



Co-convenor's Annual Report to AGM November 2014

Tena koutou katoa!

This past year was another busy one for the Inclusive Education Action Group (IEAG). We are now in our 6th year as an official organisation. We have tried to keep up with the invitations for IEAG to be represented on Ministry of Education advisory, reference and project groups. Our other emphasis has been on developing relationships and working collaboratively with disability sector groups such as CCS Disability Action, IHC, the Education For All Forum and People First. We have continued planning for regional inclusive education networks for IEAG members and other concerned people. Starting networks through supporting initial meetings was a priority for the 2013/2014 period. We hope that network groups will give members and others opportunities to share their challenges and to support each other locally as well as feed engage in IEAG projects and opportunities.

We have continued to provide expertise to the Ministry of Education (MOE) Special Education reference groups, the MOE Inclusive Education Capability Building Project Sector Advisory Group, and the Special Education School Transport Assistance (SESTA) advisory group to the Minister.

IEAG continues to link with education sector groups to build relationships, provide inclusive education advice and information, and to work together in areas of mutual interest. We have been part of meetings with education organisations such as NZEI, the Principals' Federation, and IHC to discuss disability and education issues and to begin a national conversation/s about inclusive and special education between the education, and disability sectors and the government.

We have been an active within the Education For All disability, human rights and inclusive education forum and the development of a priority and action plan for inclusive education. The governing board of CCS Disability Action gave us a generous donation at the end of 2013 to help cover our EO's salary. We continue to collaborate with organizations such as CCS Disability Action, IHC and People First to support and advance positive change.

IEAG Governing Committee

This year's Governing Committee was Colin Gladstone, Bernadette Macartney, Denise Astill, Ally Attwell, Trish Grant, Kate McAnelly, and Shane McInroe.

Many thanks go to all committee members for your contributions over the past year.

The Governing Committee extends its grateful thanks to Sarah Berman, IEAG Executive Officer, for her efforts and commitment to our organisation. Sarah continues to provide huge support to the Governing Committee and has worked prodigiously across a whole range of areas to keep IEAG running and growing. Strategic planning, financial management, website development and management, developing e-learning modules, fundraising, workshop support, and Governing Committee secretariat services, membership and correspondence are just some of the many areas where Sarah provides invaluable support. Thank you once again for your energy, commitment and work for IEAG, Sarah.

Strategic Goal 1

IEAG will influence policy to create systemic change at a national level.

1. On 12 Sept 2013, 28 Nov 2013, 5 March 2014, and 17 July 2014 Bernadette Macartney attended the Ministry of Education's **Inclusive Education Capacity Building (IECB) Advisory Group**.
2. On 3 October, 2013 Ian Armstrong attended the final meeting of the **IPT (Inclusive Practices Tool) Reference Group**. The tool was developed for the MOE by the NZ Council for Educational Research (NZCER). The tool prototype was trialled with schools, students and parents during the final term of 2013. The tool was released in Term 1 2014 on the MOE Wellbeing@School website.
3. **Education For All Forum (EFA)**
This group is hosted by the DPA and is open to disability and education organisations and anyone with an interest in disabled students (and their families') rights to an inclusive education. Bernadette Macartney attends on behalf of IEAG. The group has been meeting monthly, and has developed a Priorities and Action Plan for inclusive education. EFA has been meeting with the newly appointed National Director Special Education Service, Dr David Wales, and senior Ministry of Education staff and have presented the Priorities and Action Plan them. EFA is meeting monthly and is currently discussing it's representation, roles, and relationships within the disability, education and human rights sectors and with the Ministry of Education and government.

4. Special Education School Transport Assistance (SESTA)

Bernadette Macartney attended the release of the SESTA report that was a result of the working group that Denise Astill represented IEAG on. 14 of the 18 recommendations we adopted outright, a great achievement and testimony to the good work of the group. The other four are tagged as “further investigation required”. Recommendation 1A states: “reassess the range of SESTA transport options with a view to promoting greater independence in students where appropriate.” IEAG has been contacting the Ministry of Education to begin work on implementing this recommendation.

