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International Council for Education and Re/habilitation of People with Visual Impairment

ICEVI European Newsletter

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Content:

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From the Board

Dear ICEVI-members

The approaching end of 2011 means an invitation to look back and forward for many people. Therefore also for ICEVI-Europe.

At the end of the year our well respected chairman Herman Gresnigt has died.
As chairman he made huge efforts to build ICEVI-Europe into a European organisation. He largely made efforts to involve the East European countries with ICEVI.
I have been fortunately to have known Herman for more than 42 years. In many ways, Herman has always been concerned with the issue of full membership in society for people with impairment.
Many of us will miss his involvement and stimulus.

For Mary Lee and Eberhard Fuchs 2011 was the year in which they ended their active employment. Fortunately they will remain active in the education and rehabilitation of children with visual impairment and they will remain available to give service to ICEVI-Europe.

The Board has reflected the ins and outs of ICEVI-Europe this year. It was decided to find out in which way the structure of ICEVI-Europe could be improved.
Also the website and the newsletter are the subject of discussion and improvement.

In May two conferences have taken place.
In cooperation with Royal Dutch Visio an international conference was organised with the theme 'ageing people with a visual impairment'. We have the intention to further work on these problems and also to pay attention to this theme during the European Conference in 2013.
In the same month the Teacher Training programme took place in Graz, Austria.
The subject was the International Classification of Functioning Disability and Health (ICF). ICF is already worked with in several other fields (www.visualprofile.info).
The European Conference will be based on the ICF.

In October the fifth East European Conference took place in Baku, Azerbaijan.
The theme was Inclusion. More than 150 participants from four countries exchanged information.
Happily inclusion is a subject in which there is a growing interest.

In between times we took part in the Africa Forum in Accra, Ghana.
Education For All children with visual impairment, mainly in Africa, was an important subject. In Africa people work hard to improve the accessibility of education for children with visual impairment.

The coming year lies completely open for us, also for ICEVI.
However it is certain that the final preparations for our European Conference in 2013 in Istanbul, Turkey will be completed.

In 2012 the World Conference of ICEVI will take place in Bangkok, Thailand.
This conference, which is organised in cooperation with WBU, is a new idea, which means that the number of participants per sub region is limited. You will find more about this on our website.

Another conference for East European countries lies ahead and also another Balkan conference in Cluy, Romania.

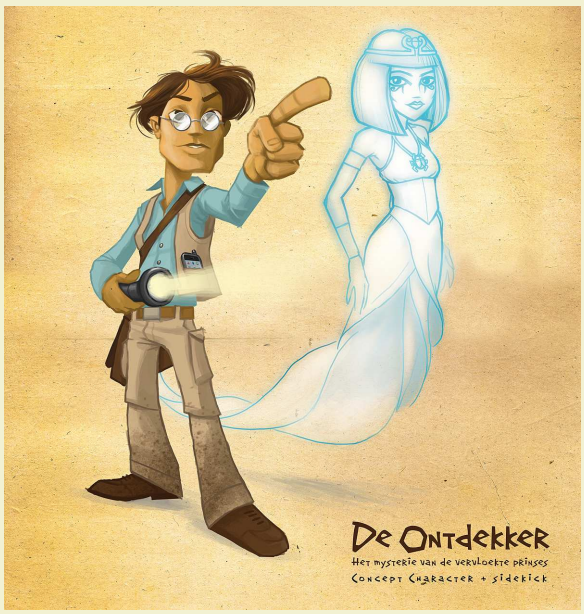
In 2012 the International Master's Degree Programme in Behavioural and Social Sciences will start. This programme has also been achieved through the initiation of ICEVI-Europe. Naturally the newsletter will be published regularly and the website will offer relevant information.

For the rest, the year is still open for members together with the Board and the country representatives to give content and shape to it. Concerning the newsletter and website this is easy; both are open for all relevant contributions and information.

Herewith I would like to wish you happy and inspiring holidays and for you personally and professionally an interesting 2012.

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

The Explorer and the Mystery of the Diamond Scarab
A Serious Wii Game for visually impaired, blind and fully sighted children



www.visio.org/wii-game

From now on visually impaired, blind en fully sighted children can play together on Nintendo Wii. For the first time, children with and without visual impairment can play together on an equal level, thanks to the game called The Explorer and the Mystery of the Diamond Scarab.

Development

At the end of 2008 the collaboration partners - MAD multimedia, Principal Blue, TNO and Royal Dutch Visio – had decided to give the concept of Serious Gaming a new dimension. Within two years and with a subsidy from Innovative Action Programme in Groningen (Dutch: IAG2) the first official Nintendo Wii game was developed for children with or without visual impairment. The process used for this development is called co-creation, a technique in which the end user is involved in the development of new products and services. Visually impaired, blind and fully sighted children contributed to the content and form of this game, while physical therapists, exercise specialists and teachers monitored the motoric aspects.

Improving motoric functions

Visio supports, encourages and counsels visually impaired people by providing various courses, training and programmes. In addition to the positive effect of playing unhindered with peers on an equal level, this game also contributes to improving motoric functions and physical coordination.

The Explorer

In this game you play the role of Ben the Archaeologist who is searching for the Temple of the Diamond Scarab. Once he is in the temple he meets Tiri, an enchanting Egyptian princess. Going through a maze of underground passages they look for ancient Egyptian treasures and confront various challenges. The Guardian leads them step by step to the exit. The game is played on a Balance Board, a standard Wii accessory. With this you can move through the maze, find treasures and enter challenging situations. Since this is the first game in the world developed jointly for visually impaired, blind and fully sighted children, the game can be played in Dutch and in English.

To order the Wii game

As of January 2012 the Wii game The Explorer can be ordered on www.visio.org/Wii-game.

READ MORE: **http://www.icevi-europe.org/enletter/issue48-02.rtf**

Braille reading – developing the decoding skill

Braille reading – developing the decoding skill is the title of a study that is being carried out during 2010-2011. Managers of the project are Catharina Johansson and Anders Rönnbäck, both special teachers at the National Agency for Special Needs Education, Resource Centre Vision, Stockholm, Sweden.

Background

Braille is a tactile code for written language. Reading Braille, just like reading print, is mainly based on decoding and understanding - in addition to motivation - also an important factor. Between the two reading media there are many differences, mainly in the decoding of the text. Braille is very rare, it does not exist naturally in our environment, and few people know or have knowledge of Braille. These are some factors that may affect the Braille user's reading development.

The principle of the basic decoding is based on the association between a sound in the language and an alphabetical character. This is, basically, what reading is about. For the sighted child the shapes of letters are learned long before school starts, in both spontaneous and structured reading and writing activities. The consequence of this is an over-learning of the characters shapes with favourable outcomes for the development of reading.

Moreover, the sighted person meets text in many situations which are not accessible to Braille readers - TV's subtitles, headlines, advertising, product information - examples of the over-learning that contributes to incidental learning in reading. The energy can thus be moved from decoding to contents

and comprehension. Braille readers have no access to this over-learning of letter characters, but they still face similar demands in learning situations.

To compensate the Braille reader, to some extent, for this disadvantage, we believe that there is a need to develop materials as well as methods to be used in Braille teaching.

For sighted students with reading difficulties there are many methods to use. One of the Swedish methods is developed by a special teacher, Carl-Erik Petterson, and is called the Rydaholm method. The basic ideas of the method are the focus on decoding, the simple structure and the clear documentation of the student's reading development. Characteristic of the method is also the high intensity during reading sessions. As it says in the information about the method: "The idea is that training should be at maximum level for the student to experience a sort of 'mental lactic acid' effect."

Aim of the study

The aim of the study is to deepen the knowledge of the importance of strengthening the decoding skill in the development of fluency in reading Braille.

Research questions

1. Is it functional to use a training material and method, originally developed for sighted students with reading and writing difficulties, to reinforce the Braille reader's decoding skills?
2. In what way has the reading ability developed when assessed before and after the intervention?
3. How has the reading intervention affected the reading ability as experienced by teacher and pupil?

Study Group

The study group consisted of nine students, five boys and four girls, aged nine years. These nine children constituted the whole group of Braille readers in third grade, in Sweden, a certain year. The training was meant to be conducted by the teacher teaching the student at the local school.

Method and implementation

The theory of this study is that Braille decoding skills could benefit from the kind of training that the Rydaholm method offers. The material has been adapted for Braille.

After a positive reply regarding the participation of the students´ parents and teachers, materials and detailed instructions were sent to the schools. The whole training period was divided into two parts, seven weeks for each part, the first part during the autumn and the second during the spring.

Each single session, three sessions every week, consisted of six elements - six Braille papers to be read; the first one *single letters*, the second *two-letter-*

combinations, the third and fourth papers with highly frequent *single words*. Finally the fifth with *two letter combinations* and the last one with *single letters*.

The student was told to read aloud from each paper for one minute, the teacher made a note of the last read word and also of words being misread, counted the words and filled the results into a form. It is important to note that each student should leave the session with a feeling of having succeeded. That is why each session ends with a single letter paper.

