

Volume XXXXI, Issue 4,
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INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION



International Association of Special Education

Fostering a Global Exchange of Ideas and Information



*President's
Message*

Daniel McCarthy

As your IASE 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, supporting our VSP sites and continuing our Biennial conferences in a variety of venues in different countries that reflect and grow our membership.

In that regard, the IASE conference committee and the local Bhutan committee have been meeting to coordinate and plan for the 19th Biennial Conference, scheduled for June 21-26, 2026. The conference is a joint effort with IASE and the Royal Thimphu College (RTC) located in Thimphu, the capital of Bhutan.

As of the deadline for proposals, there were 172 submitted to our conference planning committee through our new website software Easy Chair. They are now under review, and the presenters will be notified by December 1st regarding their acceptance. Registration for the conference will open on the IASE website after December 3, 2025.

For any inquiries, please check our IASE website and get in touch with iaseconference2026@gmail.com.

**INSIDE,
WE ALSO
TALK
ABOUT:**

VSP Updates

Membership updates

Treasurer's Report

Save the Date - IASE
2026 Conference
Updates



President's Message continued

Regarding the issue of payments on our website, our treasurer, Dr. Drower has recently met with banking staff and hopefully the difficulties that some of our members have had in payment for dues will have been resolved. Please keep us informed on any issues that you may be having when using our website.

Recently, Dr. Carloyn Lindstrom, who has been our IASE President Elect resigned because of professional conflicts. In accordance with the IASE By-Laws, the Board has chosen Dr. Anupriya Chadha from India as the new Interm President-Elect. She has been a long-standing member and will be a strong voice and advocate for persons with disabilities on our IASE Board.

As in every organization like ours, communication between members is very important. In that regard, as President, I was able to have my first National Chairs zoom meeting on October 25, 2025. 5 National Chairs were able to join the meeting from Nigeria, Ghana, Bulgaria, India and our National Chair Committee Chair, Dr. Mrstik. Our next National Chairs meeting will be scheduled for early 2026.

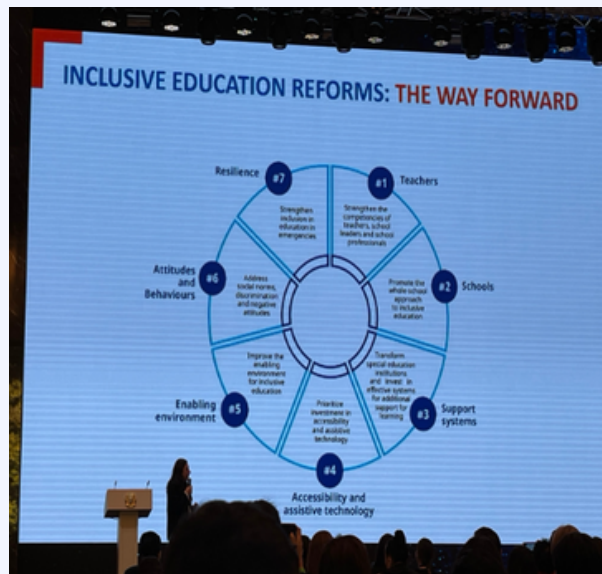
We have also continued our Virtual Dialogues as we had our 1st 2025 Virtual Dialogue on March 29th. The dialogue was focused on three presentations from our **National Chairs** in Canada, India and Nigeria. Our 2nd 2025 Virtual Dialogue was held on Saturday, September 6th. The focus was on: **Growing up with a Disability: Challenges and Accomplishments**.

Our next Virtual Dialogue is tentatively scheduled for January 2026 and will be a **conversation with doctoral students about their dissertation research**. Sherwin Fraser will lead the Dialogue.

These Dialogues have been a great success due to the effort of our Virtual Dialogue and National Chairs Committee chairperson Dr. Samantha Mrstik.

If you have any topics for future dialogues, please communicate your recommendations to Dr. Mrstik or any member of the Board.

As your president, I was invited to attend as a delegate to the 1st World Congress of Inclusion by the Ministry of Education of Kazakhstan which was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan from October 15-17, 2025. During the conference, I was able to meet other attendees and attend presentations by delegates from many of the participating countries. I shared information about our organization and upcoming conference in Bhutan.



As a reminder, the IASE Board meets 4 times during each calendar year. Our next scheduled Board meetings in 2026 are on 2/23 and 4/3. Our By-Laws require us to have a IASE Board meeting at each of our Biennial Conferences as well as a general Membership meeting open to all members. So, please plan to attend our conference in Bhutan and if you have any items for either of these meetings, please communicate to our leadership team. The contact information is located on our website at iase.org under About Us/Leadership/Board of Directors.

