

ICEVI European Newsletter

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From the Board

Dear ICEVI-members

At the beginning of May the board had a meeting in Edinburgh, Scotland. The Royal Blind School was our host.

At the beginning of the meeting two new members of the French speaking countries were appointed, Mira Goldschmidt from Switzerland and Francis Boe from France.

Both have made an enthusiastic start. Francis has been a board member before.

The meeting was longer than usual, because the Board thought it was important to thoroughly discuss the role of ICEVI-Europe. We had lively discussions and new ideas came up. The central theme was, over and again "How can we realise our aims and what does that mean for the communication between our members and the member organisations". Is it important to look once more to the instruments, to see if these are adequate and well used.

In short, there were many questions and also agreements. It was agreed that we take up the following themes, prepared by the sub committees:

- The structure of ICEVI-Europe.
Can this be strengthened? How can we use the country representatives more? The function of the region becomes even more important since ICEVI has decided to lay more emphasis on the sub regions.
- The most important channels for communication within ICEVI-Europe are the newsletter and the website. It is obvious that we should look at these further. Two sub-committees were appointed for this task. These committees will also look at the results of the questionnaire.

It was agreed that the first recommendations will be discussed at the meeting in 2012.

During the Board meeting the annual report for 2010 and the budget for 2011 were approved. The report has now been sent for approval to the country representatives.

After their approval the annual report will be published on the website.

Finally the first meeting of the Programme Committee for the European Conference in 2013 in Istanbul, Turkey, took place. It was decided to use as a basis for the conference, the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health, ICF, which is naturally concentrated on the various age categories. The committee anticipates that there will be specific interest groups - small conferences within a conference, so to speak. Experience shows us that these are the best meeting places.

In the second half of 2011 the first announcement will be placed on the website.

In February 2012 the Programme committee will have their second meeting together with the Organising Committee. Then the final decision will be made about the structure and the contents of the conference. Naturally suggestions are much appreciated!

So we have enough to do! The Board is open to comments and suggestions from you all. As mentioned before, the next meeting will be in the middle of 2012.

I wish you all a nice summer and vacation time.

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



The elderly, still a young target group

There is a growing global awareness that the amount and percentage of elderly within the population of blind and partially sighted people is increasing. In the Netherlands 79% of visually impaired people are over age 65 and 94% are over age 50. In the history of the various institutions and organisations in this field, there has been a traditional emphasis on children and youth. So, for them it is relatively new to focus on the elderly.

ICEVI Europe now wants to pay more attention to the target group of elderly people and Royal Dutch Visio has been approached to support ICEVI in this effort. This has led to the organisation of a European Expert Meeting on Ageing People with Visual Impairment. That meeting took place on the 4th and 5th of April in Vught, the Netherlands. There were 18 participants from 14 different countries. And these were not just participants from the ICEVI network. People were specifically invited who are active in other European

networks, the EBU and Enviter, because in these networks are also seeking the best ways to support older people with a visual impairment and provide rehabilitation services for them.

The purpose of this meeting was to collect and connect knowledge and people with experience in working with visually impaired older clients. Much good practice has been exchanged and discussed and will be published online in a kind of database of these practices. The organisers are now working on a website where all the results and presentations of the expert meeting will be placed.

In anticipation, here are some conclusions already. It has become clear that in many countries our organisations recognize the need of older people to have access to a key worker, a case manager or personal coordinator. Also the meeting showed that cooperation with other care providers is essential. Few older people are 'just' visually impaired. Often there are other diseases too. Good examples were given of cooperation with services for the hearing impaired and with organisations for people with brain injury (traumatic brain injury and dementia). Participants were unanimous in their focus on autonomy and independence and the desire to maximize participation. It was also confirmed that people as they age, change more and more and therefore standard programmes are less applicable. Older people often ask for an individual approach. This however does not change the fact that participation in group work is often highly appreciated by older clients.

A good example of the pursuit of participation is the so-called Generation Supermarket. In Germany, there are already three such supermarkets that are specifically designed for older people and which also take into account disabilities as a result of visual impairments. The adaptations range from a tactile map at the entrance to the supermarket to magnifiers in many places all over the shop to read price tags and other information. Another practical idea is the Low Vision Care Management Passport of the RNIB. It is an easy way to help people who have difficulty in articulating (e.g. as a result of dementia) what they can and can not see and hear. This passport also contains some tips for carers and other people involved.

These and other ideas as well as all the presentations will be available soon. Once the website is ready, it will be announced in the ICEVI Newsletter so that everyone can take a look at the proceedings of the expert meeting on the elderly. A core group of participants will consider further continuation of this initiative for the future, including further elaboration of this European network.

In addition to the meeting, the participants also visited some locations of Royal Dutch Visio. They went to the Regional Centre of Visio in Den Bosch. There was a guided tour and a presentation of a project (called NOVO Den Bosch) concerning screening in homes for the elderly in that region. Next there

was a successful visit to the Vlasborch in Vught, a specialised home for visually impaired elderly with their own specific working philosophy.


Peter Verstraten,
Senior Project Manager, dept. Development and Innovation
Royal Dutch Visio (The Netherlands)








Attachments:

Low Vision Care Management Passport

Please read:

It will help you support "Betty" by ensuring she is making the best use of her sight and hearing.



