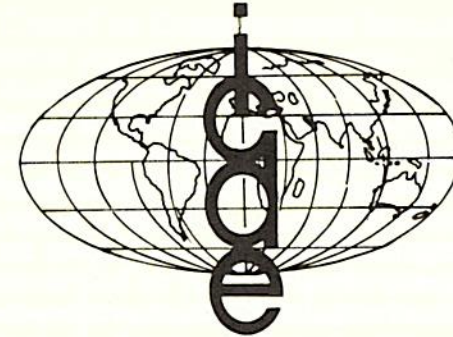


The First 50 Years
1938 - 1988

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR
DISTANCE EDUCATION



The First Fifty Years

1938 - 1988

14TH WORLD CONFERENCE ON DISTANCE EDUCATION

**9 - 16 August, 1988
Oslo**

ICCE/ICDE: THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS

Reflections

It is appropriate that in this 50th year since ICDE was established in its original form as the International Council for Correspondence Education (ICCE) we should feel the need to acknowledge achievements and savour the triumphs in retrospect. It is right that our members should also be given a sense of history of the organisation and an awareness of the changes which have marked its development along the way. In the process, however, it is hoped that there is a realisation that rather than having reached full maturity (as we have come to regard a period of 50 years to represent in the lifetime of a human being), ICDE may be really only emerging from a rather protracted adolescence.

This *Review* in no way attempts to be a history of the organisation. Such a project is beyond its scope; besides, there are others who have a more intimate knowledge than I do of ICCE's earlier years and achievements and are better placed to undertake the task. I hope, however, that one day a history will be written to pay due tribute to the most outstanding individual contributions of ICCE/ICDE members, especially those who served in various official capacities. Because the focus of this *Review* is not upon individual achievement, it behoves me to express in general terms at least on behalf of the membership our sincere thanks to all who have given so willingly of their time and expertise over the last 50 years to the development of distance education at an international level through dynamic participation as a member of ICCE or ICDE. Worthy of special recognition, of course, are our past presidents whose names appear within this booklet.

This Anniversary Year will have real significance if it marks the beginning of a new stage in the life of ICDE where professionalism will be reflected in more practical responses to insistent demands from all corners of the globe for help to close the gaps that exist between traditional systems of education and the educational needs of populations that require more flexible approaches to learning. The executive believes that ICDE will emerge from the World Conference in Oslo in a position to provide a more effective leadership role in distance education than it has been able to play in the past fifty years. If it fulfils such a promise, then 1988 will be remembered as a Happy Anniversary indeed.

May, 1988

Kevin Smith
President

ICCE: Four Decades of Development

Origins

The International Council for Correspondence Education (ICCE) grew out of a meeting of a group of pioneers attending a national conference on supervised correspondence study in 1936 where a Mr J.W. Gibson, who was for many years the Director of High School Correspondence Instruction at Victoria, British Columbia, suggested that an international conference on correspondence education should be convened. The initiative to invite representatives of correspondence schools from around the world was taken by him and only two years later in August, 1938 the first ICCE Conference was held in Victoria, B.C. The Conference was attended by 88 delegates, mostly from Canada and the United States, but also from Australia, New Zealand and Scotland. So the stage was set for the development of an organisation that for the first twenty years or so was essentially North American in membership and mainly interested in correspondence methods for schoolchildren and college students using the single medium of print. Both the public and private sectors were represented.