5. IEAG Submission on Special Assessment Conditions for NCEA – for the MOE and NZQA review of special assessment conditions

Strategic Goal 2

To engage with the education sector about inclusive education philosophy, values and practice.

1. Learning Better Together Seminar Series.

The final two workshops were held in Wellington (65 attendees) on the 26th November and Palmerston North (57 attendees) on the 27th November, 2013. These completed our commitment to the IHC Foundation, who funded the series.

2. ADSA Workshops

The Auckland Down Syndrome Association (ADSA) ran its second workshop “Success in Schools” for teachers, teacher aides, parents and carers of children with Down Syndrome on Feb 24th & Aug 4th 2014. Jude MacArthur, and Bernadette Macartney presented the Inclusive Education module at the courses

3. E-learning

Podcasts of Learning Better Together presentations and parent panel discussions were finalised. NZSL translation and captioning for the podcasts, and a web framework are now developed. The podcasts and resources are freely available for anyone on our website.

4. Bernadette Macartney presented with acknowledgement to IEAG:

- ‘Understanding and Transforming Disabling Thinking and Practices in Early Childhood Care and Education’ at an Early Childhood Teacher Training Refresher Course to 50 participants. Her presentation included IEAG’s logo and links, and our resources were distributed to participants;

- Keynote speaker to 200 people at Kidicorp South Island’s Annual Conference with the same presentation as above. IEAG’s logo and links in her presentation.
 - “Inclusive Early Childhood Education: what families and disabled children want and need’ at CORE education teacher symposium day, Christchurch, June 2014
5. **Moving On – Success in Transition Conference, Nov 2014**
Abstract accepted in May for IEAG’s youth panel at the conference
 6. **Best Practice in Quality Public Education Forum** Bernadette attended at Parliament on 5th Dec, 2013
 7. **Disability Studies in Education Conference, Melbourne, July 2014 –**
Bernadette Macartney presented two papers as IEAG’s Co-convenor, the first “Specialese – the language and culture of exclusive education in Aotearoa New Zealand” and the second was a symposium of parents (Bernadette, Rod Wills and Colleen Brown) speaking about their experiences and the lessons they have learnt. Shane McInroe presented in a symposium with Annie Guerin and Anne Marie McIlroy. His presentation was titled “*I know what I want: student voice looking back and moving forward*”. IEAG resources were on display at the conference and distributed to the 100 conference participants.
 8. **School Trustees Association Annual Conference**
IHC and IEAG shared a stand at the School Trustees Association Conference from 19-21 July 2013 in Auckland. 850 delegates attended. The FAQs brochure was inserted in every conference bag.
 9. The IEAG panel at the Disability Studies in Education Conference in Christchurch in June 2013 led to a further presentation at the Ministry of Education to the Inclusive Education Capability Building Project staff in Wellington in September. This panel was facilitated by Bernadette Macartney. Shane McInroe was one of the panellists.
 10. **Social Enterprise**
IEAG applied for and was shortlisted by the Akina Foundation for their Launchpad project that will develop 10 good ideas into a social enterprise. IEAG proposed to deliver “Whole school community development that supports school improvement, imbedding inclusive values & practices”. Sarah and Bernadette presented and workshopped our idea to the Foundation in Auckland on Friday 15th August 2014. We weren’t chosen to go through to the next round but received positive feedback and are still keen to consider the idea of developing a social enterprise.

Strategic Goal 3

Support the development of a NZ knowledge base around inclusive education

1. Oral history project

IEAG's application to the Ministry of Social Development's Making a Difference Fund for \$30,000 wasn't successful. The project aims to develop an oral history repository about disabled peoples' schooling experience similar to ALLFIE's How Was School?

In May 2014, the IHC Foundations granted \$30,000 for IEAG to develop an oral history repository of intellectually disabled students' school experiences, a website and teaching resources. ALLFIE in the UK, who have developed a similar project, have been helpful in sharing their project evaluation report and have offered us help if needed.