<p>RIGHT EYE</p>  <p>I have NO vision in my right eye</p>	<p>LEFT EYE</p>  <p>I have a little vision in my left eye.</p>	<p>I have two pairs of glasses</p>  <p>I should ALWAYS wear my pink glasses when I am walking around. They will help make me less likely to trip or fall over. (Baseline 7204 is written on the side)</p>	<p>I cannot hear very well.</p>  <p>Please make sure I have my hearing aid with me. Speak slowly and clearly and give me time to answer you.</p>
 <p>My central vision is reduced so when I look at you I cannot see your face clearly when you are directly in front of me.</p>	 <p>I can see you better if you sit or stand on my left side</p>	<p>Please remember</p>  <p>I have to take a lot of tablets but only give me them one at a time and check I have not dropped them on the floor.</p>	

- Low Vision Care Management Passport
- Photo EEMAPVI group picture (taken in De Vlasborch, Vught): f.i.t.r. Marián Horanic (Slovakia), Bláithín Gallagher (Ireland), Branislav Mamojka (Slovakia), Ronald Vrydag (Belgium), Krister Inde (Sweden), Peter Rodney (Denmark), Alan Suttie (Scotland), Froukje Veenstra (Netherlands), Hans Welling (Netherlands), Petra-Verweyen Oertel (Germany), Peter Verstraten (Netherlands), Chris Roeygens (Belgium), Tatiana Gorash (Moldova), John Harris (Wales) and Huld Magnúsdóttir (Iceland).
Participants who are not in this picture are Sylvie Ervé (France), Krisztina Kovács (Hungary) and Liliya Plastunova (Russia).
- Photo EEMAPVI meeting room (in Conference Hotel Huize Bergen, Vught)



European Expert Meeting on Ageing People with Visual Impairment, April 2011, Netherlands.

The expert meeting was organised on the initiative of ICEVI Europe and under the support of Royal Dutch Visio. In general this meeting was devoted to the theme "ageing people" that will be one of the themes of the Global ICEVI-Europe Conference 2013 in Istanbul.

The meeting was attended by about 20 European key persons from service providing organisations. All participants presented different practices and services, methods and approaches, projects and programmes that could be applied in practice. It was a great meeting of experts from different countries - in one saying - 'a good quality of life and social inclusion of ageing people'. After the meeting we asked Tatjana Gorash - the expert from Moldova about how much this sharing will be useful for her work in Moldova.

The Feedback from Moldova: **Necessary actions which are needed to be taken in order to improve the situation of older people with visual impairments in the Republic of Moldova.**

Participation at the International Expert Meeting represents a true experience and necessity for the Republic of Moldova. The good practices learned at the meeting can be applied in our country in order to improve the quality of living of people with visual impairments and especially of elderly people with visual disability who are at the moment in a very complicated situation.

Elderly people with visual impairments must confront many major problems in Moldova such as economic, social and the insufficiency of quality services. Our target group- older people with visual impairments are not taken into account as a group with special needs, but are included as socially vulnerable people. So these people have many unsolved difficulties being often socially excluded. In order to improve the standard of living and also to improve the quality of the services for this group it is important to take the first steps to solve the multiple obstacles that they must confront. It is necessary to evaluate and monitor the implemented actions step by step.

In order for Republic of Moldova to enjoy the progress and improvement of the situation for this group of people, and progress gradually, we believe that currently it is appropriate to focus on these benchmarks.

- To have an individual approach to the living situation of each elderly person with visual impairment, to know and analyse the requirements of each person in order to find optimal solutions to improve their conditions of living.
- In recent years in Republic of Moldova no surveys or census of elderly people with visual impairments have been done. Therefore it would be beneficial to have 2-3 surveys with the support of the Moldavian Blind Union and of the local and central Associations for Protection on the different aspects of living and the de facto situation of elderly people with visual impairments. Based on the results obtained from the survey it will be possible to improve the quality of the provided services for this given group.
- Medical survey on the diagnosis, cause, blindness prevention.
- Survey on living conditions, housing that is obsolete, to track down lonely elderly people, on the sources of living, support from family, relatives.
- Professional assessment of their potential involvement in activities, local circles of interest, level of independence, socio-economic inclusion of these people.
- Monitoring the programme on respect for the blind elderly people's rights, creating opportunities for development, improvement of the living conditions of older people with visual impairments.

It is necessary to undertake a census of people with visual impairments, as today we do not know the exact number of blind and visually impaired people that are in Moldova

- It is essential to create better living conditions to ensure longevity in order to improve the level of survival of elderly people with visual impairments.
- At the moment Moldova has an increased number of ageing people thus it is necessary to focus on the quality of living of elderly people with visual impairments and to ensure their participation in the social life of Moldova.
- By improving the quality of medical services we can attain an important objective stipulated in the legislative documents and at the international convention, which is improvement of the quality of life. By obtaining this goal we will be able to ensure the longevity of elderly people with visual disabilities.
- So it is important to be connected to the national legislation of international standards and mechanisms that focus on people with visual impairments. Republic of Moldova have to make many changes to adjust to international standards and legislative requirements to ensure effective social inclusion and provision of adequate support for elderly people.

- Taking into account the peculiarities of age, it is recommended that we focus not on changing older people's skills and their way of living, but to create support services and assistance for them.
- To adopt the services of home care , to create opportunities for the individual employment of a social assistant and in case of necessity to be adapted to conditions in care homes for older people with visual impairments.
- To expand the potential of the regional organisations of the Blind People's Society by creating regional Centres of therapy, of information and social rehabilitation.
- On a regional level, within the Centres designed for persons with visual impairments, to conduct various activities tailored to the interests and needs of older people with visual impairments. The involvement of older persons with visual impairments in various activities and meetings both at national and local levels depending on their interests and occupations, is very welcome.
- To ensure the minimum of care and avoid loneliness for these persons it is necessary to involve and mobilise the family, their relatives and the community.
- To carry out counseling and provide information both for older people and for their families.
- To raise awareness and inform people on the ageing phenomenon and the situation of elderly people with visual impairments.
- For the people who are working with our target group it is particularly necessary to conduct seminars on the characteristics and ways of working with older people with v.i..
- There is a great need to conduct training to increase the level of knowledge of professionals working with older people with visual impairments.
- In order to improve the quality of life of older people with v.i., it is absolutely necessary that the Moldova Blind Union specialists collaborate with government structures, local departments of social assistance, as well as with various NGO`s in the field both national and international.

Moldova Blind Union could make a substantial contribution to enhance the lives of elderly people who are visually impaired by direct involvement in the implementation of these measures mentioned above and by carrying out planned activities.

It is important that implementation of these actions be effective in one way or another for each person with visual impairments in Moldova.

