in the third millennium.
- c) The role of technology in the transformation of methodology.
- d) The structure of institutions that develop distance education programs.
- e) The public image of distance education in the third millennium.
- f) The actors in distance education.
- g) Can F2F education support distance education?

The success of the Conference was reflected in the wide variety of participants from many different countries and regions of the world: 35 countries were represented by more than 450 participants who attended the Congress; in addition, 150 participants participated in virtual form, through the live streaming videos provided by the Campus Toluca TEC de Monterrey. Representatives from the National Ministry of Education, and Government of the State of Mexico, were present during the Opening Ceremony of the conference.

As a result of this International Conference, ICDE got many new contacts and some new individual members from Latin America. We received all the articles presented during the conference and many of them have been published in our electronic journal, Open Praxis, accessible to our members.

The successful conference in Mexico led to the decision to organise a new conference in Latin America. Thus, in November 2008, another ICDE International Conference will take place in the Dominican Republic in the city of Santo Domingo, hosted by the University of the Caribbean.

It has been a long-term strategy for ICDE to foster further collaboration with our Latin American network, and we can conclude that the ICDE conference in Mexico was an important step in this direction. Further information about this network is described later in the report.

## 2.2. SCOP 2007 meeting, Heerlen, The Netherlands

The ICDE Standing Conference of Presidents, Rectors, and Chief Executive Officers (SCOP) took place in Heerlen, The Netherlands, 3-5 June 2007. The Open Universiteit Nederland was the host of the conference. ICDE SCOP is a peer-to-peer closed meeting between Presidents and Rector for ICDE institutional members.



The Conference Theme was: "Open Educational Resources as an instrument for achieving Education for All", with the subtitle: "Policies, impact, conditions and implementation options for the ICDE membership".

Experts on the topic from around the world participated as speakers (including UNESCO representatives and speakers from the Hewlett Foundation and OECD).

The Minister of Education of the Netherlands opened the conference and the Dutch Ministry of Education was the main partner and sponsor.

During the SCOP meeting in 2006 in Lillehammer, it became evident that the Open Educational Resources (OER) Movement is an important movement which 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 at the end of 2006: the establishment of a Global ICDE Task Force to deal with Open Educational Resources, involving members from different continents, cultures and education approaches.

The conference organisers for the SCOP 2007 meeting relied heavily on the advice of both the ICDE Task Force on Open Educational Resources Members (which acts as a Programme Board) and two experts; one from UNESCO/IIEP (Susan D'Antoni) and one from OECD (Jan Hylén). All the presentations given during the SCOP meeting were published in Open Praxis, accessible to our members.

Conclusions:

During the SCOP meeting the following recommendations were made for ICDE for its further activities related to OER:

- Explore the primary question: "How can OER contribute to the 'Education for all' UNESCO policy, capacity building, widening participation and access?"
- And the secondary question: "What role can be attributed to OER in developing or strengthening a knowledge-based society?"
- Make a deeper analysis of the diversity regarding OER, the underlying assumptions or grounds and the required variety in actions (e.g. collaboration ICDE and UNESCO)
- Make practical reports that relate to ODL about Quality Assurance, sustainability, adaptation to language/culture, content & services (e.g. assessment),
- Develop handbooks for OER including training schemes
- Contribute to awareness raising
- Organize mechanisms for: exchange strategies, policies, best practices, expertise
- Make use of the ICDE website as a means for information exchange and discussion
- Joint collaboration with other organizations active in the field (UNESCO, EADTU, Hewlett Foundation, OCW Consortium, COL)

Further information about the Task Force' activities is described later in this report.

### **2.3. Other future conferences and events**

During 2007, the Permanent Secretariat was involved in the organization and planning of the following meetings that will be held in the coming months:

- an International workshop on capacity building for principals of secondary schools in the Philippines and adjacent area hosted by SEAMEO Innotech in Manila in September 2008, organised in cooperation with ICDE.
- The 2008 ICDE SCOP meeting in Shanghai, 18-19 October (after the Summer Olympic Games) hosted by Shanghai Radio and TV University
- Travelling seminar for Norwegian members and contacts to China in October 2008.
- The 23<sup>rd</sup> ICDE World Conference to be held in Maastricht, The Netherlands, in June 2009. The host will be the Open Universiteit Nederland.
- The 24<sup>th</sup> ICDE World Conference to be held in Jakarta, Indonesia in 2011.
- ICDE International Conference in Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic) 24-26 November 2008.

