

Annual Report 2020



INTERNATIONAL
COUNCIL FOR OPEN AND
DISTANCE EDUCATION

Content

Page 4	Greetings from the ICDE President
Page 6	Reflections from the ICDE Secretary General
Page 8	This is ICDE
Page 9	History of ICDE
Page 10	2020 Activities in Brief
Page 12	The Year 2020 in Highlights
Page 14	The ICDE Covid-19 Campaign #learningtogether
Page 16	The ICDE Presidents' Forum 2020
Page 18	Communication and Social Media in 2020
Page 19	ICDE Collaborations and Partnerships in 2020
Page 20	EPICA Project in 2020
Page 22	ENCORE+ Project selected for funding
Page 23	Francophone Africa Project
Page 24	Quality Network
Page 25	OER Advocacy Committee
Page 26	Membership 2020
Page 27	Financial Briefing from the ICDE Control Committee
Page 30	Governance Activities
Page 32	ICDE Main Partners
Page 34	ICDEs permanent Secretariat Staff in 2020
Page 35	Organisation

Greetings from the ICDE President



“I found myself humbled by the leadership of the ICDE community. Almost immediately, our members mobilized their collective knowledge, skills, and abilities to support colleagues around the world who needed to make a rapid shift to emergency remote learning.”

- Neil Fassina, ICDE President

It is difficult to imagine that mere months after I assumed the Presidency of ICDE that we would be facing one of the largest global health crises in our memories. Amid the devastation created by COVID-19, I found myself humbled by the leadership of the ICDE Community. Almost immediately, our members mobilized their collective knowledge, skills, and abilities to support colleagues around the world who needed to make a rapid shift to emergency remote learning. This leadership undoubtedly empowered educational systems to demonstrate resiliency in the face of crisis so that learners around the world could continue to access quality higher education. My gratitude toward the ICDE community cannot be overstated. Thank you.

Throughout 2020, the importance of open, flexible, and distance learning models were reinforced by successive health restrictions in numerous regions. This provided a strong backdrop for the development of ICDE’s new strategic plan. Formally launched in November of 2020, this new plan was the result of an engaging and consultative process among members of ICDE. I hope that members will see that this plan is a divergence from prior ICDE plans in that it is inspirational and focused on strengthening the connections among members so that they may optimize their impact in local and regional communities.

On a more pragmatic note, the ICDE Executive Committee, the Board of Trustees, and the ICDE Secretariat collaboratively developed a new governance structure for the ICDE. Among other amendments, this new governance structure clearly delineates the role of the Board in relation to the Secretariat.

January 1, 2021 marks the first official day of this new structure. On behalf of the Executive Committee (now the ICDE Board), I would like to extend a sincere thank you to all outgoing members of the Board of Trustees and the Election Committee as well as continuing and incoming members of the new ICDE Control Committee and Nomination Committee for their dedication and commitment to the success of ICDE.

I would like to also extend a thank you to the Norwegian Government for their ongoing support of ICDE. Their trust in our global community to make our vision a reality is greatly appreciated.

Finally, thank you to Torunn and the entire team at the ICDE Secretariat. This small but mighty team has certainly gone above and beyond during a time of transition and global crisis.

Respectfully,

Neil Fassina
President of International Council for Open and Distance Education

Reflections from the ICDE Secretary General



“The silver lining is that the relevance of our work has reached new heights and that educators have faced a learning curve with regards to the use of technology and distance education modalities which we have never seen before.”

The Year the Pandemic Hit

2020 will go into the history books as the year when COVID-19 changed our everyday lives and working environments in almost every corner of the world.

When the outbreak was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 12 March, the ICDE Secretariat was in the middle of a site visit to Brazil, preparing for the next ICDE World Conference that was planned to take place in Natal in October 2021. Even though we had to rush back to Norway due to national lock down and closure of borders, I remember we praised that the World Conference would take place in 2021, believing that we would be back to normal way before then. In the following months, ICDE, as everyone else, had to quickly adapt to what had become “the new normal”, which meant to navigate through unprecedented waters and deal with uncertainty for the months to come.

Very quickly, it became obvious that the pandemic had hit education extremely hard, as learning institutions across all continents started to close their campuses. By 1 April, around 1,5 billion learners in 167 countries were affected by the school closures, more than 80 % of all enrolled learners world-wide. In response to the situation, ICDE launched a Task Force and global campaign called #learningtogether. As the leading global membership association for open and distance education we knew that we could make a difference in supporting the many educators and learners around the globe that were forced to immediately pivot to distance and online provisions. We collected resources and best practice from our global network, entered fruitful partnerships with other organizations, arranged open webinars for practitioners and leaders and participated in many external virtual events and conferences to share the expertise from our global community.

All collaboration moved on to virtual platforms. When writing this, most of us have not seen each other for more than a year other than through a screen, and do we miss it! The silver lining is that the relevance of our work has reached new heights and that educators have faced a learning curve with regards to the use of technology and distance education modalities which we have never seen before. In our Presidents’ Forum in November, ICDE had a record high participation from leaders among our members, virtually discussing, across multiple time zones, how to recalibrate educational leadership for resilient education.

In this annual report, you can read more about ICDE multiple activities and endeavours through a challenging year. I acknowledge, with gratitude, the strong commitment and support from the ICDE Board, the solid contributions from the ICDE Chairs, networks and committees, our members and partners, and in particular, my Secretariat team members in Oslo, who have been working from home more or less over a year now, with unstoppable energy and enthusiasm for ICDEs mission and goals.

Torunn Gjelsvik
Secretary General, ICDE

This is ICDE



Global community of more than 330 members and partners working to advance inclusive open, flexible and distance education



Non-profit NGO hosted by Norway, in formal consultative partnership with UNESCO



Informing stakeholders and encourage the sharing of good practice and knowledge exchange to reach SDG 4



Further the acceptance of a wider range of learning modes



8 employees

ICDE has a staff of 8 employees representing 5 different nationalities.

ICDE history

From Correspondence to Distance: In an era of societal advancements ICDE was founded in 1938 in Canada as the International Council for Correspondence Education (ICCE). Biannual conferences were consecutively organized by and at member institutions world-wide, which further included hosting a secretariat in between the conferences. In 1982, at the 12th World Conference, *ICCE* changed its name to *ICDE*.

The Permanent Secretariat of ICDE was established in Oslo in 1988 on the invitation of the Norwegian Government. ICDE is today a modern non-profit and non-governmental organisation.



ICDEs founders at the 1st World Conference in Victoria, B.C. Canada, 24 August 1939. / ICDE Archives.



2020 in brief



In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic immediately put an end to all travelling activities from mid-March. Nevertheless, ICDE maintained a high level of activities focusing on virtual collaboration, a special Task Force and campaign #learningtogether related to COVID-19, extended partnerships and virtual events.