World Conferences

The story of ICCE's growth and development is reflected in its World Conferences which took place every three years or so, with the exception of the decade of inactivity between 1938 and 1948 as a result of the Second World War. As Figure 1 shows, the next five conferences attracted only a handful of countries with Canada, United States, Australia and New Zealand providing the bulk of the delegates. The Stockholm Conference of 1965, however, marked a turning point in the fortunes of ICCE for it was the first truly international conference in size, representation and spirit with an attendance of 223 delegates from 27 countries. Subsequent conferences in the 1960's and 1970's maintained this international character and witnessed greater participation from higher education institutions in the public sector, although attendance at the 1975 Brighton Conference suffered somewhat as a result of having to shift venue rather hurriedly from Kyoto, Japan, a few months before the event. The 1972 Conference in Virginia was especially noteworthy as it saw the launching of the *ICCE Newsletter* which has been in continuous publication since then in various forms (the *ICDE Bulletin* from 1982) as an important link with members between conferences and as a source of information on a wide range of educational philosophies and practices around the world. Special thanks are due to the four editors, Habeeb Ghatala (USA) 1972-74, Erling Ljosa (Norway) 1975-78, Janet Jenkins (UK) 1979-81 and David Sewart (UK) 1982-88. The 1978 Conference in New Delhi warrants mention as the first ICCE World Conference to be held in a developing country.

ICCE/Unesco Relationships

In the 1960's important links with Unesco were established, culminating in formal affiliation as a Category C non-government organisation or NGO in 1967. Mainly due to the work of the then President, Miss Renee Erdos of Australia, who had also produced a Unesco source book *Teaching by Correspondence*, Unesco agreed to provide the venue and facilities for ICCE's 1969 World Conference, the success of which resulted in affiliation being upgraded to Category B and funds provided for two major research projects conducted by Dr Ripley Sims of the United States. Unesco also supported the Ninth Conference in Virginia by financing the participation of some delegates from developing countries. This period marked the high point of our relationship with Unesco.

FIG. 1: WORLD CONFERENCES AND PRESIDENTS

No.	Date	Venue	Attendance (delegates/countries)	Presidents
1	1938	Victoria, B.C.	88/5	Rex C. Haight (US)
2	1948	Lincoln, Nebraska	118/6	Knute O. Broady (US)
3	1950	Christchurch, N.Z.	79/2	A.G. Butchers (NZ)
4	1953	State College, Penn.	73/8	William R. Young (US)
5	1957	Banff, Alberta	76/5	G.F. Bruce/G.J. Buck (CAN)
6	1962	Gearheart, Oregon	77/5	Viron A. Moore (US)
7	1965	Stockholm, Sweden	223/27	Donald Cameron (CAN)
8	1969	Paris, France	153/35	Renee Erdos (AUS)
9	1972	Warrenton, Virginia	147/28	Charles A. Wedemeyer (US)
10	1975	Brighton U.K.	84/32	Borje Holmberg (SWE)
11	1978	New Delhi, India	192/39	David Young (UK)
12	1982	Vancouver, B.C.	450/54	Bakhshish Singh (IND)
13	1985	Melbourne, Aust.	700/50	John Daniel (CAN)
14	1988	Oslo, Norway	na/na	Kevin Smith (AUS)

ICDE: Metamorphosis

A Change of Name

Although a name change from 'Correspondence Education' to 'Distance Education' did not occur until 1982, the catalyst for such change can be identified as early as 1979 when, at an international conference held in Birmingham by the U.K. Open University, it became clear that ICCE as then constituted did not meet the needs of some newly emerging distance education institutions. Consequently, there was a distinct threat that a rival organisation would be set up to respond more directly to those needs. This produced a new sense of urgency for a name change which took place at the Vancouver Conference of 1982 with little dissent, despite the fact that similar moves had failed at three previous World Conferences.

The change of name to the International Council for Distance Education was more than semantic. The new title recognised that the Council had moved a long way from representing mainly government secondary-level correspondence schools and proprietary colleges as it did in 1938 and was recognising the wave of state-supported open colleges and universities that had begun to emerge in the 1970's using a multi-media approach. The immediate consequence of this change was the release of a new energy from members which was expressed in an ambitious plan of action for the next few years, a plan that the new President, John Daniel, carried out with great enthusiasm to lay the foundations for future developments.

Current Activities

Whilst our world conferences will no doubt continue to be major events in the ICDE calendar, perhaps with increasing regularity or supplemented by regional conferences in the years between, the adoption of members' recommendations to the executive committees from the Vancouver Conference of 1982 and the Melbourne Conference of 1985 has resulted in an extended range of activity requiring devolution of responsibility to vice-presidents and their respective committees formed from co-opted members.

