

ICEVI European Newsletter Issue 41, Volume 15 number 3, November 2009

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From the Board

On 13th and 14th October the newly composed Board of ICEVI-Europe held its first meeting at the beautiful Sabanci School in Istanbul, Turkey.

As usual the portfolios of the Board were allocated.

Vice chairperson: Peter Rodney
Secretary: Mary Lee
Treasurer: Eberhard Fuchs

The 7th ICEVI Conference in Dublin, Ireland, was discussed in great detail. The board members had received the evaluation report from the Host Committee.

Unfortunately the forms were filled out by only 36 of the 336 participants.

A number of participants were mainly attracted by the theme "Living in a changing Europe".

Others used the conference mostly for networking.

The discussion amongst the board members provided a varied picture of the conference, which was also seen during the conference.

The conference went well; there were no significant problems, on the contrary.

All sessions began on time and there were some excellent chairpersons.

A point of note for the next conference will be the theme.

In general the impression was that the theme had not been implemented sufficiently by many keynote speakers.

The allocation of supported places will be considered again.

The Board had not received a final report of the finances of the conference.

Concerning the costs of the conference, critical remarks were made. It was known that Ireland would be an expensive country for many participants.

Furthermore the economical crisis hindered the finding of sponsors.

The board of ICEVI-Europe thanked St Joseph's again for organising the 7th conference and wished the management lots of success with all the building plans for the future.

During the conference the 7th General Assembly took place after the meetings of the delegates with their sub regions.

The results of these meetings you can read in this newsletter too.

In the meantime the board talked about the possibility of working through the items mentioned and in this way making a start with the programme for the next years.

The discussion about this will be continued during the next board meeting, which will be held 19 and 20 April 2010 in St Petersburg in Russia.

An important part of the meeting was the information and the discussion about the **8th European Conference**.

The Host Committee, supported by the bureau Vista, had done a lot of

preparations. Several venues were presented.

It was decided to hold the next conference in Istanbul in Kaya Ramada Hotel in July 2013. The members of the board visited the location on the second day of the meeting.

Finally the programme committee was designated for the next conference. The following persons were chosen to be in the committee

- Hans Welling, chairman
- Mary Lee
- Peter Rodney
- Hale Aksuna (Ergenc) from the organising committee

In St Petersburg the committee will have its first meeting.

We almost approach the end of the year.

Therefore I gladly use the opportunity to wish you all happy holidays, and above all a good and healthy 2010, personally with family and friends, but also with your activities for the education and rehabilitation of people with visual impairment.

If my wishes will be fulfilled it will also be a good ICEVI year. We have a lot to do, conferences, Education for All children with Visual Impairment and so on. This only can be accomplished together.

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

Opening speech 7th ICEVI Conference in Dublin

Many of you will remember the enthusiasm of our Irish colleagues, when they announced today's conference in Chemnitz in 2005.

With the same enthusiasm, the programme committee, the scientific committee and the host committee have worked over the past years to prepare this conference, the seventh ICEVI conference in Europe.

At the beginning of the conference I would like to congratulate St. Joseph's Centre for the Visually Impaired. Not only because you made great efforts to be the host of this conference, but also - and primarily - because this is the 150 year jubilee of St. Joseph's.

St. Joseph's is the only centre of its kind in the Republic of Ireland. The children, who attend, range in age from birth through to young adulthood. All have a visual impairment - some have additional disabilities.

The staff seek, through education, training and social care, to provide their students with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to fulfil their individual potential, so each can lead the life of his/her choice.

Currently the services of St. Joseph's include:

- **Assessment Service**
- **Preschool & Early Intervention**
- **Primary & Secondary Education**
- **Vocational Training**
- **Family Resource Centre (FRC)**
- **National Braille Production Centre (NBPC)**
- **Library & Information Service**
- **Residential Service**
- **Training & Research Department**
- **Ophthalmology & Low Vision Clinic**
- **Occupational Therapy, Speech & Language Therapy and Physiotherapy**
- **Animal Assisted Therapy and Horticulture, The 'Sense & Grow' Project**

I hope that St. Joseph's will remain successful in offering its services to people with a visual impairment so they can live their lives as they see fit.

Ladies and gentlemen

Living in a changing Europe, this is the theme of our conference.

Social, economic and political conditions are changing very fast.

There is a clear tendency for governments to withdraw more and more and responsibilities have to be shouldered by individual members of society.

People with a disability are primarily responsible for their own lives, and also have the right to ask for support.

In this conference the changes in Europe and the meaning of this for people with a visual impairment and the professionals who work with them, will be the main issue.

As you know, in December 2006 the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its optional protocol has been accepted by the United Nations. So far, 58 countries have ratified the convention.

A milestone has been reached, because persons with disabilities are no longer viewed as objects of charity, medical treatment and social protection. Rather they are seen as "subjects" with rights, who are capable of claiming those rights and making decisions about their own lives, based on their free and informed consent as well as being active members of society. A great paradigm shift.

In a recent concept of the UNESCO Global Monitoring Report 2010 the switch from the medical model to the social model is described.

I quote

A disabled person is a person with impairment who experiences disability. An impairment hence is an injury, illness, or congenital condition that causes or is likely to cause a loss or difference of physiological or psychological function and a disability is defined by the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part

in society on an equal level with others due to social and environmental barriers.

There is no agreed intentional definition of disability. In the past disability has been classified within a “medical model” of clinical diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation. More recently disability has been looked at with a public health focus whereby there is a shift from individual rehabilitation to a broader framework of focusing on risk reduction, functioning and accommodation needs of people with disabilities in order to participate fully in society. This model recognises the responsibility of society, policies and institutions to counter the causes of marginalisation of disabled people. This in turn leads to fundamentally different policy priorities and choices, mainly around the removal of disabling barriers, as well as a strong emphasis on human and civil rights.