Activities

1 - Norway

The new ICDE Executive Committee convened in Oslo in February for a 2 days face to face meeting. Primary focus was to develop ICDE's next strategic plan. ICDE Secretary General speaks at national conference on Digitalization of Higher Education organized by the University of Bergen, DIKU and UNIT.

2 – Uganda

EPICA project partners met in Kampala for its 5th consortium meeting (January).

3 – France

ICDE took part in the launch of the UNESCO OER Dynamic Coalition as one of the Dynamic Coalition partners.

An ICDE working group focusing on OER in Francophone Africa was established in Paris with ICDE, French Ministry of Education, UNESCO and Université Numérique.

ICDE joins the UNESCO Global Education Coalition.

4 – Brazil

ICDE Secretariat visited Brasilia and Natal as part of the preparations for the ICDE World Conference 2021. The planned World Conference was later cancelled due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

ICDE contributes to the virtual ESUD2020/CIESUD 2020 conference.

5 – Canada

ICDE Secretary General contributes as panellist in COLs COVID-19 regional webinar for Europe/Africa.

6 – Thailand

ICDE contributes to SEAMEO's COVID-19 Webinar series.

7 – New Zealand

ICDE's first #learningtogether webinar: "Educational leadership during the Coronavirus pandemic", Chaired by Board member Mark Nichols from Open Polytechnic, New Zealand.

8 – Romania

ICDE/EDEN joint webinar "How do we plan for education after the pandemic?" with participation from the ICDE President Neil Fassina.

9 – Belgium

The ICDE led ERASMUS + project application for ENCORE + approved by the European Commission.

10 – Italy

ICDE contributes to Kiron's Virtual Refugee Conference together with ICDE member UNINETTUNO from Italy.

11 – Sweden

ICDE's second #learningtogether webinar "Open, online and distance teaching and learning during the Corona Virus pandemic", chaired by Board member Ebba Ossiannilsson from Sweden.

11 – Sweden (cont.)

ICDE Secretary General speaks at webinar on Digital Transformation of Higher Education organized by the expert group on public finances, reporting to the Swedish government.

12 – Australia

ICDE Quality Network Webinar #1 with contributions from Australia and United Arab Emirates.

13 – Ecuador

ICDE Quality Network Webinar #2 with contributions from Ecuador and United States.

14 – Nigeria

ICDE Quality Network Webinar #3 with contributions from Nigeria and the Netherlands.

15 – Senegal

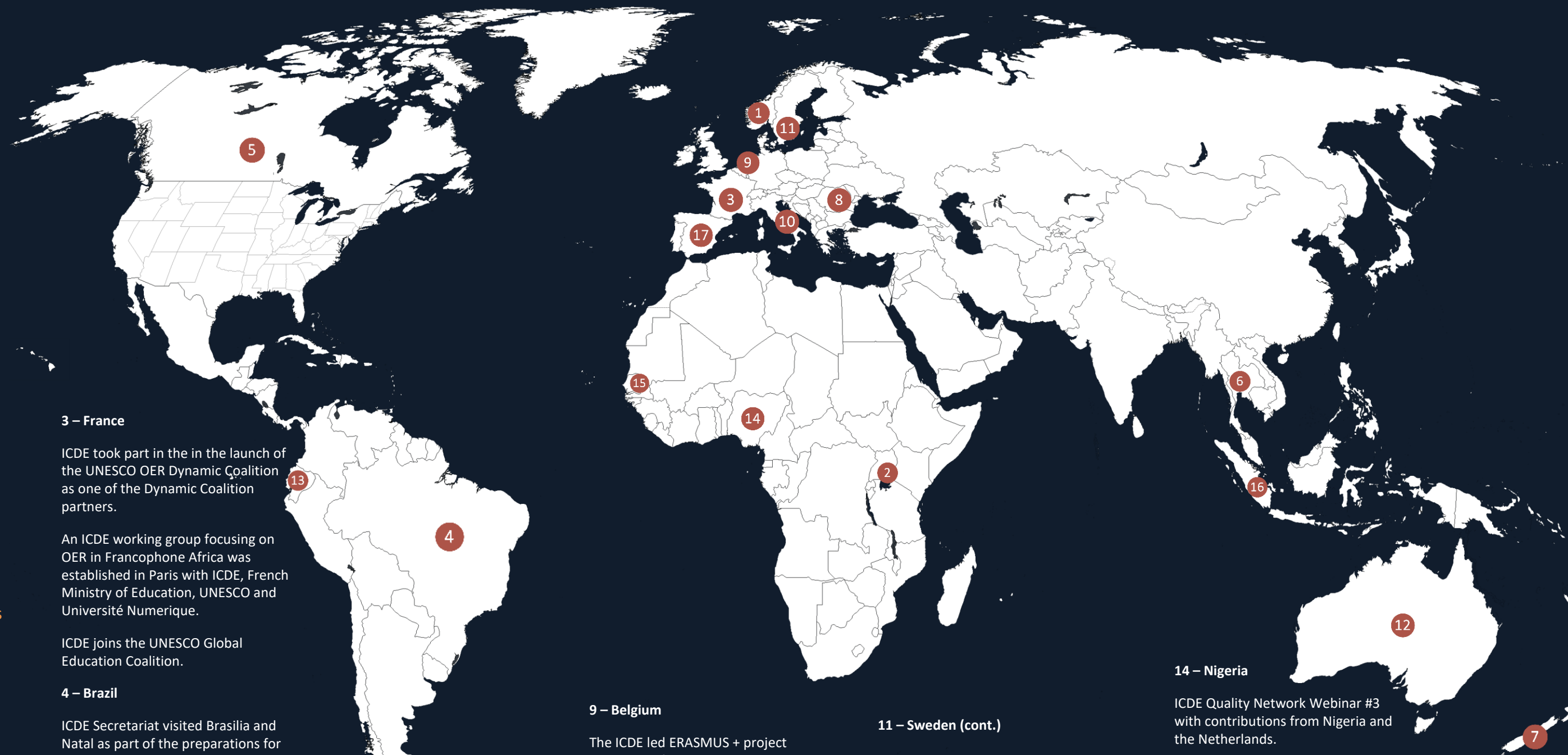
ICDE participated in UNESCO led Consultations with Sahel countries in relation to the Francophone Africa Project.

16 – Indonesia

ICDE Quality Network Webinar #4 with contributions from Indonesia and the Philippines.

17 – Spain

EPICA Project: The final conference of the project organized virtually from Madrid.



The year 2020 in highlights



The new ICDE President Neil Fassina and Secretary General Torunn Gjelsvik, both started their terms in January 2020.



ICDE and its project partners in the EPICA project met at Kampala in Uganda for its 5th consortium meeting in January.

The ICDE Executive Committee met with the ICDE Secretariat in Oslo for a two-days workshop devoted to the development of ICDEs Strategic Plan 2021-2024.



An ICDE working group for OER in Francophone Africa was established in Paris in March with ICDE, the French Ministry of Education and the French Digital University (Université Numérique).