### **2.4 Participation of ICDE officials in Conferences from partner organisations**

Representatives from ICDE's Business Bodies visited a number of countries pursuing ICDE business during 2007, and held several keynotes speeches at conferences in Asia and USA organised by cooperating associations and agencies. This means visibility for our organisation and is a part of a coordinated effort. Among other conferences:

- 30th Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) High Officials Meeting, held in Bangkok, Thailand 20-22 November 2007. Professor Atwi Suparman, member of the ICDE interim Board of Trustees held a presentation on behalf of ICDE.
- NADE-NFF conference on November 16 -17 in Oslo- on "Learning with Technology: Flexibility and Collaboration", ICDE staff participated in this conference.
- Sloan Consortium Conference, Orlando Florida, 7-8 November 2007: ICDE was invited to be part on a panel on International Collaboration. Professor Nick Allen, member of the ICDE Interim Board of Trustees gave a presentation (prepared at the Permanent Secretariat) on behalf of ICDE.
- The Acting President and personnel from the Permanent Secretariat participated in the European Association for Distance Teaching Universities Annual meeting in Lisbon (Portugal) on 8-9 November 2007.

### **2.5 ICDE and Latin America**

ICDE has been working in Latin America for many years. Distance education is very relevant to the development and needs of this vast region with more than 350 million people who share the same language and culture. By respecting their wish to communicate in Spanish, ICDE has developed a number of tailor-made initiatives to act as a channel of communication between Latin American experts and their colleagues around the world. In this context Latin America has been the host region

for several ICDE conferences, meetings, projects and publications. Besides ICDE has developed an ICDE website in Spanish and special network of Latin American professionals.

### 2.5.1 ICDE Latin American Network: activities

In the past, very few Latin American academics and CEOs were able to fully participate in ICDE activities due to the language barrier. By allowing Latin Americans to develop communication tools (websites, virtual meetings, publications, databases, etc) in Spanish, this network fosters comprehensive collaboration among them and with the rest of the world. The Permanent Secretariat in Oslo translates many of the documents in Spanish into English for further dissemination in ICDE.

The ICDE Latin American Network's role is to:

- Increase the presence of ICDE in the region
- Promote the development of open and distance education
- Reinforce the cultural and linguistic identity of Latin America in the field
- Support and strengthen national organizations involve in distance education
- Provide a space for discussion and dissemination for the regional authors

The Network has coordinators in 11 countries:



The role of the national contacts is to disseminate ICDE's activities in the region and gather national information on distance education that can be interesting for the ICDE Network. In addition, they take an active part in the planning, organization and management of the different activities defined by the ICDE Network such as: International Conferences on Distance Education, the maintenance and update of the ICDE Website in Spanish, maintenance and update of the database on "Who is Who in Open and Distance Education", annual surveys on ODL courses and programs offered in the region, and participation in publications such as the following books: Distance Education in Latin America. Models, Technologies and Realities (2006) and Building the New Agenda of Distance Education (2007). The network has several virtual meetings each year. Their minutes as well as the 2007 Activity Report are available on the ICDE website ("ICDE en América Latina" section).

## 2.5.2 Publication by ICDE in collaboration with UNESCO Latin America

ICDE has been collaborating with the UNESCO regional office in Latin America for the publication of a book focusing on developing a Distance Education agenda in Latin America. "THE NEW AGENDA OF DISTANCE EDUCATION" is the result of the efforts by ICDE's Executive Committee member Prof. Marta Mena, and various experts in field.

This book shows an integrated view of the different aspects confronted, and focuses on the region's present concerns and challenges. This is a valuable resource to stimulate reflections, cooperative work and to produce new inputs which may result in diagnosis and interpretation tools.



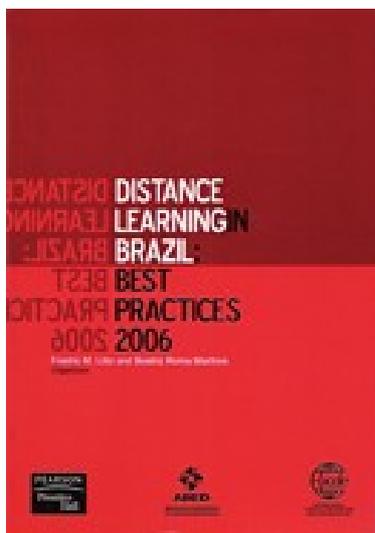
The main topics of the Latin Americans' distance education agenda according to the authors are to:

- Ensure the search for quality in Distance Education programs.
- Strengthen the accreditation processes developed in the region.
- Reach a consensus in the tension between globalization and contextualizing.
- Take a position in relation to a new social image of distance education.
- adjust the structural models of Latin American institutions in the context of the new developments in the area.
- Construct a new pedagogical model suitable to the regional needs.

