

Volume XXXXI, Issue 2,
May 2025

Annuntiatu

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION



International Association of Special Education

Fostering a Global Exchange of Ideas and Information



President's Message

Daniel McCarthy

As the new President, I want to share with you the latest news from the Board and the various IASE Committees that are working on your behalf. Our focus continues to be on growing our international community of special educators.

Since my last report, the conference committee continues to plan for our next conference which is the 19th Biennial Conference to be held June 15-19, 2026, and hosted by the Royal Thimphu College (RTC) located in Thimphu, the capital of Bhutan. The IASE conference committee delegation: Renata, iris and I are scheduled to travel to Thimphu, Bhutan to meet with the local conference committee on June 2 thru June 8 to visit the University and local facilities, hotel and lodging options and local school and community programs. Updated conference information will be posted on our website.

Given the feedback from members, the Board has scheduled a conversation with a software company that provides conference management services and support. We hope to have something in place for our next conference, including the possibility of having a IASE App.

**INSIDE,
WE ALSO
TALK
ABOUT:**

VSP Updates

Membership updates

Treasurer's Report

Save the Date - IASE
2026 Conference



President's Message continued

At our last IASE Board meeting on April 26, the Board voted to accept the nomination of Elia Balagilije Dyiteg (Tanzania) as the new Member at Large on the IASE Board of Directors. In addition, Dr. Brenda Lazarus was appointed our IASE Historian and will be working on collecting and storing our past documents and activities. We also welcomed Dr. Girma Berhanu from the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, as our new IASE Journal Editor. A letter of appreciation and a Lifetime membership were given to Thomas Donaghy of the University of Minnesota for his work as the Managing Editor of the IASE for the past 8 years.

We had our first Virtual Dialogue on March 29th. The dialogue focused on three presentations from our National Chairs in Canada, India, and Nigeria. It was a great success due to the effort of our National Chairs Committee chairperson, Dr. Samantha Mrstik. Dr. Mrstik is also our Virtual Dialogue Committee chairperson, so if you have any topics for future dialogues, please communicate your recommendations to Dr. Mrstik or any member of the Board.

I would also like to thank our website moderator, Dr. Kalynn Pistorio, for her continued work on improving our IASE website. Please communicate any ideas you have for content or information you want posted on our website.

Communication continues to be an important part of our mission. In that spirit, Tejal Kothari, our Board Member at Large from India, has volunteered to coordinate our social media messaging.

Our IASE Board meets four times each calendar year. The next scheduled Board meetings are on 8/23 and 11/15. If you have any issues, suggestions, or topics for our next IASE Board meeting, please communicate your thoughts to our leadership team. The leadership team contact information is located on the website at iase.org under About Us/Leadership/Board of Directors.

The Board and I will continue to expand our memberships in unrepresented countries and improve our most important international initiatives.

- 1) The Volunteer Service Projects (VSP)
- 2) The National Chairs Project
- 3) Virtual Dialogues
- 4) Biennial Conference

Again, our organization cannot function and grow without you, our members who provide the dedication, personal time and professional expertise. So, thank you all for your support and continued membership in IASE.

Please respond with comments to: Daniel McCarthy, IASE President at DanielRNM@comcast.net.

**Bio of Mary Sima Nkatiah,
PhD (Candidate)
Ghana National Chair,
International Association of
Special Education (IASE)
Part-Time Lecturer,
Department of Special
Education, University of
Education, Winneba, Ghana**



Mary Sima Nkatiah is an emerging scholar in the field of special education and currently serves as the Ghana National Chair of the International Association of Special Education (IASE). She is a part-time lecturer at the Department of Special Education, University of Education, Winneba (UEW) in Ghana, where she teaches in the areas of instructional strategies for learners with intellectual and developmental disabilities and literacy interventions for struggling readers.

With a growing portfolio of research, teaching, and advocacy, Mary is steadily establishing herself as a committed voice in inclusive education. Her academic journey is anchored in a strong dedication to literacy development and equitable learning opportunities for learners with disabilities.

She holds an MPhil in Special Education and is pursuing a PhD at UEW, where her research focuses on the role of support systems in promoting the emotional and behavioral engagement of learners with disabilities. She has presented her work at leading conferences, including the IASE Biennial Conference in the Czech Republic (June 2024). As part of her scholarly work, she is engaged in a collaborative research initiative with the University of Potsdam, focused on introducing theater-based approaches as a strategy to improve literacy in Ghanaian classrooms.