ICDE meets with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Brasilia, Brazil.

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR OPEN AND DISTANCE EDUCATION #learningtogether

ICDE WEBINARS

"Open, online and distance teaching and learning during the Corona Virus pandemic"

26th March 16:00 CET

icde.org/corona

in | | f

ICDE launches its campaign #learningtogether as a response to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic including a special resource webpage: icde.org/corona.



ICDE joins the UNESCO Global Education Coalition in June.

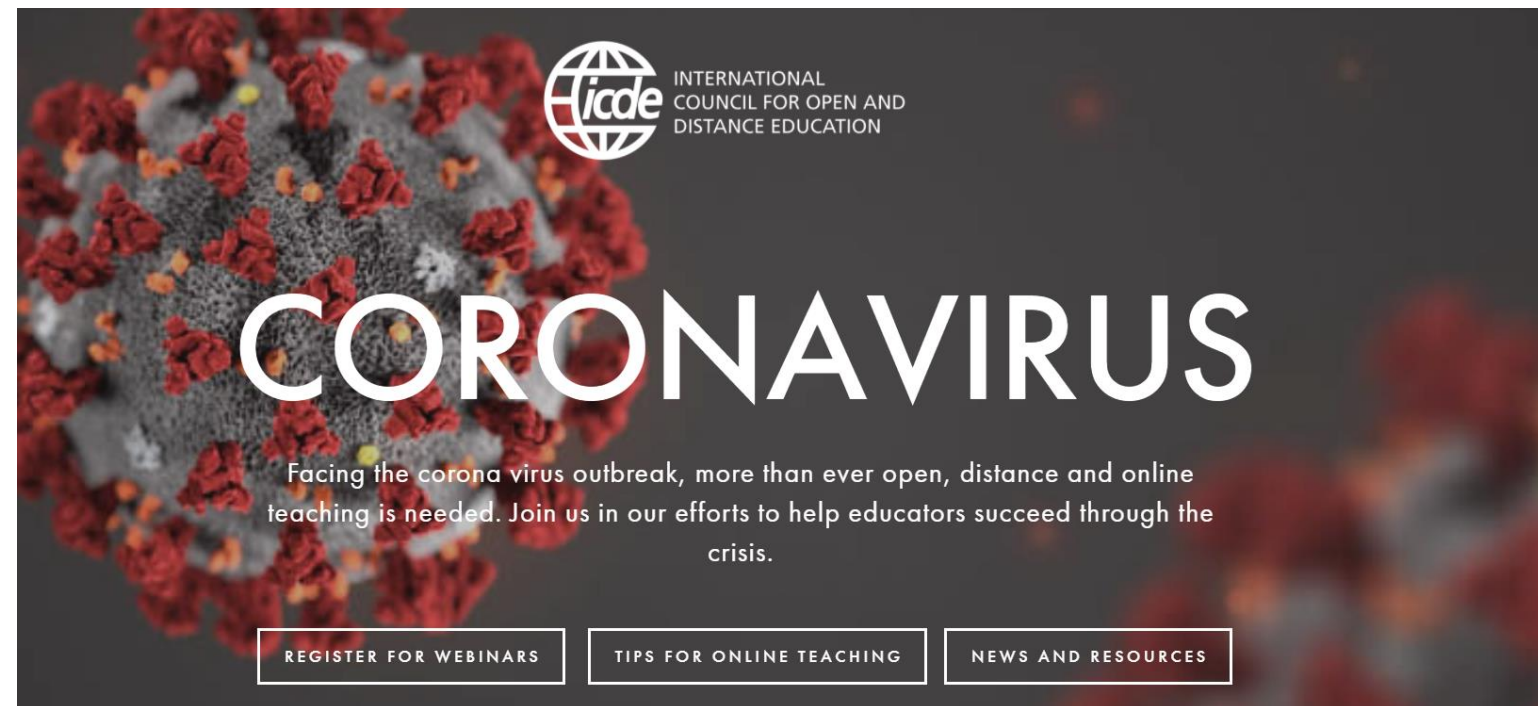
LAUNCH OF ICDE STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2024

NEIL FASSINA
ICDE PRESIDENT

The new ICDE Strategic Plan for 2021-2024 and new vision was launched at the ICDE Presidents' Forum in November.



In November, the ICDE Presidents' Forum was conducted virtually through 18 hours of leadership discussions across 6 regions within 24 hours. 87 registered Presidents, Rectors and Vice-Chancellors among ICDE members.



The ICDE Covid-19 Campaign #learningtogether

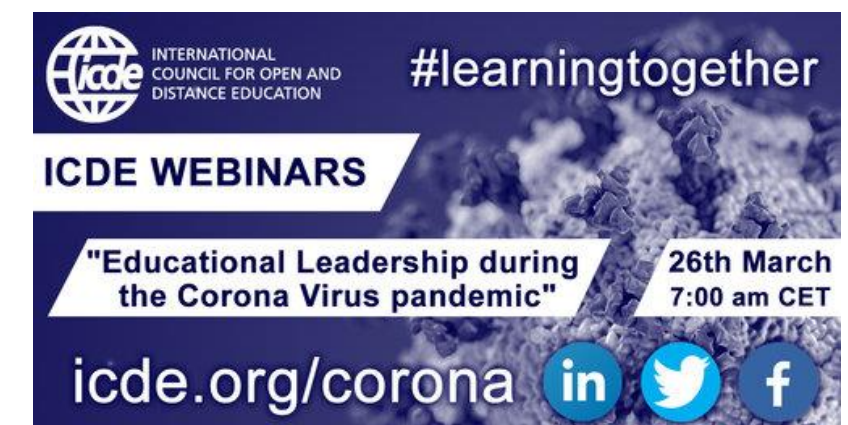
In March, ICDE launched a Task Force and global campaign named #learningtogether as an immediate response to the COVID-19 outbreak, which disrupted education in all parts of the world. ICDE's ambition as the leading global membership association for open and distance education, was to support the many educators and learners around the globe that immediately were forced to shift to distance and online teaching and learning modalities. Another important aspect was to emphasize the need for quality assurance of these provisions, addressing the need for openness, inclusiveness and the various needs and challenges related to proper infrastructure, equipment and capacity building for educational leaders, teachers, and learners.

With active contributions from its global network, ICDE collected and distributed valuable resources, knowledge and best practice through its special COVID-19 resource page, icde.org/corona. A series of open webinars were arranged, with participation from expert members and partners as well as ICDE's own Board and committee members. ICDE's Quality Network offered a series of 4 regional webinars throughout the year, specifically focusing on quality assurance and assessment of distance and online education, and the number of participants in ICDE webinars reached new heights throughout this particular series.

ICDE also entered fruitful partnerships with other organizations, such as the UNESCO Global Dynamic Coalition, and the OER4COVID partnership, initiated by Commonwealth of Learning (CoL) and Open Universitas (OERu).