Reading tests were carried out before, during and after each period. The tests consisted of single words and of prose reading.

The results were sent to Resource Centre Vision to be analysed, and that is what we are dealing with right now. We hope to be able to publish a written report during the autumn 2012.

We are quite satisfied with what we have seen so far, it seems like the fluency in the children´s Braille reading has been strengthened. We have also noticed an increased awareness in the children about their own reading ability. For example the awareness of reading rate, others' and own, and that it is possible to improve it. Teachers have told us about more spontaneous pleasure reading among the children.

For more information about the study, please contact
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Anders Rönnbäck, anders.ronnback@spsm.se

Participation for students with impairments in mainstream schools

Participation for students with impairments in mainstream schools is the title of a research project that is now carried out at the National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools in Stockholm, Sweden. The project started this year, in 2011 and is supposed to go on for three years. Managers of the project are Kristina Szönyi, Ph.D. and Tove Dunkers, special teacher.

Background

In Sweden the majority of students with impairments of some kind, have attended mainstream schools for many years. The obvious gain is of course to give children with impairments the same right to go to school in their home area as everyone else and social contacts between disabled and non-disabled students should increase. Unfortunately studies concerning inclusive education in many countries during recent years, show that many schools fail in creating an inclusive environment for these students. We all know that students with some kind of impairment often feel that they are left out of the group and find it hard to participate in activities with non-disabled friends. Many of these

studies also show that the main reason for this failure is not that students with impairment are not interested or not able to participate, but nevertheless they often feel lonely. Possible environmental explanations can be structural barriers to the mainstream curriculum, inadequate adaptations or non-working assistive technology or lack of access and recognition.

Participation for the student with impairment can also vary in different situations and environments throughout the school day depending on circumstances. Maybe it is possible to participate on fairly equal terms during English lessons but not during athletics and games or during spare time. It is therefore hard to generally identify what can be considered to be an inclusive environment. More knowledge is needed and the most important structural barriers need to be found to be able to create a truly inclusive environment for students with impairments.

Overall aim

The overall aim of the project is to create a structure, an instrument that can be used for identifying important factors for participation and interplay between disabled and non-disabled students in mainstream settings.

The project's hope is to develop useful tools to be able to analyse and value environmental factors of importance for inclusion and participation. Today there is an obvious risk that we tend, too much, to explain lack of participation and interplay as being due to individual factors such as diagnosis and the child´s individual traits. Is there a way to look at participation, not at the pupil or the environment separately, but at what it looks like in different situations and activities during the school day?

Questions

1. Is it possible to participate on equal terms or are there environmental barriers that make this difficult or impossible?
2. To what extent are these students taught in the classroom together with their classmates and to what extent are they taught in a separate room outside the classroom?
3. Do they have access to adequate adapted learning material and assistive technology?
4. Do students with impairments get the required learning information in their own media?
5. What are the terms for participation in the peer community in school?

Structure of the project

The aim of the first year of the project is to deepen knowledge about students' participation in different school activities. It is important to document as much evidence as possible of the students' own experiences of their opportunities to participate in different activities. So, semi-structured interviews with 24 students with impairment, 12 students with visual

impairment, and clinical observations in the school have been carried out. During the observations different situations in the school curriculum have been observed, such as different kinds of learning situations in the classroom, spare time and lunchtime in the school canteen.

Depending on the results from the collected material from the first year of the study, the plan is to develop a useful model for deciding what participation looks like in different school activities. The collected knowledge will hopefully result in a greater understanding of where the barriers are and what the students identify as the positive aspects of participation. For the third year of the project, the plan is to test the model and to, hopefully, be able to meet the students' obvious right to full participation.

For more information about the study, please contact:
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Tove Dunkers, tove.dunkers@spsm.se

Segregation, inclusion and the transition to adulthood for students with a visual impairment

Introduction

This article presents a summary of a case study in a Dutch special school for students with a visual impairment. The practitioners involved wanted to change and improve their work with the academically less able teenage students. The case study was part of a research project for obtaining a PhD.

The following topics are addressed:

- segregation and exclusion of students with a visual impairment;
- challenges their teachers faced in preparing them for adult life;
- dilemma's mainstream schools in the Netherlands encounter when trying to become more inclusive;
- the international debate about the position and the status of people with disabilities, focusing on concepts like integration, inclusion, participation, citizenship and the medical and social model of disability.

The international debate on integration and inclusion

Integration and inclusion were the two concepts used in the 1980s and 1990s to discuss the enrolment of students with disabilities into mainstream schools and classrooms (Farrell, 2001b).

Integration originated in the 1980s and was used in education to indicate where the student was educated: not in a special school, but in the mainstream school (Rieser, 2001) and whether the provision was organised separately from peers or not (for example in special classes, in separate units or in the mainstream class). Initially the focus was on system reform, which

implied that the learning and teaching in integrated settings received little attention at the time (Vislie, 2003). Identifying reasons for the success or failure of integration policies, Dyson and Millward (1997) found that countries which have focused on changing the mainstream education sector have been more successful in developing more integrated education, than countries which have tried to reform the special education sector.

Integration did not explicitly address the quality of education students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) were entitled to receive (Feiler & Gibson, 1999; Farrell, 2001b). Due to this rather limited 1 Schuman, focus the concept of integration generally failed to challenge that in the end "disability is a social construction" (Barton, 2003, p.5). From this perspective integration therefore:

- continued to operate within the medical deficit paradigm, focusing on what people cannot do, based on concepts of normality and abnormality, rehabilitation, and special educational needs, developed by non-disabled people;
- sustained the image of disabled people as dependent, socially dysfunctional, unemployed, and relying on social benefits and medical and social service providers;
- defined difficulties and challenges as located in the individual, thus labelling disability as a medical problem and a personal tragedy;
- functioned as a system of gate keeping of resources and service provision, allocating funds based on the labels disabled people have received and the assessments of their individual needs by professionals;
- denied disabled people in general, and disabled children in particular, to speaking for themselves and to exercising choice and ownership; and
- supported a traditional way of training teachers based on failing to cope with the traditional curriculum and focusing on individual remedial teaching programmes (Swain, Finkelstein, French & Oliver, 1993)

Integration, therefore in the late 1980s was considered to be a matter of fitting individual students into existing and unchanging mainstream provisions, expecting them to assimilate (Thomas, Walker & Webb, 1998), thus implying that they were welcome only when they were prepared to play by the rules of the non-disabled majority. Basically such an approach denied them the opportunity to "take pride in themselves" for who they are and what they are. Such an approach fails to address the issue why "disability provokes such negative feelings among non-disabled people" (Morris, 1993, p.101). This resulted in "an un-adaptive, unfriendly and hostile set of material conditions and social relations that cumulatively contribute to the marginalisation, disempowerment and exclusion of disabled people" (Barton, 2003, p.7). Therefore in the UK a new paradigm, i.e. the social model of disability (Oliver, 1996), emerged, supported by an alternative concept for integration, referred to as inclusion (Dyson, 2001). Thus shifting the focus from changing the individual with a disability or impairment to changing a disabling environment

(Brown, 2001) and striving to overcome the on-going focus on the so called individual deficits of disabled people (Barton, 2003).

Inclusive education from this perspective would demand of schools to engage critically with the transformation of the "deep structural barriers, ... including the social base of dominant definitions of „success, „failure and „ability" (Barton, 2003, p.12). This would involve "a political critique of social values, priorities and the structures and institutions which they support" (Ibid.). It would also involve a public process of naming and celebrating differences and engaging with the identification of what it is we value about one another (Ibid.).

Although these scholars write from a UK perspective, their analyses seem rather universal to me. Social justice and equity are often viewed as outcomes of inclusive education. It seems unlikely, however, that the traditional school system, supported by current government initiatives which focus on marketing principles of cost-effectiveness, accountability and raising standards in narrowly defined areas of the curriculum, would be able to realise social justice and equality of opportunity for all in inclusive settings (Lloyd, 2000). The transformation of schools into inclusive and flexible learning environments seems to depend, ultimately, on the recognition that the difficulties of disabled people "do not arise primarily from their own bodies or minds but from the way society has treated them" (Shakespeare & Watson, 2001, p.548).

Although the reform of the mainstream school system therefore seems the decisive issue in the progression towards more inclusive education at a national level (Dyson & Millward, 1997; Farrell, 2001b), the real contest for more inclusive education seems to be at the level of schools and classrooms (Ibid.). However, in the UK for example, the current emphasis on conformity, improving results and league tables, and the lack of recognition among policy-makers of the inappropriateness of the curriculum for many young people at risk, for example because of social disadvantage, poverty and minority status, create and sustain SEN (Evans & Lunt, 2002), and probably exclusion.

It may be necessary to re-address and critically re-think the whole issue of Special Educational Needs itself because it may be that from an inclusive viewpoint the term "is no longer helpful, reflecting a „within child or medical model to guide planning" (Gerschell, 2003, p.104). The Index for Inclusion (CSIE, 2000) suggests the replacement of the concept of Special Educational Needs by the term „barriers to learning and participation", which actually challenges the capacity of the school and its staff to decrease their impact on creating SEN and sustaining forms of exclusion. Such an approach seems to demand a more holistic view of students (Corbett, 2001), where strengths and preferences and opportunities for choice are the starting point for developing educational programmes for all within a whole school approach of valuing differences, and where "all students get a fair deal" (Gerschel, 2003, p.106).