Thanks, Tatjana, for the widely and open concept of the situation of elderly people with v.i in Moldova.

Liliya Plastunova, Representative of EE Countries (lp@icevi-europe.org)

Tatjana Gorash, Moldova Blind Union (tatiana.gorash@gmail.com)

ICEVI Teacher Training Conference

Visual Profile - the application and adaptation of the International Classification of functioning, disability and health (WHO-ICF) in rehabilitation, care and education of people with visual impairment.

Graz, Austria - 18th – 22nd May 2010

TT Conference by *Dr Z. Nazan Baykan*

28. 05. 2011

Dr. Z. Nazan Baykan

Ophthalmologist

AYAN VISION CENTER/ ISTANBUL

Now that May 2011 ICEVI conference, Visual Profile is over and we are back home.

I kindly would like to express my sincerest appreciations to you for the efforts and contributions you have made this conference, to be remembered by those who attended, as a big success.

Visual Profile courses given to us by Paul Looijestijn in a very friendly way and with beautiful slides, showed us the importance of implementing ICF-CY as a tool in our daily work in supporting our clients with visual impairments. Interactive work shops and very well planned exercises trained us in using ICF-CY. I do appreciate his efforts and want to express my gratitudes to him.

I also want to thank guest speakers Roxana – Elina Cziker, Karen VonHemelrijck, Joke Luyton and Dorthe marie Degn for their informative contributions to the program and speaking to us about their work with CVI and ICF-CY in their institutions and latest developments.

I must also express my gratitudes and thanks to Mrs Gerti Jaritz for wonderfully arranged social program, delicious tastes, wines and most of all for her allways smiling face.

Lastly I must add that we have gained much knowledge in ICEVI Teacher Training Conference 2011. With this knowledge, using Visual profile in our assessment and rehabilitation programs, we will make valuable contacts, exchange knowledge in a more informative way and will be more supportive to our clients with visual impairment. Every event was very well arranged and was so friendly

Thank you Mr. Hans Welling, Thank you ICEVI

Sincerely yours
Dr. Z. Nazan Baykan

TT Conference by Iain Prain

This conference was organised by Hans Welling (ICEVI) and Gerti Jaritz, (Odelian Institute, Graz) and brought together practitioners in an excellent location, (Schloss St. Martin), on the outskirts of Graz that encouraged the 30 participants from 16 countries to not only learn about the practical application of the Visual Profile and ICF but share experiences, ideas and resources that will improve their own practice and have positive impacts on learning outcomes for their students.

The aim of the workshop was to use the ICF framework and the Visual Profile, developed over the last 20 years by Royal Dutch Visio and the University of Groningen in the Netherlands, to set up an interdisciplinary support profile for young persons with a visual impairment, that gives an accessible and practical insight into the client's visual problems, aims of re/habilitation, care or education and actions to reach the optimal participation of the young person with a visual impairment. This instruction was expertly led, over three days, by Dr Paul Looijestijn such that, whatever the participants previous level of understanding of ICF, they have all gone home with much to think about that will positively effect their practice when they get back to their own work. The programme also allowed participants to think about a new working definition of low vision, in which ocular visual impairment (OVI) and cerebral visual impairment (CVI), can be seen as part of a continuum gaining equal access to re/habilitation and specialised education.

The main programme was very well supported by excellent presentations from guest speakers:

- Karin van Hemelrijck & Joke Luyten, Ganspoel in Belgium. *CVI-ID: a working method for children and youngsters with CVI to describe their visual problems and coping strategies*
- Roxanna Elena Cziker, High School for the Visually impaired, Cluj-Napoca in Romania: *Cerebral visual impairment in children with brain damages. Multidisciplinary research, assessment and rehabilitation within the frame of ICF*
- Dorthe Marie Degn, Coordinator of the ICFproVIP Partnership, IBOS in Denmark: *Dilemmas in implenting ICF for VIP - results from the ICFproVIP Partnership, Lifelong learning programme - Leonardo da Vinci - EU*

Despite the hard work there was activity outside of Schloss St Martin and Gerti Jaritz organised a visit to the Odelian Institute and a tour of the area around Graz focusing on some extraordinary and very beautiful church architecture and the sampling of local produce, including some excellent wines. There was also a city tour that culminated in a reception at the Rathaus. In his speech at the Rathaus, Hans Welling noted that 'We have to listen to clients and how they participate in society, is the starting point.' All the participants in this conference have gone home with this thought and many new ideas and plans that will positively impact on the lives of those they teach and support.



Touching Maths, a European Comenius Project

"Touching Maths", a 2-year project on braille and mathematics, has been implemented since August 2010 in the framework of the European Comenius program. The project partners are educational institutions from 7 European countries; they are schools or resource centers which serve blind and partially sighted pupils in special and/or in mainstream education.

The coordinator of the project is the Secondary School Spermalie in Bruges, Belgium.

The other partners are from:

- Estonia: Tartu Emajõe School – Estonian State School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, in Tartu;
- France: INJA, in Paris;
- Germany: Johann-August-Zeune-Schule für Blinde, in Berlin;
- the Netherlands: Royal Visio, in Rotterdam;
- Norway: Huseby Resource Center, in Oslo;
- the UK : RLSB Dorton College, in Sevenoaks.

The main aim of the project is to promote equal opportunities for Braille users in the field of mathematics by improving the teaching methods and educational materials. Special attention is paid to the use of mathematical Braille on secondary education level, with a focus on the mainstream environment.

There have been two project meetings since the beginning of the project. The first meeting took place at Dorton College in the UK in October 2010. The partners presented their national educational systems and the organization of special education in their countries. Furthermore, they compared and evaluated their national mathematical Braille codes. They analyzed strengths and weaknesses in the codes represented, in order to suggest possible improvements.

The second meeting took place in Berlin in March 2011. The topics discussed were: special aids, ICT devices and software products for facilitating math teaching and learning. Partners shared good practice about interesting and stimulating materials to enhance the process of teaching mathematics.

