

# **IEAG Co-Convenors Annual Report to AGM 26 April 2018**

Tena koutou, nga mihi nui ki a koutou!

IEAG has had another particularly busy year advancing our own initiatives and making significant contributions to a number of ongoing national and regional events. This work aligns with our vision of an inclusive society where all people, including those with disability, are valued and contributing members of their community; where diversity is viewed as an asset. In the work of IEAG we aim to provide information that will challenge attitudes, practices and structures that create systemic barriers to students' participation and learning. We believe an inclusive education system will create an inclusive society.

2017/2018 was a progressively busy year with many significant changes taking place within the Education sector, including the first major legislative update of the Education Act, the Special Education Update (now referred to as Learning Support) and the announcement in March 2018 of a major reform to the Education system, including the first review of the Tomorrow Schools policy in almost thirty years.

## **Education system reform**

IEAG has continued to work constructively with the Ministry of Education on key changes in Learning Support attending Building on Success for All forums in May and October 2017. The Learning Support Update aims to strengthen inclusion and modernise how learning support is delivered across the education sector. To find out how the recent changes to the learning support system were being experienced by children, families, schools and related professionals and to be able to represent the interests of our members, IEAG ran a survey prior to the October Ministry of Education Forum meeting. Network meetings in Wanganui and Palmerston North were also organised. IEAG remains concerned about the effectiveness of the learning support model which remains unevaluated.

## **IEAG Snapshot Survey of Learning Support Provision**

In October 2017, IEAG conducted a survey designed to find out how the recent changes to the learning support system were being experienced by children, families, schools and related professionals. The findings identified 97% of respondents had concerns about the current education system for children with additional learning needs, 88% of respondents had concerns for the educators of children with additional learning needs, and 90% of respondents had concerns for their families of children with additional learning needs. These findings were consistent through the quantitative and qualitative data identifying a significant issue in inclusive education experience and practice in New Zealand that needs to be fully explored.

IEAG plans to repeat this survey at regular intervals over the coming years and have the data analysed, reported and shared. IEAG believes that positive change to the education and learning support systems can only occur if there is respectful collaboration with students, whanau, educators and professionals. IEAG remains committed to the transformational change needed to ensure that every teacher is confident in teaching all learners, and every learner has the support they need to be welcomed, participate and achieve in their local school.

## **Going forward**

As part of the recently announced reforms to the Education system two major Education Summits (one in Christchurch and one in Auckland over a weekend) are planned for May 2018 to develop and agree on a 30 year vision for Education in New Zealand. IEAG is represented on the Virtual Reference Group which is currently reviewing questions to be addressed at the Summits and a number of committee members have received invitations to attend the upcoming Summits. IEAG has also been invited to send a representative to a further Building on Success for All Forum (as part of IEAG's ongoing role with this national advisory group) planned for June to assist with the development of a Learning Support Action Plan.

## **NZEI Inclusive Communities through Education summit**

Last year IEAG had a role in the organisation of, and a strong presence at, the NZEI Inclusive Communities through Education Summit (May, 2017). The key theme of the Summit was for organisations to work together on inclusion as a quality public education issue. NZEI Te Riu Roa hosted the summit so that

members, education leaders, disabled people, families and others could co-construct how we can make education inclusive. The IEAG members in attendance took on the group facilitation roles ensuring social

justice and children's rights were prioritised within discussions. Two hundred people participated, and the Summit included key note addresses from IEAG international supporters and advisors such as Professor Roger Slee from the University of South Australia.

### **Voices Project**

A focus for IEAG in 2017 /2018 has been the completion of the VOICES Project (Phase One). This has been a two-year project involving support and funding from the IHC Foundation and the TODD Foundation. The aim has been to listen and respond to the voices of young disabled people as they spoke of their experiences of school in Aotearoa New Zealand. The project involved a professional filmmaker, experienced researchers conducting interview sessions, detailed transcripts so that nothing was lost in translation from the lived experience to multimedia presentation. The powerful videos were then aligned to a range of resources created by three PhD qualified teacher researchers to support and inform teachers and teacher educators to create more inclusive schools for disabled young people. This IEAG project is a first of its kind in New Zealand and was launched at Canterbury University to an audience of academic researchers and national teacher educators, national disability organisations, Ministerial representatives and NGOs. It has also been used as a core curriculum resource for the 2017 - Universities of Canterbury and Massey Teacher Post Graduate Specialist Teacher Education Programme.

VOICES was also profiled at the Disability Matters conference Otago University 26-29 November 2017. IEAG was well represented at the Disability Matters conference with five presentations from IEAG Governing Committee members.

### **IEAG Website**

IEAG has created a new website with a multi-layered linked platform for the VOICES project. The IEAG website work involved a complete update in conjunction with the VOICES project in order to promote the VOICES material and encompass the multimedia resources, the layout and accessibility of the material. This has been a significant project and a major investment for IEAG.