Within the social model, PwD are regarded as disadvantaged not because of their impairments, but as a result of the limitations imposed on them by social, cultural, economic, and environmental barriers. Disability according to this formulation is not about health or pathology but about discrimination and social exclusion. From a social-model perspective disability is a socio-political issue. This in turn leads to fundamentally different policy, priorities and choices, mainly around the removal of disabling barriers, as well as a strong emphasis on human and civil rights. This model was developed and is mainly applied in the context of “developed” countries where functioning public institutions and a rights-based approach to policy are the norm.

Such an approach is reflected in the WHO International Classification of Functioning, Disabilities and Health (ICF) which conceptualises disability as a product of the interaction of a person with a health condition with the environment, manifested in the dimension of body functions, performance and activities and participation. This social model of disability has in a related way emphasised the fact that disability resides not in the individual but in a social construction about limitations, as much rooted in cultural, social, political, legal and economic factors as in biology. In other words people with disabilities are disabled not so much because of their functioning limitations but because they are denied access to education, labour markets etc

Every country uses its own definition of disability. Policies for disabled people are strongly determined by their underlying understanding of disability. In a “medical model” disability is regarded as the problem of an individual arising from his or her functional limitations. Therefore the primary focus in countries using such an approach is on providing people with disabilities with various aids and appliances, immunisation, etc, that can help them function like others, rather than addressing social barriers that result in their exclusion or non-participation from the mainstream. In such contexts, efforts to develop educational programmes for disabled children often are organised apart from the regular education system”.

It is of great importance to realise this paradigm shift, because it also concerns the question of which role we as professionals and professional organisations play, so that parents together with their children, and also adults and elderly people with disabilities can follow their own path.

Within Europe many people dedicate themselves to improving the quality of life of people with a visual impairment. Wonderful!

At the same time we can see how difficult things sometimes are. Not only because materials are insufficient; this is hardly ever the cause.

Sometimes professionals and professional organisations do not show enough professional flexibility when facing a redefinition of their roles.

Ladies and Gentlemen

ICEVI exists to provide educational and rehabilitation opportunities for children, adults and elderly people with visual impairment.

This means those people who are totally blind or who have low vision, including those with additional disabilities, such as cognitive, hearing, behaviour, physical or other disabilities.

I am happy that during this conference we have special interest groups paying attention to the total target group of ICEVI.

The role of ICEVI is to:

- Provide a wide range of information
- Offer expert advice and link members with leading world practitioners
- Organise training courses, seminars and conferences

For the coming period this means in the first place

- The ICEVI conference 8 – 13 August 2010 in Jomtien, Thailand
- The conference on Low Vision in Chisinau, Moldova in October this year
- The Balkan Conference in Croatia 2010
- The TT Workshop in Austria 2010

Furthermore ICEVI is cooperating with 5 European Universities to start a European Masters for those who are working in the field of education and rehabilitation of people with a visual impairment. A tremendous challenge!

The programme of ICEVI can only be implemented in cooperation with its members.

I trust that the programme can also be realised in cooperation with the network MDVI and Enviter and our colleagues from the European Blind Union. There is a lot to be done. The board is convinced that the regional meetings tomorrow will supply input for the coming years.

Now back to this conference.

I close with the words of Tomaso Daniele, president of the Italian Disability Forum and of the Italian Union of the Blind and Partially Sighted: " the time has come now to put words into deeds and to take concrete action so as to consolidate the fundamental rights of persons with disabilities".

I wish you an inspiring conference that invites you to reflect on your work as a professional.

Hans Welling
Dublin July 2009

Minutes of General Assembly for ICEVI Dublin July 2009

Annual report and budget

Eberhard Fuchs presented the budget and indicated that the full figures can be found on the website. The figures were accepted.

Elections

Hans Welling was proposed as the continuing chairman

Accepted

Dieter Feser (Germany) and Ana Isabel Ruiz López (Spain) presented themselves as new candidates.

Accepted

All other board members were proposed and *accepted*

Contact persons were proposed and *accepted*

Regional reports

Nordic and Baltic countries by Peter Rodney

22 persons participated in the meeting and the discussion on future focus areas was intensive. We ended up with these issues for ICEVI-Europe to work with for the next 4 years.

1. Strengthening of training in the use of Braille. This should be carried out at a European level, to ensure sufficient legislation. Perhaps by using the UN convention of rights.
2. Mobility for children.
3. Ensure the qualification of teachers who are working with visually impaired students in mainstream settings. (QTVI)
4. A research project to outline the cost differences between training in mainstream and special settings.
5. Outline the minimum standards of services for persons with low vision.

Balkan Countries Meeting by Betty Leotsakou

Representatives from all countries were present except Albania, Cyprus, and FYROM at the regional meeting.

We discussed the outcome of the 2 Balkan Conferences that we held in Belgrade and in Istanbul and every one of the representatives proposed a subject for discussion for the next events.

Topics

- Alternative strategies in teaching students with VI
- Contemporary role of assistive technology in the education of students with VI as a mean of communication and learning.
- Issues regarding rehabilitation
- Issues regarding early intervention and assessment regarding children with MDVI
- Transition from school to work.
- Academic achievements of VI in inclusive settings
- Methods of inclusive education for VI
- Elderly and low vision = quality of life
- Support and employment for MDVI – what are they getting after school age. Support programmes.
- Different programmes for MDVI children after their parents are too old to take care of them
- MDVI children and the educational services
- Parent involvement in advocacy groups
- Orientation and Mobility in early intervention
- Vocational training
- Training of activities of daily living
- New assessment methods in children with low vision
- Physical Education needs of blind children
- Social inclusion
- Behavioural problems of VI teenagers
- Activities for leisure time
- Rehabilitation of adults and elderly people
- European Union teacher training seminars
- Care for adults and elderly
- Braille curriculum

The next Balkan conference is going to be in Croatia in Zagreb in October 2010. I am planning to visit them on November 10-12 so we will start preparing the event.