2. In the media

- Bernadette was interviewed by Newstalk ZB on 11 July about Labour's recently released education policy and inclusive education. A short article appeared on their website.
- Sarah was interviewed by the Cerebral Palsy Society and an article about IEAG appeared in their August newsletter.
- ADSA featured an article about inclusion and IEAG's network meeting in their July magazine.
- IEAG wrote a response to the Nelson Mail's article "Special needs changes defended" where a journalist implied that students that changed schools after property modifications were made were wasting taxpayer money.
- Bernadette and Sarah attended a free media training course in Auckland in March, run by MSD's Think Differently project. Shane attended the Christchurch training in April and Denise attended an Auckland training.

3. The Ministry of Education's Inclusion Taskforce asked to include a link to our "Questions for Board of Trustees – Supporting your School to be Inclusive" resource on their website, which we agreed to.

Strategic Goal 4

To raise community awareness so that inclusive education is understood by all.

1. **Membership-** in May was at 290 members, with 7 new members since March 2014. People joined from a variety of sources including personal referrals, google search and Facebook.

- 2. Networking:** A networking group meeting was held in Auckland on 3rd October. Bernadette facilitated the meeting and parents from Cornwall Park School shared their experiences of setting up a support group for parents of students with learning difficulties/disabilities. . The next Auckland network meeting in May 2014 hosted Mark Barratt, principal Papatoetoe South School, who spoke to the 20 attendees about “The child – the Heart of the Matter, How a school can work for all”. The presentation was videoed and will be put on our website.
- 3. Facebook page, website and E-newsletter** – Many people continue to access IEAG and our resources through these media. In May 2014 the E-newsletter was sent to 287 members and non-members interested in our work.
- 4. Sustainable Funding:**
- March 2014 Grant funding was received from the **ASB Community Trust** for \$26,640 for operating costs.
 - In December 2013, upon hearing about our financial difficulties, The **CCS Disability Action** Board donated \$5,000 to IEAG.
 - Nov 2013 **COGS** funding of \$12,984 was received
 - July 2014 **COGS** funding of \$13,887 for a global contribution
 - **IHC Foundation** May 2014 \$30,000 donation towards Oral History project
 - **Give a Little widget** is now on our website, and has been promoted in our newsletters to members and on our Facebook page.
 - May 2014, grant funding was received from **the Lotteries Community Committee** for \$7,000 for activity, resource & programme costs (\$1,500); admin costs (\$2,000); community awareness (\$500); travel costs (\$1,000); and volunteer costs (\$2,000).
 - Sarah has been meeting and talking with a charity that is interested in our work and has requested that IEAG put a proposal together as they have funds available that could support IEAG’s work.
- 5. Staffing**
- We have had difficulty covering Sarah’s salary at times this year, and are still concerned that some of Sarah’s time is spent on administrative tasks which are not the best use of her skills and capabilities. Sarah’s work and commitment have been exemplary this year and under uncertain financial circumstances. Thank you for your on-going significant contributions to IEAG as our only paid staff member Sarah. We hugely appreciate it. Sarah has been employed by IEAG for 30 hours per week.

Acknowledgements

The Co-Convenors would like to thank the organizations that have supported and funded IEAG through grants, the IEAG Governing Committee, the Executive Officer, Sarah Berman, and the members and volunteers who have generously supported our work.

IEAG's work was made possible through grants and donations in the past year from:

- IHC Foundation
- COGS (Auckland, Wellington, Manukau, Waitakere, Dunedin, Papakura/Franklin)
- ASB Community Trust
- CCS Disability Action

Other organisations to thank:

- IHC Advocacy for continued support with logistics, partnering in delivering seminars, support in hosting the School Trustees Assoc Stand, and their fantastic resources (e.g. Learning Better Together (LBT)).
- People First-Nga Tangata Tuatahi
- NZ Red Cross –making meeting rooms available
- Wellington City Council – making their meeting rooms available.

Individuals to thank:

- Jude and Gill for the workshops and E-learning module presentation.
- Bernadette for the many conference presentations and networking groups organised.
- Denise, Ian, and Bernadette for all the meetings attended on IEAG's behalf.
- Shane McInroe for distributing IEAG brochures and promoting IEAG in Christchurch
- Neil Rothbart, Chelbrit Accounting, for reviewing IEAG's financial accounts.

Naku noa, na,

Bernadette Macartney & Colin Gladstone (Co-Convenors IEAG)