All educational provision, regardless of format or delivery mode, requires strong leadership. This involves knowledge of the target learner groups, engagement and capacity building for teachers, regional, cultural and linguistic contextualization, inclusive pedagogical design and quality assurance mechanisms for continuous development. It demands an ongoing development of knowledge and competencies, which is what unifies ICDE's broad membership and extended community. Therefore, ICDE chose the topic: "Recalibrating educational leadership for resilient education" for its virtual Presidents' Forum in November.

There seem to be no doubt about it: Open, flexible and distance education is a cornerstone in building resilient education ecosystems that can withstand future crises and societal challenges. ICDE Presidents, Vice-Chancellors and Rectors took a first step sharing experiences from the current pandemic to prepare tools, systems, and leadership approaches to meet these.



The ICDE Presidents' Forum 2020

On the 25th of November 2020 ICDE hosted its first virtual Presidents' Forum.



Caroline Seville,
Manager Communication, Events
and Partnerships, ICDE

Together 87 registered Presidents, Rectors, and Vice-Chancellors among ICDE members embraced the opportunity to connect and communicate through ways typically reserved for our many learners around the world. Delegates took the opportunity to reflect and learn from the experiences from the COVID-19 pandemic and to share, contribute, and discuss those challenges relevant to ensuring we can create quality and resilient education systems long-term globally.

The leadership discussions were guided by the theme of "Recalibrating educational leadership for resilient education" and took place during 6 fully virtual, facilitated regional consultation sessions that were led by ICDE Executive Committee members over 18 uninterrupted hours.

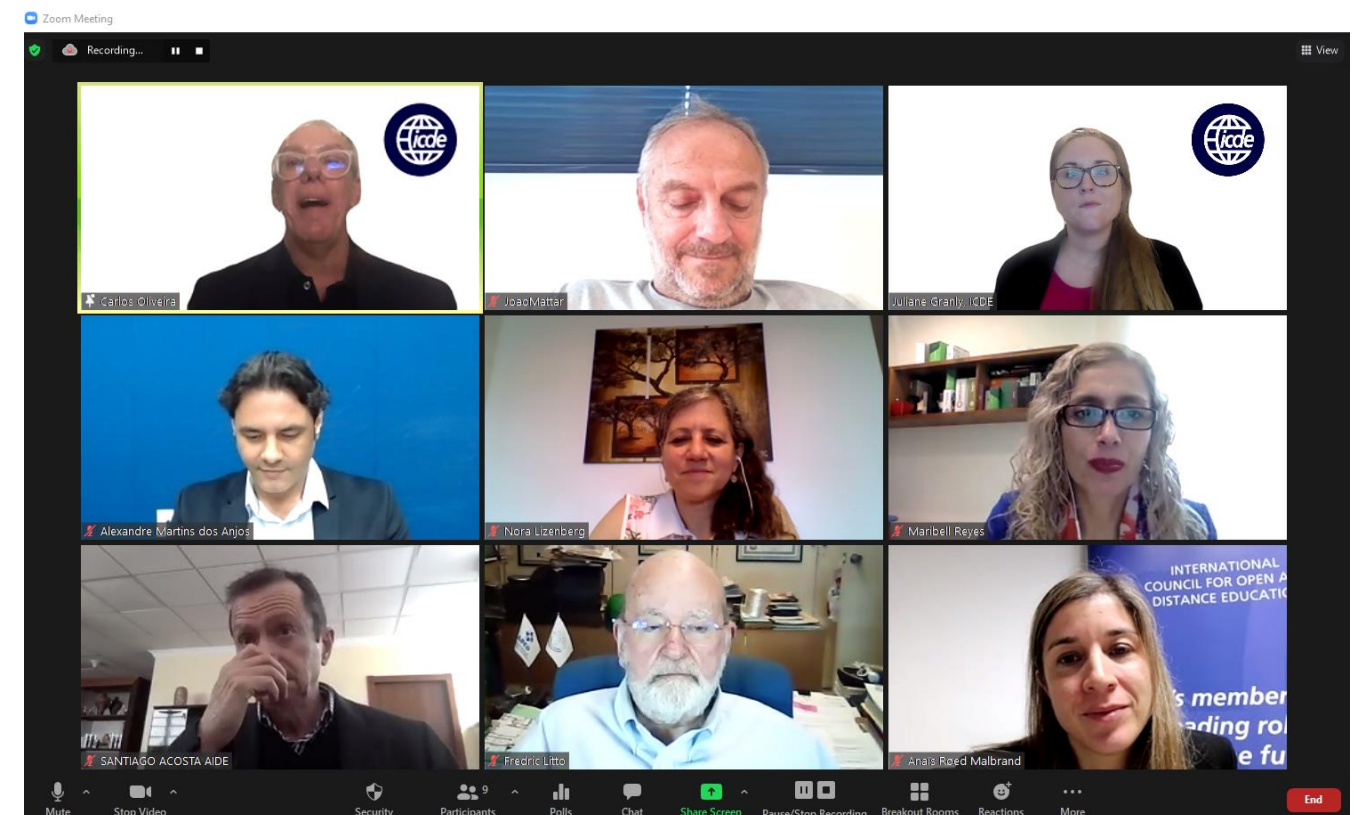
Increasing impact and engagement

While virtual conferences became familiar to most of us during 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, ICDE aimed to engage and activate the delegates through a flipped format for this particular event. For that purpose, we invited all members and partners broadly to contribute to the development of pre-Forum materials, such as vlogs and blog posts. Three expert leaders provided their insights through video keynotes, and five of ICDE's partner institutions hosted Satellite Engagement Events prior to the day of the Forum. The materials were made available through the pre-Forum website and a dedicated YouTube playlist.

Shaping the future global advocacy for Open, Flexible and Distance Learning (OFDL)

Through this forum, ICDE was able to capture regional differences and nuances in the many challenges and opportunities being faced by OFDL institutions globally. These regional nuances were captured in summary by the ICDE Secretary General and was further developed into a Report of discussions from the Forum that in turn will be fed into the discussions for the ICDE Presidents' Forum 2021 and the subsequent ICDE global advocacy campaigns to support the objectives as laid out in the new ICDE Strategic Plan 2021-2024.

"Building on lessons learned from the 2019 Presidents' Forum in combination with those learned from early COVID-19 responses, the 2020 ICDE Presidents' Forum created a six-time zone, fully virtual, synchronous forum for global leaders to share, contribute, and discuss those challenges relevant to ensuring we can create quality and resilient education systems long-term globally."



Zoom screenshot of the Presidents' Forum participants from around the world.
Photo: ICDE Secretariat (ICDE)



Julie Schiering,
Special Adviser, ICDE



Ola Eloranta,
Communication and
Administration Officer, ICDE

Visit www.icde.org and follow ICDE on social media!