We still haven't found a contact person for Albania and for Bosnia & Herzegovina so I will e-mail the associations of the blind to propose someone who fulfils the criteria.

At the meeting we decided to have a link on the ICEVI – Europe web page, with news from the Balkan Countries (projects, new services new schools, sharing information good practices etc.) Each contact person by rotation will be responsible. This service will officially start **in January with Maria Kyriakou** being the first contact person who is going to collect all the news.

German and Dutch speaking countries by Dieter Feser

In the regional meeting of the German and Dutch speaking countries, the following topics have been discussed:

1. Mr. Karsten Hohler (Chemnitz) has retired from the European Board.
2. To ensure the integration of the VBS (Verband für Blinden- und Sehbehindertenpädagogik e. V.), Mr. Feser was elected to the Board, as the ICEVI Chairman Hans Welling is from the Netherlands.
3. The contact persons for Germany, Austria, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Belgium were elected.
4. Contents:
The integration of blind adults into professional life was discussed.
5. This topic should be brought up before the ICEVI Board, more intensively

Furthermore a working group is to be formed in order to consider elderly persons. Karsten Hohler has agreed to take the initiative.

French speaking countries by Catherine Thibault

Seven participants were present at the sub regional meeting and three main subjects were discussed:

- Organisation of ICEVI activities:

Someone suggested the organisation every year of a meeting, as in 2007 in Angers, for French speaking countries. But many others think that it's not realistic to propose another meeting because of the multiplicity of meetings from different associations: "We have no more time and money to go everywhere".

The final suggestion was to have a meeting coupled with an annual meeting of GPEAA in Paris for example.

- Discussions about the role of contact persons and elections.

The question was how to motivate contact persons and to give them more responsibilities to enrich the network of ICEVI?

One suggestion was to specially invite them to a European committee meeting of the board...but the price was also a problem.

We discussed what kind of information is interesting to give to the representative on the board: conferences, new projects, research

- Suggestion to create a forum for discussion for French speaking countries on the net

But who can manage it? And do people enter into this type of forum (it needs much time and regular use)? Transmissions by mail seem to be more efficient if everybody answers and tries to give information to the others. Our objective is to extend our network, to diffuse more information about ICEVI.

Some themes were also suggested for organising a meeting in the year 2010.

East European Countries by Liliya Plastunova

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE WITH ICEVI

- ALL OVER UKRAINE PROJECT: "Mama School" will be followed by the exit school of parental skill in Yevpatoria City (Ukraine) 1-13 July 2009. Next one will be July 2010.

- EAST-EUROPEAN PROJECT: "**XXI Century - A Century of the Open Society for All**" will be followed by the **2nd Conference in Moldova** 1-4 October 2009. The theme of the conference: "**Low vision – theory and practice**".
- INTERNATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN "**Step Towards**" will be followed by the **3rd Festival in St.Petersburg March 2010**
- NEW PROJECT: "**East-European Partnership – Cultural Exchange**" started this summer: **St.Petersburg** – Moldova, Ukraine. 2010: **St.Petersburg** - all E-E Region.
- NEW PROJECT: "**Summer Camp**" will start summer 2010 – **Azerbaijan-Caspian** – all E-E Region and also **Moldova** - all E-E Region.
- NEW PROJECT: "**Sport Competitions – Badminton for Low Vision**" will start November 2009 – St.Petersburg – all E-E Region.

South European countries by Ana Isabel Ruiz López

In the South European regional meeting there were only three persons, the two Spanish contact persons and someone who came on behalf of the contact person in Portugal.

Due to the current economic conditions and the lack of participation in our countries, mainly because of language difficulties, we made an action plan aimed to catch the attention of professionals in our countries and distribute information within the sub region.

ACTION PLAN 2009-2013

- We will try to find contact persons in Malta, San Marino and Monaco.
- We will send all the ICEVI documents, which we translate into Spanish, to Portugal, Andorra and Italy through the contact persons.
- We will include on our websites links to the associations and institutions of the sub region.
- We will exchange information about different activities and events to be developed within the sub region.
- We will encourage each contact person to be the reference to other institutions
- We will send the new contact person a list and this action plan to all the contact persons in the sub region
- We will create a network within the sub region to share information, good practices, training experiences and material.

We ask ICEVI to help us in this action plan by creating a place on the ICEVI-EUROPE website for each sub region to allow us to communicate between members, share information.

Central European Countries by Terezie Hradilkova

Contact persons are:

- Emma Gallová – Czech Republic

- Elena Mendelová – Slovakia
- Damijaja Dusak – Slovenia
- Grazyna Walczak – Poland
- Krisztina Kovacs – Hungary

Participants of regional meeting:

ICEVI members: Association for Early Intervention – Terezie Hradilková, Jana Vachulová, Markéta Skalická
Poland – Boguslaw Marek

Non members:

Representatives of Palackého University Olomouc, department of special education

Hungary – nobody

Slovenia – nobody

Slovakia – nobody

Discussed themes:

- Participants in the conference from Central Europe were for the first time, without financial support and it turned out to be inaccessible for most people. Kristzina Kovacs and Grazyna Walczak wrote to me by email with this opinion:
The same case for Czech Republic – I am sure we could expect many more participants if the conference were cheaper (including travel costs – the only way to get to Ireland is a flight)
- The role of contact persons – they often do not communicate enough with members and even with potential members (opinion from Poland). The problem is that often contact persons do not communicate even with regional representatives and board members (Damijana Dusak, Elena Mendelova), so as an intermediary for ICEVI events and communication, the name of contact person loses its meaning.
Evidently it is a key problem, because the theme concerning expectations from ICEVI and activities which could be supported by ICEVI was very rich (networking, shared address lists, information exchange, seminars, conferences, stages...)

