



International Commission on Mathematical Instruction

About ICMI

Background

The *International Commission on Mathematical Instruction*, ICMI, is a commission of the *International Mathematical Union* (IMU), an international nongovernmental and nonprofitmaking scientific organisation with the purpose of promoting international cooperation in mathematics. Among international organisations devoted to mathematics education, ICMI is distinctive because of its close ties to both the mathematics and the mathematics education professional communities, as well as for its breadth — thematic, cultural, and regional.

Established at the Fourth International Congress of Mathematicians held in Rome in 1908 with the initial mandate of analysing the similarities and differences in the secondary school teaching of mathematics among various countries, ICMI has expanded its objectives and activities considerably over the years. The Commission aims today to offer educational researchers, curriculum designers, educational policy makers, teachers of mathematics, mathematicians, mathematics educators and others interested in mathematical education, a forum to promote reflection, collaboration, exchange and dissemination of ideas and information on all aspects of the theory and practice of contemporary mathematical education from an international perspective. ICMI thus takes initiatives in inaugurating appropriate programmes designed to further the sound development of mathematical education at all levels, and to secure public appreciation of its importance. The Commission is also charged with the conduct of the activities of IMU bearing on mathematical or scientific education. In the pursuit of its objectives, the Commission cooperates with various groups, regional or thematic, which may be formed within or outside its own structure.

As a scientific union, IMU is a member organisation of the *International Council for Science* (ICSU). This implies that ICMI, through IMU, is to abide to the ICSU statutes, one of which establishes the principle of non-discrimination. This principle affirms the right and freedom of scientists to associate in international scientific activities regardless of citizenship, religion, political stance, ethnic origin, sex, and suchlike. Apart from observing general IMU and ICSU rules and principles, ICMI works with a large degree of autonomy.

Structure

Members of ICMI are not individuals but countries, namely those countries that are members of IMU and other countries specifically coopted to the Commission. Each member of ICMI appoints a Representative and may create a Sub-Commission for ICMI to maintain liaison with the Commission in all matters pertinent to its affairs. ICMI currently has 84 members.

The Commission is administered by the *Executive Committee (EC) of ICMI*, elected by the General Assembly of ICMI and responsible for conducting the business of the Commission in accordance with its Terms of Reference and subject to the direction and review of the members. The *General Assembly of ICMI*, consisting of the members of the ICMI EC and the Representatives to ICMI, convenes every four years in conjunction with the International Congress on Mathematical Education.

ICMI Activities

A major event in the life of the international mathematics education community, the quadrennial *International Congress on Mathematical Education, ICME*, is held under the auspices of ICMI and typically gathers more than three thousand participants from all over the world. The ICMI Executive Committee is responsible for the selection of a site for an ICME as well as for the appointment of an International Programme Committee, in charge of the scientific content of the congress. The practical and financial organisation of an ICME is the independent responsibility of a Local Organising Committee, under the observation of general ICMI principles. The Commission also organises or supports various activities, such as the *ICMI Study Programme*, in which each Study, built around an international study conference, addresses an issue or topic of particular significance in contemporary mathematics education and is directed towards the publication of a coherent, state-of-the art report appearing as a volume in the New ICMI Study Series (NISS); or the *ICMI Regional Conferences*, supported by ICMI morally and sometimes financially in order to facilitate the organisation of regional meetings on mathematics education, especially in less affluent parts of the world. In addition to these activities, of a more or less regular nature, ICMI involves itself in other activities on an *ad hoc* basis. Also ICMI is involved in the planning of the education components on the programme of the International Congresses of Mathematicians, the ICMs.

The *ICMI Solidarity Project* aims at increasing the commitment and involvement of mathematics educators around the world in order to help the furtherance of mathematics education in those parts of the world where there is a need for it that justifies international assistance and where the economic and socio-political contexts do not permit adequate and autonomous development.

ICMI has created two prizes, given in odd-numbered years since 2003, recognizing outstanding achievement in mathematics education research: the *Felix Klein Award*, honouring a lifetime achievement, and the *Hans Freudenthal Award*, recognising a major cumulative program of research.

ICMI Affiliated Study Groups

The Commission may approve the affiliation to ICMI of Study Groups, focussing on a specific field of interest and study in mathematics education consistent with its aims. The current Study

Groups affiliated to ICMI are the *International Study Group on the Relations between the History and Pedagogy of Mathematics* (HPM), the *International Study Group for Mathematical Modelling and Applications* (ICTMA), the *International Organization of Women and Mathematics Education* (IOWME), the *International Group for the Psychology of Mathematics Education* (PME) and the *World Federation of National Mathematics Competitions* (WFNMC).

Information and Communication

The official organ of ICMI since its inception is the international journal *L'Enseignement Mathématique*, founded in 1899. Under the editorship of the Secretary-General, ICMI publishes the *ICMI Bulletin*, appearing twice a year. The Bulletin is accessible on the ICMI website <http://www.mathunion.org/ICMI/>, where more information about ICMI can also be found. Since 2007, ICMI also publishes an electronic newsletter, *ICMI News*, appearing every two months. Free subscription to *ICMI News* is accessible via the ICMI website.

Support to ICMI

The principal source of ICMI's finances is the support it receives from IMU, its mother organisation. Every year ICMI thus has to file a financial report for the endorsement of IMU, as well as a scientific report on its activities. Quadrennial reports are presented to the General Assemblies of both IMU and ICMI. But one of the greatest strengths of ICMI is the time contributed freely by the hundreds of mathematicians and mathematics educators committed to the objectives of the Commission.