Communication and Social Media in 2020

Supporting the universal switch to online and distance

During 2020, ICDE was able to fully utilize the new possibilities presented with the switch to a new web platform that took place during 2019. This was especially needed with the launch of the ICDE #learningtogether campaign that was initiated after most governments shut down countries due to the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in many educators being forced to shift to online and distance provisions.

The Secretariat launched a dedicated portal site icde.org/corona, populated with news and resources, and a task force and campaign under the hashtag #learningtogether and hosted two supporting webinars covering most time zones focused on the subject of "Educational Leadership" and the "Teaching and Learning". Over 470 registrations were received for these free virtual events.

The communications campaign increased ICDEs visibility within the distance and online education community and engaged both members and non-members alike. The Secretariat received many mails of congratulations and support for the campaign and used this momentum to feed into the program of discussions for the ICDE Presidents' Forum and webinars given by ICDE networks.

Increasing network engagement

Building on the momentum from the #learningtogether campaign ICDE provided a flipped format to its first virtual ICDE Presidents' Forum 2020 to further engage ICDEs global community and using ICDE communications channels again was key to this. Through providing media kits for partners to share on their own social media channels, pre-forum materials that included 4 blogs and 10 forum branded vlogs and 3 video keynotes in addition to and 5 partner forum branded Satellite Engagement Events ICDE was able to provide an engaging and high impact presence that reached well beyond the traditional audience of ICDE President's Forum delegates.

Building on improving the website platform

ICDE received an external expert analysis of the ICDE website on SEO performance and user experience. The findings were comprehensive with solid recommendations that are being addressed in the ICDE communications activity plan being drafted in support of the new ICDE Strategic Plan. An internal workshop was also conducted to identify key priorities that could be addressed promptly.



Caroline Seville,
Manager Communication, Events
and Partnerships, ICDE

ICDE collaborations and partnerships in 2020

2020 was an exceptionally important year to partner with organisations globally to support educators through capacity building in open, flexible and distance learning. This was achieved through close collaboration with a number of organisations.

In early 2020 ICDE formalised its longstanding working relationship with OERu through a Memorandum of Action (MOA) which included launching of a co-branded version of the free and openly licensed online course "Open Education, copyright and open licensing in a digital world", including a free certificate of completion. In addition, ICDE together with UNESCO IITE was engaged as partners for the initiative [OER4COVID](#), initiated by Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and OERu.

In 2020 ICDE continued to strengthened its partnership with UNESCO, resulting in UNESCO support to several ICDE initiatives and projects (a French translation pilot of the co-branded OER course from ICDE and OERu, and ICDEs Francophone Africa project to support the implementation of the UNESCO OER Recommendations). UNESCO also became an official partner in the Francophone working group alongside the French Ministry of Education and Research, The digital University of France (Université Numérique) and several virtual universities in Francophone Africa.

Finally, ICDE was invited to take part in the UNESCO Global Education Coalition and ICDE formally joined the Coalition platform that includes 175 members from multilateral agencies and major global brands to start-up technology businesses and local education organizations. The mandate of the Coalition focuses on how to support countries and their student population, affected by COVID-19 school closures, in scaling up their best distance learning practices and reaching children and youth who are most at risk.

ICDE connects with 70 federal Brazilian universities through UniRede

ICDE remedied its underrepresentation of members in the Latin and South America through signing of a formal membership recruitment agreement with the University Network Association (Associação Universidad em Rede - UniRede) from Brazil, which represents over seventy federal Brazilian universities.

Through the newly formed partnership between ICDE and UniRede, it is anticipated that the global ICDE community will be able to welcome and benefit from a greater representation of Brazilian experts in the field of open, flexible and distance learning while also contributing to the Brazilian higher education landscape through providing expert insight and experiences from outside Brazilian borders.

2020 Statistics

Facebook:

2019: 3,170
2020: 3,553

Twitter:

2019: 4,483
2020: 5,127

LinkedIn:

2019: 750
2020: 1,406

Newsletter:

2019: 13,711
2020: 13,281

Website unique visits:

2019: 69,065
2020: 106,300

EPICA Project in 2020

The project EPICA - Strategic Partnership for the Co-Design of an Innovative and Scalable ePortfolio – is a 3-year project co-funded by the European Commission under the Horizon 2020 programme. It has sought to bring together businesses, organisations and universities in both Europe and Africa to design an innovative, scalable e-portfolio in order to improve the quality, visibility and availability of new skills.

The ICDE coordinated EPICA Project (2018-2020) was successfully completed and concluded by its final virtual project conference in December. The project consortium has bridged graduates and employers, universities and companies together, by allowing students of all ages to not only better highlight their resume but also to highlight their skills and competencies to potential employers.

EPICA can be described both as a commercial and Research & Development project that has explored the responsivity of the African market by piloting the ePortfolio in three different universities within three countries (Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania). In parallel, the legal requirements, the business model, the sustainability, and the relevant technology were cumulatively researched and studied by the EPICA consortium. The overall objective of the EPICA project was therefore to explore the marketability and set the conditions for the EPICA ePortfolio to be adopted by the African market. Despite the Coronavirus pandemic and its belated restrictions that severely reduced the scope of the pilot and delayed the potential exploitation of the project results, the EPICA project has positively addressed its objectives and reaffirmed the assumptions upon which the project was developed.

The Competency-based education model introduced new learning and teaching methodologies as a new trend of increasing the quality of the education programs in the participant institutions. Interaction and collaboration between and among students, academic and administrative staff was fostered through the ePortfolio. The relationship between academia, workplace representatives, and the creation of ad hoc services has encouraged a real change and has proven its impact on educational outcomes. Further actions were aimed at strengthening the link among these sectors and to promote public-private partnerships. These actions led the participant universities to modernize their curricula and offer an education path closer to the labor market. In addition, the EPICA outcomes adapted to the African local context provided ways to standardize training and teaching throughout urban and rural universities, which allowed all students to receive the same educational opportunities.

The EPICA project has given an opportunity for ICDE to demonstrate its leadership and relevance on a cross-regional international stage. EPICA has also increased ICDEs visibility in both Europe and Africa through representation at various international conferences such as OEB Berlin, IST-Africa in Vienna and Elearning Africa in Rwanda and Ivory Coast.



Jean-Baptiste Milon
Senior Project Manager
ICDE



EPICA Consortium Partners at Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda, January 2020.

EPICA Consortium Partners



ENCORE+ Project selected for funding



Juliane Granly,
Project and Development
Manager, ICDE

After working for a number of years to secure a European Commission, Knowledge Alliances project on OER, 2020 turned out to be the perfect year for ICDE's project proposal for ENCORE+, European Network for Catalyzing Open Resources in Education. Building on the OER Recommendation of 2019, and the growing need for stronger implementation, and increased knowledge of OER in Europe, the project proposal was successfully selected for funding by the European Commission in July 2020.