The conclusion:

The Dublin conference was inaccessible for people from Central Europe.

Networking in the frame of the Central European region is very weak.

It is necessary to solve the work of contact persons.

The potential of ICEVI is still quite huge, but it is necessary to engage people, to open them up to the possibilities and how to be an active member.

English speaking countries by Mary Lee

At our regional meeting, where we had representatives from all the areas within the English speaking regions, we discussed firstly what have been the

significant events in our region in the last few years.
Here are just a few:

- Scotland, England and Wales have been reviewing teacher training and qualifications for specialist teachers of the visually impaired.
- The English universities have been given extra money to train 60 new teachers to make up the shortfall due to large numbers of specialist teachers coming up to retirement age.
- In Wales and England, there are now two new courses for mobility officers who wish to work specifically with children.
- In Wales, teachers from generic special schools are now going out to other schools to advise and some special schools are acting as resource centres.
- RNIB Cymru now has a children's low vision advocate. Low vision assessments are being carried out and free aids are provided for use at school.
www.rnib.org.uk/xpedio/groups/public/documents/publicwebsite/public_waledu.hcsp
- In Scotland there is now a forum at the Scottish Parliament where young people with disabilities can go and put their views to our politicians.
www.syp.org.uk
- In Scotland, the Scottish Sensory Centre has funded a teacher to be trained in the use of the Developmental Journal as devised at Great Ormond Street Hospital. Training is now being provided within Scotland.
www.ssc.education.ed.ac.uk/courses/vi&multi/vfeb09ii.html
- In Israel there is a strong parents' group which is now international in scope.
- In Israel they have developed a pre university course for visually impaired students with state of the art equipment to prepare them for their studies. 80% of students have found employment.
www.alehblind.org.il
- In Ireland, the Department of Health are developing a framework for early intervention. Parents of children 0-5, will have a legal right to ask for an assessment of their child.
- In Ireland, all organisations working with the visually impaired, have come together under the umbrella – VISPA.
www.vispa.ie

We further discussed what we would like ICEVI to be doing that we can contribute to. Suggestions were to:

- Provide a forum for the parents' voice to be heard and also that of the young people themselves.
- Continue and expand the sharing of good practice across Europe and beyond. Project based partnerships.

- Support, through the website, the idea of e.g. communities of good practice, a catalogue of where expertise / courses can be found
- Urge more people to research, document and present their work at conferences.

Next conference

Turkey (Turkan Sabanci school for the visually impaired in Istanbul) made a presentation and put themselves forward as possible candidates to host the next ICEVI Europe conference.

November 2009

Mary B. Lee

The International Conference: "Low vision – Theory and Practice"



In the period 1 – 3 October 2009, in Chisinau, the capital of the Republic of Moldova, there took place the second International Conference on the theme of the East European and Asian regional project „XXI Century – All over open society century”, with the topic „Low vision – theory and practice”.

(www.upsc.md/icevi_conf_2009)

The organisers of the conference are the State Pedagogical University „Ion Creanga” (www.upsc.md) in partnership with the Blind Union of Moldova, (dcsom@mtc.md) and ICEVI (International Council for Education for People with Visual Impairment) (www.icevi-europe.org) with the financial support of Soros Moldova (www.soros.md).



The conference was held on the basic objective of access to information and increasing the degree of social participation and inclusion for people with visual impairment, by assuring them the right to see, by preventing blindness and by providing periodical activities for sight maintenance.

Over 100 scientists and practitioners from different universities' scientific centres such as: Netherlands, Romania, Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, and Moldova, participated in the conference

The main aim of the regional project is to create a structured contact network in the field of education and rehabilitation for visually impaired people within the East European and Asian region.

The focus of this project is on improving the quality of life and raising the level of education and rehabilitation services provided, for children, students and adults with visual impairment.

The objectives of the 2nd International Conference were the following: coordination of the teachers' training process in the field of education and rehabilitation of visually impaired people, exchange of experience among the network partners, elaboration of special conditions for practical activities concerning services for visually impaired children, implementation of various common projects, programmes and partnerships.

The following personalities participated at the official opening ceremony:

- **Welling Hans** – President of the International Council for Education for Visually Impaired People from Europe (ICEVI)
- **Racu Igor** – Vice rector in the science field and responsible for international affairs and European inclusion, SPU „Ion Creanga”, PhD in psychology, University professor; Chisinau
- **Buliga Valentina** – Minister of Labour, Family and Social Protection
- **Crudu Valentin** – Counsellor of the Minister of Education
- **Plastunova Lilia** - President of the International Council for Education for Visually Impaired People from East European and Asian Regions. (ICEVI)
- **Sclifos Dumitru** – President of the Blind Union of Moldova
- **Lebedeva Valentina** – President of the Association for Children and Youngsters with multiple disabilities „VITA”
- **Celan Larisa** – Vice President of the Blind Union of Moldova, National Coordinator ICEVI

In the plenary session the following representatives took the floor:

- **Bucun Nicolae** – Vice rector of the Institute of Educational Sciences; PhD in psychology, university professor.
- **Deniskina Venera** – PhD in psychology, Institute of Correctional Pedagogy in Moscow.
- **Bodorin Cornelia** – PhD in psychology, university professor, Special psycho pedagogy department, PSU „Ion Creanga”, Chisinau.
- **Vetrov Iurii** – Ophthalmologist, Moscow

- **Povorazniuc Maria** – Main specialist in the work with pupils with disabilities at the General Department of education, youngsters and sport from Chisinau
- **Celan Larisa** - Vice President of the Blind Union of Moldova, National Coordinator ICEVI
- **Zarubina Irina** - PhD in psychology, and Chief of department at the Federal Institute for education development polices, Russian Federation Ministry of Education.