The sheer existence of special schools in itself, like the one I was working at currently, thus is in direct conflict with the central idea of inclusion which recognises that people with disabilities are entitled to be part of the mainstream of life and that excluding them is an injustice (Corbett & Barton, 1992; Swain et al., 1993; Barnes, Mercer & Shakespeare, 1999; Barton, 2001).

It remains important therefore, to acknowledge that the vested interests of specialised institutes might, in themselves, interrupt the further development of more inclusive social and educational practices for children, teenagers and adults with a visual impairment. Special schools still admit students because mainstream schools tell parents that they cannot cope with the student‟s special educational needs anymore. We need to recognise that regular schools may use the sheer existence of a highly specialised provision for students with more complex and multiple difficulties as an excuse for referral of their more challenging students. The effect of such practices, however, may result, as seems the case in the UK, in "removing objectionable, unwanted students and thereby enabling the mainstream system to function more effectively" (Barton & Landman, 1993, p.42). Special schools then serves to perpetuate "an old tradition of releasing high-status regular education from „deviant‟ and problematic students" (Emanuelsson, 2001, p.140) and pacify teacher opinion, both in special and mainstream schools, on the inclusion /exclusion issue, in favour of exclusion (Stangvik, 1997).

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READ MORE: **http://www.icevi-europe.org/enletter/issue48-05.pdf**

Dr Hans Schuman,
Fontys University of Applied Sciences
Head of research group Interdisciplinary Collaboration

Education in the Netherlands, recent developments and the debate on integration and inclusion

Introduction

I initially wrote this article for a Comenius project (INSPIRE) we started in 2003 with partners in Belgium (Flanders) and the UK. The project focused on innovations in special educational needs provision in Europe. It aimed at bringing together participants from all over Europe to discuss issues of segregation and inclusion, share ideas and examples of good practice and develop ways of moving forward towards a more inclusive education system. With regard to the international audience we intended to reach it seemed important to provide an overview of current developments in the three countries regarding their efforts to include more students with disabilities and/or Special Educational Needs (SEN) in mainstream schools. The issues and

debates in the UK on this topic were well presented in international educational journals. However, for professionals who wanted to know what is actually happening in the Netherlands and how this was connected to international developments, it seemed more difficult to access relevant information in the English language. Hence we decided to write the original article.

In October 2011 I am invited to do a presentation for an international audience in Azerbeidzjan on the topic of inclusion. I thought it might be useful for them to have the original article, serving as a case study of how we in the Netherlands struggle to include students with disabilities and/or SEN in the mainstream education system. However, reading the article again I was not very pleased with it anymore. I decided therefore to re-write it and add a section on the latest developments.

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READ MORE: **http://www.icevi-europe.org/enletter/issue48-06.pdf**

Dr Hans Schuman, Fontys University of Applied Sciences
Head of research group Interdisciplinary Collaboration

Does inclusion of visually impaired students work? What are]] the pitfalls of inclusion?

Introduction

Over the last 30 years, many European countries have made a tremendous shift in their educational approach with regard to visually impaired students. In this process, the focus has moved from special schools towards inclusive education in mainstream schools.

Denmark has a reputation of being a country where inclusion is successful, but over the past ten years, I have often been asked whether this is really the case. Is inclusion a good approach for visually impaired students?

Several parameters can be used to investigate or evaluate the outcome for visually impaired students in mainstream education. But one essential question beyond the educational outcomes per se is the subsequent position of the visually impaired person in the labour market.

The important evaluation question therefore, is, what is the percentage of visually impaired students...

- who get similar grades to fully sighted peers?
- who receive a full graduation diploma at the end of 9 or 10 years of schooling?
- who complete a higher (tertiary) education programme?
- who complete a qualifying or vocational education programme?
- who find gainful employment that lets them support themselves?

A recent research project1 studied the outcomes of the educational and rehabilitation efforts in Denmark over the last 40 years. The outcome, briefly put, is very disappointing. It would be easy to say that this is due to inclusive education, since that has been the general educational approach during the period in the study, but there is no indication that the visually impaired students would have been better off in special schools.

The research project simply found that the services available to visually impaired people have failed in the above-mentioned aspects, and that the present trend is continuing in the wrong direction. At the same time, it should be mentioned that the Danish authorities have never spent as much money on services for people with a visual impairment. Thus, the poor outcome has nothing to do with cuts. The only explanation I can come up with is that we are not managing the inclusive and rehabilitation services in the right way.

What, then, is the right way? I will conclude this paper with a general European overview of essential themes to specify how these services should be managed to achieve better results than we have been achieving in Denmark over the last 40 years.

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READ MORE: **http://www.icevi-europe.org/enletter/issue48-07.pdf**

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Vice chair of ICEVI-Europe.

Foreign Visitors for "Tweemaster" (Brigantine)

Lifestyle | 28 June 2011 | source: De Koerier

HEERHUGOWAARD – last week the primary school De Tweemaster located Onyx 89 received some guests from Ukraine. They visited a class where also blind children are part from. Here very usual, in Ukraine still a difficult subject.

The visit of that group of people from Ukraine, parents, teachers, people from the university and policy makers, is part of a 3 years project Sunshine. The objective of that project is the improvement of the quality of life of children with visual impairment in Ukraine. For that Royal Dutch Visio (center of expertise for visually impaired and blind people) cooperates with ProForKids (foundation for humanitarian projects for children's homes, Ukraine), employees from the regional state administration of education and sciences in Chernigiv and Donetsk and the Ministry of education and sciences in Ukraine.

The Group of 12 people from Ukraine did a working visit at Visio in Heerhugowaard. In Ukraine visually impaired and blind children are going to

special boarding schools while here in The Netherlands most of those children are going to mainstream schools. The visitors were interested how that does work here and were still not able to envisage that. Therefore they are visiting a number of schools in North-Holland where a blind or visually impaired child is visiting that school. In that way also the blind Isabel in group 6 of the primary school "De Tweemaster."

The guests from Ukraine are watching amazed and interested how Isabel (r) without any problem participates in the lesson. (Foto: Theo Annes)

Differences

The guests, whereof also a mother of a blind son, were sitting down for about half an hour in the ba

ckground of the classroom to watch everything. After that they discussed what they saw with Isabel and her mother Astrid and the teacher Bruna Mallei. Bruna: "This was a very special morning, as well for the people from Ukraine as for ourselves. The differences are tremendous: Isabel goes from her home to school within her own environment and has girlfriends in the neighborhood whereas the children in Ukraine are living in a boarding school.

Isabel has various aids available especially for her, in Ukraine they have nothing. Just to give an example: Isabel has a Braille-typing machine and a laptop with a Braille-reading line at her disposal. The guests from Ukraine had never seen that before. Their children at the boarding school are pricking with a prick pen point by point into a paper, sometimes until they are blistering.

Tears

With sobbing eyes the Ukrainian left the school after having seen how things can also go well. Astrid: "We are realizing now very well how good everything is arranged and organized. The deepest impression the Ukrainian guests had was the fact that Isabel is just part of the community and that in a very common way. There in Ukraine people with impairment are at a boarding school or at home. Beside of that they were asking themselves whether the other parents are accepting that a blind girl is together with their children in one class. Now that is for anybody here very normal and without any question."

Missing

That visit was very exciting for Isabel. Because people were coming to look to her she would like to show everything they would like to see. She can't really understand that not all children just like here can visit a regular school.

But with what Isabel is still most busy is that the Ukrainian children can only go a few times per year at home: "Do those children are not terribly missing their parents?"

Dutch version on http://www.dichtbij.nl

Introduction to Guide Dogs for Young Children

INTRODUCTION

Although many visually handicapped children heard about guide dogs, most of them have but a partial knowledge about them.
A pilot experience has been run in Lausanne, Switzerland. Its goal was to introduce guide dogs to young children. The Centre pédagogique pour handicapés de la vue (a center for visually handicapped children) and the Fondation école romande pour chien-guides d'aveugles (the local guide dogs' school) have been in charge of this project.

METHOD

Children (age 5-18) had one to five lessons with guide dogs. In the first lesson, the dogs were presented to the children. The guide dog's instructors gave explanations to all the children about guide dogs, their responsibilities, their training, the care and handling that guide dogs require. Children asked questions and expressed their expectations. After the first lesson, all the lessons were individual and were adapted to the possibilities of each child. O&M instructors were consulted by the guide dogs' instructors.

AIMS

As orientation and mobility instructors, we work with visually handicapped children from infancy to adolescence. In Switzerland, children are not considered candidates for guide dogs. However, getting some experience in walking with guide dogs seems to be important.

Fifty children, aged 5 to 16, participated in this program. We designed an individual program for each child. Children played, cleaned and walked with guide dogs, indoors and outdoors.

