

European Newsletter 1 • 2005

Happy New Year to all our readers and ICEVI members!

2005 is a very important year for ICEVI-Europe. Our 5th conference will take place from 14th-18th August in Chemnitz, Germany. Already many of you have indicated an interest in attending and also in presenting workshops, papers, posters and videos. Because time passes so quickly and there is so much to do before the conference, both for the organisers and for you, who, I hope, will be participating as delegates, we are using this issue of the newsletter to give you more information about the conference. If

you receive your own copy of this newsletter, you will also soon receive by post, an information and registration brochure. However, continue to keep a lookout on our conference website www.icevi2005.de for further details.

In this issue of the newsletter you will also hear about the recent ICEVI Teacher Training workshop held in Budapest in September 2004. Antonina Adamowicz-Hummel tells us about a Polish-Hungarian O&M, ADL cooperation. How electronic textbooks are produced for blind and partially sighted pupils and students in Serbia is the topic of Tihomir Nikolic's article. Good reading!

Marianna Buultjens
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Solveig Sjøstedt welcomes Participants to
the Teacher Training Workshop in Budapest

A Polish-Hungarian cooperation

A custom made **Postgraduate Program in Orientation and Mobility and Activities of Daily Living of Blind and Low Vision Persons** was 'commissioned' by the School for Blind Children in Budapest at the Academy of Special Education in Warsaw and implemented there October 2003 - October 2004. The participants were eight employees of the educational and rehabilitation settings for the visually impaired in Hungary. The Program was implemented in close cooperation with AWARE Europe Foundation and with the Institute for the Blind at Laski near Warsaw where most of the Poland-based training took place.

The Program goal was to prepare the participants to provide quality O&M and ADL services to persons with visual impairment in order to enhance their independence at home and in the community, and their capacity to compete with sighted individuals at school and on the labour market.

The curriculum had been developed by a Polish-Hungarian team. It drew from the experiences acquired under the regional Central European teacher training project sponsored by the Open Society Institute of the Soros Foundation and implemented by the Academy of Special Education in Warsaw and two non-profit ngo's – AWARE (USA) and AWARE Europe in 1994-2000.

The Program had a part-time format, the students getting together for 5-7 day training

session every few weeks. There were a total of 11 sessions – first five training sessions and the final graduation session held in Poland, and five sessions held in Hungary (in Budapest and Debrecen).

Instruction included theoretical classes, simulation activities, demonstration/observation classes and discussions, supervised instruction of participants' own students/clients - observed by fellow students. It was practice-oriented, with an emphasis on individual work and in-depth feedback from the teacher and peers. The competency-based course in Orientation and Mobility - which was the main focus of the Program - ended with an extensive practical exam which consisted of a thorough evaluation of skills. A lot of emphasis was put on the issues related to developing and maintaining professional documentation – collecting data, selecting/adapting assessment tools, developing individual education/rehabilitation plans, writing progress reports.

The language of instruction was Polish or English, with interpretation into Hungarian. The final evaluation by the participants showed the highest degree of satisfaction with the Program, both content- and organizationwise. The costs of Program were fully covered from the grant awarded to the School for Blind Children in Budapest by the Hungarian Ministry of Health and Social and Family Affairs.

Antonina Adamowicz-Hummel
Program Director



On the photo, left to right: Antonina Adamowicz-Hummel (Program Director), Janusz Preis and Ma³gorzata Walkiewicz (Key Instructors, O&M) and Jolanta Katzenbach (Hungarian Coordinator of the Program)

**”Education – aiming for excellence”
ICEVI European Conference
15th – 18th August, 2005**

Conference Promoter

ICEVI Europe
Ohmstr. 7
D-97076 Wuerzburg, Germany

Host

SFZ Sächsisches Förderzentrum
Chemnitz gGmbH
Flemmingstr. 8c
D-09116 Chemnitz, Germany

Phone: +49 (0) 37133440

The SFZ Sächsische Förderzentrum is located on the compound of the Sächsisches Rehabilitationszentrum. This institution was founded in 1905 as the Royal Saxon Institution of Education. Since then Chemnitz has been a centre of education for people with visual impairments in Germany.

The SFZ offers a wide range of educational services for people with visual impairments and multiple handicaps. In 2005, the year of the ICEVI conference, the institution celebrates its 100th anniversary.

The employees, students and trainees of SFZ are delighted to have the ICEVI European Conference 2005 as our guest.

Our conference town is Chemnitz

The town can look back on an 800 year history. It is known as the Saxon Manchester, due to a large part of the industrial history having been written here. Chemnitz became a centre for the manufacture of textiles, the motor manufacturing industry and chemical production. This industrial boom turned Chemnitz into a city. There are still lots of historical buildings bearing witness to this time. Great efforts are being taken to preserve these buildings.

The Conference

The 5th ICEVI European Conference will be organised in the form of Plenary Sessions, Interactive Workshops, Symposiums, Presentations (Poster, Video/DVD) and will be accompanied by an exhibition.