The next project meeting will take place in October 2011 in Estonia. The main theme is the adaptation of visual materials into tactile format. Different methods of making the visual aspects of mathematics accessible for Braille users will be discussed.

Altogether, there will be 5 common project meetings. In addition, this project allows bi- or trilateral meetings between the partners. For example, the Norwegian teachers are coming to Estonia to share their expertise on the use of a digital format for writing mathematics in Braille.

Between meetings, the project partners work together through a mailing list and a blog. One of the project's outcomes will be a website in order to share good practice, useful teaching methods and educational materials. This way the project partners will support the science teachers of blind and visually impaired pupils in special and mainstream schools. But the website will also be useful for pupils, researchers and all those interested in mathematics and mathematical Braille. The website will be online by the end of the project, in the summer of 2012.

Please contact one of the partners if you want more information on the project or the upcoming website.

Promoting collaboration between young and old, the conclusion of the INTERGEN project

European Blind Union
Press release
Paris, 14 February 2011

Designed and conducted by EBU and funded by the Education and Culture DG of the European Commission, the INTERGEN project involved five partners from the EBU network: the German Federation of the Blind and Partially Sighted (DBSV), the Italian Union of the Blind and Partially Sighted (UIC), the Italian Institute for Research, Training and Rehabilitation (IRIFOR), the Turkish Federation of the Blind, and the Turkish Six Dots Foundation.

The aims of the project were to develop methods and techniques which would facilitate the exchange of experience and knowledge between different generations of visually impaired people. Throughout the project a series of workshops were held by the different partners, and the evaluation and

successive improvement of these permitted the creation of a workshop facilitation manual.

These results, and the positive response to the project both from the organisers and the participants in the different workshops, allow us to hope that INTERGEN will continue to have an impact beyond the end of 2010 when it officially ended, and will become a valuable resource for future use. The individual skill forms, designed to enable young and elderly visually impaired people to improve their daily living skills and their capacity to exploit new technology, and translated into five different languages, are great examples of practical, easy-to-use resources resulting from the project.

All the documents mentioned above are available on the internet site resource centre, in English, French, German, Italian and Turkish, here: <http://www.intergenerations.eu/results>

The site also includes photos, videos and testimonials relating to the project. We invite you to visit the site and to make use of and disseminate the information. Please mention the INTERGEN name and the European Blind Union when using the documents.

EBU and its partners are very pleased with the outcome of this project, which demonstrates, on an international level, that cooperation between generations is a universal topic and offers advantages to young and old, men and women and to society as a whole.



**INTERGENERATIONAL
KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE**

About EBU

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

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The voice of blind and partially sighted people in Europe

Hot message from Kazakhstan

ICEVI-Europe has a new member - The Republic of Kazakhstan joined in 2010, the contact person is a very open and tolerant lady - Mrs. Klara Rakisheva.

The year before this, Klara created an Association for the Rehabilitation of Invalid Children "I TRUST IN YOU" in the city of Aktau. The target group - visually impaired and MDVI children, aged from 2.5 to 18 years. About 50 families with v.i. children have been screened in this region. The Association is a unique establishment in Kazakhstan which provides rehabilitation services for visually impaired children now.

Remarks: *Kazakhstan ranked as the ninth largest country in the world. Its territory of 2,727,300 km² is greater than Western Europe with a population of about 16,455,000 people.*

The aim of the Association is not only to find the possibility to render material support, but also to search for the possibility to help with the rehabilitation of these children; that means paying for special teachers, psychologists, doctors.

The wishes of the Association are: to cooperate with ICEVI-Europe and possibly some support at the start. In 2011 the Association is continuing the project There is no strange trouble. We would like to invite ophthalmologists, psychiatrists, neurologists, nephrologists, kinesio therapists from Russia and other countries for the ongoing project and for this we are in need of ICEVI support, meaning voluntary support from the above experts.

Liliya Plastunova, Representative of EE Countries
e-mail: lp@icevi-europe.org

Klara Rakisheva, Contact Person of Kazakhstan
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A new profession for the visually impaired

Last May, the last lesson of the first course in Italy for phonic expert court transcribers was held in the Training Centre of the Italian Union of the Blind and Partially Sighted "Giuseppe Fucà" in Tirrenia, near Pisa, Italy. Ten visually impaired graduates from all over Italy attended the course. The course was established by I.Ri.Fo.R. (Institute for Research, Vocational Training and Rehabilitation) and the University of Calabria, under the direction of Luciano Romito, professor of forensic phonetics and coordinator of the Forensic Phonetics Expert Group of the Ministry of Justice.

The ten students studied to become professional interpreters/transcribers of phone tapping and eavesdropping, which are today's indispensable tools for forensic investigations, although in our country there was no training for this profession before this course was established.

Luciano Paschetta, Contact person of Italy
e-mail: inter@uiciechi.it or l.paschetta@libero.it

Nordic Walking in Tandem

On wooded paths, in parks and on the streets of cities, we more and more frequently encounter people of various ages briskly waving their walking sticks. Nordic Walking is here to stay in Poland. It was officially registered and described as a sport in 1997 in Finland. Since then it has grown in popularity and spread itself over the face of the earth. Nordic Walking is most popular in Scandinavian countries, the USA, Germany, and Switzerland. It's growing popularity shows that it is not only a great form of exercise, but it is also being used with increasing frequency in physical rehabilitation.