The Board and I will continue the effort 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. I want to especially thank, Dr. Renata Ticha for her work on our Biennial conference, Dr. Samantha Rigglesman for her editorship of our newsletter, Dr. Iris Drower for continuing efforts with the VSP sites and Dr. Samatha Mrstik and her co-chair, Sherwin Fraser for their valuable work on the Virtual Dialogues and National Chairs projects, Kalynn Pistorio who continues to manage our website and our 3 Board Members at Large: Tejal Kothari (India), Elia Dyiteg (Tanzania) and Dr. Jan Siska (Czech Republic).

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

Congratulations to Our Visit to Mwayi Trust Vocational Training College...an IASE Volunteer Service Project in Malawi, Africa

By Mary Gale Budzisz

Accompanied by Dr. Ambumulire Phiri, Eric Mchecka, Sandra Trevethan



I was there when it was a pile of red bricks, locally made by the villagers. Then I had the luxury of sorting the bricks, piling them into a wheelbarrow, and delivering them to the place on-site from which the local volunteers would grasp a single brick, and place it into the wet cement which was stirred by hand in an old open oil barrel. Water needed for the mixture was carried a distance by the local women...on their heads!!

I could not even lift the buckets, and these strong women carried the water across a dirt road on their heads. Watching the school walls rise up from the ground was breath-taking.



Building From the Ground Up



Fast forward....viewing the blue tin roof from my airplane landing in Blantyre, Malawi...did make my heart beat faster. After enjoying a delightful graduation ceremony, before the onset of Covid, with a five-year hiatus, I was back. Changes were evident, chickens chasing around, a huge bountiful garden, trees and bushes gracing the grounds, and the beautiful brick building standing stately on the campus.

Congratulations to Our Visit to Mwayi Trust Vocational Training College....an IASE Volunteer Service Project in Malawi, Africa



What transpires within the classrooms is even more awe-inspiring. The huge corner room has the whirring of sewing machines. Everyone was task oriented and sewing up a storm. Articles made by the students were displayed on the wall in the classroom. They included dresses and skirts for children and adults, shorts and pants with zippers, plus shirts with collars. The tailoring classes are well attended, and even after graduation some machines are available for returning graduates. They continue to take orders from surrounding villages and have stitched chef uniforms for a local restaurant and also school uniforms for local children.



Left to right: Manager Linda Banda, guest Dr. Ambumulire Phiri and CEO Sandra Trevethan

Instructor Chef (Arthur Kanyalika) wearing his baseball cap surrounded by his students



Peeking into the kitchen I inhaled the waft of succulent smells. The culinary students were in the process of preparing a lunch for us. The table was set, and the students in their chef attire were putting the final touches on a scrumptious luncheon. They served Dr. Ambumulire Phiri, Mary Gale, Eric Mchecka, Sandra Trevethan and Manager Linda Banda. Every item was eye-appealing and delicious.

Congratulations to Our Visit to Mwayi Trust Vocational Training College...an IASE Volunteer Service Project in Malawi, Africa



I was filled up with many yummy tastes. A small sign hanging above the dining table stating: "IASE provided this kitchen equipment", swelled my heart with pride to have these diligent students using these items to enhance their skills and abilities to commandeer their new jobs in the culinary field.

Other classrooms were designated for Carpentry classes, a Computer lab, a Library, and an on-suite bedroom and bathroom which is used to teach the skills to gain employment in local hotels and/or resorts. Local students now have the opportunity to attain gainful employment in their communities and beyond.



Everyone is happy on board with this incredible team. Even two special students help volunteer their time and complete a variety of tasks around the school.



Left to right: Instructor Chef Arthur Kanyalika, Instructor tailor, Anna Banda and guest Eric Mchecka

Featured: Mada and Prescott with Sandra Trevethan

Congratulations to Our Visit to Mwayi Trust Vocational Training College....an IASE Volunteer Service Project in Malawi, Africa

Sandra Trevethan, CEO of Mwayi Trust, must be given the proper accolades to credit her with accomplishing her altruistic vision of creating this project to provide dreams for students who previously did not realize that they were most capable young adults. The smiles on their faces and the warmth in their hearts truly signify that “the warm heart of Africa” is alive and well documented. The IASE Volunteer Service Project funds have been supportive along the way.



