

ICEVI European Newsletter

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From the Board

Dear ICEVI-members

Hopefully you have all had a good vacation period that has given you new energy for the next year.

In November 2012, ICEVI will have another World Conference, which will take place in Bangkok, Thailand. This conference is a mutual initiative between ICEVI and WBU. The structure has been changed and thirteen persons from Europe can attend the conference. The Board will decide on who the participants will be.

This new structure goes together with the new policy to give shape to the regions of ICEVI: Europe, Africa, East Asia, Latin America, North America / Caribbean, Pacific and West Asia.

In this respect Europe is already working in line with the new structure. Once every 4 years a European Conference is held and, in the meantime, sub regional conferences take place, for example, the Balkan Conference and the Teacher Training conference.

Naturally the Board is open to new suggestions in order to give further shape to ICEVI-Europe.

The fifth conference for the East European countries, will take place in October 2011. The conference will take place in Baku, Azerbaijan. For more information you can contact

<http://www.icevi-europe.org/calendar/ee5conference2011.html>

Information will soon be placed on the website concerning the European Conference in July 2013 in Istanbul, Turkey.

This newsletter is thinner than usual, which gives me a reason to inform you that everyone can use the newsletter and the website of ICEVI.

I would like to receive copy for the next newsletter.

On behalf of the Board of ICEVI-Europe,
Hans Welling,
Chairman



Congratulations to two members of the Board



Recently two Board members have changed their hard working lives.

Mary Lee worked for the Royal Blind School in Edinburgh and in addition she was active internationally in delivering training in working with pupils with MDVI.

Eberhard Fuchs was connected to the Blindeninstitutsstiftung in Würzburg for many years and was also active internationally with the network MDVI Euronet.

I have had the pleasure to work with them both on the Board of ICEVI-Europe for many years. Therefore I have seen all their activities and their expertise in the field of children with multiple impairments.

Happily they will both continue to pursue their interests in the education and rehabilitation of children with visual impairment and, importantly, they both will remain Board members of ICEVI.

The Board of ICEVI considers itself fortunate and thanks Mary and Eberhard for their professional efforts in the past and their managerial contributions within ICEVI-Europe.

On behalf of the Board of ICEVI-Europe,
Hans Welling,
Chairman

Early language teaching to blind and partially sighted children through 70 different games and activities

January 2011

An abstract

A teacher's fear is the greatest enemy of all children with special needs – even blind and partially sighted, because it hinders the teaching process and often stems from a lack of knowledge. As we all have a right to knowledge, it is crucial to educate teachers to reconcile themselves with the special needs of the child and to show them the bright light at the end of the corridor, moreover; to tell teachers that their child is unique and special, a winner who could be independent and successful – also due to an appropriate approach to early language teaching through 70 different games and activities.

To start with...

When one wants to be a good teacher, one should never forget what it is like to be a student. If we are talking about a good teacher of blind and partially sighted children the idea is even more important. As an experienced teacher of blind and partially sighted, Roman Brvar, once said (Brvar, 2000: 11): "How is it possible to find something interesting, that does not exist (for you), something you could not imagine, something you have never dreamt of? This is a challenge for a teacher of blind and partially sighted children – to make a child interested in everything that is behind the wall of darkness. But when a hole is made in that wall... then comes a time of endless whys – a joyfulness for the child and satisfaction for the teacher." How to achieve this? To be innovative and able to adapt to one's special needs (Brvar, 2000: 69), moreover to have energy and positive attitude to teaching, because being without sight means being without 20 different abilities, which are not easy to compensate for.

Early language teaching with the correct attitude – a lot of games and funny activities – can be fun, because a new language, new culture, variety... is easily taught in that way. What does »correct attitude« mean? Firstly an emphatic and well-educated teacher is needed. What about if there is a blind or partially sighted child in our classroom? No games and fun approaches to teaching anymore? As an itinerant teacher I am really sorry, but my answer is: "Yes.". But why? It happens often that a teacher feels sorry for the blind or partially sighted child and suddenly does not find his subject or/and goals in the curriculum important any more. "Why should a blind child know colours?" "Why should she or he understand a foreign language?" "Why should one have to name all the buildings in the city in a foreign language since he/she could never see them?"