ENCORE+ is a 3 year project, secured in a consortium with 8 other partners; DHBW - Baden-Wuerttemberg Cooperative State University, OUUK - The Open University UK, UNIR - Universidad Internacional De La Rioja, K4A - Knowledge for All, JOUBEL AS, FPM - Fondazione Politecnico de Milano, CANVAS - Instructure Global and DCU - Dublin City University. ICDE leads the project as project coordinator and the project runs from January 2021 to December 2023.

ENCORE+ seeks to develop a coordinated European approach strengthening the value of OER as a catalyst and multiplier. The core of the project is to move from a series of individual OER initiatives into a European OER Ecosystem. To do that, the project will address and contribute to European and International Policy priorities, stimulate innovation in business, support modernization and digitalization of higher education as well as bridge non-formal and formal education through increased recognition of open learning.

Throughout the project, ENCORE+ will engage stakeholders in and outside of Europe through four streams of events and engagement: Quality, Technology, Policies & Practice, and Innovation & Business Models.

ICDE is very excited about this project, and hope as many of our members and stakeholders would like to join us in building the European OER Ecosystem, which also can be replicated for other regions and contexts across the globe.

Please find more information about ENCORE+ and how to stay connected to the project here:

www.encoreproject.eu



Anaïs Malbrand
Senior Adviser, ICDE

Francophone Africa Project

Seizing the opportunity of the UNESCO OER recommendation's unanimous adoption by 195 member states in 2019, the French Ministry for Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MESRI) and ICDE established a Francophone OER expert working group early 2020. It was created to tap into the ICDE global, OER expert network to support Francophone African and French partners and stakeholders with the implementation of the UNESCO OER recommendation on a regional basis.

The working group held its first face to face meeting in Paris in March 2020 and has virtually met four times in 2020. It was initially composed with representatives from the MESRI, the French Digital University (UNIT, AUNEGe and UOH), the Virtual Universities of Senegal, Mali and Republic of Congo. Representatives from UNESCO Headquarters, the French National Commission for UNESCO and the International Organisation of la Francophonie joined at a later stage.

The ICDE Francophone Africa Project was born within this collaboration. The initiative aims to develop OER capacity building and supportive policies by connecting national and institutional stakeholders (ministerial and educational leadership level) through joint workshops. The first piloting workshops in 2021 will focus on Francophone Africa and investigate the need for national/regional adaptation. It was planned to include more countries in a second phase of the project. Through the potential of upscaling/extending the concept to other countries and regions, the initiative will also promote and reinforce international cooperation. The project initially focused on Senegal, Mali, and the Republic of Congo. Burkina Faso, Niger, Togo, Gabon and Ivory Coast were planned to be included in a later phase.

In September 2020, the project was formally supported by UNESCO. It was agreed that this project would build on and supplement the findings and results from a parallel project led by UNESCO Dakar and OER Africa in cooperation with UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. ICDE and the French Digital University participated in two virtual consultations held in November 2020 within the parallel project.

The project will also be aligned with the French adaptation to an OER course, created in English by OERu (ICDE partner in New Zealand). The French translation, technical and cultural adaptation will be done within the working group and used as a capacity building tool in the planned workshop.

A consultant, based in Senegal, was engaged in December 2020 to support ICDE and the working group in the implementation of the project.

ICDE Quality Network



The ICDE Quality Network is made up of 7 individual experts and regional focal points on Quality (FPQs), who have a leading and coordinating role for quality enhancement of open, flexible and distance education. The committee is chaired by ICDE lifelong member, Prof. Emeritus Alan Tait from the Open University UK.

The ICDE Quality Network was first established in November 2016 by the appointment of regional Focal Points on Quality by the ICDE Executive Committee (now named the ICDE Board). The quality network gives advice and collects knowledge on the latest developments of quality work related to open, flexible and distance education within their institutions and regions.

In addition to the mandated tasks of 2020, the Network completed 4 regional webinars that took place in Oceania/the Middle East, Europe/Africa, the Americas, and Asia. This series, entitled “International Reflections on Lessons Learned during the Covid-19 Pandemic” focused on quality in open, flexible and distance education and specific issues that were brought to light during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The webinars were extremely well attended and gave assistance to both educators and administrators around the world who were dealing with the immediate emergency transition to online education.

The Webinar Series resulted in a white paper produced by all 7 Regional Focal Points. This report, “[Global Quality Perspectives on Open, Online and Flexible Learning 2020](#),” gives an overview of perceived issues of quality and assessment related to the immediate shift to online and distance learning modalities that educators had to undertake when the pandemic hit.

The 7 Regional Focal Points of the Quality Network in 2020 were:

- African Region - **Professor Nebath Tanglang**, Director, Academic Planning National Open University of Nigeria, Nigeria
- Arab Region - **Dr. Souma Alhaj Ali** Director for Excellence and Governance Hamdan Bin Mohammed Smart University Dubai, UAE
- Asian Region - **Prof. Ojat Darajat**, Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia
- Latin American Region - **Mary Morocho Quezada**, AIESAD (Iberoamerican Association of Higher Distance Education) and CALED (Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Quality in Higher Distance Education) Ecuador
- European Region - **George Ubachs**, EADTU (European Association of Distance Teaching Universities) Netherlands
- North American Region - **Yaping Gao**, EDD, Senior Academic Director, Member Services and Partnerships Quality Matters USA
- Oceania Region - **Dr Philip Uys**, Adjunct Associate Professor and Senior International Education Consultant, Charles Sturt University Australia



Prof. Dr. Ebba Ossiannilsson, OERAC Chair

ICDE OER Advocacy Committee

The ICDE OER Advocacy Committee (OERAC) is composed by individual experts on Open Education Resources (OER) among ICDEs members, representing various countries and regions. The committee is chaired by ICDE Board member, Prof. Dr. Ebba Ossiannilsson.

The OERAC was first established at the 27th ICDE World Conference in Toronto, October 2017 with the objective to increase global recognition of OER; and to provide policy support for the uptake, use and reuse of OER. In 2020, the particular focus for the committee was to support the implementation of the [UNESCO OER Recommendation](#), which was unanimously adopted by all UNESCO member states in November 2019.