RESULTS

Each child could have a personal experience adapted to his own needs, comprehension and capacities. For some children, this experience was the first opportunity to touch a dog. For others, it weakened their fear of dogs. Finally,

most of them enjoyed very much just walking with the dogs, indoors and outdoors.

General observations:

- children were very gentle while brushing and playing with the dogs
- body posture changed while walking with the dogs
- the children who were afraid before having had contact with the dog, walked with the dogs outdoors at the end of the training
- walking with the guide dogs required a lot of concentration for some of the children

Examples of adapted programs:

- David only touched and explored the dog.
- Patricia went out with the dog, but gave her hand to the guide dog's instructor during the lesson.
- Dan did not like dogs, but agreed to try and touch it. Finally, he walked outdoors with the dog and even enjoyed it.
- Mike went to his home and came back to the school with a dog (he used to do it with his cane every day).

Activities with the guide dogs

1. Dog exploration
2. Brushing the dog
3. Putting the harness on the dog
4. Walking indoors in a known environment
5. Walking outdoors in a known environment
6. Walking outdoors in a unknown environment
7. Playing and having fun with the dog

CONCLUSIONS

Introduction to guide dogs for young children was a very positive experience. For some children, it was the first time they touched a dog while for others, it gave the possibility to walk a long way, outdoors, with a guide dog. Giving the opportunity to young children to walk with a guide dog develops a better knowledge about guide dogs. Walking with guide dogs gave a lot of fun to most of the children. All the children wanted to renew this experience.

For more information about the project please contact

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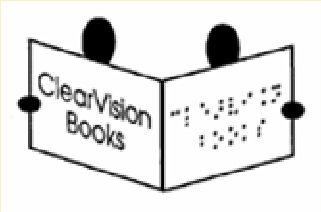
Create Your Own London 2012 Book of Sports

Mandeville's Book of Sports is a specially designed book to introduce young braille readers to the nine Paralympic sports open to blind athletes: Athletics, Cycling - Track, Equestrian, Football Five-a-Side, Goalball, Judo, Rowing, Sailing and Swimming. There is a short braille text and a tactile illustration for each sport, based on the official pictograms.

The book was designed by ClearVision children's braille library with help from the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games. It is part of ClearVision's Touchlines project, funded by VICTA.

Contact ClearVision: info@clearvisionproject.org to find out how your organisation can make its own copies of this book, free of charge, using an embosser or swell paper with files provided by ClearVision.



Reg charity no. 1012850

Children who have visual impairment and autism: Resource Pack

This article describes a Resource Pack intended primarily for practitioners working with children who have both visual impairment and autism.

Introduction

The Resource Pack was the main outcome of the Visual Impairment and Autism Project which ran from September 2008 to March 2011. The Project, based in England, was established to provide guidance for practitioners working with children who have both visual impairment and autism. It was a partnership between the following organisations:

- the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) (http://www.rnib.org.uk/Pages/Home.aspx)

- Brookfields School (http://www.brookfieldsschool.org/Pages/default.aspx)
- Sunfield (http://www.sunfield.org.uk/)
- the National Autistic Society (http://www.autism.org.uk/)

The Project was set up when one of the team, Judy Bell, was RNIB's National Development Officer for Children with Visual Impairment and Complex Needs. One of Judy's roles was to give advice to practitioners and parents. During 2006 she received several requests for advice about meeting the needs of children who had visual impairment and autism. Unfortunately, Judy lacked the knowledge to respond effectively and identified no resources that would help. She therefore decided to establish the Project to develop such resources; the Resource Pack is the outcome.

Although the combination of visual impairment and autism is extremely low incidence, it has a very high impact on the children concerned, and on the practitioners who work with them. The Resource Pack is designed to reduce this impact.

The needs of families

Because the Project had limited funding and was restricted to 2½ years, we were only able to focus on providing guidance for practitioners. We are very conscious that the combination of visual impairment and autism has a major impact on families, and hope that much of the guidance provided in the Resource Pack will prove to be appropriate for use in the home setting. Nevertheless, there is an urgent need to develop our work to provide support specifically for families.

The needs of adults who have visual impairment and autism

We are also aware that children who have visual impairment and autism become adults. Although the Project did not directly consider the needs of adults who have visual impairment and autism, we believe that the Resource Pack will be of value to practitioners working with this group of people. There is an urgent need to establish whether adults have specific needs not addressed in the Resource Pack.

The task for practitioners

Practitioners working with children who have visual impairment and autism have an extremely difficult task. Visual impairment alone presents a child with many challenges; autism likewise. When they occur together, the challenges are not added, but multiplied (Jordan, 2005). If learning difficulties are also present, these make the situation even more complex.

Many strategies employed with sighted autistic children appear to be inappropriate for children who have visual impairment. For example, most sighted autistic children rely heavily on visual learning (Jordan, 2005). Many teachers feel disorientated, because their usual strategies prove to be

ineffective (Gibbons, 2005). The lack of studies concerning this group (Jordan, 2005) and the resulting lack of literature adds to practitioners' difficulties.

Individual practitioners have had to develop their own practice. They have often relied on anecdotal reports from colleagues and on intuition. However, anecdotes are unhelpful: they lack detail and do not explain why a strategy has worked or failed. Furthermore, intuition is misleading when dealing with autism (Jordan, 2005).

Meeting the needs of children who have visual impairment and autism

To meet the needs of a child who has both visual impairment and autism, practitioners must understand

- visual impairment and how it affects that particular child
- autism and how it affects that particular child
- how the visual impairment and autism interact and affect that particular child.

Most staff working with visually impaired children have an excellent understanding of visual impairment and how it affects children.

However, fewer have a thorough grasp of the nature of autism in sighted children, making it difficult for them to understand the child from the autism perspective.

A description of the Resource Pack

The Resource Pack provides practitioners with guidance about the strategies that can be employed to support the educational progress of children who have both visual impairment and autism.

The pack consists of an interactive CD-Rom supported by an introductory booklet. The CD-Rom contents are:

- 13 case studies based on the children who were surveyed; each case study outlines the strategies that are used to support the child
- Strategies; the strategies outlined in the case studies are described in greater detail
- Glossary; this explains terms used in the case studies and strategy descriptions
- Resources, giving information about equipment and sources of further information, including websites, books, papers and on-line articles
- Documents in PDF format (for creating print copies)
- The contents of the booklet in a format accessible to those who have sight loss.

The strategies are grouped into the following areas:

- Underlying principles
- Promoting learning
- Managing the environment

- Promoting effective communication
- Supporting sensory needs
- Promoting wellbeing
- Promoting mobility and independence
- Supporting musical skills and using musical interests.

Purchasing the Resource Pack

The Resource Pack was published by RNIB in May 2011. It is priced at only £10, and is available from the RNIB.

The ISBN number is 978 1 4445 0094 3.

The RNIB Product code is PR12333.

Overseas customers can order by phone or email. For further information on international orders and deliveries please contact telephone +44 (0) 1733 37 54 00 or email exports@rnib.org.uk

If your registered address and delivery address are in the UK, and you wish to order online, go to http://www.rnib.org.uk/shop/

If you would prefer to use an order form to purchase the Resource Pack, please email: vi-autism.medina@tiscali.co.uk

Concluding remarks

Although the funded Project was completed in March 2011, there is still considerable interest in visual impairment and autism, and a great deal of work still needs to be carried out. We hope that further funding will be provided in the future to support additional work. For the present, the email address used during the Project is being retained by Ian Bell who was the Project Leader. If you have any queries about the Project or about visual impairment and autism, please email Ian at vi-autism.medina@tiscali.co.uk

From time to time, Ian sends out a newsletter or other information by email. If you would like to be added to the email list, please email Ian at vi-autism.medina@tiscali.co.uk

Ian set up his own website during 2011, with a particular focus on communication in people who have visual impairment and additional needs. He intends to add material on visual impairment and autism as time permits. His website is at http://ianpbell.wordpress.com/

Status of the Convention on the Rights of the Child Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The General Assembly, by its resolution 44/25, adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child. As at 1 July 2011, the Convention had been ratified or acceded to by 193 States, and 2 States had signed the Convention. By its resolution 54/263, the Assembly adopted two Optional Protocols to the Convention. As at 1 July 2011, the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict had been ratified by 142 States, and the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography had been ratified by 144 States. Pursuant to resolution 65/197, the implementation of the rights of children with disabilities is the focus of section IV of the present report, which highlights issues relating to discrimination; data collection; the Millennium Development Goals and disability; the right of children with disabilities to be heard; progress in realizing the rights of children with disabilities and the current global situation; education; health; poverty and social protection; child protection; de-institutionalization; emergencies and humanitarian action; and perspectives on ways forward.

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READ MORE: **http://www.icevi-europe.org/enletter/issue48-12.pdf**

70 different games and activities for early language teaching to blind and partially sighted children

An abstract

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

...