In addition to her academic roles, she is a founding member of the Disability Rights, Education, Advocacy and Mentoring (DREAM) Club and a volunteer reading instructor in Winneba. She is also a member of the Membership Committee of IASE. Mary brings energy, insight, and a community-centered approach to her work, making her a rising scholar and advocate for inclusive education in Ghana and beyond.

Disability Support International (DSI) Piloting Virtual-Training Expansion By Jennie Wendland

Disability Support International (DSI) – an IASE member and US-based NGO – strives to build more inclusive and equitable communities through partnerships that support and strengthen local capacity. This disability development work is a process rather than a quick remedy. This partnership approach promotes continuous transformation that helps everyone—those who are "helped" as well as those who are "helpers"—to grow, learn, and improve the world, while striving to lessen the immense inequality that is the current reality. DSI currently has two main areas of programming: its online-based Global Disability Directory (available on its website) and its training program.

DSI is now beginning to expand the reach of their training program focused on increasing the capacity of local teachers and inclusive education leaders, and especially those working with children with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are all too often the most misunderstood and excluded right now in developing nations.

Originally developed and refined in Cambodia, DSI's training model emphasizes working collaboratively in partnership with local organizations. DSI is now piloting a new virtual training program to meet growing demand and overcome barriers of distance and resources. While the value of in-person engagement remains central to DSI's philosophy, access to materials and virtual coaching offers a flexible and scalable solution. This training support will provide key training resources and tools to increase the knowledge and skills of local staff, as well as customized support from skilled DSI team members for partnering organizations' leaders. We are now beginning to explore collaborative program work in Vietnam and Uganda that have expressed interest from our networking through IASE.

A young student is at the table next to the Cambodian teacher giving a thumbs-up. The youngster is grinning and making a proud gesture.



DSI Expansion continued

A glimpse of the outcomes we've seen in Cambodia already:

- In 2024 alone, 392 Cambodian teachers and educational leaders participated in training sessions, reaching and improving the lives and education of 1,310 children with significant disabilities. 100% of our local leaders (Master Trainers) and 88% of teacher trainees reported improved competence and understanding after receiving DSI's training (which increased further if they were able to access ongoing coaching).
- One partner leader shared: "We found that the teacher training tools are simple, easy to understand, and easy to use... They help children with disabilities to improve and have success in school!"
- One Master Trainer shared: "Thanks to the DSI team for the important trainings which impacted me to be more confident to help both teachers and parents"
- Interest and involvement has been from both local NGOs and also from within the National Institute for Special Education (a department in the Cambodian Ministry of Education), working to develop the profession of special education now.



Top Left: Local partner leaders and DSI team members stand together and hold DSI materials from one training module, focused on communication strategies.

Top Right: A DSI skilled trainer listens to Cambodian Master Trainers sharing their ideas while seated together.

In our world today, people with disabilities are among the most disadvantaged and marginalized groups, particularly in developing nations, and in low-income countries, up to 90% of children with disabilities never attend school. Not because they can't learn—but because schools aren't prepared to teach them.

That's a gap we can work to close—together.

If you are interested in learning more and possibly collaborating with this project, feel free to contact me, DSI Executive Director at jwendland@ds-international.org



Three Cambodian leaders—two men and one woman—sit at a table, going over documents, talking, and smiling at a partner organization's school site.



IASE MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Dr. Rachael A. Gonzáles
Membership Chair

IASE is only as strong as our membership

THANK YOU to ALL who continue to work towards the improvement of quality of life and service delivery for all individuals with special needs in an inclusive environment. Being an IASE member allows you to stay updated with the news of what our members are doing across the globe in their communities to support children and families. Check out the Volunteer Service Project (VSP) site <https://www.iase.org/vsp> and consider volunteering by sharing your professional expertise with teachers and parents in developing economic countries. It is a most rewarding experience.

Join the IASE Team by choosing from one of the following: 5 Membership Types

- \$50 - Regular
- \$20 - Student (full-time student)
- \$20 - Developing Economy Click here for our list of nations with developing economies based on the UN World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP).
- \$70 - Institutional - for colleges and universities who want to include our publications in their selections
- \$70 - Regular + Sponsorship (from developing economy) Regular member and sponsorship of a member from a developing economy country

Payment for membership can be made online using a credit card account.

Alternatively, complete an IASE membership form and send a check or money order to the IASE Treasurer at P.O. Box 2159, Mesa, Arizona, 85214, USA.

