



Co-Convenors Report to AGM 10 May 2017

This has been a particularly busy year for IEAG and the Governing Committee with a number of significant changes happening within the Education sector, including the first major update to the Education Act in nearly three decades and the Special Education Update (now referred to as the Learning Support.) This Update aims to strengthen inclusion and modernise how learning support is delivered across the education sector. IEAG has continued to work constructively with the Ministry of Education on these key changes.

IEAG Governing Committee and Coordinators

This year's Co-Convenors were Antonia Hannah and Heather Lear. The Governing Committee was Trish Grant, Antonia Hannah, Heather Lear, Shane McInroe Noreen MacMahon and Kris Appleby, with Giovanni Tisco having been co-opted on to the Committee during the year.

Many thanks go to all committee members for your contributions over the past year. Special thanks to Shane who is standing down after three and a half years. We will miss your enthusiasm and your dedication to promoting our organisation, especially in Christchurch. Also thanks to Noreen who has been on our committee over this past year. And to Kris who stepped down during the year.

The Governing Committee extends its grateful thanks to Imelda Coleman, IEAGs Co-ordinator, for her ongoing efforts and commitment to our

organization. Imelda has provided welcome support to the Governing Committee and has worked diligently across a whole range of areas to keep IEAG running and growing.

Education for All Group

We also continue to have a strong political voice in the sector and as a core member of the Education For All network have been involved with planning, organising and presenting at three Rallies aimed at letting Government know that they cannot continue to tweak the Education system and must invest in inclusion to ensure all children, particularly children with disabilities, receive a quality education, The initial Rally was held in Wellington in September on Parliament grounds and a follow up Rally/Picnic was held in November in front of the Rotunda in the Auckland Domain. Both events received good media coverage with IEAG Governing Committee members being interviewed on national radio. More recently a third rally was held in Christchurch in March this year which Shane helped organise.

Submissions

IEAG has submitted to the Education and Science Select Committee on the Education (Update) Amendment Bill and the Supplementary Order Paper banning seclusion and regulating the use of physical restraint in schools. Members of the Governing Committee presented an oral submission in February. IEAG have taken a strong public stance on the unacceptable, outdated and potentially harmful use of seclusion in schools. IEAG sees the practices of seclusion and restraint as a symptom of a bigger systemic problem; that being a non-inclusive education system that is not designed for all students and does not have the human and financial resources to ensure the learning needs of all students are able to be met.

Alongside all the political engagement we continue to connect with, support and inform the community and other key players in the sector.

Presentations and Networking

This year IEAG continued with its program of inclusive education workshops focused on advancing thinking and action on inclusive education. A workshop facilitated by Dr Jude MacArthur was held in Dunedin last year. Dr MacArthur has also given two presentations for IEAG at the ADSA workshops in Auckland in Feb and August.

Auckland Network Meeting May 2016

We had France Adlam, Specialist Educator talking to us about the benefits of multisensory learning for children with learning disabilities and the importance of a teachers gathering a rounded picture of students in terms of their interests and backgrounds.

The teachers at the meeting were able to share their frustrations around Ministry requirements and the pressure of attending so many meetings during the week. They were also honest about schools not having inclusion policies in place. Teachers exchanged contact details in order to share resources and knowledge. Parents at the meeting were frustrated by the lack of knowledge within school communities about disability and the lack of teacher knowledge in terms of different learning needs of their children. Both teachers and parents felt unsupported by the Ministry of Education.

DSE Inclusive Education Summit July 2016

A number of IEAG members presented at the Inclusive Education Summit on “Belonging” at the University of Canterbury in July. This included a presentation on the development and aims of the Voices Project and an initial screening of one of the films. This project involved the interviewing and filming of young disabled people talking about their aspirations and experiences of schooling. The short films will then be posted on IEAG’s website alongside teaching resources that focus on the key messages from the young people and the implications of these for inclusive thinking and practices in education.

School Trustees Association Annual Conference in Wellington in July 2016

We attended the conference from Friday to Sunday and got to speak to a number different school board members, teachers, SENCOS and Principals. It

became apparent that there were a number of initiatives going on around the country in individual schools with regards to inclusion; from employing full time SENCO's to the implementation of alternative reporting for those with learning disabilities. However, a common thread emerged around a shortage of funds and a lack of support from the Ministry. Some board members discussed inclusion but for others this was a novel concept.

Talk at Manukau Institute Technology, August 2016

We delivered a talk to trainee teacher aides at MIT introducing IEAG and discussing 'Why Inclusive Education? Heather and her daughter Sarah accompanied me. We were asked if we could come back to talk more about inclusion techniques given the success of this talk.

Voices Project

This year also saw the completion of the Voices Project and accompanying Teaching Resources, IEAG's most significant project to date. This will be formally launched tonight. The aim of this exciting piece of work is that teachers, teacher educators, students, non-disabled people, families, leaders, researchers and policy makers will listen to, learn from and use the films and resources in their settings.

Acknowledgements for support given to IEAG

Special thanks are extended to the Todd Foundation without the generous five year partnership funding we would not have achieved all we have this year.

We also wish to extend our thanks to organisations that have supported our work through grants, and to those people who have generously and voluntarily supported our work. We acknowledge with gratitude the funding received from these organisations:

- Todd Foundation
- IHC Foundation
- Lotteries Community Grants Board

- COGS - Manukau City and Dunedin.

IEAG extends its thanks to the following people for their generous, voluntary support:

- Trish Grant and IHC for ongoing supports, including printing, support and advice for our Coordinator and premises for meetings
- CCS Disability Action for printing and use of premises for our meetings
- Anne Marie McIlroy and Bernadette Macartney for their work on the Voices Project
- Dr Jude MacArthur for facilitating the inclusive education workshops

This support has been invaluable and is very much appreciated.

Looking Ahead

2017 will continue to be a busy and exciting time with so many changes happening within the Education sector and wider disability arena. IEAG will continue to work constructively with Ministry of Education on these key changes, all of which offer the potential to contribute to a more inclusive education system. IEAG, along with other key stakeholders, have a critical role to play in monitoring the implementation of these changes and providing timely and constructive feedback.

Co-convenors IEAG

Heather Lear

Antonia Hannah