READ MORE: **http://www.icevi-europe.org/topics/lv/ELT-Celesnik.doc**

by ***Nina Čelešnik Kozamernik***, M. A.
Institute for blind and partially sighted, Ljubljana, Slovenia

Handbook for successful aging

Preface

To age successfully means to stay, as possible, physically and mentally healthy until the end of life and at the same time to become as old as possible, if you want to.

To be healthy means for me that you feel well, that you are able to do everything that is important to you despite a possible disability or disease and that you are able to adapt to changed situations, in case of need.

...

READ MORE:

- Handbook in English (http://ma-ha-schulze.de/index.php?menuid=49&getlang=en)
- Handbook in Spanish (http://ma-ha-schulze.de/index.php?menuid=49&getlang=es)
- Handbook in German (http://ma-ha-schulze.de/index.php?menuid=49&getlang=de)

Dr. Hans-Eugen Schulze,
Justice Dr. Schulze rtd., German Federal Court of Appeals
http://ma-ha-schulze.de/index.php?menuid=6

Self-employed work of visually impaired people in Europe – Results of a spontaneous survey

From EBU Newsletter 81 July August 2011

Introduction

The EBU Commission for Rehabilitation, Vocational Training and Employment has among others been assigned the task to work out recommendations concerning self-employed work of blind people in Europe. A survey has been conducted among the national member organisations to establish a base for the development of this recommendation. This has helped to collect some basic data and information on the subject in general.

There are several problems related to the conduct of this survey. First of all, one has to keep in mind that different definitions of the words "disability" and "blindness and visual impairment" as well as the types of social security systems, employment regulations and the economic situation differ significantly from one European country to another. This is why the results of this survey have to be interpreted carefully with regard to the relevant background. The informative value has been additionally restricted by the fact that not all members have returned the questionnaires. And finally, it is important to take into account that there is no systematic record of self-employed blind and/or visually impaired people in Europe. This is why many

organisations could only speak for their members; how many blind and visually impaired people actually work as self-employed in the concerning countries can thus only be estimated.

A big Thank You goes to the organisations of the blind and visually impaired in Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Finland, Great Britain, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Norway, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland, Spain and the Czech Republic who, by filling out the questionnaires during the summer of 2010, have contributed significantly to the work of the Commission for Rehabilitation, Vocational Training and Employment.

In the following section, I will give a summary of the most important findings.

Findings

The most detailed data has been contributed by Great Britain. There is no system in place to register self-employed blind and visually impaired people either, but by conducting two relatively broad studies it was possible to obtain relatively reliable and meaningful data (Network-1000-study and the "Labour Market Experiences of People with Seeing Difficulties" study of the RNIB).

Similarly reliable data has been collected in Bulgaria. There, the surveys are conducted annually at the local branches of the organisation, which has made it possible not just to identify the total number of visually impaired entrepreneurs but to distinguish between people who are self-employed and visually impaired or blind. Additionally, it could be established how many of these entrepreneurs are actually blind from birth.

Both Germany (1000) and Estonia (15) provide relatively precise numbers of self-employed blind and visually impaired masseurs. Apart from that, there is only very little data available. Especially in Germany, the estimated number of self-employed blind and visually impaired people is most likely far lower than the actual number. Finland is the country which has stated the highest overall number of blind and visually impaired entrepreneurs, with a list of 54 different professional categories in which the blind and visually impaired are involved and have the status of self-employed.

Ireland and the Czech Republic, on the other hand, state extremely low numbers, which gives reason to the assumption that they are underestimated. An especially difficult situation concerning the availability of data can be found in Italy, Luxembourg, Switzerland and Russia. Often there is no official data at all, not even a rough estimate.

Norway has indicated a number of about a hundred self-employed blind and visually impaired people. It is a special case as people have the possibility to complement a basic pension with self-employed work. The legal base regarding this situation has just recently been improved.

In Russia, data on employment of blind and visually impaired people is generally available but unfortunately there are a few shortcomings concerning the numbers of people in self-employment in particular.

A purely quantitative evaluation of the data based on the problems mentioned above is thus rather a case of benchmarking than a direct comparison of general structures or support systems. Putting the available numbers of blind and visually impaired people in relation to the overall population in the respective countries, one gets a number that varies between 0.02% and 0.00004%. This means that the percentage of recorded blind and visually impaired people having the status of self-employed varies by a factor of 500. Even between the Nordic countries with Norway and Sweden on the one hand and Finland on the other hand, there is already a variation of the percentage by a factor of 20.

Discussion of the findings

By far the highest number of blind and visually impaired people in self-employment have been stated by Great Britain and Finland with 0.01 and 0.02 respectively. In both countries the following particularities can be observed:

1. Both countries have relatively up to date and broad statistics concerning blind and visually impaired people.
2. They offer an advice service which deals more or less specifically with the problems and concerns of blind and visually impaired people that want to launch a business as self-employed. The Finnish Federation of the Visually Impaired, for example, employs an advisor who is specifically in charge of blind and visually impaired who are already self-employed or want to become self-employed in the future. The same is true for Great Britain, where so-called Self Employment Business Advisors provide a similar service.
3. Both countries offer financial aid of different kinds to pay for support material or personal assistants.
4. They provide financial support for those self-employed who want to launch their own business in the form of special allowances, tax relief or the temporary exemption from National Insurance payments.

With this support, about ten to twenty blind and visually impaired people in Finland are able to establish themselves as entrepreneurs or self-employed every year.

In Germany, for example, while the conditions 3 and 4 are equally fulfilled, there is a complete lack of conditions 1 and 2. Denmark has managed to fulfil all the above mentioned conditions except for the specialized advice service.

The significance of a special advice service or a distinct infrastructure is also highlighted by the fact that in Germany, about a thousand blind or visually impaired masseurs and physiotherapists are registered. But apart from that, there is hardly any information available about blind businessmen. The blind

and visually impaired physiotherapists are very well organized and their different sections give support to those colleagues who want to become self-employed. The Finnish Federation of the Visually Impaired has attached a list of over 50 professions to its questionnaire which includes all the fields of activity in which blind and visually people are active.

The same is true for Estonia, which states a similar percentage of blind and visually impaired businessmen that can mainly be found among physiotherapists. Even though they state that a special advice service for the blind and visually impaired exists, it is difficult to verify whether this advice service is focusing on the special needs of blind and visually impaired people (condition 2). Additionally, the available data is not sufficiently broad to analyse the situation appropriately (condition 1).

The situation in Norway seems to be slightly different: it is stated that there are five specialized advisors across the country dealing with people with disability who want to become self-employed. These advisors are allegedly also working together with the association of blind people, but there is no information about the number of people that take advantage of this advice service each year, which leaves some questions about the level of experience in this field open. Norway is also a special case in the sense that blind and visually impaired people have only recently gotten the opportunity to be trained as physiotherapists and psychologists.

In terms of numbers, Bulgaria is still occupying a place before Norway, Germany and Denmark with a percentage of 0.003%. It has to be emphasized that the data is fairly reliable in this case and that there is hardly any additional support for people with disabilities except the tax rebate. With this percentage, Bulgaria is still by ten to twenty times below the factor of both Finland and Great Britain.

Looking at the number of blind or visually impaired self-employed people, there seem to be equally exceptional conditions in Spain. The numbers stated in the questionnaire result in a percentage of 0.008%, which is only slightly lower than in Finland and Great Britain. However, this might be explained by the fact that ONCE exists, but further research into this case would be necessary.

All other countries that have stated a percentage of 0.0001% or less of blind or visually impaired people in self-employment lack sufficient data, so that these numbers cannot be interpreted properly.

Summary

Overall, 16 national organisations for blind and visually impaired people have taken part in the survey on self-employment of blind and visually impaired people in Europe. Out of the 16 participants, only eight countries could present adequate data which allowed a first evaluation and interpretation. The results lead to the following conclusions:

1. First of all, blind and visually impaired people must have access to professional training. The best way to enter self-employment seems to be via the training to be a physiotherapist or a masseur.
2. The blind and visually impaired in self-employment should have the same possibility to access resources and support mechanisms as their employed counterparts and their employers, especially concerning personal assistance and other means of support.
3. Furthermore, there is the need for more specific support to launch a business to make up for the loss of financial support, loans, tax rebates or the temporary exemptions from National Insurance contributions.
4. Finally, another important factor seems to be the infrastructure in place. This could be either a network of other self-employed people who give each other advice (peer counselling), or a professional advisor who combines entrepreneurial expertise with the appropriate knowledge of the special needs and mechanisms in place to support people with disabilities.

A selection of possible professions

- Masseur or physiotherapist
- Tuning and repairing pianos
- IT-trainer
- Disability-awareness counsellor
- Music teacher
- Artist such as painter, sculptor or photographer
- Musician
- Lawyer
- Tradesman (in different sectors)
- Management consultant
- Security training (Finland)
- Craftsman
- Psychotherapist

By ***Erwin Denninghaus***,
Member, EBU Commission on Rehabilitation, Vocational Training and Employment

"Blind", a photographic project from Germany

From EBU Newsletter 81, July – August 2011

A project enabling blind and partially sighted people to express their vision of their environment through photography has been undertaken in Germany. Carried out with the participation of BSVH, a German association for the blind and partially sighted, the aims of the project are explained by the photographer and initiator, Kilian Foerster: "As a photographer and visually

aware person I am impressed by the ability of the blind to orientate themselves and by their perception. "Blind", a series of photographic works, shows what blind people see. Initially I took a portrait of each participant. Subsequently the participants took a photo each of a place familiar to them. The participants then described what they thought the photo showed."

