

ICEVI European Newsletter

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Content:

- The President’s Message..... 2
- Developing University Guidance for the Socio-Emotional Needs of Students with Vision Impairment 5
- THE BURNOUT FREE PROJECT: Burnout of Professionals and Parents with Children with Disabilities: Prevention, common challenges and mutually empowering methodologies and practices in Early Child Intervention Services. 7
- ICEVI Report from Ireland 10
- Egymese Newsletter 11
- New Danish statistics show that persons with a visual impairment need higher education qualifications than sighted people to get a job. 12
- Save the Date: 10th ICEVI European Conference May 15-17, 2025 in Padova, Italy 13
- Invitation for Participation: 10th ICEVI European Conference in Padova, Italy Call for Abstract Submission is Open! 14

The President's Message

Dear Members, Non-Members, Partners, and Friends of ICEVI-Europe,

Welcome to the latest issue of the ICEVI-Europe Newsletter!

Anticipating the 10th ICEVI European Conference in Padova, Italy

We are thrilled to share exciting news and updates about the upcoming 10th ICEVI European Conference, which will be held in the beautiful city of Padova, Italy. The CALL for ABSTRACTS is OPEN! (<https://icevieurope2025-hollman.it/abstracts/>) This landmark event, celebrated for its profound impact on inclusive education for children and young adults with visual impairment, is set to bring together leading educators, researchers, policymakers, health professionals and advocates from across the continent and beyond. The conference will not only mark a decade of progress and collaboration but also set the stage for new initiatives and networks designed to further our mission. We are especially looking forwards to welcoming you at our conference as we celebrate the 10th Anniversary of European Conferences of ICEVI-Europe and the first time it will be held in Italy.

The Scientific Committee is therefore happy to invite you to the 10th ICEVI European Conference in Padova (Italy) held May 15-17, 2025. The theme of the conference is: "Supporting children and young adults with visual impairment: What can we do? What can be done?" The main programme areas are:

1. **Individual Development and Assessment**
2. **Education and Learning**
3. **Habilitation and Rehabilitation**
4. **Access, Participation, Engagement in Society**

We hope you will join us and submit an abstract for an oral/poster presentation. Both theoretical and empirical studies are welcome.

- **Oral presentations** will last 10 minutes.
- **Poster presentations** will use a given template.

Abstracts should be no more than 150 words in length. Please structure your abstract as follows:

1. Aims/Relevance of the topic
2. Methodology
3. Brief description of the intervention/tool/programme/best practice, etc.
4. Results/Outcomes
5. Conclusion and Implications

Abstract submission will be possible until September 1, 2024. We will inform you regarding the acceptance of your abstract by December 2024.

The link to the abstract submission page is: <https://icevieurope2025-hollman.it/abstracts/>

Participants will have the opportunity to engage in a diverse array of workshops and interactive sessions covering a wide range of topics, from the latest research in visual

impairment education to practical strategies for classroom inclusion. Sessions on assistive technologies, curriculum adaptations, and social-emotional support for visually impaired students are anticipated to be particularly well-received, providing attendees with valuable knowledge and tools to implement in their respective contexts.

One of the most valuable aspects of the conference will be the opportunity for networking and collaboration. Attendees from various countries and backgrounds will come together to share their experiences, challenges, and successes. This exchange of ideas is expected to foster a sense of community and mutual support, laying the groundwork for future partnerships and projects.

Introducing the CVI Professional Network: A New Milestone in Our Mission

We are proud to announce the planned establishment of the Cerebral Visual Impairment (CVI) Network. CVI is a prevalent cause of visual impairment in children, and the need for specialized resources and support for this group has become increasingly apparent. The CVI Network aims to address this need by providing a platform for collaboration, research, and resource sharing among professionals working with children with CVI. This network is led by our colleagues Marieke Steendam from Royal Dutch Visio, Frank Laemers from Pädagogische Hochschule Heidelberg, and myself and fantastically supported by Aukje Sniijders again from Royal Dutch Visio of which we thank them for their support and contribution.