It should come as no surprise that the blind have started to search for ways to adapt Nordic Walking to their needs. Some people have been trying to adapt the walking sticks to the needs of the blind. On the basis of various experiments, the enthusiastic traveler and promoter of physical activity, Pawel Piechowicz has invented a device called the harness, which is made for a person leading the blind. This device has been tested experimentally on 20 blind persons of various ages and under different circumstances by Pawel Piechowicz and Malgorzata Smigielska (an instructor in Nordic walking). The central idea of the harness is very simple and thus versatile. It is constructed of two pairs of straps and a rope. The blind and their leader attach the straps to their arms. An elastic band connects all the people, first crossing over the backs and under the underarms of the blind, both ends of which are attached to the straps of the leader. The distance between the blind and their leader is between 1.5 and 1.7 meters. Thanks to this the blind persons are able to move their hands as well as their walking sticks. The elasticity of the band helps them to feel any changes in direction that the leader might make. While walking the blind person(s) must control the tension of the bands so as to maintain an appropriate distance between the next person(s) and not step on their heels. The bands should not be over-tight so as not to overstrain the group leader. Any information about the direction of the walk and the terrain will be better interpreted by the blind if their walking partners are of similar height and if the elastic band is parallel to the ground. If there is a disproportion in height, this can be compensated for by adjusting a regulator on the bands of the group's leader. The leader should set the tempo and pace of the walk.

A well trained blind person is able to walk with the walking sticks over various terrains, such as: a wooded or grassy plain; a beach; snow; asphalt; mountainous or hilly paths. Correctly performing Nordic walking involves first pushing off the ground with the left walking stick, next taking a step forward with the right leg, and then taking a step forward with the left leg and pushing off the ground with the right stick. However, when descending hilly or mountainous paths, a different method of using the walking sticks is advised. While descending, the blind person should check the terrain in front of him with the walking stick, before taking a step. The left stick should check the terrain for the left leg and vice versa.

The blind frequently have a problem finding a group leader, but the walking techniques described allow there to be one leader who steers two blind people.

Nordic Walking in tandem is an excellent form of recreation which both helps the body and the mind, while at the same time not requiring excessive effort. It should be available to the blind in any age group. Some of Nordic Walking's health benefits are that it relieves stress on the joints, helps the circulatory system and burns excess calories. All of these benefits are available to those participating in Nordic Walking, leader and blind alike. In addition, with the harness device the blind have a feeling of independence while the leader doesn't feel as if he is leading somebody.

The harness has already been used and fulfilled expectations in the Second General Polish Championships in NW in Gniezno and also in competitions in Zielona Gora. In both places two tandems walked, successfully, a distance of 5km, attracting the attention and admiration of all participants. Demonstrations and courses in Nordic Walking have also been given throughout Poland, which also aroused interest. Among these were: the First Convention of Instructors and Nordic Walking Enthusiasts held in Wroclaw; the Eighth Conference of Rehab for the Blind in Poland in Warsaw; and workshops for blind readers of e-kiosk in Felenica.

It has to be admitted that certain of the blind who use a white cane in daily life had to surmount psychological barriers in learning to walk independently without the cane and in tandems, with walking sticks. These types of Nordic Walking tandems attract the attention of passers-by. Some look on this with wonder, while others with an unhealthy curiosity. These types of situation can deject the blind and their Nordic Walking leader. It then becomes necessary to surmount these difficulties. The popularisation of an apparatus that will allow the blind to take part in Nordic Walking will come to mean that those seen attached to a harness will become commonplace, which will be recognized and admired. The participation of the blind in Nordic Walking will help them to meet new friends and meet new leaders among the enthusiasts of this sport.

*Maria Niesioloska, Poznan (Poland)
Tlum. Piotr Kopylowicz*



Announcements

International Master's Degree Programme in Behavioural and Social Sciences

Visual Impairment: Assessment and Support

University of Groningen (The Netherland)

For professionals in the education, care and rehabilitation of people with visual impairment and people with intellectual and visual impairment

How can professionals provide good support to people with visual impairment if their expertise in low vision and its consequences for daily life is limited and not up to date? There is more to visual functioning than acuity and visual field, although many organizations use a definition of low vision that is mainly based on these two concepts. What is impairment in contrast sensitivity and light adaptation? What is cerebral visual impairment (CVI), neuropsychological assessment of higher visual functions and simultanagnosia? How does visual impairment develop in a progressive disease in the retina or in the brain? What are the effects on social contact in daily life if you cannot distinguish faces or facial expressions?

In many countries CVI is now recognized as the most common cause of visual impairment in children. In addition, an increasing percentage of the elderly have problems with visual processing caused by acquired brain damage. Special groups of clients have additional needs, for instance people with intellectual impairment and ocular or cerebral visual impairment. This is a substantial group, where a lack of knowledge often has strong negative effects on the quality of life. How can we give them the right support? Special programmes must be developed for this group.

Vision is one of the body's most complex functions and many disciplines are involved with vision science. Support for people with visual impairment requires an interdisciplinary approach. Up-to-date knowledge and new developments in vision research should be part of daily practice. Research findings need to be translated to practice, aiming at smart solutions for daily-

life problems. Organizations need professionals with interdisciplinary expertise in vision and visual impairment - professionals with the skills to translate interdisciplinary knowledge into adequate support for the rehabilitation, education and care of people with visual impairment.

The **ICEVI-Europe** (International Council for Education and Rehabilitation of People with Visual Impairment) has recognized the need for such professional training in many organizations in various countries. In 2006, it started looking for partners for professional and research-based training programmes. In 2010, cooperation was begun in the Netherlands with **Royal Dutch Visio**, Centre of Expertise for blind and partially sighted people, the **University of Groningen**, Department of Special Needs Education & Youth Care, and the Research **Centre on Profound and Multiple Disabilities**. As a result, the University of Groningen is now planning to start an International Master's Degree in Behavioural and Social Sciences "Visual Impairment: Assessment and Support for professionals supporting people with visual impairment as well as people with a visual and (profound) intellectual impairment". The mission of this Master's degree programme is to train our students in qualitative and quantitative research, aimed at improving the participation of children and adults with visual impairment and the combination of intellectual and visual impairment. The Master's programme takes an interdisciplinary approach to ocular impairment as well as cerebral visual impairment. In its interdisciplinary approach, this Master of Science degree programme is the first in the world to be based on the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health of the World Health Organization and the support model of the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

The interdisciplinary approach to the support of people with visual impairment in the degree programme is an integration of the ophthalmological, optometric, neurological, neuropsychological, ecological and developmental approaches, and uses the ICF and AAIDD for an interdisciplinary support diagnosis. Applying and adapting the WHO-ICF in rehabilitation, care and education of people with visual impairment in such a way is known as the method Visual Profile.