The results of the project can be seen on the artist's homepage http://www.kilianfoerster.de/blind.htm
Kilian Foerster can also be contacted on kilianfoerster@web.de

Lifelong learning needs for aging people with sensory disabilities

In October, the project "Lifelong Learning Needs for Ageing People with Sensory Disabilities" with acronym SensAge was launched, www.sensage.eu

Definition of «Life Long Learning» was proposed by Lengrand, Paul in 1965 at the UNESCO forum and it sounds like this:

"Life Long Learning (LLL) describes Education without age limits. Education and learning should expand to contain the whole life of a person, all skills and all knowledge areas, to use all possible mediums to give all people the opportunity to develop their personalities".

Paul Lengrand describes the concept of lifelong education in his book "An introduction to lifelong education". (* "An introduction to lifelong education", by Paul Lengrand, Paris UNESCO, 1970 (London : Croom Helm, 1975, as well).)

The author, a theorist and practitioner in adult education, suggests how lifelong education can be promoted and highlights some of the problems it involves.

The idea of LLL has stimulated the finding of new special techniques, forms, and training and retraining of all ages. And this idea was the basis for development of the project "Lifelong Learning Needs for Ageing People with Sensory Disabilities" (SensAge).

The aim of the project is to become the reference point within the European Union for developments in lifelong learning and enablement for ageing people with sensory disabilities in order to maintain their independence and to improve their quality of life.

The program LLL implies that the learning can be organized at home, at work and in leisure time, using all forms of media and modern technologies of distance education.

What is lifelong learning in the modern sense? We interviewed the employee of the Institute of Open Education - Andrei Markov, PhD. Today, it's

not a secret that modernization should cover all aspects of life. Of course, this process must begin with education.

L. Plastunova. Andrei tell please, how far you've gone through in education?

A. Markov. I graduated from a school for children with visual impairment. I have Usher syndrome – I'm blind and partially hearing. A feature of this syndrome is that people have difficulties in orientation, communication, and access to information. However, these people can be kept without any changes to the verbal speech. I'm enjoying hearing aids.
In the 70-s I went to the University, Faculty of Philosophy. It was a laborious process that was associated with changes in the rate of hearing perception. Ultimately, the intermediate goal was achieved: I received a "red" diploma, in which all estimates were "excellent."
After the University, I entered post graduate courses.
The theme of my dissertation was "The historical fact as a problem of methodology of scientific knowledge."

L. Plastunova. Andrei, you have learned so much, while experiencing some difficulties. You have not lost the desire to improve your education?

A. Markov. It is clear that after graduation the process of education does not stop – because the reading of books is continuing. Reading allows you to obtain information from various areas of knowledge. Reading is an active prerequisite for education. Education - is raising the cultural level at the same time, such as theatres, concert halls.
Finally, education - it's a journey. During travel we do not only entertain ourselves, but also learn something new about the history of the country, its culture, we try to imagine ourselves in a new cultural and historical space.

L. Plastunova. Andrei, can you use a computer? If "yes", then what features do you gain through the computer for yourself?

A. Markov. Yes, computer skills with Braille displays are important in my life. Computer for me - it is a source of information: I write text, edit, send e-mails, as well as get new information, including through the global network "Internet".
However, currently there is a process of constant renewal both of the computers and software. That requires the user to update his knowledge in this area.
Blindness and hearing impairment cannot be the justification to use older programs - this is a cruel law of globalization. But the user's own efforts are not enough. We need teaching support.

L. Plastunova. That is, you would like to continue education in computer courses?

A. Markov. Yes, I feel it necessary.

L. Plastunova. Of course, computer skills, will not only enhance lifelong learning for people with sensory disabilities, but in many respects improve their quality of life.

ICEVI-Europe supports the program of lifelong learning and is actively involved in the project SensAge.

One of the forms presenting the results of the project will be the Annual Conferences.

The first conference will be held next year. 2012 is the EU Year of Active Ageing.

Please follow of the announcement on the ICEVI-Europe website: www.icevi-europe.org

Interview by ***Dr. Andrei Markov***, markov@pdmi.ras.ru
Institute of Open Education St.Petersburg - Moscow, Russia

Dr. Liliya Plastunova, lp@icevi-europe.org
Legal representative of ICEVI-Europe in SensAge Project

With love and hope

We met in St. Petersburg.

Alisa now is 18 months, but during her life she has travelled with her parents in distant countries.

Maria – the mother of Alisa - told us:

"When we were expecting our second child I only hoped for her to be very beautiful.

Our first baby was so handsome, that people stared on the streets. So the second one, the girl, must be even more beautiful. And she is. When she turned 3 month, the neurologist told us she had some developmental problems. We did not believe it - we are the parents of perfect children! Also her brain screening was good. When Alisa was 5 months, we too realised that she had some problems. She could not hold her head up, turn herself, reach for or hold toys. We did not know how good her vision was. We went to a neurological clinic. We were sure they only needed to push our girl a little and she would be fine. My husband told me:" do not look at the other children there; some of them are so ill that it is difficult to bear. Our baby is totally fine, I am sure!" In one month we had a diagnosis and it turned out to be one of the most difficult cases in this clinic. We were even asked to leave home. She was diagnosed with Canavan disease - a genetic neurodegenerative disease. The illness progresses fast and so far there is no cure anywhere in the world.

We found a group of doctors in the USA who gave us some small hope. The combination of medications prescribed by them stops the brain damage and even stimulates some development for the child.

Besides medications, we invite all possible professionals to work with our child. They help her to develop her visual, motor, comprehension and other skills. We learned a lot in order to be able to do exercises ourselves since she needs them often. This is really surprising - all that routine work with our girl is more inspiring than our prestigious office jobs. This job offers more satisfaction; more joy and the results are of more value to us.

We already have made some small progress that is unbelievably big for this disease. We now see that exercises and belief can do a lot even for the baby who has no potential in the doctor's eyes. But the main thing for us is to see her smile of course and to be sure we provide her with the best quality of life we can."

In understanding the pathogenesis of mental development in this disease, there are two main areas. One line links the impairment with organic brain damage only. Another line considers that organic brain damage is important, but no less important are the disadvantages of social and cultural influence on the child.

In the case of Alisa deficiencies of social and cultural impact are not there. A positive psychological climate in the family and a strong attachment with her mother helps our child to develop and enjoy life.

And there, not far off - gene therapy will come to assist, that we very much hope for.

***Maria**, St.Petersburg*

***Dr. Plastunova L.** lp@icevi-europe.org*

Announcement: International Master's Degree Programme

Visual Impairment: Assessment and Support 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 or people with intellectual and visual impairment if their expertise in low vision and its consequences for daily life is limited and not up to date? 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, visual impairment and the combination with intellectual and multiple disabilities – professionals with the skills to translate interdisciplinary knowledge into adequate support in rehabilitation, education and care.

The ICEVI-Europe (International Council for Education and Rehabilitation of People with Visual Impairment) has recognized the need for such professional training. 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 / LEVRETA (Leonardo European Vision Rehabilitation and Education Training Association) / and the WHO-FIC Collaborating Centre in the Netherlands. As a result, the University of Groningen will start in September 2012 an International Master's Degree Programme Visual Impairment: Assessment and Support.

Key facts of the programme: interdisciplinary, ocular and cerebral visual impairment, optimal participation, support, WHO-FIC, AAIDD-model.

Start September 2012 / Duration 12 month / Language English / Degree MSc in Educational Sciences; ICF certification; LEVRETA certification

Detailed information and application forms: http://www.rug.nl/prospectiveStudents/degreeProgrammes/mastersProgrammes/masters/croho66607vi or http://www.rug.nl and the keywords Master Visual impairment.

University of Groningen starts new unique International Master's programme Visual Impairment: Assessment and Support

Press release November 2011

How can professionals provide good support to people with visual impairment? Special groups of clients have special needs, for instance people with intellectual and ocular or cerebral visual impairment. Recent research makes clear that this is a substantial group, where a lack of knowledge often has strong negative effects on the quality of life. 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? And moreover, what are the effects on social contact in daily life if you cannot distinguish faces or facial expressions?

In September 2012 the University of Groningen in the Netherlands will start an interdisciplinary Master's programme in Visual Impairment: Assessment and Support. This Master is mainly meant for professionals in the education, care and rehabilitation of people with visual impairment and of people with intellectual and visual impairment.

Dr Paul Looijestijn, curriculum coordinator of the programme: "Our Master's programmetakes an interdisciplinary approach to ocular impairment as well as cerebral visual impairment. The mission of this Master's degree programme is to train our professional students in qualitative and quantitative research, aimed at improving the participation of children and adults with visual impairment and the combination of intellectual disabilities and 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.