Two main departments of activity were created during the conference:

1. Rehabilitation, Socialisation and Inclusion
2. Education of partially sighted pupils

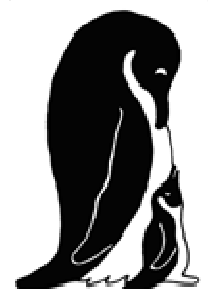
In both departments more than 50 scientific works were presented:

The keynote speakers were the specialists from the Netherlands' University of Utrecht, **Theo Blom and Karel de Vries** organised a whole day workshop on the topic of education for partially sighted people for all the participants at the conference.

On the 3rd of October the participants at the conference were invited to the National Artistic concert of children with multiple disabilities held by „VITA” Association. Also on this day there took place an exhibition of handicraft by partially sighted masters.

*Presented by
Larisa Celan, vice president of BUM
Igor Racu, PhD, university professor.*

EARLY INTERVENTION “Recent experiences and perspectives”



Saturday, 19 September 2009, Novi Sad

The field of Early Intervention has highly developed programmes and cooperation in Europe. We wish to follow the professional issues and matters and to receive more professional knowledge from colleagues from other more developed countries in Europe. The conference was held with support and a reference from Mr Hans Welling, ICEVI-Europe, and Mr Dennis Lolli from Perkins International, the Association of the Blind of Serbia, the town of Novi Sad and The Association of Special Educators of Serbia.

The goal of this conference was to share experience with International professionals from the Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Croatia and to present our own work. It is very important to draw the attention of all professionals in special education and learn more about children with multiple disabilities and

their needs in Early intervention. The conference took place on the 19th September in Milan Petrovic School Novi Sad. There were 80 participants, including professionals from Czech Republic, Croatia, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and of course Serbia. Our speakers demonstrated a variety of knowledge and skills in the field of Early Intervention and had a great opportunity to share their experience. The papers included medical, pedagogical and social approaches in Early Intervention and interdisciplinary cooperation. This means that special educators involved in the field of visual impairment, hearing impairment, motor and physical disabilities, cognitive delay and multiple disabilities presented their work to each other.

Mrs Terezie Hradilkova, Vice-president of ICEVI-Europe was our honoured guest and her experience in the field of Early intervention gave everyone an opportunity to compare their own approach in work, professionalism, skills and competencies. The colleagues from SUVAG polyclinic, Zagreb demonstrated The verbo-tonal method as a highly developed approach in rehabilitation of young children with hearing impairment. Mala Kuca, Zagreb, once again proved their competencies and hard work with children with multiple disabilities. The presentations by Snjezana Seitz and Tatjana Petrovic-Sladetic on the programmess of "Mala Kuca" and their skills in the field of assessment of functional vision of the visually impaired and children with multiple disabilities impressed everyone in the audience. In Serbia and the region, we don't have any skills or tools to do this part of intervention.

We hope that this was only the beginning of further cooperation and that special educators from Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina will have many more opportunities to share, learn and develop their competencies in the field of Early intervention in the future.

The papers from the programme will be provided online at www.ok.servisimp.org from October 1st 2009.

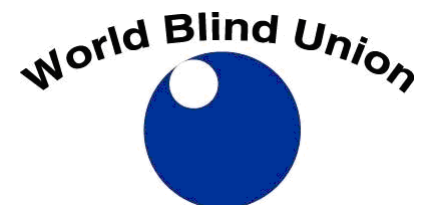
*By Jelena Mazurkivic,
Serbia*

PRESS RELEASE: WHITE CANE SAFETY DAY

OCTOBER 15, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The ability to travel safely and independently is a critical issue to everyone in our society. We all want to get to our destinations in the safest and quickest way possible. This is no different for persons who are blind or partially sighted. While new technologies are emerging that harness global positioning systems linked to speech enabled mobile phones to enable navigation of foreign cities, such technology is not universally suitable, available, or affordable, and for



most blind and partially sighted people the white cane remains the essential mobility aid.

The white cane is also acknowledged as a symbol representing blindness and mobility and is used by blind and partially sighted people across the world. Guide dogs are also used in some countries.

As we celebrate White Cane Day on October 15th, the World Blind Union, representing some 160 Million blind and partially sighted people worldwide, is concerned that some present day innovations are threatening the safe and independent travel of blind and partially sighted people.

Acoustic information is a primary tool for orientation by blind and partially sighted people, for example, to determine when traffic has actually stopped – rather than when it has been signalled to stop. And when crossing at an intersection that has no traffic lights, they listen for oncoming traffic to determine when to cross.

All that relies on being able to hear the vehicles but in recent years “hybrid/quiet vehicles” have become more commonplace. By the time a blind person (or anyone) has heard the quieter engines of these vehicles, there is simply not sufficient time to safely cross the street.

We recognize the need to develop more environmentally friendly vehicles and we would not wish to stifle such innovation. However, it is essential that vehicle manufacturers design some kind of sound into these vehicles to ensure the safe and independent travel of blind persons. The technology exists to make sounds that adjust to ambient noise level unnecessary noise pollution can be avoided.

Another challenge relates to a new urban design concept that is being applied in many countries, namely “shared space”. The aim is to create more pedestrian friendly, civilized streets with less traffic and lower speeds. However, the concept is most commonly delivered by means of a “shared surface” where kerbs are absent and pedestrian and trafficked areas are at the same level. Priority in crossing the space is negotiated by making “eye contact”.

This undermines the mobility of blind and partially sighted people in two ways: first, blind and partially sighted people rely on the kerb as an essential clue for navigation and orientation; and second, “eye contact” is quite clearly impossible for someone with sight loss.

In the 21st century we should be creating town and streetscapes that can be used by everyone in our society and which reflect the principles of inclusive which are called for in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The World Blind Union calls upon governments, regulators, designers and manufacturers to establish and implement standards that will ensure universal

access for all persons with disabilities. We further call upon designers and manufacturers to consult with the World Blind Union, our members and partners in order to discuss possible implications of proposed design change so that issues which may be identified can be dealt with in the early stages. In this way, our environment can enable safe and independent travel for everyone including those who are blind or partially sighted.