IASE Conference Updates

By Drs. Renata Tichá and Iris Drower

The quantity of proposals received from all across the world for our IASE Conference in Bhutan 2026 has been overwhelming. Thank you all for your interest! All proposals has now been closed. Our online system, Easy Chair, has informed you that your proposal has been received. We are currently conducting proposal reviews.

You have registered an account at <https://easychair.org/conferences/?conf=iase2026> and will receive notification of official acceptance from this system on or before December 1, 2025. Please check this link for updates:
<https://easychair.org/conferences>

Please fill out a [registration](#) form on our website. The payment forms will be up by Dec. 1st.

All questions about submissions and conference related items should be emailed to iaseconference2026@gmail.com

Photos (below) of the Royal Thimphu College Campus



IASE Conference Updates - Continued

Photo the Royal Thimphu College Campus (below)



For more information about the Royal Thimphu College (RTC) go to:

<https://www.rtc.bt>

Important Dates:

December 1, 2025: Notification of acceptance of proposal

December 2, 2025: Registration and housing choices opens

February 15, 2026: Conference proceedings due

March 1, 2026: Early bird registration and housing deadline

April 20, 2026: Final registration deadline

Spotlight: Salhati Mohamed Songoe – Growing with Confidence at Mountain of Joy Foundation (MJF) By Elia Dyitege



The Mountain of Joy Foundation is in Arusha, Tanzania, Bonden Street, BBC Road. MJF was founded in 2021 by Elia Dyitege, MJF is dedicated to supporting children and youth with disabilities and other co-occurring conditions to gain life skills and become independent rather than dependent. The organization believes that every young person deserves an opportunity to learn, contribute, and be valued by their community.

Despite funding issues, MJF continues to grow thanks to the enormous support of local residents and churches, particularly through church groups known as Deacones, which frequently offer food and basic goods. Despite its modest resources, MJF has already achieved significant success. Twelve young people have been hired by local businesses in a variety of positions, and five others are now preparing for volunteer opportunities. The initiative aims to construct an inclusive café in Arusha where youth can work and serve the public, reducing community stigma and creating sustainable employment possibilities.

SALHATI'S STORY

Among MJF's inspiring young people is 13-year-old Salhati Mohamed Songoe, who joined the foundation two years ago. Salhati was born with Down syndrome, and when she first arrived, she could not speak or do things independently. Through care, love, and continuous support at MJF, Salhati has made tremendous progress. Today, she speaks clearly, takes care of herself and joyfully helps her fellow students. Salhati especially loves music and dancing, and she is passionate about sewing. She enjoys making bags and helping others during activities. Her kindness and cheerful spirit make her loved by everyone at the center. **"We love Salhati because she loves taking care of her fellows,"** says one of the teachers proudly.

VISION AND MOTTO

Mountain of Joy Foundation continues to work tirelessly to create a community that focuses on abilities, not disabilities. Our motto is "Focus on my ability, not my disability" reflects our vision to build an inclusive and supportive society for all.

IASE Membership

Mountain of Joy Foundation is connected to the International Association of Special Education (IASE) through its founder and director, Mr. Elia Dyitege, who serves as the Member at Large for Tanzania. The team is honored to share stories like Salhati's, showing how inclusion, support, and opportunity can change lives.

SUPPORTING MJF

Mountain of Joy Foundation welcomes support from friends and partners who believe in inclusion and empowerment. If you are interested in supporting the continued work of MJF please contact me at eliadyitege95@gmail.com THANK YOU.

Spotlight: Salhati Mohamed Songoe – Growing with Confidence at Mountain of Joy Foundation (MJF)

By Elia Dyitege



Below are some pictures of Salhalti



Call for 2028 Biennial Site Venues

We are currently seeking proposals for the 2028 IASE Conference site. We welcome proposals for a venue site that meets the requirements listed below:

- Located in a city with an international airport and situated in reasonable proximity to hotels. In addition, there should be available low-cost sleeping rooms (e.g., dorms) for individuals who prefer to stay on the university campus.
- Provide adequate meeting space with 12-15 meeting rooms that would accommodate 25-35 persons, a large meeting space (to accommodate 400 people) for general plenary sessions, and space for registration, exhibits, and poster sessions.
- Provide needed equipment (e.g., overheads, and/or LCD projectors, screens, laptops, easels).
- Have food services available at/near venue site.
- Be willing to promote the conference in the region/country and designate a minimum of 5-6 people to serve on a Local Planning Committee to work with the IASE Planning Committee on conference needs (e.g., printing a program).
- Be willing to provide guidance to the IASE Planning Committee about tours, school visits, venue for Gala Dinner, and more.
- Be able and willing to accept registrations from your own country. This would include accepting the registrations and funds and maintaining appropriate records for accounting purposes.