Career prospects: 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 disabilities and visual impairment. This programme is recognized and certified by Leonardo European Vision Rehabilitation and Education Training Association and certified by the WHO Collaborating Centre for the Family of International Classifications in the Netherlands.

More information:
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A.M. Arendshorst LLM, academic advisor,
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Professor *C. Vlaskamp*, course coordinator

Braille 21 World Congress. Innovations in Braille in the 21st Century

Leipzig, Germany. September 27-30, 2011

The Braille 21 World Congress promoted by the World Braille Council and organized by the German Central Library for the Blind in Leipzig has been a very important event to think about what is happening with Braille in the 21st

Century.
The World Braille Council (WBC) is a Commission of the World Blind Union and it is in charge of different aspects dealing with Braille: unification of Braille codes, teaching of Braille, Braille and technologies, support for developing countries and so on. The conference, with about four hundred participants, consisted in plenary sessions, presentations, workshops and an exhibition.

The themes of the conference were the following:

- Education and literacy. The new tendencies and proposals about the teaching of Braille are centred in the application of computers and other technologies to learn Braille. Thus it is clear how new technologies complement and promote Braille itself against some theories which say that new technology will replace it. A good example of this were some presentations as "Daisy for Braille display and Braille Grade 2 with human voice", by A. Katemann from Germany, "Teaching Braille with Daisy", by W. Hubert from Austria, "The Braille becomes multimedia with Smart Pages and TAg it" by R. Emling, or the one presented by Elena Gastón form ONCE, about "Braille and the 21st Century technologies". The interest emerged in these presentations shows us the importance of combining both things. Out of programme we held a very interesting meeting with some professionals from Bartimeus who showed us an interesting programme, BrailleStudio to teach Braille through the Braille display in a funny way.
- Vocational training, employment and live long learning. In this topic presentations addressed the importance of Braille in the working place, as it was evidenced in the presentation "Improving the efficiency of the blind in the workplace through digitization and Braille" of C.Catacutan-Sam. The conclusion we draw is that job, digitization and Braille are complementary.
- Research and development. Although the Conference has not excelled by important developments in terms of research, some studies are being carried out about the use of Braille displays with different population groups to optimize their use. We also have to talk about the Hyperbraille prototype. This is a sheet size device consisting in a multitude of cells that allow, according to the disposition thereof, to perceive graphics, icons and geometric shapes. It is an interesting prototype, while its price was about € 60,000. So the conclusion in this point is that there is a real need to do more research on these kind of devices and specially look for affordable ones for all the population not only for developed countries.
- Improve of access to information. This section discussed about the current situation between editors and users. There are some countries that are not interested in exchanging books files, while some others are in favour of this kind of access to information. One of the trends is to publish a not compulsory agreement, while the other is to publish a compulsory normative for all countries. This is a burning topic, as it faces

various types of interests: editorials, economical, associations, etc. If this situation is finally solved in favour of a compulsory international agreement it will have as a consequence the possibility to have "global libraries" so that a single user could access to any type of file. They also talked about the unification of Braille codes of different subjects. As you may know, this problem is not a current one, but it has been dragging on for many years now and for the moment it doesn't seem to be any agreement on the matter.

- Braille as a part of universal design. Some presentations talked about the unification of international standards for documents. In the panel about "The Use of Braille Signage in Consumer Goods and Services", conducted by D. Mobner, they said they are trying to find some standards for Braille signage in those products, although the interests of the enterprises and the consumers are different: the first ones don't want to make a better Braille as it is more expensive, while the consumers want to have the right to information. In this sense, there has been a recommendation which more or less satisfies the needs of both groups.
- The role of Braille en the achievement of an independent life. In this topic there was a claim to have a good labelling of everyday objects: food products, pharmaceuticals, textile... There were also some presentations dealing with the importance of Braille in order and spatial organization in ordinary contexts to make life more comfortable and efficient.

The "Braille 21 Award", organized by the WBU was celebrated during the Conference. From several experiences and researches presented, five of them were shortlisted.

- BraillePen 12 – by Harpo Sp. z o. o, Poland
- DaCapo – Braille Music – by German Central Library for the Blind in Leipzig (DZB), Germany
- Embroidered Braille for textiles – by Kampmann GmbH – international, Germany
- PEF – Portable Embosser format – by Swedish Library of Braille and Talking Books, Sweden
- RoboBraille – by RoboBraille – Sensus, Denmark

Of all of them we want to remark two as we find they can really help to make Braille more accessible and affordable worldwide: The PEF – Portable Embosser format – by Swedish Library of Braille and Talking Books, Sweden, which was the winner. It is a kind of file format that allows you to print in any embosser. And the Robobraille, of Sensus, Denmark, a programme with which you can send any kind of file via e-mail to a server and they give it back to you in the accessible digital format you need. Our conclusions from the Congress are:

- Braille is alive, it is perfectly compatible and complementary with technology
- There is a tendency in developed countries to teach Braille using technology
- The unification of different codes is something to solve in a long term
- There is a need to look for new manufacturers that can make tiphlotechnical devices at a minimal cost
- And finally, there is a need of networking to improve Braille in all the aspects treated in the Congress.

Madrid, November, 15th 2011

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Braille and 21st Century Technologies

Paper presented at The World Congres Braille 21, celebrated in Leipzig, Germany, from the 27th to the 30th of September 2011.

Abstract

What would Luis Braille do with his code today when we are immersed in technology? The benefits of technology for visually handicapped people are very well known. Nevertheless, using it in education arouses many doubts and reluctances: some people think it will put an end to Braille; other think traditional methods are still being better; some people say it doesn't allow children to work with their hands, and some other believe it can only start once the child knows already how to read and write.

In this paper I will try to demonstrate that technology can be useful to Braille literacy and to improve the reading efficiency.

1 INTRODUCTION

"*We must ourselves be the change we whish to see in the world."* Gandhi

It has been proved in many researches the big motivating and normalization power the technology has: blind children feel they use the same tool than their classmates, and even simultaneously with them; the interaction that computer gives is far from the linearity and monotony of paper; with the computer students feel themselves owners of their own learning as they can choose their own speed, and repeat or stop the activities; for teachers,

classmates and parents it makes the communication, correction and interaction easier, at the same time the blind child feels he can participate more and with a more enjoyable learning.

Besides, the versatility of technology gives the chance to adapt the same program to different groups of population or to some specific pupils and also gives the chance to teachers and professionals to share the resources and make use of what is already done. It will speed up our work in the future and make it possible to create international networks.

But we are now interested in discovering if Braille and technology are different, opposite or complementary concepts.

2 TECHNOLOGY AND BRAILLE: TWO ESSENTIAL AND COMPLEMENTARY ELEMENTS

The Spanish National Organization of the Blind (ONCE) created at the end of the year 2004 the ACCEDO Group, of accessibility to educative digital contents. Along these years we have made research, advice, training and assessment of tools, resources and educative digital software. In our last researches we have proved that children can accede to computer knowledge at a very early age and enjoy a fun and motivating learning not only about concepts, but also about Braille.

Technology and Braille are then fully complementary. In fact, they have been complementary until now: Braille production has improved qualitatively and quantitatively with technology and with prints connected to computers; the Braille display has proved it is useful for blind people who use computers.

We must now go a step forward: technology needs to be present in Braille literacy.

We will start from these principles:

- Literacy starts much earlier than the formal teaching of reading and writing. Braille teaching mustn't then be limited to Braille code, and it has to start by spatial concepts, hearing and tactual discrimination and so on.
- Braille is much more than the decodification of characters. It also means perception of shapes, ability to find symbols, reading speed, joy for reading... and the emotional connection to it.
- We don't have to wait until the child knows to read Braille to start technology. Technology is another good resource for learning since the early childhood. Nevertheless, we have to take care and avoid working with the computer concepts the child hasn't already experienced and/or touched.
- The high motivation power of technology for children and the possibilities it has to be adapted to real needs of all of them, makes it very useful.
- Even technology moves forward very quickly, it allows a continuous adaptation to personal needs of everyone.

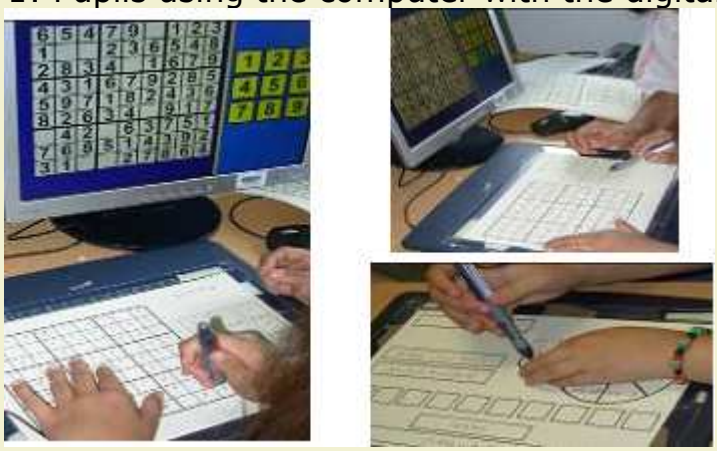
- Finally, technology gives us the chance to share resources between professionals not only from the same centre, but from different schools and countries.