Sad but true. With the above statements we underestimate blind and partially sighted people. As I always say: "Blind and partially sighted (children) are not stupid, they just do not see (well) – **they see things in their own way.**" And it is our job to help them see.

To understand better:

Possibility to visit Antarctica in one's life is not very likely, but children are still taught about different types of land in the first years of school. This is the same story as when we talk about the blind and colours. We (teachers) are obliged to teach all the things in the curriculum, despite the fact that we find some things unnecessary; it is not a question, it is our duty to do so.

The beginning is always hard, even when teaching a blind or partially sighted child. In Slovenia teachers who are expecting a blind or partially sighted child to come in their class, are usually invited to the Institute for blind and partially sighted, Ljubljana, to participate in a seminar about teaching blind and partially sighted children. The itinerant teacher comes to their school to talk about the blind or partially sighted child and his/her needs. There is a lecture for all the school staff and parents... that is organized at the school, but despite that, in the end teacher stands alone in front of the class. There are some teachers who seek help and advice from the itinerant teacher, but those are very few.

And this is the reason why I have prepared a short list of basic advice and more than 70 different games, that can be played in the classroom in which the blind or partially sighted child is enrolled. All the games are authorial and have already been used in the classroom for different subjects: English, mathematics, mother tongue, science, art, physical education... The games are divided into different groups that occur when teaching a foreign language, but despite that all the activities and games can be used with different subjects and also in the classroom without a child with special needs or in the classroom with a child with different special needs – with some reasonable adaptations.

A SHORT LIST OF BASIC ADVICE TO WORK WITH THE BLIND OR PARTIALLY SIGHTED CHILD

- All activities and games are a result of practical work and have already been tested in practice. They have all had successful results. They can be played in bigger or smaller groups of children.
- Blind or partially sighted child should sit closer to the teacher, so he/she will be the first one to get a new object in his/her hands.
- Blind or partially sighted child should work with real and concrete material so he/she gains a concrete experience. That kind of experience will make lessons better for all the students.
- Blind or partially sighted child is allowed to do fewer examples than his/her sighted peers, because he/she is often slower at his/her work.

- When talking to a blind child we can still use colours (often in combination with other adjectives) and verbs to see, to look, to observe...
- All the written activities should be taken as an appendix to activities in teachers' manuals.
- There are several activities that can be used with different subjects in different units.
- A blind child should always be helped with the orientation of the material, picture. We should be systematic and always start from the same position.
- Do not get angry if the child is not looking in your eyes when talking to you, but he/she is turning his/her ears to you. The reason why he/she is doing this is to hear you better.
- Do not get angry if the child is reading »with his nose« – this is the only way for him/her to see what is written.
- If you do not know how, if you do not have an idea, just do not say: "This is not possible."; rather find the help of an expert who is working with your child, someone who knows how.

ACTIVITIES AND GAMES THAT CAN BE PLAYED IN THE CLASSROOM DIVIDED INTO GROUPS

1 ME

(Presentation of yourself, your look, personality, interests, hobbies, experiences and plans)

NAME – MY NAME IS...

Material: /

Comment: all the children should play. We finish with positive intonation.

Activity, game: children sit on the floor in the circle. In the first round everybody says his/her name in the way somebody would call him/her when he/she would be angry with him/her. In the second round in the way somebody would call him/her when he/she would be satisfied with him/her. We can play this game as long as children are interested and use as many adjectives as we want.

NUMBERS – AN ECHO

Material: cards with numbers or concrete material.

Comment: teacher should ask all the children in the classroom.

Activity, game: children are given different numbers (written on the piece of paper or concrete material – Lego, pebble...). Then the teacher asks: "How old are you?" Child answers (according to the given number): "One." Teacher: "Sorry?" Class: "One."

NUMBERS – HOW MANY FINGERS CAN YOU FEEL?