Objectives of the CVI Network

The primary objectives of the CVI Network will include:

1. ****Raising Awareness****: Increasing awareness about CVI among educators, healthcare providers, and policymakers to ensure early identification and intervention.
2. ****Professional Development****: Offering specialized training and professional development opportunities for educators and practitioners to enhance their understanding and skills in supporting children with CVI.
3. ****Research and Innovation****: Promoting research initiatives to better understand CVI and develop innovative approaches to education and intervention.
4. ****Resource Sharing****: Creating a centralized repository of resources, including instructional materials, assessment tools, and best practices, accessible to network members.
5. ****Advocacy and Policy Influence****: Advocating for policies and practices that support the needs of children with CVI and their families at local, national, and international levels.

Join Us in Our Mission

As we anticipate the successes of the 10th ICEVI European Conference and prepare to embark on the journey of the CVI Network, we invite all our members, partners, and supporters to join us in these endeavors. Together, we can continue to make

strides in inclusive education, ensuring that every child and young adult with a visual impairment has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Stay tuned at <https://www.icevi-europe.org/> for more updates, events, and opportunities to get involved. Thank you for your unwavering commitment to our shared mission.

Warm regards, On behalf of the Board of ICEVI-Europe,

Dr John Ravenscroft

Professor of Childhood Visual Impairment

President



Developing University Guidance for the Socio-Emotional Needs of Students with Vision Impairment

Principal Investigator: *Dr Ifigeneia Manitsa, Institute for Mental Health, University of Birmingham*

Co-Investigators: *Dr Fiona Barlow-Brown, Department of Psychology, Kingston University London; Dr Rachel Hewett, VICTAR, University of Birmingham*

Consultants: *Professor John Ravenscroft, Moray House School of Education and Sport in the University of Edinburgh; Dr Joao Roe, Head of Sensory Support Service in Bristol; Dr Mhairi Thurston, School of Applied Sciences, Abertay University*

The Higher Education Statistics Agency reports in the academic year 2020/21 that there were 3,450 students enrolled in UK universities whom they categorised as “blind or as having a serious visual impairment”. This number has risen steadily over the last decade. Whilst student numbers are rising, there does not appear to be adequate guidelines in place to support this student group in terms of social inclusion, and social and emotional needs (Croft, 2020; Hewett et al., 2016; Manitsa & Doikou, 2020).

This research project brings together six experts from the Institute for Mental Health (IMH) and the Vision Impairment Centre for Teaching and Research (VICTAR) in the University of Birmingham, the Department of Psychology at Kingston University, the School of Applied Sciences in Abertay University and the Moray House School of Education and Sport in the University of Edinburgh, in close partnership with the Sensory Support Service in Bristol which operates under a joint arrangement across the local authorities of Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Bath and North East Somerset and North Somerset. The main purpose of the suggested project is to develop participatory research in the areas of vision impairment and Higher Education (HE) with a focus on priority setting and co-production. The outcome of our study will be the development of co-produced university guidance to address the interpersonal and socio-emotional needs of adults with vision impairment in HE and promote their educational inclusion.

Our research team is currently conducting online interviews with adults with vision impairment enrolled in and pursuing a university degree (undergrad, masters, and doctoral students) and/or adults with vision impairment who have recently (within

the last five years) completed a university degree as well as professionals from national and university staff that support students with vision impairment. During the online interviews, participants discuss their university experiences, their socio-emotional needs and the support they provide to university students with VI. Preliminary findings of the study have shown that better advertising of disability services should be promoted in the university as well as better collaboration between academics, administrative staff, and university students with vision impairment (a joined-up approach). Students with vision impairment also indicated that there should be more social opportunities at university for students with vision impairment who may experience significant challenges in socialising. Both the professionals and university students who participated in our study called for the development of an official plan to support their transition to HE.

Our future plans include establishing an advisory group of university students with vision impairment and a second advisory group of staff members from professional organisations in the field of vision loss and university staff to help us define the main pillars of the proposed university guidance. As a team we would welcome the opportunity to further discuss our research with interested professionals and academics.