The ophthalmological and optometric approach to visual impairment is aimed at the ophthalmological diseases or disorders, the anatomical structures of the eyes and ocular muscles of the visual system and particularly the coherence with the lower visual functions (= oculomotor and visual sensory functions). The neurological and neuropsychological approach to visual impairment entails studying neurological diseases and disorders, the anatomical structures of the visual system involving nerves, tracts and brain and the coherence with the higher visual functions (= visual perceptual-cognitive and visual motor functions). The ecological approach to daily life of persons with visual impairment aims to achieve coherence between the lower and higher visual functions and environmental factors, self-sufficiency in (visual) activities and

participation.

The developmental approach to persons with visual and intellectual impairment is a combination of a pedagogical approach (the influence of visual impairment on the education and development of children and the subjective meaning of visual impairment in their lives) and a transactional approach (the influence of visual impairment on the interactions with parents, siblings, other family members, teachers, partners, attitudes in society, etc.).

For the Master's thesis, students may choose their own research topics in the field of support in the rehabilitation, care or education of the organization and population of clients.

After completing the programme, students will be awarded a Master's degree in Educational Sciences and be well trained and qualified to work as researchers in the field of people with visual impairment or people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and visual impairment. All degrees awarded are accredited by the Dutch government and are internationally acknowledged. The University of Groningen was the first Dutch higher education institution to be granted the ECTS Label and the Diploma Supplement Label by the European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES. The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is the EU standardized system for measuring student workload as a way to facilitate international mobility. The programme of this International Master of Science is recognized and certified by **LEVRETA** (Leonardo European Vision Rehabilitation and Education Training Association). After successful completion of the ICF course unit, students will also receive an ICF certificate from the **WHO Collaborating Centre for the Family of International Classifications (WHO-FIC) in the Netherlands**.

*For further information
see www.icevi-europe.org/master/index.html*

ICEVI E-News April 2011

[Download ICEVI E-News April 2011 \[DOC, 170 KB\]](#)

Joint letter to the memberships of WBU and ICEVI

Dear Colleagues

As you will recall from articles in the WBU E-Bulletin and the Educator, for the past two years the ICEVI and WBU have been working collaboratively with the IAPB through the establishment of the Vision Alliance, which has its objective to enhance opportunities for cooperation and synergy among our organizations. One of these areas of cooperation has been discussions around the possibility of holding the General Assemblies of both WBU and ICEVI at the

same time and in the same place. This discussion came about following the need for ICEVI to cancel its assembly planned for Bangkok Thailand in 2010, their subsequent decision to move their General Assembly year to 2012 and the plans that WBU had already commenced to look at Bangkok as a possible venue for its own General Assembly in 2012.

The result of these discussions is that the WBU and ICEVI have agreed to hold a joint event in November 2012 that will include the General Assemblies of both organizations as well as two days of overlapping programs that will enable our two organizations and our members to work even more closely together and to build on opportunities for information sharing and cooperation.

We can assure you that this decision was not taken lightly. Preliminary discussions were held in August of 2010 during a Vision Alliance meeting in Bangkok. These were followed by discussions with the Executives of both WBU and ICEVI in November and December which both voted unanimously to continue to pursue the possibility of planning a cooperative event. A joint planning meeting was held in Bangkok with representatives of ICEVI, WBU and our local host, the Thai Association of the Blind, and based on the recommendation that came out of that meeting, the principal officers of both ICEVI and WBU made the final decision to move forward with a cooperative event.

While both WBU and ICEVI will continue to hold their General Assemblies, the format of these events will change slightly. That is particularly the case for ICEVI who will no longer hold its large World Congress in conjunction with its General Assembly, but will rather put more emphasis on its Regional Conferences for the presentation of papers.

Overall, this is what the WBU and ICEVI General Assembly events will look like:

- The entire event takes place over the period of November 10 to 18, 2012 in Bangkok, Thailand. Some events are specific to WBU, some will be specific to ICEVI members and there will be overlapping days that will be attended by members of both organizations. We want members from both organizations to feel welcome to attend the events of the other, and this will be facilitated by special registration fees for those who decide to participate in the entire series of events
- November 10 – 11: WBU Diversity Forum
- November 12 – 16: WBU General Assembly
- November 15 – 18: ICEVI meetings and General Assembly
- November 15 – 16 will be joint program days where we will have joint sessions for both WBU and ICEVI participants for most of that two day period
- November 17 will be a joint strategy day with ICEVI and WBU related to EFAVI
- November 18 the ICEVI General Assembly will be held

This is an overview of the program structure with detailed programming to follow to include times for the Executive Committees of both organizations to meet, and for formal closing of the WBU General Assembly which will take place on the Friday afternoon. This outline is essentially intended to give you an understanding of how the two General Assemblies and associated meetings will be structured. We will also hold a joint gala dinner as well as a joint technology exhibit.

We hope that the members of our two organizations are as excited as we are about this collaborative event. We believe that it will provide an excellent opportunity for organizations of blind persons, for service providers and educators to come together for mutual sharing and learning. We believe that we will be able to attract some excellent speakers of international caliber for our joint sessions and that technology exhibitors will be eager to participate. We also recognize that many of our members traditionally attend both WBU and ICEVI events and will therefore be able to take advantage of these joint activities. We also anticipate a positive reaction from organizations that traditionally sponsor delegates to both events.

Over the coming months you will hear much more from us about the programs, and the local arrangements. The time will pass quickly and it is now less than 20 months when we will meet in Bangkok. We look forward to seeing you there.

With warm regards,

*Lord Colin Low, President ICEVI
Mrs. Maryanne Diamond, President WBU*

Teaching English to VIP children

My name is Alenka Bera and I am a master's student of Special education and rehabilitation sciences at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia.