Any questions or concerns, please contact me at rgonzales@csus.edu

Staying Rooted Through Collective Purpose

**By Stacy-Ann N. Hylton, MSW
Doctoral Student, Virginia University
Lynchburg**

Remaining grounded in the helping profession requires resilience, self-care, and a strong sense of community. In a field where emotional labor is a constant reality, our connections with others are the anchors that keep us stable. Over the past two decades, I have realized that meaningful work, especially within complex and under-resourced systems, is sustainable only when connected to a shared purpose and supported by family, mentors, colleagues, and friends who resonate with our values.



This past May, I was honored to join the International Association of Special Education (IASE). I received this invitation from a long-time friend and former colleague, whose unwavering commitment to education, support, and inclusion of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities I have always admired. Given our professional history and shared vision, this opportunity was a natural progression in my career. It came at a time when I sought deeper engagement in spaces prioritizing community, cross-cultural dialogue, research, and global practices around services and education for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). This experience reaffirmed a truth I've long understood: we can achieve success by connecting with others who care about reaching our shared goals.

I am a Clinical Behavioral Therapist at Behavioral Treatment Services (BTS), a state-contracted and funded program under Riverside Community Care. BTS specializes in providing outpatient mobile mental health treatment for adults with I/DD, many of whom have dual diagnoses and behavioral challenges. Our team collaborates closely with the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services to serve clients throughout eastern and central Massachusetts.

What distinguishes BTS is our mobile, community-oriented approach. We deliver therapy directly to individuals in the comfort of their homes, day programs, and other familiar environments, effectively removing barriers to access and fostering trust through consistent engagement. In my role, I conduct diagnostic evaluations and assessments and provide evidence-based individual and group therapy, all rooted in cultural humility. As an immigrant and someone deeply committed to social justice, I view every clinical interaction as an opportunity to affirm dignity and confront systemic inequities.

Beyond my clinical work, I have been a Clinical Field Instructor, guiding advanced practice social work students as they integrate theory, research, and social justice into their practice. These mentoring relationships have become some of the most fulfilling experiences of my career. Both giving and receiving mentorship sustain and inspire me.

I remain deeply connected to the field through my work with BTS and my position on the IASE Membership Committee. We must support one another to prevent burnout and uphold the values that initially inspired us to engage in this work. Although the future remains uncertain, we can face it with strength when united. In a society that often overlooks the contributions of marginalized groups, I am committed to fostering inclusivity and creating supportive environments through therapeutic interactions and meaningful connections.

VSP Site Visits in Vietnam

By Dr. Iris Drower and Mary Gale Budzisz

Our annual Volunteer Service Project visit to monitor our sites in Vietnam occurred in March 2025. Our departures from Phoenix, AZ and Charleston, SC connected at Narita /Tokyo, Japan and then we flew together to Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), Vietnam which is remembered by us as Saigon. This is a hustle-bustle city with a population of over 9 million, which is alive 24 hours of the day and night. It takes a bit of an adventurous spirit to visit, but every moment is worthwhile. Two of our previous VSP sites have become sustainable and we no longer provide support for them. They were the Santa Maria Clinic and the Special Education Department of the Ho Chi Minh City University. BUT.....we still do plan a dinner gathering to socialize with our Saigon colleagues for food, fun, conversations, networking, ideas, and discussions on future collaborative efforts! Plus, we truly enjoy the bountiful local gifts received from them, especially the fresh mangoes that drip their delicious juice down your chin when eating.



Photo: Featured to the left are Dong, Quyen, Dr. Nga, Dr. Iris, Dr. Giang, Mary Gale, Thu and a guest.



In HCMC we visited our newest site, The Nhan Hoa Inclusive Education Development Support Centre, which was established by Nguyen Thi Thu, who was a student of Dr. Giang at the Santa Maria Clinic. This Centre provides evaluations, assessments, interventions, and instruction for children with speech delays, autism, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorders, and stuttering. The goal of this site is to teach the principles of language

development, good behavior, and communication, with early and individuated interventions to children with developmental problems. The ultimate goal is to help young students to successfully integrate into the community. Because of parental demands Ms. Thu now operates six of these centers. See photos below of Thu and her team working on communication and social skills.





In HCMC we have been lodging at the Zazz Urban Hotel and truly appreciate the Vietnamese hospitality showered upon us by Manager Katy. Luckily we had a few hours to play tourist so we attended the oldest water puppet show in town, wandered through tiny alleys to find super gelato, visited and learned about some beautiful government buildings, and finally under the guidance of Dean Nga we gained the skill of crossing busy streets facing the onslaught of hordes of motorbikes and remaining alive on the other side.