In addition to undertaking a series of individual commitments related to the global advocacy of OER, including publications and presentations at national, regional and international events, the committee jointly carried out two main activities during 2020:

- An article entitled “[From Open Educational Resources to Open Educational Practices. For resilient sustainable education](#)” published in the French academic journal DMS-DMK (Distance and Mediation of Knowledge).
- A global piloting survey on the implementation of the UNESCO OER Recommendation. The survey gathered feedback from ICDE stakeholders, members and partners about the status of the UNESCO OER Recommendation's implementation within the first seven months of adoption, and during the educational crisis caused by COVID-19. The questions had their foundation in the Recommendation but also on the work of the [UNESCO OER Dynamic Coalition](#), in which ICDE takes part. The abstract was translated to Chinese, French, Hindi, Portuguese, Swedish and Turkish. [The survey report can be accessed here.](#)

The members of the ICDE OER Advocacy Committee in 2020 were:

- **Ebba Ossiannilsson (Chair)**, Professor, Dr. Consultant and VP, Swedish Association of Distance Education (SADE), ICDE Board member, Sweden
- **Jennryn Wetzler**, Assistant Director of Open Education, Creative Commons, US
- **Cengiz Hakan Aydin**, Professor, Anadolu University, Turkey
- **James Glapa-Glossklag**, Dean and former President of the Board, CoC and OEC, US
- **Dhaneswar Harichandan**, Director, Institute of ODL, University of Mumbai, India
- **Xiangyang Zhang**, Open University of Jiangsu, China
- **Rajiv Jhangiani**, Ph.D, Associate Vice Provost, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Canada
- **Mpine Makoe**, Professor, University of South Africa (UNISA), South Africa
- **Cristine Gusmao**, Associate Professor, Federal University of Pernambuco, Brazil
- **Don Olcott Jr.**, Fellowship of the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (FRSA), Romania (until August 2020)

Membership in 2020



Anaïs Malbrand
Senior Adviser, ICDE

At the end of the year ICDE membership keeps growing, reaching 317 members in 2020.

At the end of the year ICDE had 317 members divided into 199 institutional members, 84 individual members and 34 Student members.

The #learningtogether campaign, the high number of virtual events, webinars and calls proposed to members, the activity on Social Media and the ICDE biweekly Newsletter, has increasingly been expanding the ICDE community and triggered higher interaction among members.

The ICDE Secretariat and the members have also been working on customizing the offer of resources available to the community by translating capacity building material such as courses, executive summaries of key reports and offering regional virtual events and webinars. An OER course created in English by ICDE institutional member OERu from New Zealand for instance, has been translated into French by UNESCO and technically reviewed by institutional member the French Digital University. Another example is the Survey report from the ICDE OER Advocacy Committee, composed of 9 ICDE members, which includes executive summaries in English, Chinese, French, Hindi, Portuguese, Spanish, Swedish and Turkish.

The ICDE Secretariat also remained in close contact with the ICDE membership through regular virtual meetings and surveys throughout the year. A selection of ICDE members and partners were directly consulted to provide their inputs and comments to the ICDE Strategic Plan 2021-2024. Presidents, Vice-Chancellors, Principals, and Rectors of 72 ICDE member institutions reflected together in working groups at the ICDE Presidents' Forum 2020 on the topic "Recalibrating educational leadership for resilient education".

2020 also marked the anniversary of 7 key actors in ICDE's network, celebrated through congratulatory videos and letters from the ICDE Secretary General and inclusions into the ICDE Newsletter. A certificate of completion for the 2019-2020 ICDE quality review service was also awarded by the ICDE Executive Committee to ICDE institutional member Universitas Terbuka from Indonesia.

Membership administrative processes were upgraded through improvements in the ICDE membership dedicated webpages, membership application form and payment portal.

2020

Membership Statistics

Institutional:

2019: 205

2020: 199

Individual:

2019: 56

2020: 84

Students:

2019: 24

2020: 34

Cancelled/Expired:

2019: 220*

2020: 60

New Members:

2019: 39

2020: 59

*ICDE offered free indiv. membership in a limited period in 2018 explaining the observed volatility.

Statistics calculated per 31 December annually.



Jan-Atle Toska
Chair, ICDE Control Committee

Financial Briefing

Provided by the ICDE Control Committee

ICDEs main sponsor is the Norwegian Ministry for Education and Research through the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (DIKU). Membership fees, conference fees and project funding are also important additional sources of income. ICDEs total income in 2020 was NOK 6,1 million out of which conference income and project funds constituted NOK 1.2 million. In 2019, these numbers constituted NOK 7.1 million and NOK 2.2 million respectively. ICDEs expenses in 2020 was NOK 6.6 million, hereunder NOK 4.4 million tied directly to personnel costs. The result of operations for 2020 was negative NOK 524 666. Comparably in 2019, ICDEs expenses amounted to NOK 6.1 million where NOK 4.4 million was personnel costs. The result of 2019 was NOK 999 775. At the end of the year 2020 ICDE had NOK 1.5 million in equity, and NOK 3.7 million in total equity and liabilities.

Public statement for the Annual Report by ICDEs Control Committee

According to the ICDE Constitution, the ICDE Control Committee shall ensure that ICDEs funds are used in accordance with applicable law, decisions, grants and financial frameworks, and that the financial dispositions made are in accordance with the Constitution and relevant Board resolutions. The Control Committee shall further ensure that the internal financial control of the Secretary General is appropriate and justifiable. The Control Committee has tasks that go beyond what an external auditor is concerned and must therefore carry out its own information gathering and checks in addition to the auditor's work. The Control Committee shall ensure that the accounting is reliable and that the annual accounts and interim reports give a correct expression of ICDE's operations and financial position. When reviewing the accounts, the control committee shall assess the financial position, management and operation of ICDE.

Comments of the Control Committee to the 2020 Accounts of ICDE

The Control Committee has reviewed the minutes of the Board, as well as other documents the Committee has found necessary to review. The Control Committee has received all the information that it has requested from the Secretary General and from ICDEs dedicated auditor. The annual Accounts for 2020 have been reviewed. The material presented to the Committee does not give rise to comments other than what is already stated in the notes of the accounts, and the Control Committee recommended that the Annual Accounts for 2020 were approved by the Board.

Bodø/Jakarta/New York/Oslo, 11 March 2021,

*Jan-Atle Toska, Tian Belawati, Meg Benke and Snorre Qveim-Leikanger
ICDE Control Committee*



“The challenge that we face is that there is no role model. We are the role model. We are literally building the future of higher education.”

Dr. Neil Fassina, ICDE President, on the future of distance education.

ICDE governance activities 2020



Anaïs Malbrand
Senior Adviser, ICDE

2020 has been the year where ICDE members and the Executive Committee approved a new [Constitution](#), an updated and modernized governance structure, a new [Strategic Plan 2021-2024](#) and a new [Activity Plan 2021-2022](#).

ICDE Constitution and Governance Structure

The renewed ICDE Constitution was approved by ICDE members in June 2020, resulting from a need to modernize the ICDE governance structure and be better harmonized with the Norwegian legal framework.

The amendments to the constitution improve the current constitutional mechanisms of ICDE and constitutionalize, among others, member referendums. They clarify the relationship between the different ICDE business bodies, and furthermore the relationship with the Secretary General. They also follow best practice among similar organizations operating under Norwegian law.

The amended constitution introduces for instance member referendums as the highest authority of ICDE and reshapes main ICDE business bodies now named the ICDE Board, the ICDE Control Committee and the ICDE Nomination Committee.