## 2.5.3 CARTAE – new Blog for Latin America

CARTAE is a publication produced in Spanish by the University of Puerto Rico (campus Río de Piedras) and ICDE- Latin America. It started in the year 2000 as a newsletter with almost 3500 subscriptions and in 2007 it has transformed into a blog (<http://cartae.blogspot.com/>), keeping pace with our times. It contains news, events and documents of interest for educators, focusing on innovation and distance education. The editor is Prof. Juan Meléndez.

## 2.5.4 Book on Best Practices in Distance Education (ABED- ICDE and Pearson Education)



The Book "Distance Learning in Brazil: Best Practices 2006" was prepared by the Brazilian Association for Distance Education (ABED), the host of the 22nd World Conference of the ICDE held in Rio de Janeiro at the end of 2006, in collaboration with ICDE and Pearson Education. The aim was to make available an overview of distance learning efforts currently underway by the time of the conference which shows Brazil at its best in distance education, in situations of school, university, technological, corporate and continued learning, and offering examples from the different geographical regions of this vast country.

The practice of distance learning, like so many other endeavors in the developing world, is an activity that sometimes seems like

confronting a permanent obstacle course. The discontinuity of legislation, of institutional policies and of funding; the higher costs of sophisticated imported equipment and software; the problem of working in a minority language (less than one percent of the material on the web is in the Portuguese language); the relatively incipient experience of widespread, democratic access to higher education; and the shortage of professionals with mature experience in creating and operating distance learning, are all problems which beset this approach to capacity building in the developing world. Hence, the achievements of the institutions represented in this volume are worthy of very special attention.

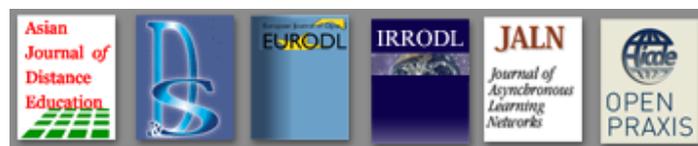
All 2,600 members of ABED received a circular letter inviting to the submission of a two-page abstract, in English, describing the significance and experience of the case. Some forty-five abstracts were received, and were sent to a council of about thirty international specialists in distance learning involved in ICDE. Twenty cases were approved by the council and they are contained in this volume. Selected chapters of the book are available at: <http://www.abed.org.br/media/BPDL00.pdf> -

## 2.6 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 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 could 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:



- Asian Journal of Distance Education- <http://www.asianjde.org/>
- Distances et savoirs: [www.cned.fr/ds-](http://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/>
- Open Praxis- [http:// openpraxis.com](http://openpraxis.com)

The abstracts selected by each journal are now 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 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 2008. ICDE is involved in the organisation of the conference. Open Praxis received a good number of papers mostly from Asia, Europe and Latin America.

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

More information can be found at: <http://www.distanceandaccesstoeducation.org/index.aspx>

## **2.7 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. It is published several times a year. The first issue for 2007 was published in January; the second was published in September.

Papers from ICDE conferences are published in Open Praxis. The best papers from the 22 World Conference were published in the first issue of 2007, but all of the papers (more than 350) are available in the Members Only section of our website. The content that ICDE distributes to its members are 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.

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

## **2.8 The ICDE Website**

The ICDE website was substantially revised and updated during 2007, revitalising the information and activities in the members-only section. All work is done in-house. Among others: the complete lists of ICDE members were published in October 2007, minutes of ICDE Business bodies are also accessible for ICDE members (published within 25 days of the meeting), and all content from ICDE conferences is made available to members a few months after the conferences take place. This is part of ICDE's new direction concerning membership services and also an effort to keep the necessary transparency of ICDE bodies.

## **3 ICDE and UNESCO**

The relationship to UNESCO goes back to the 1960s. The organisation has been for many years an official and active partner of UNESCO which recognizes ICDE as the Global Membership Organization in flexible, distance and e-learning. ICDE works very closely on a day-to-day basis with UNESCO Headquarters in Paris and regional UNESCO offices around the world. ICDE's approach is built on a combination of active engagement and expertise in the fields of Education and ICT.