A short flight took us north to the former capital city of Hue in central Vietnam. Our VSP site is now named The Fund of Genetic Counselling for Disabled Children located within the Hue College of Medicine. Our project coordinator Phoung Anh picked us up for a rousing visit to the Future New School. It was outside play time and every student was engaged in fun activities under the new tarp on their playground, which provides a shield from the hot sun and protection from inclement weather. Smiles were readily evident on the faces of the students and staff, and a congenial atmosphere was demonstrated by everyone.

Physical enjoyment was displayed by jumping, rocking, swinging, running, sharing, and singing, laughing and just being a kid! We have been in awe of the school transformation over the last five years while the little help from our funds that have been able to supplement school and teacher supplies to broaden the educational curriculum for the students. Photos below show students and their appreciation for the materials too!



In operation for one year has been the Bee Café staffed by older students who truly exhibit their best manners and hospitality skills. They take orders, prepare the array of coffee and drink selections and then serve the orders. Preparing customer bills, collecting the payments and finally clearing and cleaning the tables...are lifetime skills that are solidly embedded in each student.



We were so impressed that we did provide funding (out-of-pocket) for these accomplished students to have a fun field trip into the community for a “job well done!” Check out these photos of that activity. Photos below of the busy Bee students!



The Orchid Hotel has been our lodging in Hue for many years and the welcome again by Ruby and Emma made us feel right at home. The added attraction is the small bakery located next door....the delicious smell of egg tarts will always draw us right inside to make an order. Plus a dinner at Madame Tue's local cuisine is a neighborhood favorite of ours.

A three hour drive south along the coastline via Danang took us to Hoi An and a visit to our VSP site at the Dien Ban Day School. This delightful school is mainly supported by the Kianh Foundation from Australia, with extra donations from various organizations including our IASE. We have provided school and office supplies for many years. Starting with a cramped 2-room cottage and moving to a brand new building, we have watched the thrilling development of this complex over the years. Some impressive events in this program have included: creation of the store and coffee shop; noticing the inclusion of outdoor toys and activities; the greening of the garden; the arrival of the pigs; the new painting of the fence line; all while the growth of the students and the gainful grasp of their new skills and leadership qualities were put to use in and

around the school. Thanks to Hoang and Quyen for hosting us while Jackie is in the UK attending to her parents. We were totally enthralled with the two students who showed us their newly acquired skills of embroidery and sewing. They are so lucky to have teachers to share these handicraft skills and then be able to create lovely items which can be sold for income. Below are Friday activities that the students across all ages participate in.



Our annual visit to Hoi An always includes a visit to the Hung Family Mai Home Hoi An Cooking Class and Restaurant. The most yummy and interesting delights come from their kitchen and into our mouths! During our 15 year relationship we have been able to go fishing in a little round boat, visit the fish market at 5 AM, walk through farm fields, receive \$20 dollar massages, experience vastly different foods, and ride a water buffalo! Check out from left to right: Mr. Hung the Chef, one final yummy delight and yes a water buffalo.



We do encourage all of you IASE members to take the time to visit or volunteer at our IASE Volunteer Service Project sites. Such participation can definitely provide immeasurable rewards and lifelong memories. We continue to monitor (at our own expense) our VSP sites to make sure that the VSP funds provided are implemented as requested when their “wish-lists” are submitted for IASE Board approval.



Treasurer's Report

By Dr. Iris Drower

As of May 6, 2025

Checking: \$7,021.13

Marg Scholarship: \$7,894.37

VSP: \$12,437.27

Operating Savings: \$92,727.54

CD 4 MONTHS: \$50,000.00

Total available balance
\$170,080.31



Renew and Join IASE Today!
To join IASE, contact Rachael
Gonzales, email: rgonzales@csus.edu
IASE Membership

Please print clearly

Surname:		First name:	
Address:			
City:		State/Province:	
Postal code:		Country:	
E-mail:			

*Membership type	US	(check applicable)	Name	Amount
<i>Institution</i>	\$70			
<i>Regular</i>	\$50			
<i>Sponsorship</i> 3 or more sponsored individuals – please state number here and attach details in page 2 below. Thanks)	\$20 /person		(Name and email of sponsored)	
			(Name and email of sponsored)	
<i>Student</i>	\$20			
<i>Developing economy</i>	\$20		Please refer to website for qualifying countries.	
<i>Marg Csapo Scholarship</i> (Donation)	\$ _____			
Total				