References

- Croft, E., 2020. Experiences of visually impaired and blind students in UK higher education: An exploration of access and participation. *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research*, 22(1), 382–392. <http://doi.org/10.16993/sjdr.721>
- Hewett, Douglas, G., McLinden, M., & Keil, S. (2017). Developing an inclusive learning environment for students with visual impairment in higher education: progressive mutual accommodation and learner experiences in the United Kingdom. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 32(1), 89–109 <https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2016.1254971>
- Manitsa, & Doikou, M. (2022). Social support for students with visual impairments in educational institutions: An integrative literature review. *The British Journal of Visual Impairment*, 40(1), 29–47. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0264619620941885>

THE BURNOUT FREE PROJECT: Burnout of Professionals and Parents with Children with Disabilities: Prevention, common challenges and mutually empowering methodologies and practices in Early Child Intervention Services.

By Vassilios Argyropoulos (ICEVI Europe National Representative of Greece)

The [Burnout FREE ECI Project](#) “Burnout of Professionals and Parents with Children with Disabilities: Prevention, common challenges and mutually empowering methodologies and practices in Early Child Intervention Services”, comes under the ERASMUS+ Programme (KA220-ADU-Cooperation partnerships in adult education). It is coordinated by Amimoni and managed by the [State Scholarships Foundation \(IKY\)](#).

The project boasts a diverse consortium of 11 partners from 8 countries, pooling together expertise from various sectors including ECI organizations, academia and the private sector.

In specific the following partners compose the consortium of this project:

AMIMONI – the Panhellenic Association of parents and friends of visually impaired people with additional handicaps/Coordinator/Greece, PANEPISTIMIO THESSALIAS/Greece, SVEUCILISTE U ZAGREBU/Croatia, UNIVERSITATEA BABES BOLYAI/Romania, EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES/Belgium, MALI DOM - Zagreb dnevni centar za rehabilitaciju djece i mladezi/Croatia, C.E.C.D. MIRA SINTRA - CENTRO DE EDUCACAO PARA O CIDADAO COM DEFICIENCIA CRL/Portugal, KARIN DOM Foundation/ Bulgaria, THEOFANIS ALEXANDRIDIS KAI SIA EE/ Greece, KYPRIAKI ETAIREIA PISTOPOIISIS LIMITED/ Cyprus, Down Syndrome Albania Foundation “DSA”/Associated Partner/Albania

At its core, the Burnout FREE ECI Project seeks to craft a comprehensive roadmap that addresses the multifaceted challenges faced by parents with children with disabilities (CwD), professionals in the family centered Early Child Intervention field (ECI) and Organizations working in this field. These challenges not only hinder the prospects of early childhood development but also endanger the well-being and resilience of those involved. By leveraging interdisciplinary approaches and innovative methodologies, the project aims to empower professionals and parents, and fortify their ability to navigate the demanding roles they undertake.

Crucially, the project aims to foster a supportive ecosystem within ECI organizations, one that is conducive to the well-being and professional development of its members. This involves not only mitigating burnout risk factors but also cultivating a culture of resilience, implementing effective leadership approaches, and establishing robust support structures.

The Project Results developed throughout the lifetime of the project include:

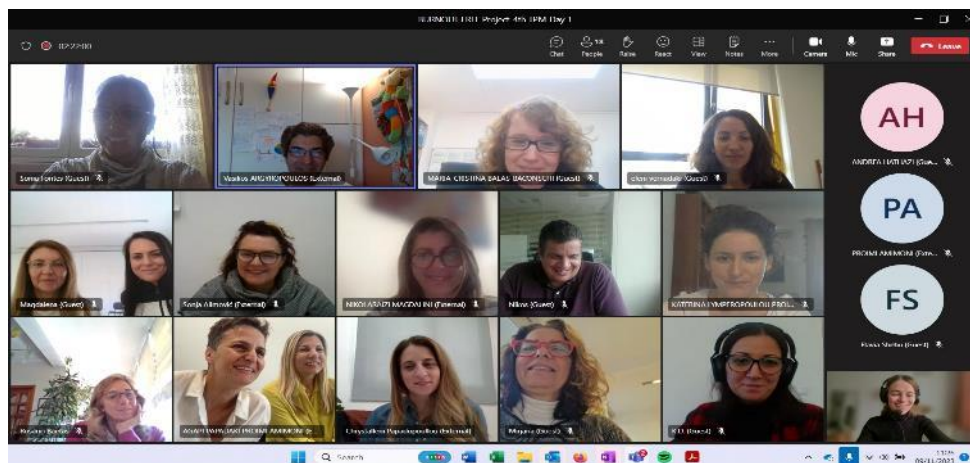
1. Report on Burnout (PrR1) including a Literature Review on the issue of Burnout and a Needs Assessment, identifying the needs of the parents of Children with Disabilities and ECI professionals involved in their education and care.
2. Burnout Free ECI Training Materials & Content for Professionals & Parents (PrR2) covering the need for enriched knowledge on burnout prevention, leading to a Burnout Free ECI Methodology.
3. A Methodology Guide & Report on the Burnout Free ECI Pilot (PrR3) with Guidelines for implementing Burnout Free practices in ECI Organizations during the pilot phase, and a Report on the pilot results.
4. An E-learning Game (PrR4) consisting of a set of free applications designed to meet the needs of professionals and parents, employing cutting-edge technologies.

5. A Certification Scheme (PrR5) leading to Certification of Curriculum & Training Materials and Certification of Professionals, that enhances quality assurance, and encourages lifelong learning and professional development.

6. A Digital toolkit and replication methodology (PrR6) enabling the development of digital tools, e-learning courses, hybrid learning opportunities, expanding the project's impact beyond ECI Organizations.

Within this fruitful framework, both face-to-face and online project meetings with quite intensive and productive character were conducted.





Throughout its duration, Burnout FREE ECI Project will yield a range of tangible outcomes aimed at equipping professionals and parents with the necessary tools and resources to prevent burnout and thrive in their roles. From comprehensive reports and training materials to innovative e-learning tools and certification schemes, the project endeavours to leave a lasting impact on the ECI landscape, ultimately leading to improved outcomes for children with disabilities and their families.

For more information about the project please follow us on social media, Facebook: [BurnOut Free ECI Project](#), Instagram: [burnoutfreeproject](#), LinkedIn: [Burnout FREE Project | LinkedIn](#) and visit our website <https://www.burnoutfree.eu/>.

This project (No:2021-1-EL01-KA220-ADU-000035230) has been co-funded by ERASMUS+ 2021 Programme, KA220-ADU-Cooperation partnerships in adult education and managed by the Greek National Agency. The European Commission’s support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



ICEVI Report from Ireland

ChildVision have a number of different and exciting programs and projects for children with a visual impairment;

- ChildVision are now a specialist national disability team for visual impairment in Ireland, with a multi-disciplinary team encompassing a wide range of clinical therapies and a low vision clinic.
- ChildVision's clinical departments continue to assess ASD and have been working hard to make the standardised assessment more suitable to children with a visual impairment. We are communicating with our Europe colleagues around projects within this area.
- On 13th of March, ChildVision hosted a 'Cortical/Cerebral Visual Impairment workshop for professionals. The workshop was presented by the 'CVI Special Interest Group' in Ireland and included presentations from the Anne Sullivan Foundation for Deaf/Blind, a CVI clinic from University Children's Hospital and ChildVision. The workshop was attended by professionals from Education (Department of Education), and Clinical and Rehabilitation experts. Overall the workshop was a great success and has already led to an increased awareness of CVI nationally.
- On 3rd of April, the Psychology and Low Vision Departments of ChildVision presented at Trinity College Dublin's Psychology Department disability workshop. Presentations on VI and CVI were given to highlight awareness of issues that affect children with a visual impairment when facing psychology assessments.
- ChildVision Psychology and Low Vision Departments are working together on a pilot project to adapt and increase the accessibility of psychology assessments for children with a visual impairment.
- ChildVision are hosting a National Braille Reading Day in conjunction with the Department of Education on Monday 22nd of April. Primary school aged children will attend from all over Ireland to participate in a Pirate Theme Day with fun Braille activities, books and games to engage and encourage the Braille skills of all the tactile learners. Children's author Debbie Thomas and Braille reader Christina Kelly will be in attendance to listen to the children read.
- The Physiotherapy Department have added rebound sessions to complement the ongoing therapeutic interventions, which the children from St. Joseph's Primary School for the Blind are currently availing of.
- Our Equine Assisted Activities Department will be offering training for other similar centers in Ireland to show the benefit of equine activities for children with visual impairments.