I am preparing a research paper for a masters course which focuses on early foreign language learning (in my case English) among blind and partially sighted children aged 4 to 10 years.

I have a BA teaching degree in English and I used to teach courses for visually impaired teenagers and adults when I was still a student. Now I no longer teach and I work in the field of supporting university students with various kinds of disability in their study.

However, my interest in language teaching remains and that is why I have chosen this topic. I would like to find out whether children in regular or specialized schools start to learn English as a foreign language at an early age (before the age of 10), what course books the teachers use and how do they manage course book and teaching adaptations and adjustments, since most of

the teaching in the early stages is so much focused on visual support to learning.

If any teachers could share their experience of including a blind or partially sighted child in their classroom, I would be most grateful.

Kind regards,

Alenka Bera

e-mail: alenka.bera@guest.arnes.si

CALL TO ACTION

Applications NOW OPEN for 2012
International Institute for Social Entrepreneurs
website: www.bwb-iise.org

The International Institute for Social Entrepreneurs (IISE) is a dream-factory where participants from all over the world share visions and acquire all necessary skills to create social change.

The IISE welcomes participants, all over 22 years of age, whom have overcome significant life challenges ranging from vision impairment, disability, poverty, war, discrimination and exploitation. Most of them have personally experienced adversity or witnessed a particular situation that they wish to change so others do not suffer. They have a passion to make the world a better place and the strength to be forces of good rather than victims of circumstance.

The IISE does not select its participants according to pre-education/degrees.

What we are looking for are motivated and dedicated individuals who have the potential to start and run a social project.

For those who are selected, the IISE offers an 11 months high profile and unique leadership course. This course is conducted by international experts who help the participants to develop all necessary skills to succeed as social innovators.

The 2012 course will take place from Mid January 2012 till mid December 2012.

To ensure high quality training the IISE accommodates a maximum of 30 participants per academic year who are chosen through a stringent 5-step selection process.

If you know of potential participants, please do inform them about the existence of the IISE course and refer them to our website at

www.bwb-iise.org/apply

Also please send the above poster and this letter to anyone else you

think would know of potential participants including individuals, your social network contacts, organisations, student leaders etc. Feel free to print the above poster and post it where you believe it will reach potential change makers! If possible, post this letter and the Poster on your website as well. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your consideration.

With very best wishes,

Paul and Sabriye, Founders - Directors
Braille Without Borders
International Institute for Social Entrepreneurs
Trivandrum, Kerala, South India.
e-mail: office@iiseconnect.org web: www.bwb-iise.org

Typhlo & Tactus 2011

The first and unique international competition for tactile illustrated books accessible for visually impaired children,
www: [www: www.LDQR.org](http://www.LDQR.org)

EBU newsletter

Download [EBU newsletter Issue 79 \[DOC\]](#), March–April 2011.

Book famine: European Parliament votes its support for a binding “books without borders” treaty

European Blind Union, Press release, Paris, 13 May 2011

Millions of blind EU citizens face a “book famine” in which only a few per cent of books are converted to “accessible formats” they can read such as braille, large print or audio. EBU has campaigned for some years for an international treaty to help us get better access to books. However, the EU Council and Commission have consistently opposed this.

Yesterday, the European Parliament adopted a report called "Unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries", making clear its support for our treaty. Article 70 of the report “Calls on the Commission to work actively and positively within the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) to agree on a binding legal norm based on the treaty proposal drafted by the World Blind Union and tabled at WIPO in 2009”.

Discussions at the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), a UN body based in Geneva, on such a treaty, have seen most WIPO Member States

support the proposal. However, the EU Council and Commission have steadfastly maintained that soft law “recommendations” and voluntary licenses are a “better” alternative.

Not only does the EBU not agree, but now, formally, the European Parliament has challenged EU negotiators to support a treaty.

Lord Low of Dalston, President of the European Blind Union, said:

Just a month ago the European Blind Union co-hosted an event in the European Parliament to highlight the EU Council and Commission’s opposition to our treaty. I am delighted that the Parliament has so clearly demonstrated its support for a binding law at WIPO. I urge the Council and Commission, which negotiate on this matter, to listen to the Parliament, which speaks for the EU’s citizens, and support a binding treaty when they go to Geneva this June.

For further information, please contact:

Gary May, European Blind Union Information Officer
Tel: +33 1 47 05 38 20
Fax: +33 1 47 05 38 21
E-mail: ebuinfocom@euroblind.org

About the World Blind Union treaty proposal

1. The problem we are trying to solve

Even in 2011, blind people and others living with a print disability such as those with dyslexia still have very limited access to books and other published works. Only some 5% of published books are ever made accessible in richer countries, and less than 1% in poorer ones. We call this a “book famine”.

Increasingly, affordable and rapidly developing technology such as e-books is becoming accessible to print disabled people. This digital revolution ought to help end the book famine by allowing us to share accessible books worldwide.

However, copyright law has not changed in line with the technology. Often copyright law prevents both the making of accessible books at national level and the sharing of them across national borders.

2. What is the WBU WIPO Treaty? (“The treaty”)

The World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) makes treaties and other international laws on intellectual property rights such as copyright and patents.

The World Blind Union, assisted by copyright experts, drafted the treaty proposal. The governments of Brazil, Ecuador and Paraguay then tabled it at WIPO in 2009.

The treaty proposal would:

- Make it legal for print disabled individuals and specialist organisations to make accessible copies of published works in all countries which sign the treaty
- Make it legal for accessible books to be sent internationally without permission for publishers
- Prevent contracts with publishers from undermining copyright exceptions for print disabled people (currently they sometimes do)
- Still respect copyright law: it is not an attack on publishers!

The WIPO Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights (SCCR), which meets twice a year, is considering the WBU treaty proposal. Its June 2011 session will have an extra three days to specifically consider the WBU proposal and three others that have since been tabled to deal with the issue of print disability.