Material: /

Comment: pair work.

Activity, game: One child turns his/her back to the other. The other child touches his/her back with his/her fingers and he/she should guess the number of fingers he/she has been touched with. They switch rolls.

COLOURS – WHAT IS A COLOUR?

Material: plasticine.

Comment: a discussion about colours, what colour is what. When we are talking about, for example, red colour, we give children a piece of red plasticine.

Activity, game: children are asked to make snakes of plasticine and paste them one above the other in the form of an arc to make a rainbow.

COLOURS – WHAT COLOUR IS A BANANA?

Material: different objects, pictures of different colours (for example: red apple, green grass, blue sea, brown chair, yellow sun, orange orange, black horse, white cat, gold goldfish).

Comment: objects are introduced to the children (in touch and colour). Blind child should keep the objects in the box in order not to lose them.

Activity, game: Every child is given different objects or pictures (everybody the same). Teacher or one child gives instruction on what to touch. If he/she says: "Touch something blue." children do not touch anything, but if he/she says: "Teacher (Anna) says, touch something blue." everybody touches an objects or a picture of a blue colour.

ADJECTIVES – A MAGIC TOUCH

Material: /

Comment: children can stand around the classroom, in a circle or behind their chairs as well.

Activity, game: Teacher and some children are walking around the classroom. When they touch a child, they give him/her certain order, for example: "big". This child should turn into a "big one", until somebody else touches him/her with a different order, for example "small" (fast / slow; thin / fat; happy / sad; old / young; tall / short).

CLOTHES – A FASHION SHOW

Material: a bag with clothes.

Comment: clothes are put on the clothes already dressed up.

Activity, game: child takes out of the bag one piece of clothing, dresses it up and walks around the classroom, pretending to be a model in a fashion show. All the others are saying what he/she is wearing ("She/ he is wearing a hat.").

CLOTHES – A MAGIC SHEET

Material: a bag with clothes, sheet or a blanket.

Comment: clothes are put on the clothes already dressed up.

Activity, game: children sit in a form of a circle. Everybody closes their eyes or turns around as we pick one child to dress up in new clothing. Then we cover the child with a blanket to prevent other children seeing what he/she is

wearing. Other children open their eyes and start guessing what is a child covered with a blanket wearing.

All the described activities and games are simple to play, children love them, they forget about embarrassment when talking a foreign language (My name is ...), a lot of them involve movement (A fashion show, A magic touch), which children often lack and laugh (An echo). Children relax during competition (What colour is a banana?) and make connections in the group. They usually like to guess and be surprised (How many fingers can you feel). Through games they learn to be different and equal (A magic sheet). All the described activities and games can be used in all parts of the lessons, as motivation, introduction to a new theme, vocabulary or at the very end of the lesson for revision, relaxation or just to have fun.

For further information See website www.icevi-europe.org

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IS 'EDUCATION FOR ALL' FAILING BLIND CHILDREN?

ICEVI Media Release: for "immediate Publication
5 July 2011

Six million children worldwide have a disabling visual impairment, and a shocking 4.4 million of them (over 90 per cent of those in developing countries) receive no education at all. The International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) presented this bleak picture of the educational opportunities available to children who are blind or have poor sight at a high level Strategic Planning Summit held in connection with the 5th IDP Africa Forum in Accra, Ghana, 1--4 July.

In 1990 the United Nations launched its Education for All (EFA) initiative with the goal of universal access to education by 2015. EFA has made significant progress in reaching non-disabled children, but it has largely failed to include children with disabilities, particularly those requiring alternative modes of communication, such as blind and partially sighted children.

Lord Colin Low, ICEVI President, says: "The funding for EFA comes largely from developed countries, so they have a responsibility to ask why children with disabilities are still not effectively being reached by this initiative. The funding should serve all children, but currently those with visual impairments or other disabilities are being failed."