Note: Due to retirements, ChildVision has both a new CEO and deputy CEO. The National Council for the Blind of Ireland (NCBI) has also changed its name to 'Vision Ireland'.

Egymese Newsletter

By Time Bata

The Egymese (One-tale) Civil Association was founded a year and a half ago to create stories with developmental content for children with special needs (including children with vision impairments, intellectual disability, physical impairments, multi-disabilities or severe complex needs). The materials also contain professional background materials for their parents and professionals working with them.

We are implementing our current project with the Association for the Rehabilitation of Visually Impaired Persons (LÁRESZ) Association. After the initial self-financing last year, E.ON Hungary (an energy company) supported us for the project period.

We would like to bring to your attention the content created during this project, in which the vision development focus is particularly effective among several other accessibility aspects.

During our project, we created two children's tales with a total of eight visually different versions of complexity.

The first tale, "What is in the sky?" (Mi van az égen?) aims to bring distant objects closer to visually impaired children.

The second tale is "What is in the grass?" (Mi van a fűben?) aims to introduce small garden animals to the audience.

Regarding visual performance and accessibility, we recommend the materials for children who already have some practice in looking at figures/images, but who don't find that classic storybooks attract or hold their attention.

The versions with a black background are explicitly recommended for children affected by cerebral visual impairment (CVI). The black background supports focus and maintains longer visual attention, and the simplified illustrations facilitate visual processing.

Our stories, in addition to visual functions, also develop mental processing functions and communication skills.

Augmentative and alternative communication gestures are being prepared for the story and characters of the tale "What is in the grass?" (Mi van a fűben?), which will be available on our YouTube channel in the coming weeks.

Unfortunately, the videos are only available in Hungarian, but if there is an interest, we aim to prepare translated versions in other languages.

You can access our content for free on our Youtube channel at:

<https://www.youtube.com/@egymesestudio>.

New Danish statistics show that persons with a visual impairment need higher education qualifications than sighted people to get a job.

by Dorte Marie Degn, IBOS

At least in Denmark, but perhaps in many other countries as well, a future as an unskilled labourer is far more unrealistic for persons living with a visual impairment, than for fully sighted persons. Even a final qualification after 9-10 or 12 yrs. in school - in the Danish educational system called the Gymnasium Student Exam (equivalent to A Levels in the UK, and the Baccalauréat in France) is rarely sufficient for persons with blindness or low vision to enter the labour market.

This is what the first statistical research carried out in this area in Denmark reveals. The Danish Institute for Visual Impairment, locally known as IBOS, has been working in collaboration with Statistics Denmark, The Danish Association of the Blind (DBS) and the specialized library 'Nota', to review research data on 15.000 persons who are blind or who have severe low vision.

More than half of this group has no advanced level school qualifications, while this is only the case for a third of the general Danish population. Twice as many 30 to 34-year-old visually impaired persons (VIPs) started their career without a qualification above Secondary level 1 (Grundskole).

A defined profession is the way forward.

According to IBOS' researcher Isak Kornerup Houe, the new research underlines that clear and specific professional competences are key to getting a job when you have a reduced sight. One consideration is that many unskilled jobs are often incompatible with a severe sight disability.

"This is not so surprising. What is more surprising is that the statistics show that longer education seems to give job opportunities. This can be interpreted as if it is necessary for VIPs to have rather specific professional competences in order to get a fair chance at the labour market" he says.

Improve the support for children and young persons

IBOS intends to use the research findings to raise awareness about the need to strengthen the efforts to help children and young persons with visual impairments emerge from education with advanced level qualifications.