PAYMENT DETAILS:

VISA Master Card Discover Authorized.net (Please follow link on the website @ www.iase.org)	Name of Card holder (print): Credit card number: Expiry date:	Cheque Payable to: IASE Treasurer US funds Send membership form to: IASE Treasurer US funds PO Box 2159 Mesa AZ 85214
Billing Address:		

Details of 3 or more sponsored individuals

Name of sponsored individual	Email address

IASE's builds on current and historical strength to attend to her mission statement of reaching out to the wider international disability community. The following information that you provide will make a difference to our outcome as an IASE team and is greatly appreciated.

Name of member:-	Country :
------------------	-----------

Subject	Check level of participation	✓	Please specify where appropriate
Active participation	Research		
	Practical		
Profession (please check only 1)	Academic		
	Education		
	Therapy		
	Support service		
Area of interest (check NOT more than 2)	Policy/management		
	Specific disability		
	Transition / occupational		
	Social / Community		
	Advocacy		
	Communication/behavior		
	Others		
Interest for participating in IASE programs	Presentation		
	Sharing /Observing		

Effective 28 June, 2017 IASE is implementing rolling membership dates. This means that an individual new membership will be effective for a year after payment is processed. Membership renewal will work similarly: membership will be extended for one year provided a renewal is processed before the membership expires. If a renewal is received after the membership has expired, the new expiration date of the membership will be one year after the renewal.

Save the Date

19th Biennial Conference of the International Association of Special Education (IASE)



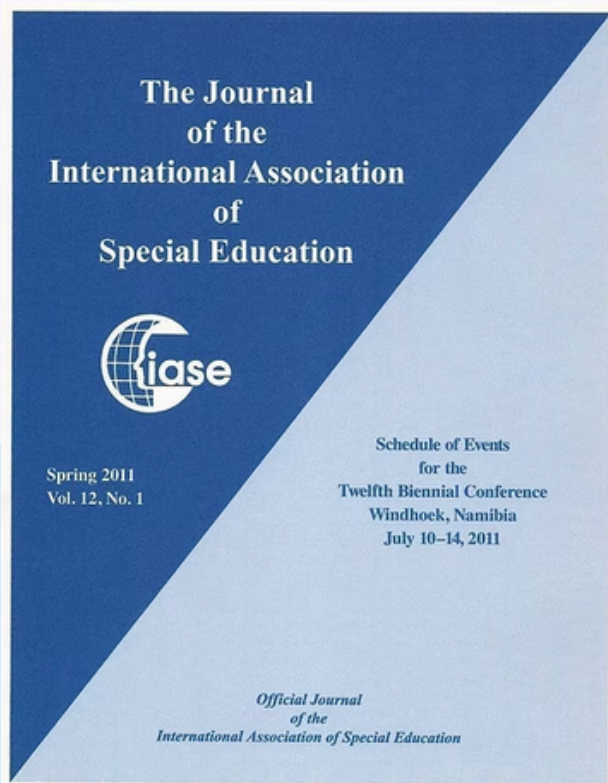
Cultivating Inclusive Futures: Innovations in Special Education
Thimphu, Bhutan
June 15, 2026- June 19, 2026
A Partnership between



JIASE - Journal of the International Association of Special Education

IASE would like to thank Renata Ticha for her leadership as journal editor. Girma Berhanu will take over as editor of JIASE. Once the transition takes place, the 2024/25 issue will be out.

As a member of IASE, you have access to JIASE. JIASE, is published annually in the spring. The ISSN # is 1555-6913. JIASE is listed with EBSCO, SWETS, and Wilson indexes. If you are an IASE member, you may purchase a journal for a fee of \$35 US. If you are not an IASE member, you may purchase an extra Journal for \$70 US. Purchase your journal today using the QR Code below.



SCAN ME

The IASE Conference Committee is looking for upcoming conference venues 2028. If you have suggestions, please share with the committee.

Newsletter Updates

By Samantha Riggleman

If you have any resources, stories, and pictures for a resource corner in future editions. Please email any additions to the newsletter to my email: srigglem@sju.edu.



Stay Up to Date

Visit the website: <https://www.iase.org/>



Save the Date

What: 19th biennial IASE conference

When: June 15-19, 2026

Where: Royal University of Bhutan