3. Why we need a treaty

There are several reasons, but here are the main two:

1. Only one third of the world's countries have a national exception to copyright law to allow the making and distribution of accessible format books. All countries need such an exception, because publishers often fail to help by making their books accessible or authorising specialist organisations to do so. The treaty would create such exceptions.
2. The national nature of copyright law prevents the import and export of accessible books. The treaty would remove this legal barrier to sharing resources across borders. That would allow many hundreds of thousands of books to circulate between blind people's organisations in different countries.
3. But aren't the "EU Stakeholder Dialogue" and the WIPO "Stakeholder Platform" better / speedier / more effective solutions?

No. These are at best partial solutions. They will never provide the same level of coverage that a binding international treaty could do.

Whilst we want to work with publishers on appropriate licenses, those they are proposing for these dialogues are far too complicated and are a step back from many licensing agreements we have now with publishers.

In any case, these agreements are by their nature more subject to change than a hard law. They also are at best only appropriate for developed country organisations with big resources. Given these concerns and the need for EBU and WBU to focus our scarce resources effectively, we have suspended our participation in the EU Stakeholder Dialogue and WIPO Stakeholder Platform pending the agreement in WIPO of a binding international copyright exception along the lines of our treaty proposal.

4. 12th May Parliament Vote on the report "Unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries"

The Parliament adopted the report which contains the following two articles:

- "69. Stresses the need finally to address the 'book famine' experienced by visually impaired and print-disabled people; reminds the Commission and Member States of their obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to take all appropriate measures to ensure that people with disabilities enjoy access to cultural materials in accessible formats, and to ensure that laws protecting IPR do not constitute an unreasonable or discriminatory barrier to access by people with disabilities to cultural materials;
- 70. Calls on the Commission to work actively and positively within the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) to agree on a binding legal norm based on the treaty proposal drafted by the World Blind Union and tabled at WIPO in 2009;"

WBU – E-bulletin April 2011

[Download WBU E-bulletin \[DOC 197 KB\]](#) (Volume 5, Issue 2, April 2011)

Press release: IDPP Master's Application Launch

Institute on Disability and Public Policy
Contact: Maya Aguilar
tel: +1 202 670 4143
www: www.aseanidpp.org



**Institute on Disability
and Public Policy**

Networking » Leadership » Accessibility » Inclusion

For Immediate Release: Applications Open for First Cohort of Global Leaders in Disability Studies and Public Policy

Washington, DC, 18 May – Students from around the world can now apply to enter the inaugural class of Southeast Asia's first virtual Master's program on disability and public policy. The Master's of International Affairs in Comparative and International Disability Policy (CIDP), offered by the School of International Service at American University, is the centerpiece program of the Institute on Disability and Public Policy (IDPP) for the ASEAN Region. The IDPP is a collaborative effort of four founding academic institutions and two supporting partners, funded by The Nippon Foundation. The degree is taught in a blended cyberlearning environment, and focuses on the complex intersection of disability studies and public policy.

At the forefront of technological innovation, the IDPP promotes an inclusive, barrier-free, and rights-based environment in Southeast Asia by providing increased access to higher education for a traditionally

underrepresented population: persons with disabilities. The program's cyberinfrastructure cuts across geographic boundaries, allowing faculty to teach and students to be taught entirely online. "Through a network of outstanding universities and accessible cyberlearning techniques, we will enable students to become leaders on international disability policy in the public, private, and NGO sectors," states Dr. Derrick L. Cogburn, Dean and Executive Director of the IDPP. Fifteen full fellowships per year will be awarded by The Nippon Foundation, with preference given to students from the ASEAN region who are blind, deaf, and/or mobility impaired, further increasing opportunities for high-potential persons with disabilities.

Led by the Center for Research on Collaboratories and Technology Enhanced Learning Communities (COTELCO), a joint research center at American University and Syracuse University (www.cotelco.net), the IDPP is a partnership of the School of International Service at American University; Mahidol University in Bangkok, Thailand; the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore; and the National Technical Institute for the Deaf at Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, New York. Supporting organizations are the Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability (APCD) in Bangkok and the International Council on Education for People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI). Also collaborating with the IDPP are the ASEAN Studies Center, the Intercultural Management Institute, the Disability Student Support Services at American University, and the Burton Blatt Institute: Centers of Innovation on Disability at Syracuse University.

The Master's program will begin with a two-week residency at Mahidol University from 18-29 July 2011, where an international faculty will introduce students to ASEAN affairs, cross-cultural communication, and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Afterwards, students will disperse to their locations of residence for the duration of the program.

The Asia Pacific region has one of the world's highest proportions of persons with disabilities. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) estimates as many as 400 million people with disabilities living in the region. These individuals continue to face significant barriers in accessing information, education, and employment. The IDPP is designed to address these issues.

Please visit www.aseanidpp.org to access more information and the online application.

Conferences

23-24 June 2011

International scientific conference "Evolution of attitudes towards the blind - projection of the social maturity of society"

St.- Petersburg (Russia)

Contact information: www.gbs.spb.ru

27-28 June 2011

[MDVI Euronet Conference](http://www.mdvi-conference.org): The School for the Visually Impaired Has Changed – Challenges for a New Generation, Dublin (Ireland).

Website: www.mdvi-conference.org

25 August 2011

Meeting in Riga for representatives from the Nordic and Baltic countries:

- Toril Loe, Norway
- Grita Strankauskiene, Lithuania
- Tarja Hännikäinen, Juha Lahti, Finland
- Anne Koiv and 4 other persons, Estonia
- Huld Magnúsdóttir, Iceland
- Anders Rönnbäck; Sweden
- Peter Rodney, Denmark

27-30 September 2011

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

website: www.braille21.net

14-15 October 2011

5th ICEVI East-European Conference, Baku(Azerbaijan)

Theme: Inclusion of People with Visual Impairment

The next newsletter will be published in September.

You can send your contribution to Elly Aardoom e-mail: ea@icevi-europe.org



university of
 groningen

Visio



LEVRETA



Master Visual Impairment: Assessment and Support