According to Isak Kornerup Houe "The positive version of this research is, that there is an unused potential in getting more VIPs into the labour market. It will take a coherent effort, where young people have access to support and specialized guidance, the right assistive technology and tools plus sight compensating strategies."

"It is crucial that schools include specialized professionals, who can help find and create the relevant solutions for pupils with a visual impairment. It is important to make individual assessments of each child or young person's needs. Besides the

above-mentioned this is also about removing the structural barriers, e.g. so the pupil or student can get extended time for their study, exams, or traineeship”.

Isak Kornerup Houe can be contacted at e-mail: isak.kornerup.houe@kk.dk

The article has been rewritten from Danish by Dorthe Marie Degn, IBOS.

Save the Date: 10th ICEVI European Conference May 15-17, 2025 in Padova, Italy



10th ICEVI EUROPEAN CONFERENCE
SUPPORTING CHILDREN
AND YOUNG ADULTS
WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT:
What can we do? What can be done?
May 15-17, 2025
Town Hall and University Padova, ITALY

Theme

This conference will focus on the need for a multidisciplinary approach in offering support aimed at ensuring the best quality of life for children and young adults with visual impairment

Target Audience

- > Professionals and practitioners working with children and young adults with visual impairment
- > Caregivers, parents and families

4 AREAS OF INTEREST

- > Individual development and assessment

- > Education and learning
- > Habilitation and rehabilitation
- > Access, participation, engagement in society

FINAL GOAL

The final goal is to provide to those professionals who wish to offer a global approach a document of key principles which will support their work with children/young adults with visual impairment and their families

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

Submissions will be open in May 2024

STAY TUNED AT www.icevi-europe2025-hollman.it • lc@lccongressi.com

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Invitation for Participation: 10th ICEVI European Conference in Padova, Italy Call for Abstract Submission is Open!



Dear Colleagues,

We have the pleasure of informing you that the Call for Abstracts for the **10th ICEVI-European Conference** is now open!

Please visit the link: <https://icevieurope2025-hollman.it/abstracts/>

ICEVI-Europe in cooperation with **Robert Hollman Foundation** are proud to announce our milestone tenth European Conference in 2025. The **10th ICEVI-European Conference** will be held from **May 15 to May 17, 2025** at the **Town Hall and University of Padova in Italy, thanks to the hospitality and collaboration of the Municipality of Padova and the University of Padova.**

We are looking forward to seeing many familiar colleagues and we are also hoping to see many new colleagues at our upcoming conference. Join us to actively take part in the exchange of knowledge and expertise and sharing of best practices within a network of people and institutions promoting the inclusion of people with visual impairment, as we explore this year's theme: **"Supporting children and young adults with visual impairment: What can we do? What can be done?"**

The main programme areas are:

- 1. INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND ASSESSMENT**
- 2. EDUCATION AND LEARNING**
- 3. HABILITATION AND REHABILITATION**
- 4. ACCESS, PARTICIPATION, ENGAGEMENT IN SOCIETY**

We hope you will join us and submit an abstract for an oral/poster presentation. Both theoretical and empirical studies are welcome.

- Oral presentations will last 10 minutes
- Poster presentations will use a given template

Abstracts should be no more than 150 words in length. Please structure your abstract as follows:

1. Aims/Relevance of the topic
2. Methodology
3. Brief description of the intervention/tool/programme/best practice, etc.
4. Results/Outcomes
5. Conclusion and Implications

Abstract submission will be possible until September 1, 2024.

We will inform you regarding the acceptance of your abstract by December 2024.

Link to abstract submission:

<https://iceviEurope2025-hollman.it/abstracts/>

The Conference, which will bring together hundreds of professionals from all over Europe, will focus on how support, using a multidisciplinary approach, can foster a better quality of life for children and young adults with visual impairment.

We look forward to your active participation and having you all join us at the 2025 Conference in Padova!

Sincerely

Dr John Ravenscroft
Professor and Chair of
Childhood Visual Impairment
President of ICEVI-Europe

Dr Maria Eleonora Reffo General
Director of the
Robert Hollman Foundation