Conference Aims

To ensure a high quality education for children all over Europe the conference will offer participants the opportunity to

- get informed about the latest research and developments
- exchange and discuss experiences of good practice
- receive an overview of steps towards quality education in Europe
- network with well respected European colleagues
- further develop European cooperation, formal and informal
- identify potential partners and ideas for European funded programmes like Sokrates

The conference will deal with the following areas:

- Assessment
- Low Vision
- O&M, ADL
- Professional Enhancement
- Family
- ICT
- Social Competence

These areas will be addressed from the perspectives of:

- Early Intervention
 - School Services
 - Pre/Vocational
 - Services and Multidisabilities
- Meaning: all areas will be focused on from four different perspectives

Languages

During the conference the official languages will be English and German. Russian will also be offered. Please mark in the registration form which translation you will need.

Workshops will be held in English only.

Venue – Conference centre

The ICEVI conference will be held at the New Lecture and Tutorial Rooms' Building of the Chemnitz Technical University - the most innovative university of recent years. The Conference Centre is centrally located on the campus of university.

The building is modern and colourful with four large lecture halls and 14 seminar rooms, all of which are excellently equipped. So it is a perfect location for international conferences and cultural events.

Exhibition

During the conference you will have an excellent opportunity to present your new adaptive technology, modern educational materials and services and low vision devices to a wide audience.

Social Programme

There will be a conference opening session and following it a 'welcome' reception to which all delegates and accompanying persons will be invited. Every evening from Monday 15 August 2005 to Wednesday 17 August 2005 there will be a social event at the campus of the Sächsisches Förderzentrum SFZ.

Guided Tours

On Wednesday, 17 August 2005, there will be bus excursions to Dresden, Colditz and Meissen.

Dresden is a city that offers a great variety of attractions: the Dresden Zwinger, the Frauenkirche Church, Semper Opera House and Royal Pala-

ce as well as many other historical monuments, museums and magnificent promenades on the banks of the river Elbe.

Colditz is situated in the triangle between Leipzig, Dresden and Chemnitz. The castle of Colditz is almost 1000 years old. Its fame results from the function of the castle during World War II. Allied Officers from Great Britain, France, Belgium and Poland were imprisoned in the old castle. *Meissen*, the city of wine and porcelain, is the cradle of Saxony. The Albrechtscastle is the first palace built in the German-speaking area and was built between 1471 - 1524. There is a large collection of Meissener porcelain in the public museum.

Presentation board

During the conference there will be an opportunity to present your organization or institute in form of posters. The format of poster board is 1200 mm high and 915 mm width. The use is free of charge and the allocation will be two times per day. Please indicate in your registration form if you need a presentation board.

Parking facilities

If you come with a personal car you can get parking in front of the conference centre and across the street near the University's refectory.

Note: It is advisable to go by public transport to the conference centre. Participants who stay at the SFZ Sächsisches Förderzentrum can use parking on the grounds of SFZ.

Registration

Please note: Applications in writing have to be received by **17 July 2005**.

Conference Fees

ICEVI Member – 350 Euros up until 31 May 2005

ICEVI Member – 405 Euros after 31 May 2005

Non Member – 390 Euros up until 31 May 2005

Non Member – 450 Euros after 31 May 2005

Accompanying Person – 200 Euros up until 31 May 2005

Accompanying Person – 250 Euros after 31 May 2005

Accommodation expenses are charged extra and need to be paid separately. Hotel rates are between 70 - 80 Euro per night and room and the caravan site rates are between 10 - 22,50 Euro per night and person. To book your hotel room or caravan site please use the conference registration form.

Supported places

A limited number of supported places will be available. These places are for people from central or eastern Europe. There are two types of supported places:

1. Participation without paying registration fee but with payment for boarding and lodging which will be 130 Euro.
2. Participation without any payment.

Please note that travelling expenses cannot be refunded!

Criteria for receiving a supported place in the following order:

1. Contributing to the conference.
2. Sponsoring due to country and inhabitants.
3. Equal chances within the countries concerning position in employment respecting different institutions

The Host Committee will decide according to availability of money. You may apply for a supported place by registration form supp. pl. by post or preferably electronically by downloading the form from our webpage www.icevi2005.de and mailing it to: e.fuchs@icevi-2005.de. Please add a short cv and a certification from your employing institution. You will be informed about the acceptance not later than **31 march 2005**.

Visa regulations

Foreign participants should contact the German Embassy or Consulate to find out if they need a visa to travel to Germany. EU nationals do not require a visa. In general all other foreigners require a visa for stays in Germany.

(The above is adapted from the conference information and registration brochure)

Electronic Textbooks for blind and partially sighted pupils and students in Serbia

The problem of providing textbooks for the blind and partially sighted is as old as their education. It has become more acute with the development of mainstream and inclusive policies. These two modern policies are impossible to implement without the provision of textbooks for the visually impaired. Textbook for the visually impaired means that the textbook is produced in the appropriate medium for the user: in Braille, large print, speech or electronic format.