For further information contact:

World Blind Union

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Press release: SAFE DRIVING BY THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED NOW POSSIBLE

Bioptic telescope admitted to the list of permitted visual aids

v i s i o

Huizen, [date] - *Royal Visio, National*

Foundation for the Visually Impaired and Blind, has increased the chances for a select group of visually impaired people to obtain their driving licence. By using a bioptic telescope system and corresponding intensive visual training, Visio enables candidates to pay due care and attention in traffic. An eye disorder can result in failure to meet the statutory requirements for driving a car. Scientific research shows that a bioptic telescope system can lead to a decisive improvement in the practical fitness to drive. Visio and its collaborative partners, Groningen University Medical Centre (UMCG) and the Central Bureau of Driving Skills Certificates (CBR) are enthusiastic about the legislative change: the requirements for passing the driving test have not changed, yet the telescope has been admitted to the list of permitted visual aids.

Bioptic telescope system

The bioptic telescope system is a small telescope of low value magnification fitted in the left or right spectacle glass. It enables the user to instantly assess the traffic situation ahead and to clearly see the road signs. Use of the telescope is allowed in traffic in the majority of US states, with over 4000 drivers currently using a similar aid. Driving independently and safely is an important part of independency. Visio understands the importance thereof for people with a visual impairment and has been the initiator of the project to use the bioptic telescope system as a visual aid allowed in Dutch traffic. An

intensive training course on the use of the telescope and driving lessons form part of the rehabilitation programme. Scientific research by Visio, UMCG and CBR shows that some of the participants can use this to drive a car in Dutch traffic safely.

Course of Affairs

When an individual no longer meets the statutory requirements for driving a car, the ophthalmologist can refer the potential candidate to Visio. Here an intake interview, a visual test and a (neuro-)psychological test will be held. The medical details held on record by the own ophthalmologist are also required. If the candidate meets the requirements, Visio will customise a bioptic telescope system for the user and train the individual in using the device in practice safely. Visio developed these training courses in conjunction with the CBR and UMCG. Following driving lessons with specialist driving instructors immediately thereafter, the CBR will hold an official fitness to drive test on the basis of the general requirements. Candidates must demonstrate that they can drive safely with the device.

For further information, please visit www.auto-mobiliteit.org

Anyone with questions on being visually impaired or blind can contact Visio. Visio offers information and advice as well as different types of tests, guidance, rehabilitation, training and housing. These services are offered to people who are visually impaired or blind, whether or not in combination with a mental, physical or other sensory impairment. Those who are personally and professionally involved can contact Visio for information and promoting expertise. As from 1 January 2010, Visio, Sensis and De Brink will merge into a single organisation, the Royal Visio expertise centre for the visually impaired and blind.

For further information, please visit www.visio.org.

VIEWS International and its contribution through non formal education for young visually impaired persons or what was not said during the ICEVI's 7th European Conference

Article by Anca DAVID

I was quite surprised that during ICEVI's 7th European Conference held in Dublin, last July, there was no mention about the existence and the benefits of non-formal education for young visually impaired persons.

Non-formal education, according to the Youth in Action Programme Guide, refers to the learning which takes place outside the formal educational curriculum. Non-formal learning activities involve people on a voluntary basis and are carefully planned, to foster the participants' personal and social

development. Non-formal learning enables young people to acquire essential competences and contributes to their personal development, social inclusion and active citizenship, thereby improving their employment prospects.

A non profit organisation, VIEWS International, located in Liège, Belgium, promotes non-formal education for visually impaired persons, between 18 and 30 years old, through its current activities. VIEWS International is aiming: to encourage encounters between blind and partially sighted young Europeans with the aim of developing a mind for solidarity and democracy that is specific to the European culture and to facilitate contacts between professionals working in all areas associated with visual impairment: scientific and technical research, culture, sports.

VIEWS International is a network of 15 European countries working on different projects. VIEWS International is both a team of parents, professionals, academics, all concerned by visual impairment and/or experts in the field as well as a team of young European visually impaired or sighted, who get passionately involved in a number of projects within the association.

VIEWS International is using mainly the framework of the Youth in Action Programme of the European Commission, in order to propose activities like youth exchanges, European Voluntary Services, trainings or seminars for young visually impaired persons.

One of the activities that have the greatest impact on young visually impaired persons, are the youth exchanges. Since 2004, VIEWS International has supported one of its organisation members or informal groups of young persons to organise international youth exchanges.

A youth exchange, according to the Youth in Action Programme is a project which brings together groups of young people from two or several countries, providing them with an opportunity to discuss and confront various themes, whilst learning about each other's countries and cultures.

For example, in the summer of 2008, VIEWS has organised a youth exchange with 7 different European countries on the theme of art and body expression. During 10 days young people, both visually impaired and sighted, from Bulgaria, France, Italy, Latvia, Romania, Poland and Belgium experienced adapted activities like: sculpture, dancing, singing, theatre, photography, piano, sport, T-shirt painting, playing African drums or visiting adapted museums like the Musical Museum in Brussels.

Two of the participants at this youth exchange, gave their feed-back on their experience: Magda from Poland said "This exchange was a very good experience for me. I met fascinating and valuable people... This experience motivated me to learn new languages..." and Boyan from Bulgaria: "To me it was a great experience I will remember it my whole life. During the exchange I met a lot of new cool people and a few guys I knew from before and I am completely sure that we'll manage to become good friends through keeping in touch... Thank you all for everything that you gave me as emotions and your

personal appearance! Once again, I miss you all very much and hopefully we'll keep in contact! ”.