These activities include publication of the ICDE Bulletin three times a year to serve as the main channel of communication to members about research in distance education, project reports, editorial pieces, regional contributions, affiliated association reports and news on forthcoming events. The Council co-operates with and financially supports the United Nations University-sponsored International Centre for Distance Learning (ICDL), a documentation and information centre with hard copy and computer-based data on which members may draw. The Research Committee monitors

current research and scholarly publications as well as administering a fund through which grants are awarded to assist members with projects of special interest, and a Workshops, Visits and Exchanges Committee encourages national and regional meetings and workshops with a modest program of grants to assist members with travel expenses. ICDE funds are also provided to support regional and national workshops. The Women's International Network (WIN) has flourished since its inception in 1982, giving recognition to the increasingly important role that women are playing in distance education as teachers, administrators and students. WIN publishes a Newsletter, organises regional networks and seeks funds for specific projects such as the publication of a book on the contribution of women in distance education and a workshop in India focussing attention on a similar theme.

In recent years, moves have been made to re-establish closer links with Unesco through co-operative ventures. In 1987, for example, a contract was arranged through the President for ICDE to co-ordinate a study of Asian distance education institutions making large-scale use of communication technologies and another global survey of resources in distance education is being conducted this year by Keith Harry of ICDL following a recommendation from ICDE to Unesco. It is expected that a Unesco-sponsored and ICDE-organised Round Table of representatives of regional and national associations and distance education institutions will meet in Oslo during the World Conference to examine distance education needs for developing countries. ICDE was also represented during 1987 at two Unesco seminars in Australia and one in Singapore.

Constitutional Changes

Many members will be aware that in response to recommendations initiated at the Melbourne Conference in 1985 concerning the need for different procedures for the election of a President and an Executive Committee, changes to the Constitution were introduced this year to allow for a postal ballot. Accordingly, several advantages are anticipated: firstly, the new procedures are more democratic since no member of ICDE will now be disenfranchised if he or she is unable to attend world conferences; secondly, the election of presidents and their executive committees will be completed before rather than during a world conference, thus allowing delegates to concentrate on conference programs instead of organisational politics; thirdly, the handover of responsibilities from one group of office-bearers to another can be planned well in advance and effected smoothly when both groups meet at the ensuing Conference.

With such a process, it is hoped that members will have more time to identify worthy candidates for nomination and will be able to make their final selections for office in a more informed way to ensure that the diverse interests of ICDE members as a whole are represented.

A Permanent Secretariat

The incredible growth of distance education around the world in the last decade or so requires an international body that can provide expert professional services to governments, institutions and individuals planning or already engaged in distance education projects. Maintaining a voluntary association of members through publications, seminars and workshops is one thing; responding effectively to requests for human resources to assist with planning and developing a distance education system is another. The latter calls for a more sophisticated and professional organisational structure than a well-meaning executive committee composed of busy distance educators who generally have very limited time to attend to the increasing demands of their honorary ICDE office.

It is pleasing indeed in this Golden Anniversary Year to be able to announce that such an appropriate professional structure will begin operating from August 1988 in the form of a Permanent Secretariat within the Norwegian Association for Distance Education (NADE) in Oslo. The Executive Director of NADE, Mr Reidar Roll, will undertake additional responsibilities as General Secretary of ICDE, assisted by a Program Co-ordinator and clerical staff. That this is to become a reality is due in large measure to the commitment and generosity of NADE itself and to the enthusiastic support of the Norwegian Ministry of Church and Education which is to provide more than half the required funding over the next few years.

The Prospects

Such constitutional changes, combined with the establishment of a Permanent Secretariat in Oslo, have set the stage for an exciting and dynamic period of activity ahead for ICDE. Perhaps we may prove that 'life begins at fifty', not forty!