### 3.1 ICDE's General Delegate at UNESCO elected as the President of the NGOs Conference at UNESCO and President at the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee



Following ICDE's long term aim of developing a closer relationship to UNESCO, in 2007 ICDE's General Delegate at UNESCO, Dr. Bernard Loing, was elected President of the NGO Conference and President of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee during the International Conference of NGOs held in Paris (5-7 December 2007). This Conference represents the 350 international NGOs in official partnership with UNESCO and the Liaison Committee is its implementation arm.

His new and important function will give ICDE the possibility of reaching a broader audience at world level, with direct access to governmental delegations and focus on distance education and capacity building. It also means a new commitment and responsibility, and Bernard Loing is actively supported by the Permanent Secretariat in different tasks.

ICDE over the last years has been in charge of the following activities at UNESCO:

- the work of the Joint Programme Commission (JPC) on Communication and New Technologies which 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 the meetings. The outcome of the meetings is a report on the advancement of the work done at international level to apply the decisions of the World Summit on Information Society, 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.

- 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.

A short overview of the sessions and meetings held in 2007:

- **February 2007.** The subject of the meeting was Media Education which had already been treated by the JPC in 2003 by a teacher specialising in teaching media at secondary schools. This time the approach was more theoretical; the expert invited was Sorbonne Professor **Divina FRAU-MEIGS** specialist in the sociology of media. She has published an important "Media Education Kit" for UNESCO.
- **April 2007.** The theme of the meeting was The New Media: Dissemination and Production. The expert invited was **Christian DAURIAC**, General Director of Canal France International, the international French system for cooperation in the fields of radio and television. He described the new approach to production and distribution of programmes, especially with the advent of the Internet.
- There were two more meetings of the JPC in 2007, one devoted also to the new mass media, and the other to the new developments of "peer-to-peer systems" and their possible influence and role in education processes.
- In September 2007, ICDE was invited to the UNESCO High Level Group of Visionaries on Knowledge Acquisition and Sharing. The Acting President of ICDE was part of this group of personally invited experts, who discussed and issued the Kronberg Declaration.

### 3.2. ICDE Task Force on Open Educational Resources supported by UNESCO

At the 22<sup>nd</sup> ICDE World Conference in Rio de Janeiro ICDE announced the formation of the ICDE Global Task Force on Open Educational Resources. The launch 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 development 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. The ICDE Secretariat provided secretariat support to the group, besides participating in the discussions and activities.

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

During 2007, the main topic of the SCOP meeting in June was OER and the Task Force had a face to face meeting there. The outcomes and recommendations of the meeting were the basis for the further work done by this task force. The interim report presented in November 2007 is enclosed herewith, but the final report will be finalized during spring 2008. ICDE members will have access to this report and it will be published on the ICDE website.

The report deals, among others, with the following topics: availability / access, intellectual property rights, internationalization versus localization of content (regarding language and culture), learning communities support, quality control, financing and sustainable business models, interfacing with regular degree studies, possibilities to bridge between informal, non-formal and formal learning, diversity in target groups, experiences / good practice with existing offers, various options, misuse, benefits to offering institutions, potentials for developing countries from using OER, and changing roles of the Public and Private sectors.

The Task Force aims at producing a report that will serve, among others:

- to Higher Education / ODL institutions in their decision on introducing (or not) OER activities as a provider or as a recipient
- as a promotional basis for the OER concept
- as a guideline for interested stakeholders
- to ICDE to define its own strategy in this field, including a proposal for an action program for collaboration among its membership

- to contribute to the OER global movement from the perspective of independent/autonomous learning in a distance learning setting rather than teacher dependent learning in a face-to-face setting

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 and potential new members. Open Educational resources will also be one of the major themes of the next ICDE World Conference to be held in Maastricht in June 2009.

One of the first tangible outcomes of the work and ideas of the group is the organisation of three different types of OER seminars, one of them on capacity building for the leadership at ODL Universities outside of Europe. This seminar will offer an exploratory platform (or prototype) for subsequent seminars on awareness-raising on OER concept and possibilities.

### **3.3 Dissemination of news from UNESCO**

Each month, ICDE receives both electronic and printed updates and newsletters from UNESCO. On a regular basis since July 2007, ICDE has been publishing news related to our field from UNESCO, focusing on UNESCO projects and initiatives linked to capacity building, ICT based education and other aspects of distance education.

ICDE Permanent Secretariat, 12 March 2008.