If you are interested in hosting the 2028 IASE Conference, please submit a proposal to IASE addressing all the information listed above. All proposals should be forwarded to our IASE President by Feb. 1 2026. Your proposal should be sent to Daniel McCarthy at: DanielRNM@comcast.net The proposals will be reviewed by our Site Selection Committee. The recommended site(s) will be forwarded to the IASE Board for final selection at the spring 2026 Board Meeting. The final site will be announced at our 19th Biennial Conference in the Bhutan.



Please keep in mind that IASE will be celebrating its 40th birthday in Bhutan. Here are some highlights from our past events. Please share your favorite memory or photo to dririsdoug@gmail.com



Please share your recollections, images like those on this page, and testimonies about our 40 years as a leading Special Education organization.

We look forward to hearing from you and enjoying our continuous success.

Memories from Alicante, Spain 2009



IASE HISTORY MINUTE

DID YOU KNOW?

- The International Journal of Special Education's first Editor was Marg Csapo (our founder).
- The Journal was founded in 1986.
- The Editorial Board had representatives from 53 countries, including BHUTAN (site of our 2026 conference), including Father W. Mackey from the Ministry of Education
- How in the world did Marg know all of these people?
- *The International Journal of Special Education* is now an online journal. Our official publication, *The Journal of the International Association of Special Education*, was founded in 1997. See the full history of IASE Research on our webpage under the Journal tab.
<https://www.iase.org/history-of-iase-research>

Honored for the Legacy She Left Behind

It is with a heavy heart that I inform our IASE members of the recent passing of Bronwen Hewitt (UK). Everyone who knew Bronwen Hewitt well and had the opportunity to interact with her has been forever changed.



Since 2013, she has been the National Chair of IASE, presented at IASE conferences and engaged with our virtual dialogues.

Bronwen was a tireless advocate for the disabled population, a woman with a distinct vision who dedicated her life to assisting people who were unable to help themselves. Her generosity, creativity, and sense of humor impacted many lives and communities.

It is comforting to know that her legacy will live on via her artwork, beliefs, and the people she influenced through Hannah's, Leadworks, The Kintsugi Project, and other projects.

Her daughter added that “She loved working with you all at IASE it was very close to her heart and she often spoke to me about the work there.” Dr. Lealah Hewitt-Johns, Associate Professor, University of Plymouth.

In light of this sad news, let us take a minute to mourn, remember, and reflect on this remarkable woman.



| CALL FOR CO-SPONSORS |

19TH BIENNIAL CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION (IASE)

Cultivating Inclusive
Futures:

Innovations in Special Education

A Partnership between

INTERNATIONAL
ASSOCIATION OF
SPECIAL EDUCATION
(IASE)

&

ROYAL THIMPHU
COLLEGE (RTC) IN
BHUTAN

THIMPHU, BHUTAN

JUNE 21, 2026- JUNE 26, 2026

**SUBMIT YOUR SPONSORSHIP
HERE BY 15th APRIL 2026**



visit our website

www.iase.org | www.rtc.bh

Sponsorship Opportunities

We would appreciate your kind donation to help a local Bhutanese teacher, student, and wellness instructor attend our IASE conference. This is our chance to get together with peers and colleagues from throughout the international education sector to highlight voices from around the world, share ideas, and take stock of our progress as a group. We can also boldly move forward into the future we are building together. Every donation is appreciated. Go to: [Bhutan-sponsorship](#)

You can select from three types of sponsorships:

1. Scholarship for local teachers and students
 - a. Sponsor conference registration for 1 local students and/or teachers @ \$150 each or up to 10 for \$1,500.
2. Sponsorship of Wellness Breaks for conference participants
 - a. Support 1 local therapist and or wellness worker with and without disabilities during the conference Wellness Breaks @ \$50 a day.
3. Marg Csapo Scholarship Fund
 - a. Contribute to the Marg Csapo Scholarship Fund for international conference delegates who are IASE members from a developing country @ \$350 a person.

As a thank you for your sponsorship, we will include recognition of you and your organization on all communications regarding the conference. For Donors and organizations contributing over \$1000 USD we will provide an exhibit table, and your logo on a conference opening slide and on a conference banner. We will also acknowledge you and your organization during the conference opening.

Direct any inquiries to iaseconference2026@gmail.com.

Donate Today!

M e m b e r s h i p

Dr. Rachael A. Gonzáles, Membership Chair



THANK YOU to all IASE members who have sponsored individuals from developing economic countries. It is the commitment and support of sponsors who have helped spread the work of IASE across borders and make IASE stronger with its wide representation of individuals from different countries.