ICEVI has renewed its commitment to end the educational exclusion of children who are blind or have poor sight through the Education for All Visually Impaired Children (EFA-VI) campaign, a global initiative led by ICEVI and the

World Blind Union (WBU) and supported by the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB). These organisations have developed a Joint Strategy to ensure that national governments make specific provision in national EFA plans for children with visual impairment.

The EFA-VI campaign has made significant progress since it launched four years ago, with programmes in twelve 'focus' countries across Africa, Asia and Latin America. It assists developing countries with technical advice and support to make sure that their national plans address the needs of children with visual impairments. ICEVI has now resolved to take the campaign to the next stage in Africa by mobilising support to extend it to more focus countries and by strengthening its regional network and links with partner organisations.

NOTES TO EDITORS

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There are 6 million children worldwide who have a disabling visual impairment, 80% of them in developing countries. Of these, ICEVI estimates that over 90 % or 4.4 million receive no education at all.

ICEVI (the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment), founded in 1952, is a worldwide organisation of professionals, mainly teachers and educators, who work to promote the education of children and young people with visual impairment through advocacy, good practice advice and training. It is organised into seven regions worldwide, each with a chair and committee.

The Education for All Visually Impaired Children (EFA-VI) campaign is a specific initiative to get visually impaired children, who widely experience school exclusion worldwide, into school. In addition to persuading national governments to include visually impaired children in national EFA plans, it seeks to use its influence with the World Bank to make sure that provision of textbooks in accessible form is made a condition of World Bank investment in EFA programmes.

ENDS

UN-ECOSOC Statement from ICEVI

The Imperative for the Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in MDG #2 - Universal Access to Education by 2015

Statement of the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI)

Over the past decade the UN and its member organizations have made impressive progress toward achieving Millennium Development Goal #2 "Universal Access to Education" through the Education For All--Fast Track Initiative. Today, millions of children in the developing world have access to their right to education for the first time.

However, for children with disabilities and their families the reality has been entirely different. For these families it is most likely that their disabled child remains at home with no access to education, resulting in an increased economic burden on the family that almost certainly condemns the disabled child to a life of poverty and illiteracy.

This is a situation that must be addressed if Education For All is really to be "for ALL." In 2003 the Executive Committee of the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) expressed concern and a determination to change this situation for the more than 4 million visually impaired children in the developing world that today have no access to education.

ICEVI systematically examined the root causes of this serious inequity and developed a "Global Campaign on Education for All Children with Visual Impairment" (EFA-VI) that was launched in mid-2006 and involves the World Blind Union (WBU), twelve international non-government agencies working in the fields of blindness prevention, education and rehabilitation and governments of the 11 countries where this initiative is now underway. Data from 7 of these 11 focus countries indicates that during a period of just 24 months more than 32,000 visually impaired children were enrolled in community schools, most for the very first time.

While we are pleased with these initial results, we are far from satisfied with the plight of the millions of visually impaired and other disabled children for whom the right to education remains only an elusive dream.

ICEVI feels strongly that if MDG #2 is to be achieved and Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN-CRPD) is to be moved from intention to reality, the UN, its member organizations, national governments, disabled persons' organizations and the NGO community must focus concentrated efforts on addressing, within the EFA Fast-Track Initiative, the educational needs of children with disabilities to:

- assure that the needs of disabled children are reflected in all EFA National Plans
- encourage and support capacity building programs for specialized and regular classroom teachers and other human resources
- assure that educational services are inclusive of all children with disabilities and
- provide textbooks and other educational materials that are fully accessible to the learning needs of the child.

MDG #2 can only be achieved if the needs of children with disabilities and their families are immediately given high priority.

The time has come for the UN, the EFA Fast Track Initiative and governments of all countries to address the serious discrepancy that exists between the rates of access to education for disabled and non-disabled children.

ICEVI stands ready to share its experience with governments and UN member organizations. Working together we feel confident that the needs of all disabled children can be effectively addressed, making "Education For All" **truly FOR ALL.**

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Summary.