In Serbia, following The Act on Textbooks (1978), the Institute for Textbooks and Teaching Aids was obliged to provide textbooks for all the pupils with the specific needs. Another 5-10 titles were produced in large print version. Some textbooks had several editions, while there have been those that appeared for the first time when blind students started being educated in this area. Since 1985 I have worked in cooperation with the Textbook Institute on the typhlotechnical and typhlodidactical adaptation of the textbooks for printing in Braille. The former involves adaptation to the technology of producing books in Braille, while the latter, means the adaptation which enables blind users to use the textbook.

All of you know that the Braille line has half the characters of inkprint. Thus, a table printed in an 80 character line should be adapted for the 35 character Braille line, so that it

does not lose its didactic value. Dictionaries, lists, notes are often printed at the end of books. Had we done that in the last volume of the multi-volumed Braille textbook, a blind pupil would have had to have two volumes in front of him on his desk.

I have been working with computer technology for the visually impaired since 1973 and have translated articles on achievements in computer technology for the blind and partially sighted. I translated many works written by British, American, Hungarian and Scandinavian authors. I got the formulated idea on the electronic textbooks in Serbia after I had come back from Denmark in 2002, where the symposium "Braille and the age of digitalisation" was held from 16/19 April. The work of two Norwegian authors was most helpful to me. The production of Braille textbooks in Serbia was deteriorating. The number of titles per year reduced from 10 to 3-5. The situation became paradoxical, because all the important institutions and organisations for and of the blind have embosers. The textbook Institute of the Republic of Serbia could not afford the expenses of the Braille printing. They were about to stop the production of Braille books. The Act had almost been forgotten, since it belonged to the socialist past.

It would have happened had I not suggested the electronic version. The average price of this version is about 300 euros.

Here are the stages of the electronic textbook producing process:

1. Scanning the inkprint text
2. Proofreading of the scanned text
3. Editing of the Braille version which involves the typhlo-technical and didactical adaptation
4. The proofreading of the Braille text

The investment is multi-valued. For the Braille version we use Win-Braille software for the Serbian language to convert inkprint into the Braille. It was written by Mr Miroslav Sovljanski, an engineer in electronics, from Novi Sad. He created a Serbian Braille table for the Everest, which enables inkprint text to be compatible with the Braille version. The Braille version must be done in visual Braille on the screen. That means that the inkprint version in the computer can be used to enlarge it on the screen, to print it in large print on a printer, to read it in the speech output. The Braille version can be read either by a Braille line, or it can be printed by the emboser.

The CD is distributed to the responsible institutions and organisations free of charge. They decide on the copies needed. They also decide on the media suitable to their clients and members. Of course, illustrations can be added for the partially sighted. Mr Bratimir Joksimovic developed the Braille-conversion software for the "Filip Visnjic" Braille department. It enables

a sighted transcriber to edit a Braille version directly from the inkprint scanned version. The scanned text is no longer compatible to the Braille one, unless one keeps an extra copy for the purpose of compatibility. Finally, the scanned inkprint version can be very easily used to do the necessary changes with the revised editions.

The price of the Braille textbook has been drastically reduced. Before the electronic version of the textbook, all the textbooks were published in 25-40 copies. Today we keep only the electronic master copy and print a new copy for each blind person who needs it, whenever he/she needs it. It is important to say that we can produce as many textbooks as we want, through team work. I hope that this idea could be applied in your country, so you could make use of it.

Tihomir Nikolic, M. A.
Senior Teacher of English in "Veljko Ramadanovic" Institute for Visually Impaired Pupils and Students,
Zemun, Serbia

4th ICEVI Workshop on training of teachers of the visually impaired in Europe

Budapest, 23-26 September 2004

This workshop was organised for ICEVI by Solveig Sjøstedt in cooperation with colleagues from ELTE Barczy Gusztav College, Budapest, Hungary and the University of Dortmund, Germany. It took place in Budapest where more than fifty participants from 20 countries gathered for four days of hard work interspersed with happy social occasions organised by our Hungarian hosts. There were four workshop topics:

Topic 1

How to include research in teacher training projects, i.e. active student participation.

Chair persons:

Renate Walther

Germany

Krisztina Kovács

Hungary (from IV)

Topic II

Internet based virtual resource data banks (IsaR) and distance university courses.

How to realise them through international co-operation.

Chair persons:

Laemers Frank

Germany

Hännikäinen Tarja

Finland

Topic III

How to prepare teachers to work in different educational environments. The individual education plan as a tool including a MDVI student in a regular setting.

Chair persons:

Csocsán Emmy

Hungary / Germany

Sjøstedt Solveig

Finland / Kosovo

Topic V

Empowerment: Rehabilitation and education of persons with blindness and low vision - between independent living skills and competence of self-determination.

Chair persons:

Drolshagen Birgit

Germany

Rothenberg Birgit

Germany

The chairpersons of each group have written up the outcomes of their workshop and this will be put onto the ICEVI-Europe website in the near future. As usual, there was much networking going on and many new friendships made and old friendships renewed and strengthened.

Marianna Buultjens,

Hon. Fellow, The Moray House School of Education, University of Edinburgh