The role of a sponsor is to be supportive of the individual's goals, share research, foster collaboration and the opportunity of developing cross cultural understanding that impacts both special educator colleagues. There is no financial transaction between sponsor and individual being sponsored.

We need more sponsors to meet the needs of individuals requesting a sponsor. If you are interested in being a sponsor click on the donation button on the membership page <https://www.iase.org/membership> The website has been updated to make it easier for you to include all of the necessary information. You can either sponsor one new member for \$20.00 or sponsor five new members for \$100. Upon receiving your application, I will then go through the list of individuals requesting a sponsor and assign one to you. If you have any questions, please contact me at rgonzales@csus.edu

Just a **GENTLE REMINDER** – if you are a IASE member don't forget to renew your membership <https://www.iase.org/membership>. As you renew your IASE membership please consider sponsoring an individual from a developing economic country.

Also reach out to your colleagues and encourage them to join IASE so we can reach our goal of 500 membership.

Regular – \$50

Student – \$20

Developing Economy - \$20

Institutional - \$70

Regular + Sponsorship (from a developing economy) – \$70



CALL FOR IASE BOARD NOMINATIONS 2026-2028

Call for IASE Board Officers Nominations 2026- 2028 Nominations are being accepted from now until January 30th, 2026.

The following positions are open:

1. President-Elect, 1 to be elected for a two-year term
2. Secretary, 1 to be elected for a two-year term.
3. Treasurer, 1 to be elected for a two-year term
4. Member-at-Large, 3 to be elected for two year terms

Descriptions of the roles and responsibilities for each of the above positions are in IASE's constitution and by-laws which can be found at <http://iase/.org>. The Constitution states that the board shall be comprised of a minimum representation of 3 countries to reflect the international focus of the organization. Criteria for application include a valid IASE membership and prior experience with IASE (e.g., committee chair/work, volunteer service and/ or an elected position). Board members are not paid a salary and must attend meetings at their own voluntary expense. Send your current CV and your letter of intent to Dr. Renata Tichá at: tich0018@umn.edu



Treasurer's Report

By Dr. Iris Drower

As of November 1, 2025

Checking	\$3,546.56
VSP Account	\$15,238.50
Marg Scholarship	\$7,895.15
Operating Budget	\$92,236.72
CD 5 Months	\$50,000.00

Total available balance
\$168,916.93



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 :
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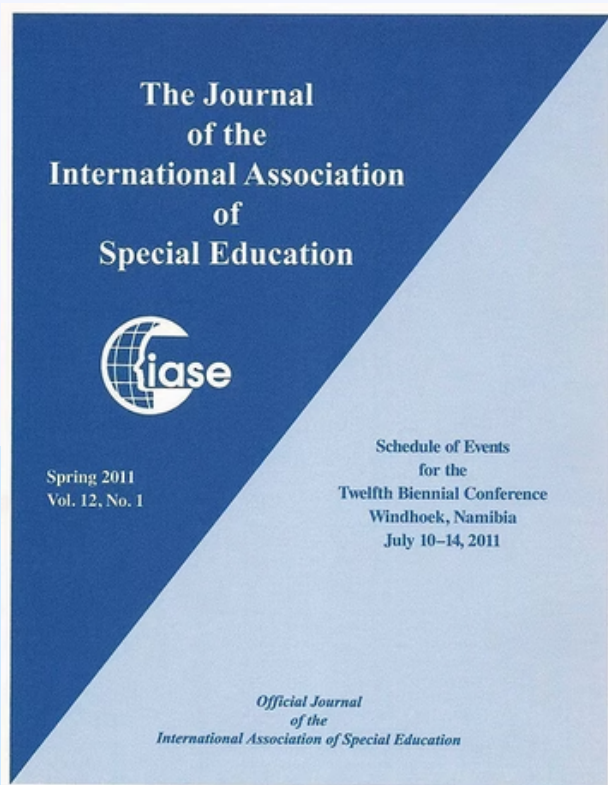
Subject	Check level of participation	✓	Please specify where appropriate
Active participation	Research		
	Practical		
Profession (please check only 1)	Academic		
	Education		
	Therapy		
	Support service		
Area of interest (check NOT more than 2)	Policy/management		
	Specific disability		
	Transition / 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.

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: sriggleman@luc.edu



Stay Up to Date

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



Save the Date

What: 19th biennial IASE conference

When: June 21-26, 2026

Where: Royal University of Bhutan