Now in Russia and Countries of East-European region has been widely discussed the topic of inclusive education. Namely this topic was devoted a five- day (21-25 August) workshop in St. Petersburg, Russia. This workshop was aimed at the formation of competencies demanded in connection with the introduction of the Federal state educational standards of the second generation in the practice of general educational institutions. The objectives of this standard involve the use of inclusive education - the humanist and adequate to the contemporary society. This area is given priority at the seminar.

Target group: administrative and teaching staff of educational establishments (Saratov, Moscow), parents of v.i. children (St.Petersburg), Regional Chair ICEVI-E on EE Countries. The trip of Saratov and Moscow experts was organized in the framework of the project "Equality of the Law for Everybody – the Foundation of Democracy" (the grant of Matra program, the Embassy of the Netherlands in the Russian Federation). One of the goals of the project is to study the Saint-Petersburg's regional legislation in the sphere of education of impaired children.

The participants visited Russian State Pedagogical Institute named after A.I. Herzen (www.herzen.spb.ru), where Dr V. Kantor told about working out a

regional legislation in the sphere of Special Education. Principal of the Special School for Blind Children (<http://grot-school.ru>) A. Muhin told about the system of Special Education in Saint-Petersburg. Special emphasis was made on the system of Inclusive Education. During the meeting with the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Child S. Agapitova (www.spbdeti.org) a question about children law violation was examined.

A. Vitkovskaya, Deputy of rector of the Special Pedagogic and Psychology Institute named after R. Vallenberg (<http://wallenberg.ru>) and L. Rostomashvili, the Dean of Adaptive Physical Training Department told about home and foreign experience of Inclusive Education of the impaired children.

The participants of the Project kindly thank L. Plastunova, the Regional Chair of the ICEVI-E on EE Countries, for the help in organizing all the arrangements.

The workshop was held on the threshold of **5 International Conference of East- European and Euro-Asian countries "Inclusive Education: experience and perspectives", 14-15 October 2011, Baku, Azerbaijan.** We invite all to participate in this conference, detailed information on the website: www.icevi-europe.org

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Vocational English Teaching for Visually Impaired People, Newsletter 03



Grundtvig and Comenius course for language teachers wishing to enrol blind or visually impaired learners

The Vet4Vip project offers a Train the Trainer course for language teachers on how to integrate blind and visually impaired learners into their language classes.

The Challenge

If blind or visually impaired people (VIP) want to learn a language, they face a problem. Usually, they learn a foreign language either as children in special schools for VIP or in the framework of rehabilitation training. If they

approach training centres later in life, they find out that these centres are usually not equipped for visually impaired people. Furthermore, teachers (in both the private and public sectors) need to receive adequate training and materials as most training materials are based on printed matter or visual information (pictures, whiteboard, beamer, etc.). Audio material is available, but almost always designed as an add-on for books and papers. Therefore, if visually impaired people approach language schools, they are very often refused, because these schools neither have the training materials nor trained teachers to cope with them.

The Course

Since one of the major challenges is to find qualified language teachers capable of teaching VIP, the project produced a training framework for existing language teachers giving them the skills necessary to integrate VIPs into their language classes. The Train the Trainer course for language teachers is described in the course framework which is based on the experience of the partnership and a needs analysis undertaken by the project. The course itself is designed as a five-day workshop and is offered as a Grundtvig or Comenius course by the partnership. Each course is organised by a school for VIP and a language school.

Details of the course can be found at the Comenius – Grundtvig Training database under <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/llp/istcoursedatabase> In the search form for applicants , select “E – In-service training in languages” for the main field, and enter “visually impaired” as part of the title.

The Grundtvig course (for teachers in adult education) and the Comenius course (for school teachers) can be fully supported with grants if the course is taken in another country. Teachers who are interested in taking this course in another country can apply to their national agency. A list of the national agencies can be found under http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc1208_en.htm

Deadline for a grant application to the national agency: 16th of September 2011

Deadline for standard enrolment (direct payer): 31st of December 2011

Places and Times

Germany: Bildungszentrum für Blinde u. Sehbehinderte

The BFW Würzburg gGmbH is a nationwide social services provider for vocational rehabilitation and training of adult people who are blind or visually impaired. The primary aim of the BFW is the reintegration of blind and visually impaired people for for their professional and social life.