Youth exchanges involve the active participation of visually impaired young persons and are designed to allow them to discover and become aware of different social and cultural realities, to learn from each other and reinforce their feeling of being European citizens.

As President of Ireland, Mary McAleese, encouraged us to do during her speech at the 7th ICEVI's European Conference, this article represents another piece of the puzzle that is the world of people/institutions that are developing activities with and for visual impaired persons. Other pieces on activities in a non-formal environment with VIEWS International will soon follow.



The transition to adulthood - A shared responsibility

Short Vita

Hans Schuman, PhD: Worked as a teacher in a special school for students with a visual impairment in the Netherlands. Conducted research on the impact of a visual impairment on family relationships and personal well being, the struggle for inclusion and giving students with learning disabilities a voice.

Summary

This book presents a critical review of a five year research project which aimed at developing an empowering curriculum for visually impaired teenagers with learning difficulties. Based on a growing body of literature, four approaches were identified to support the educational practitioners to evolve into change agents who assume collective responsibility and ownership for the change process: the ideas of the learning organization, the social model of disability, McClelland's model of the iceberg, and making use of a discussion technique called intervision. Participatory action research, with its focus on emancipation through collective, informed and democratic action, provided the necessary framework to integrate these four approaches and to inform, underpin and guide the change process.

An important conclusion is that teenage students with challenging multiple disabilities and learning difficulties are capable, when they are allowed, challenged and taught, of advocating for themselves, developing clear views about how they want to live, manage their lives and make informed decisions which best fit their personal needs and objectives.

Keywords

visual impairment, learning difficulties, curriculum development, school improvement, empowerment, ownership, participatory action research, systems thinking, organizational learning, inclusion

Subtitle

The education of visually impaired teenagers with learning difficulties and their exclusion from mainstream schools

This book presents a critical review of a five year research project which aimed at developing an empowering curriculum for visually impaired teenagers with learning difficulties. Based on a growing body of literature, four approaches were identified to support the educational practitioners to evolve into change agents who assume collective responsibility and ownership for the change process: the ideas of the learning organization, the social model of disability, McClelland's model of the iceberg, and making use of a discussion technique called intervention. Participatory action research, with its focus on emancipation through collective, informed and democratic action, provided the necessary framework to integrate these four approaches and to inform, underpin and guide the change process. An important conclusion is that teenage students with challenging multiple disabilities and learning difficulties are capable, when they are allowed, challenged and taught, of advocating for themselves, developing clear views about how they want to live, manage their lives and make informed decisions which best fit their personal needs and objectives.



Hans Schuman

Hans Schuman



Hans Schuman
Hans Schuman, PhD: Worked as a teacher in a special school for students with a visual impairment in the Netherlands. Conducted research on the impact of a visual impairment on family relationships and personal well being, the struggle for inclusion and giving students with learning disabilities a voice.

The transition to adulthood - A shared responsibility

The education of visually impaired teenagers with learning difficulties and their exclusion from mainstream schools

Transition to adulthood



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CALL FOR PAPERS & POSTERS: International Conference on Special Education ICOSE 2010

to be held on 16-18 April 2010 in Kyrenia, North Cyprus has started accepting abstracts for papers, posters, workshops and other means of presentations. Scientific scope of the conference is going to contain the following topics;



Inclusive education for learners with disabilities or special needs

- Inclusive Education Policy and Practice
- Cultural Differences and Systems of Inclusive and Special Needs Education
- Individualized Curriculum
- Overcoming Barriers to Learning

Teachers and teacher education

- Job satisfaction at Special Education Schools
- Teacher Education and Training for Inclusive and Special Needs Education
- Creativity and Innovation in Teaching

Collaboration between parents, teachers and other professionals

- Parent Involvement
- Physiotherapy
- Language and Speech Therapy
- Psychological-Educational Counselling

Educational approaches and methodology

- Special Education Programmes for Learners with Autism
- Educational Programmes for Learners who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and for learners who are Blind or have Visual Problems
- Supporting Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders
- Educational Programmes for Learners with Physical Disability
- Learning Difficulties and the Development of Literacy and Numeracy
- Cognitive Learning Difficulties and Lifelong Learning
- Communication without words
- Superior Capabilities
- Homeschooling and Children with Special Educational Needs
- Technology and Special Education

The school system

- Quality Assurance in Special Schools (residential and local)
- Higher Education and Special Educational Needs Students

- Adult Special Education and Lifelong Learning and the Bologna Process
- Educating Pre-school Children With Disabilities
- Educational Leadership
- Learning Disabilities in a Multicultural Global Village

DEADLINES AND IMPORTANT DATES

- Abstract submissions: 02 November 2009
- Notification of acceptance: 07 December 2009
- Full paper submissions: 01 February 2010
- Early registrations: 31 December 2009

PROCEEDINGS:

All abstracts will be published in the conference program & abstract book. All papers will be published in the conference proceedings book. Selected papers will be published in high standard scientific journals (SSCI)

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION:

Abstracts must be submitted by email to registration@icose2010.org
Please visit www.icose2010.org/submission.html for rules & regulations about preparing your abstracts.

REGISTRATION:

- Standart registration fee: 250 EUROS
- Late registration fee: 325 EUROS
- Accompanying person: 150 EUROS
- Audience registration: 100 EUROS

Please visit www.icose2010.org/registration.html for more information

CONTACTS:

For questions about technical and organizational matters

e-mail: info@icose2010.org

Tel: +90.392.224 13 03

For abstract and paper submissions, registrations and other academic/scientific enquiries

e-mail: registration@icose2010.org

Tel: +90.392.224 13 04

For travel, accommodation and other related questions

e-mail: travel@icose2010.org

Tel: +90.392.224 13 05

www.icose2010.org



Third European Conference on Psychology and Visual Impairment 2010

We are very pleased to announce that the third ECPVI conference will take place in Vilnius, Lithuania on the 30th and 31st of March 2010. The number of participants is limited to 120.