New ICDE Strategic Plan 2021-2024 and Activity Plan 2021-2022

The ICDE Strategic Plan 2021-2024 was developed throughout 2020. Its first draft was one of the results of the ICDE Executive Committee face to face meeting in Oslo in February 2020.

From April to June 2020, regional associations, members and partners of ICDE, representative of all regions of the world, were consulted. A written questionnaire, drafted by the Secretariat and approved by the Executive Committee, was disseminated together with the draft Strategic Plan. The detailed responses were received and taken into account in the final version of the Strategic Plan that was approved by the Executive Committee in its meeting in September.

The final ICDE strategic Plan 2021-2024 was officially launched at the ICDE Presidents' Forum, in November 2020. During the launch, ICDE president Neil Fassina highlights how this new Strategic Plan differs from previous years and how it enables ICDE to stay focused through its forward thinking and visionary approach to ensure that ICDE always remains ahead of the curve when it comes to open, flexible and distance learning. The vision of the new ICDE Strategic plan is: "To achieve the potential of Open, Flexible, and Distance Learning created through our members and learning communities".

The ICDE Activity Plan 2021-2022 was furtherly developed by the ICDE Secretariat and approved by the ICDE Executive Committee in November 2020. It outlines the prioritized strategic objectives and main activities for ICDE for the first two years period from 2021-2022.

Formal Governance Meetings

The ICDE Executive Committee met face to face in Oslo in February 2020. 4 virtual Executive Committee meetings were successively held in April, June, September and November. 2 extraordinary Executive Committee meetings were also held in August and December to discuss the concluding steps of the strategic plan and results from the 2020 Presidents Forum. 7 Executive Committee Decisions were made by written procedure.

The ICDE Board of Trustees held its annual appraisal of the Secretary General in December.



ICDE Board members working hard on the Strategic Plan 2021 – 2024.
Photo: ICDE Secretariat



Torunn Gjelsvik,
Secretary General

ICDEs main partner and stakeholders

Collaborating with UNESCO at the global policy level

Since 1967, ICDE as a global non-governmental organization, has been in a formal consultative partnership with UNESCO. As the only worldwide organization specializing in open and distance education, it has become UNESCO's main partner in developing educational policies where open, flexible, distance and online modalities have become more and more prevalent. A common goal is to ensure inclusive, quality education for all through flexible educational provisions.

In 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by all United Nations Member States. At its heart are the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) a collection of 17 global goals set by the United Nations General Assembly. Through the Education 2030 Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action, published in 2016, a reaffirmed vision was set out for education with the new Sustainable Development Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Over the past few years, ICDE has been collaborating with UNESCO and other key global stakeholders and associations on leadership for digital transformation in education, as well as opening up education through more open educational resources and practices. After two world congresses on OER, where the latter was followed by the Ljubljana OER Action Plan 2017, concrete actions were identified to mainstream OER to achieve SDG4 on Quality Education. Finally, in November 2019, the UNESCO OER Recommendation was adopted by member states after four years of conferences, declarations and consultations. ICDE, through its Chairs for OER and the ICDE OER Advocacy Committee, contributed in the consultations prior to the adoption.

In March 2020, ICDE became a formal partner of the UNESCO OER Dynamic Coalition supporting the implementation of the OER Recommendations, together with other key associations across the globe. The Dynamic Coalition aims to expand and consolidate commitments to actions and strategies as well as reinforce international cooperation among all stakeholders in the four areas of the UNESCO OER Recommendation: i) Building capacity of stakeholders to create, access, re-use, adapt and redistribute OER; ii) Developing supportive policy; (iii) Encouraging inclusive and equitable quality OER; and (iv) Nurturing the creation of sustainability models for OER. In June 2020, ICDE also joined the UNESCO Global Education Coalition, UNESCO's global response to the educational disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

UNITED NATIONS



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



ICDEs scholarly journal

Open Praxis is a peer-reviewed open access scholarly journal focusing on research and innovation in open, distance and flexible education, published by ICDE.

The editor is Inés Gil-Jaurena, hosted at Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED) in Spain under agreement with ICDE.

Open Praxis welcomes contributions which demonstrate creative and innovative research, and which highlight challenges, lessons, and achievements in the practice of distance and e-learning from all over the world. An article may present research or surveys of recent work, describe original work, or discuss new technology and its possibilities, implications and/or other related issues.

In 2020, four volumes of the journal were published. Read more at openpraxis.org.

NORWAY



Diku collaboration

Every year since 1988, the Norwegian Government has provided ICDE with a generous grant to support its operations related to furthering the international development of open, flexible and distance learning.

Diku administers the grant ICDE receives annually on behalf of the Norwegian Government and is the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education. It is a directorate under the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, that promotes development and innovation in education as well as encouraging international cooperation and digital learning methods.

According to the grant, ICDE is expected to bridge the access between Norwegian institutions and the international community and expertise within distance and flexible learning. In November 2020, ICDE contributed to a panel session about Open Education Resources in relation to sustainable development at the national conference on Digitalization of Higher Education organized by ICDE member University of Bergen, DIKU and UNIT.

The staff



Torunn Gjelsvik,
Secretary General



Anaïs Malbrand,
Senior Adviser



Jean-Baptiste Milon,
Senior Project Manager



Julie Schiering
Advisor and Project Officer



Caroline Seville,
*Manager Communications,
Events and Partnerships*



Snorre Qveim-Leikanger,
*Office Manager and Legal
Officer (until September)*



Ola Eloranta,
*Communication and
Administration Officer
(from August)*



Juliane Granly,
*Project and Development
Manager (from November)*

Organisation

The Executive Committee is ICDE's highest decision-making body and consists of six elected member representatives. The Executive Committee holds four to six meetings a year, taking decisions on ICDE's strategy, principles and financial matters. The Secretary General heads the secretariat and is responsible for the day-to-day operation of ICDE.

Executive Committee:

ICDE President: Neil Fassina
President of Athabasca
University

Ansary Ahmed, President and
CEO of Asia-e-University,
Malaysia

Carlos Alberto P. de Oliveira,
State University of Rio de
Janeiro, Brazil

Mark Nichols, Executive
Director at Open Polytechnic
New Zealand

Som Naidu, Pro-Vice Chancellor
Flexible Learning and Director
for Center for Flexible Learning
University of the South Pacific,
Fiji

Ebba Ossiannilsson, Vice
President SADE, Sweden

Secretary General:

Torunn Gjelsvik, Norway

Election Committee:

Jens Uwe Korten (Norway)
Marci Powell (USA)
Barney Pityana (South Africa)

Board of Trustees:

Chair: Helmut Hoyer,
Germany

Jan-Atle Toska, Nord University,
Norway

Tian Belawati, Universitas Terbuka,
Indonesia

Stavros P. Xanthopoulos, ABED,
Brazil

Meg Benke, Empire State College,
United States of America



International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE)

Ploens gate 2B, N-0181 Oslo, Norway

Phone: +47 22 06 26 32

www.icde.org