Location: Würzburg, near Frankfurt am Main
Times: 26/03/2012 – 30/03/2012
Course: Grundtvig (DE-2012-1183-001)
Contact: Petra Baader (baader@bfw-wuerzburg.de)
Web: <http://www.bfw-wuerzburg.de>

The Netherlands: Bartiméus Onderwijs

Bartiméus is an organization which provides services for the visually impaired and blind. Bartiméus supports visually impaired and blind children, young people, adults and the elderly so that they can live, study and work as independently as possible. This also applies to visually impaired and blind people with a mental handicap.

Location: Zeist, near Amsterdam
Times: 16/04/2012 – 20/04/2012
Course: Grundtvig (NL-2012-257-001) and Comenius (NL-2012-256-001)
Contact: Henk Snetselaar (hsnetselaar@bartimeus.nl)
Web: <http://www.bartimeus.nl>

United Kingdom: Royal National College for the Blind

The Royal National College for the Blind (RNC) is one of the largest specialist colleges for visually impaired people in the world with 165 learners and 220 staff. Staff members are engaged in Teaching, Rehabilitation Work, Residential and Support Care, Programme Enrichment, Vocational Preparation, Commercial Research, Research & Design.

Location: Hereford, near Birmingham/Bristol
Times: 23/04/2012 – 27/04/2012
Course: Grundtvig and Comenius
Contact: Sheila Cook (sheila.cook@rncb.ac.uk)
Web: <http://www.rncb.ac.uk>

Note: Please check the training database for coming details

Italy: Italian Union of Blind Florence

The Italian Union of the Visually Impaired (UICI), founded in 1920 in Florence, has more than 100 local branches in all Italian provinces. The UICI is member of the European Union of the Blind as well as of the World Blind Union. Its mission is to facilitate social integration of visually impaired people and to promote a more realistic attitude of Public Authorities.

Location: Florence
Times: to be defined
Course: Grundtvig
Contact: to be defined
Web: <http://www.uicifirenze.it>
Note: Please check the training database for coming details

Course Overview

Monday

- Introduction to the Vet4Vip course
- Being Blind – common ideas about blindness, realistic expectations, consequences in everyday life
- Being Blind – Examining the effect of visual impairment on the learning process
- Blindfold Lesson – Learning to become “Sighted Guides”
- Blindfold Lesson: finding your classroom; finding your place in the classroom; finding objects on your desk

Tuesday

- Examining psychological aspects of visual impairment and carers of visually impaired people
- Introduction to Braille and Large Print - Different ways to read and write
- Assistive Technology Part 1 – introduction + hands on experience of what could be used in the classroom.
- Study Visit – Classroom Observation
- Initiating Language Activities

Wednesday

- Adapting + Exploiting Course Books – Sample activities based on Course Books focusing on Grammar Group Work.
- Assistive Technology Part 2 – introduction + hands on experience of what could be used in the classroom.
- ALLVIP Technology - Introduction to the ALLVIP technology
- Transforming information in accessible formats
- Realia – using resources exploiting non-visual senses – touch, sound etc. Sample activities and feedback and extension.

Thursday

- Adapting + Exploiting Authentic Materials
- Creating own activity based on authentic materials.
- Focus on ‘using’ sighted learners as resource: Dictionaries and Encyclopaedias
- Vocabulary and Writing: Identifying challenges + finding solutions through Technology + Ingenuity

Friday

- Study Visit - Practicalities
- Preparing a set of guidelines for own schools.
- Teacher Presentations – micro teaching + feedback
- Course Round-up (feedback, evaluation, sustainability)

The Project Partnership

To achieve these goals, the partnership consists of adult training institutions, language schools, and schools for the blind in Germany, Ireland, Italy, United Kingdom, and the Netherlands.