## **Submissions**

IEAG has recently submitted to the Education and Workforce Select Committee on the Education (Teaching Council of Aotearoa) Amendment Bill, the Education Amendment Bill, the Education (National Education and Learning Priorities) Amendment Bill, and the Education (Protecting Teacher Title) Amendment Bill.

## **IEAG Governing Committee**

The Co-Convenors were Heather Lear and Maree Kirk. The Governing Committee elected at the last AGM were Trish Grant, Maree Kirk, Heather Lear, Giovanni Tiso and Antonia Hannah who stood down during the year. Rebekah Corlett, Stephanie Rolinson, and Anne-Marie McIlroy joined the Committee having been co-opted on to the Committee during the year. Many thanks go to all our committee members for your contributions over the past year.

The IEAG Constitution was amended at the May 2017 AGM to allow for the Governing Committee to stand for a three-year term. This change was recommended by our Auditors and accepted and agreed by the membership.

## **IEAG Coordinator**

IEAG's National Coordinator, Imelda Coleman, resigned in March 2018 after two and half years in her role. The Governing Committee extends its grateful thanks to Imelda for her commitment to IEAG, her work across a range of areas to keep IEAG running and her support to the Governing Committee. We wish her well in her new role.

## **Membership**

Membership has increased by 9% in 2017/2018 and we now have a 'membership' of 996 through Facebook, an increase of 179 in the last 12 months. We will need to reconsider our approach to membership within the Constitution at our AGM as we believe the current guidelines could be updated.

## **Collaboration**

*Education For All Forum member*

- IEAG continues to be active members of the Education For All forum that lobbies for inclusive education at the legislative, policy and practice level.
- on-going leadership and collaboration with education, disability and family sector organisations to support the development of inclusive education policies, systems and practices in education.

-IEAG has an ongoing collaborative relationship with Universities across New Zealand including University of Auckland, University of Canterbury, University of Otago, Massey University and University of Waikato.

-IEAG works in partnership with key disability and education sector groups including, but not limited to, IHC, CCS Disability Action, NZEI and the NZ Principals' Federation.

## **Financial Stewardship**

IEAG continued to apply for funding through the 2017/2018 cycle. We were successful in eight COGS regions and continue with the funding support of the Todd Foundation. The National Coordinator and Co-Convenor Heather Lear attended the Todd Hui in 2018.

We continued to engage AAF accounting and an auditor in the 2017/2018 term and utilise XERO software for the financial management of IEAG. We have undertaken all recommendations from the auditors.

IEAG has extended its approach to fund raising to several larger national applications through late 2017 and early 2018. This has required considerable focused input from the Co convenors, Executive Committee and National Coordinator. The competitive nature of funding applications, criteria and skills with the process is a reality for all NGOs and charitable organisations and has proved a challenge for IEAG. This is an area of focus for 2018/2019. It will impact on the sustainability of IEAG as an organisation and will mean a review of the operational structure.

## **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 – Auckland City, Wellington, North Shore, Coastal Otago, Waitakere, Manawatu, Hutt Valley.

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 for her continued 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 FORWARD 2018 -Strategic Direction**

### **Projects:**

1. VOICES – additional funding partners are being sought with Spark and National funding grants through 2018  
IEAG Voices Project – release on website, interactive website tools development that maintains project momentum as identified
2. Creating Everyone's Schools  
National conference in collaboration with Berhampore School to be held April 2018  
COGS funding to assist with administration costs for this regional event.
3. IEAG Survey – both quantitative and qualitative information will again be sought on how the changes to learning support are being experienced by disabled students, their families/whanau and educators

4. IEAG Website and multimedia platform: website to support interactive website tools development

**Representation**

- Continued involvement in advisory roles to the Ministry of Education and other Ministries, in advocating for inclusive education
- Raise public awareness about the changes to Learning Support

**Collaboration**

- Education For All Forum, cross-sector meetings and initiatives
- Co-hosting with Berhampore an Inclusive Education Conference “Creating Everyone’s Schools” demonstrating practical and successful methods of inclusion
- Disability and education sector organisations
- Human Rights Commission and Office of Disability Issues, Ministers responsible for children and youth.

**Membership Strategy**

- Review of the IEAG membership strategy and social media ‘membership’ status.
- Increase membership contributions and engagement
- Establish and support Inclusive Education Networks throughout the country

**Education**

- ADSA professional development on Inclusive Education (Feb/Aug)
- Conference presentations and IEAG information stands
- Review, update and add to IEAG resources within multimedia platform and available in hardcopy, working to develop a page to be included in the NZSTA handbook on Inclusive Education Requirements and Practices

**IEAG Co-convenors**

Heather Lear

Maree Kirk