The plenary program will consist of a number of keynote speakers from the University of Vilnius and the Lithuanian Association of the Blind and Visually Handicapped, among others.

The sessions on **day one** will cover different age groups:

- Early intervention
- School age
- Adults
- Elderly

The sessions on **day two** will cover topics like:

- MDVI – CVI
- Neuropsychology
- Assessment
- ICF

We would very much encourage the participants to share their work at this conference. It could be in the shape of presentation of new ideas, research findings, showing assessments, giving lectures or just asking for partners in new projects.

If you want to do this, please send a short "abstract" on the idea and the theme. The overall meaning for the conference is to exchange and reflect upon psychology and visual impairment. So do not send a formal abstract like the more formal conferences, but just as a piece of information, so the planners can get an idea of what you want present.

The host of the conference will be the Lithuanian Training Centre for the Blind and Visually Impaired in corporation with ICEVI-Europe. An associated partner will be Lithuanian Association of the Blind and Visually Handicapped.

Practical issues:

- The conference is "low budget". This means there is no conference fee but just a fee for food and drink will be required (the amount will be announced later).
- You arrange your own travel and book a hotel yourself.
- The conference language will be *English*.
- On the *evening of the 29th of March*, a local pub in Vilnius will be picked for casual meeting.

- On the evening of the 30th of March, there will be a dinner at the trainingcentre.
- The *dealine* for "abstracts" is **1st of December 2009**.
- The *deadline* for registration is **1st of February 2010**.

The contact person and the person to whom you send your information is:
Ingrida Gabrielaviciute, ingrida@lasuc.lt
<http://www.synsraad.dk/psychology/index.asp>

ANNOUNCEMENT: XXI Century – All over Open society Century

The Third International Conference in the frame of the East European and Asian regional project "XXI Century – All over Open society Century" with the theme Visual Profile will take place at the Pedagogical State University in Perm, Russia in March 2010

Pre Announcement for Tactile Illustrated Book Competition 2011.

Open to all countries in the world.

In November 2011 the [Tactus Competition](#) for the Award for the best tactile book for blind and visually impaired children will take place.

The members of the Tactus group invite you to create your own tactile illustrated book with Braille.

More details and information about Tactus & Typhlo will follow in the next issue of the ICEVI newsletter.



Specialist for Visual Impairment in the Middle East

This is a very exciting opportunity for the right candidate to work and assist with the development of the Visual Impairment curriculum within government schools in the Middle East.

Your main responsibilities will include:

- Creating policies and procedures for the identification and placement of students with visual impairments.
- Developing personnel standards for teachers of students with visual impairments.
- Developing a plan for the creation of a network of vision resource teachers to meet the needs of students in inclusive settings.

- Developing policies and program guidelines for the use of Braille for students with visual impairments.
- Developing policy and program guidelines for orientation and mobility services.
- Working closely with the Section Manager in the development of collaborative efforts with colleges and universities for the purpose of beginning new degree and certificate programs in vision, and orientation and mobility.
- Developing interagency partnerships at the national level with organizations supporting students with visual impairments.
- Organizing a comprehensive handbook of assistive technology vendors and equipment specifically for students with visual impairments, and updates this annually.

The right candidate must have the following experience:

- 3+ years experience in the educational sector working with a form of education special programs;
- Experience in working in curriculum and instruction material development for students with special educational needs;
- Demonstrated understanding of the issues relating to the personal and educational development of students with visual impairments.
- Ideally have a MA in a visual education related subject.

This is a permanent position to be based in the UAE, with an excellent salary (tax free) and accommodation.

If you are interested in this opportunity, please send your CV to cgentles@cobaltrecruitment.com.

Linn's Stamp Newsletter and 200th Anniversary of the Birth of Louis Braille

In response to our message to the editor, Denise McCarthy of Linn's Stamp Newsletter, about stamps that had or will be issued this year to celebrate the 200th Anniversary of the Birth of Louis Braille there developed a correspondence between us about these issues. We were happy today to open the March issue of the newsletter and read (click on to) "Many stamps honor Braille birth bicentenary".

We are delighted that in this year that marks the bicentenary of three great liberators.

"In the first few weeks of 1809, three baby boys were born who changed the course of history;

Abraham Lincoln, sixteenth President of the United States´ ;

Charles Darwin, British father of the theory of evolution:

and **Louis Braille**, the French inventor of the means of literacy for blind people worldwide.

Unlike Lincoln and Darwin, Braille's genius is little known outside his native land, except among those who have been touched by his gift of literacy"

From "Louis Braille - A touch of Genius" by C. Michael Mellor, 2006

Although Louis Braille is still little known, except by blind, we are thrilled that, as of today 29 countries will honor him and his system with stamps during 2009. Stamps journals, newspapers and major information networks, including the British Broadcasting Corp. (BBC) have included him in their publication and broadcasts.

Ken & Gunilla Stuckey,
[Read more from Linn's Stamp Newsletter](#)

New website established to meet the needs of the visually impaired

Hi All,

There is a new website that has been established specifically to meet the needs of the visually impaired. If you need any help, information or support then this is where you can find it.

If you answer yes to any of the following:

1. Are you visually impaired?
2. Do you deal with visually impaired people?
3. Do you run a club or sports society helping the visually impaired?
4. Are you running a business that sells goods that help the visually impaired?

Then this site is for you.

If you or anyone you know is visually impaired then this website could help you.

Visit us at www.partially-sighted.com for free access to the discussion forums set up especially for the visually impaired, to encourage the sharing of useful information, experiences or simply to offer each other advice and support.

Feel free to socialise, network or search out those who have similar experiences or conditions to yourself. You could also try and find people or groups already established in your area, or set up a new group.

I would be grateful if you could forward this link/message onto anyone who you think may find it useful.

Many thanks
All at www.partially-sighted.com