- Deutsche Angestellten-Akademie Berlin (DE) Project Coordinator
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- Centro Machiavelli Tandem Florence (IT)
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- Bildungszentrum für Blinde u. Sehbehinderte (DE)
Contact: Beate Ströhlein, email: akurse@bfw-wuerzburg.de
- Language in Dublin Ltd (IE)
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- Bartiméus Onderwijs (NL)
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- Royal National College for the Blind (UK)
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The Project

VET4VIP is a multilateral Lingua project with a total running time of 30 months (December 2009 - May 2012) and is promoted with the support of the European Union.

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Details of the course can be found at the Comenius – Grundtvig Training database under <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/llp/istcoursedatabase>

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EBU nominations for MEP Awards 2011

*European Blind Union Press release
Paris, 5 September 2011*

The European Blind Union (EBU) is pleased to announce that it has nominated three Members of the European Parliament for the MEP Awards 2011. These nominations are recognition of the special contribution that these MEPs have made to the advancement of disability rights over the last year.

In the 'Culture and Education' category, EBU nominated Austrian MEP Eva Lichtenberger. Ms Lichtenberger has for the last two years strongly supported EBU's campaign for a treaty at the World Intellectual Property Organisation to ensure better access to books for blind and other print disabled people. She has worked closely with EBU on its European campaign, and within Parliament to gather support from fellow MEPs.

In the 'Internal Market and Customer Protection' category, EBU jointly nominated MEPs Ádám Kósa and Konstantinos Poupakis, who initiated written declaration 14/2011 calling for more Braille and accessible labelling on consumer products. EBU gave its support to the written declaration, which gathered a record-breaking number of signatures, becoming the most supported written declaration in this parliament and raising the profile of an issue that affects blind and partially sighted people every day.

EBU President, Lord Low, said: "There are many MEPs who work very hard behind the scenes to improve the rights of disabled people. This year, we chose to nominate Eva Lichtenberger, Ádám Kósa and Konstantinos Poupakis in recognition of their efforts to further the rights of blind and partially sighted people. Their commitment, enthusiasm and political skills are second to none, and the European Blind Union is grateful for their support."

Notes to editors

The MEP awards are organised by the Parliament Magazine in Brussels.

Nominations are made by European trade and professional associations and interest groups working in sector-specific areas. The winners of the MEP Awards 2011 will be announced on 29 November in Brussels. For more information: <http://www.mepawards.eu>

Link to written declaration 14/2011: <http://bit.ly/rqn3hK> or EBU website: <http://www.euroblind.org/news/nr/405>.

About EBU

EBU is a non-governmental, non profit making European organisation founded in 1984. It is one of the six regional bodies of the World Blind Union. It protects and promotes the interests of blind and partially sighted people in Europe. It currently operates within a network of national organisations of the visually impaired in 45 European countries.

EBU

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Email: ebu@euroblind.org

www.euroblind.org

Announcements

"Braille - My Musical Language"

"Braille - My Musical Language" is a beautiful and moving film about three blind musicians, who through their own personal stories emphasize the importance of Braille Music. The National Library for persons with Print Disabilities, NOTA has produced a short film in English (11 min.) about Braille and music, that IBOS has been a bit involved in because of our musical youth camps and musical educations for VIPs. Download at www.nota.nu/braillefilm

NOTA are with this film promoting their free international service on braillenotes, that can be downloaded or ordered for a cd at www.nota.nu/braillemusic.

Photo project with blind people

I'm pleased to inform you that there is a new photographic work with blind people - please look at: <http://www.kilianfoerster.de/blind.htm>

With this project I try to show what blind people are able to »see«. Please contact me, if you have further questions or remarks about my work.

With kind regards,
Kilian Foerster, Germany
www.kilianfoerster.de

Conferences

27-30 September 2011

Braille 21: World Congress of Braille in the 21st Century, Leipzig (Germany)

website: www.braille21.net

5-8 October 2011

EVER 2011 - European Association for Vision and Eye Research, Crete (Greece)

website: www.ever.be

8-9 November 2011

A two day International Conference on Witchcraft Branding, Spirit Possession and Safeguarding African Children, London (UK)

Email: prospera@afruca.org

15-17 November 2011

Symposium on music technology, Copenhagen (Denmark)

Email: lnw@ibos.dk or lb@ibos.dk

Phone: +45 2616 5207 or +45 3945 2327

27-29 September 2012

8th International Conference "Research in education and rehabilitation sciences", Zagreb (Croatia)

website: www.conference.erf.hr

Call for Papers

A two day International Conference on Witchcraft Branding, Spirit Possession and Safeguarding African Children

Venue: London, UK

Date: 8-9 November 2011

Introduction

Increasing numbers of African children are suffering the consequences of being branded as witches or as possessed by evil spirits. This is particularly so in many parts of Africa and is equally a reality here in the UK. Accusations of witchcraft within a community can lead to a litany of abuses: physical, emotional, and sexual and neglect resulting in maltreatment, torture and in some instances, death. In some African countries, it has led to children being rejected by their families, forcing children as young as 5 years onto the streets where they are further exposed to other forms of abuse and exploitation. These children resort to a range of survival mechanisms including drug abuse and theft. In the UK, there have been many recorded cases of children abused and harmed by their families in the belief that they are witches. At least two

cases of children killed as a direct result of witchcraft branding are known to have occurred in the country.

The need to understand the context within which this form of abuse occurs, identify the drivers of witchcraft branding and examine strategies to increase protection for vulnerable children has become necessary in order to protect children from continuous harm.

This unique and timely conference will attract participants from across Europe, Asia and Africa to a two day Conference where the following themes will be explored through Papers, Workshops, Presentations and Posters.

1. Witchcraft branding and the mental health of victims
2. Witchcraft, religion and spirit possession
3. Witchcraft, poverty and social exclusion?
4. Witchcraft branding, culture and traditional beliefs
5. Witchcraft branding and the legal framework in European and African countries
6. Satanism and child abuse

You are invited to submit your **300 word abstract** by Friday 5 August 2011. Abstracts should clearly indicate your preferred method of delivery and the theme/s your paper will address. If an abstract is accepted for the conference, a full draft paper should be submitted by Wednesday 8 October 2011, along with a 100 word summary for the Programme Booklet. Abstracts received will be double blind peer reviewed where appropriate. Abstracts should be submitted to the Organising Committee and abstracts may be in Word or RTF formats with the following information and in this order:

1. a) author(s), b) affiliation, c) email address, d) title of abstract, e) body of abstract
2. E-mails should be titled: **Witchcraft Branding, Spirit Possession and Safeguarding African Children**

Please use plain text (Arial 11) and abstain from using footnotes and any special formatting, characters or emphasis (such as bold, italics or underline). We will acknowledge receipt and answer to all paper proposals submitted. If you do not receive an acknowledgement from us within a week you should assume we did not receive your proposal and resend.

Please submit your abstracts to:

Prospera Tedam
Chairperson, AFRUCA
Email: prospera@afruca.org

Call for Symposium on Music Technology

Place Institute for the Blind and Partially Sighted, Copenhagen, Denmark

Time Tuesday the 15 'th to the 17 'th of November 2011

Price 2500 DKK incl. lunch and dinner both days. Wednesday afternoon and evening will be spent in Copenhagen City.

Key note speaker Edina Hadziselimovic, employee at IBOS

Guest speakers

- Lydia Marchel, Prima Vista Braille Music Services Limited
- Stig Hedlund, sound engineer
- Sara Backström-Lindeberg Music consultant, (Resurscenter Syn på engelska?), Sweden
- Edvart Sæter, Music consultant Huseby Resource Centre, Norway

The main focus will be

- The current status and the need to develop music technology to simplify practical learning within music in Europe.
- The current status on Braille Music Notation within music education.
- Creating an European Network

For further information and registration please contact

Lisbeth Nørregaard Wallgren, Coordinator lnw@ibos.dk or +45 2616 5207

Lise Bang, Secretary lb@ibos.dk or +45 3945 2327

1. Registration

Name

Title

Place of employment

Address

Mail address

Phone numbers