3 TECHNOLOGICAL TOOLS FOR BRAILLE LITERACY

From the different researches we have made to make technology inclusive in mainstream schools and let blind children to use the same computer and the same software then their classmates and not only specific programs with all the activities different to the rest of the class, we have concluded that there are many aids for the computer that can be useful to work the previous literacy requirements to formal Braille: the dance pad, set in an horizontal or vertical position, let us work spatial concepts; the Webcam can be used to motivate communication or the microphone to work oral skills. However, I believe that within all of them, the most important to teach Braille are currently the Braille display and the digital tablet.

The first is a very well known tiphlotechnical tool used by a big amount of blind adults. The digital tablet is a common instrument normally used by graphic designers that we use as a screen emulator, putting on it an embossed paper adapted from the activity we see in the screen that children use with a magnetic pencil in the same way their classmates do with the mouse.

Image 1: Pupils using the computer with the digital tablet



With the digital tablet one can do activities of finding, association, order, etc… in a playful and interactive way, with the only condition that the activity in the computer has to achieve some accessibility requirements for educative contents. (ACCEDO Group, 2005. "Guidelines for the design of accessible educational environments for people with visual impairments".
ONCE: Castellano:
http://www.once.es/appdocumentos/once/prod/SS-ED%20Pautas%20de%20diseno%202005.doc;
ONCE English:
http://educacion.once.es/appdocumentos/educa/prod/GUIDELINES%20JAN%202005.doc)

The great advantage of the digital tablet is that you can use your touch, not only for Braille but also for graphics and images and it is sold in the common market. The inconvenients are that there are only a few manufacturers that make them in a DinA4 size; it requires the activity to achieve some accessibility guidelines and it is useful for some kind of activities but doesn't replace the screen reader neither the Braille display.

The big advantage of the Braille display is that it allows us to work with the computer, while its inconvenients are the high prize and the need of a training to use it, and that with it one can only read lineal Braille, not touch graphics or images.

There are some other tools that still being tested as a support to the use of computers in teaching and maybe they will decrease costs, so it is necessary to continue making research about them.

4 ART OF TECHING BRAILLE TROUGH TECHNOLOGY

The tools described and the ones that are being tested can be a big help in the teaching of Braille, not only for blind students but also for the ones with low vision that need to learn Braille, and at any age, even for already readers who need to learn this code.

Let us see some activities we can do with the computer in the different phases of Braille learning. I hope they will serve you as an inspiration for new ideas.

4.1 PREVIOUS REQUIREMENTS:

4.1.1 Linguistic skills:

- Auditions in the Net. Ex: Spanish: Sonidos de Transportes (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k9D_-KgeSv8); English: The animal sound song (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t99ULJjCsaM)

4.1.2 Motivation, attention and hearing comprehension:

- Songs and Fairy tales in the Net with real voices. Ex: Spanish: Aprender las vocales (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z9r0b1kDAlo&feature=related); Un dragón feliz (http://www.milcuentos.com/dragon/slide1.html); English: Phonics Song (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=saF3-f0XWAY&feature=relmfu)
- Sound recorder in the computer's operating system or any sound edition program, with which we can record the child's voice or ours and listen to it, play with sounds and repeat them later.

4.1.3 Basic Concepts of preschool education

- Ex: Conceptos Básicos (http://educacion.once.es/descargas/conceptos_%20basicos_01100007.zip) in ONCE's Website

4.1.4 Tactual Discrimination and perception

Image 2: Images of a Visual Stimulating Program adapted to Tactual Perception

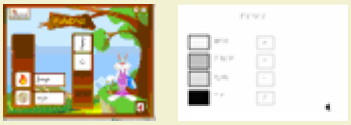
4.2 FORMAL LEARNING OF BRAILLE

- Activities adapted from the book "Learning Braille with Cantaletras", ("Aprendiendo Braille junto a Cantaletras", Teresa Barrientos Guzmány Rosa Eugenia Peña Villegas). There are some activities in it vary easy to adapt, both with textures or fuser.
  Image 3: Design of activities: shapes and Braille cell discrimination

- Learning the alphabet (http://recursostic.educacion.es/infantil/fantasmin/web/a/aa_02vf.htm):
  Image 4: QWERTY keyboard in the screen and its adaptation for the digital tablet

- Activities in JClic program, also very easy to adapt:
  Image 5: association of syllabus in the screen and in Braille

- Word games
  Image 6: association of the sound of things, its initial and its written name



4.3 EFFICIENT READING

Once the reading is achieved we must continue working in some aspects that will make the reading to become time by time more efficient:

- Activities to speed up bimanual coordination and improve the reading speed.
  Image 7: irregular and stream lines to improve efficient reading

- Word jumbles
  Image 8: word jumbles in print and Braille.

- Playful learning activities to improve Braille skills not only in lineal reading but in other ways of using the reading skills that give students strategies to achieve a more efficient reading.
  Image 9: pictures of different exercises and their embossed adaptation

4.4 WRITING

We can also work Braille writing through the computer. There are programs, as the EBKey, of Enrico Bortolazzi and Veia Progetti that aloud us to adapt the qwerty keyboard to an usual Perkins keyboard.

Nevertheless we have to tend and teach the child how to use the QWERTY keyboard. ONCE has made some computer games to teach the first steps with the keyboard in all the Spanish languages and in English, ex. "Serafin, the snail" (http://ntic.educacion.es/w3/eos/MaterialesEducativos/mem2009/caracol_serafin/start_html.html), and soon it will published another software for a formal teaching of the qwerty keyboard for children from around 4 years old. You can also start with the program Cantaletras (in Spanish), from Chile Pontifical University or any software similar to it. It's not a systematic program to learn the keyboard but it is useful to teach it in a playful way.

4.5 NORMALIZATION

There are some resources in the Net to help sighted children and adults to learn Braille in a playful way, being able to share some of the activities with the blind student.

- Braille virtual.es (http://www.braillevirtual.fe.usp.br/es/), from Sao Paolo University, thought for sighted people who want to learn Braille.

Image 10: hangman in the screen and in Braille for the digital tablet

- Luis and Braillinda. (http://www.once.es/otros/cursobraille/curso.htm) Training course in ONCE Website
  Image 11: picture of Luis and Braillinda course, from Carmen Roig

- We can also get information in the Net about strategies and materials to achieve a better image of Braille within the general population:
  - Jewelry in Braille (http://www.etsy.com/search_results.php?search_query=braille+jewelry&search_type=handmade&page=1)
  - T-shirts in Braille (http://www.brailletshirts.com/)
  - Braille's rap (http://www.aph.org/edresearch/braille_rap/index.html#lyrics)
  - Calendars in Braille (http://www.tack-tiles.com/HTMs/Calendar.html)

5 CONCLUSIONS

Technology presents great possibilities for teaching Braille. Nevertheless, it is necessary to continue making research, forming working groups to develop digital resources and fighting for making the tool's manufacturers, the designers and programmers conscious of the needs of visually handicapped students.

Besides promoting the use of the Braille display in early years, it is necessary to continue the research, training and network in relation with the digital tablet, as it combines Braille with graphics, learning with joy and the specific with the ordinary learning.

It is such a useful and inclusive tool that we should have to struggle manufacturers to produce and improve them, to reduce their prices and increase it's distribution. And, at the same time, train and convince not only designers and programmers, but also to teachers who prepare computer programs for their pupils to follow the guidelines for the design of accessible educational environments for people with visual impairments.

In that way, learning Braille through technology will be possible, useful and funny for pupils and easier and more interesting for teachers.

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Access Cities Award competition advances towards the December final

Brussels, 4 November 2011

One of the eight cities that beat off stiff competition from around Europe is to be selected as Award Winner for the prestigious Access City Award 2012. With 114 entries from 23 EU countries, the jurors had a challenging task identifying the finalists.

After 23 national juries had made a pre-selection, a European Jury composed of experts in accessibility and representatives of the European Commission, the European Disability Forum and the Age Platform Europe selected **the eight shortlisted cities of Access City Award 2012**.

They are (in alphabetical order): **Grenoble (FR), Kraków (PL), Ljubljana (SI), Marburg (DE), Olomouc (CZ), Salzburg (AT), Santander (ES), Terrassa (ES)**.

One of these cities will be proclaimed as the winner of the Access City Award 2012 on 1 December 2011. The Award ceremony will take place in Brussels during the European Day of Persons with Disabilities Conference. At the ceremony the three finalist "runners-up" and four special mentions will also be revealed.

The Access City Award is an initiative of the European Commission in partnership with the European Disability Forum. It aims to showcase and reward cities with over 50 000 inhabitants which take exemplary initiatives to improve accessibility in the urban environment for persons with disabilities, in the context of an ageing population. In line with the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities**, accessibility is one of the pillars of the **European Union's Disability Strategy 2010-2020** which aims at creating a barrier-free Europe for all.

The Award is given to the city that has demonstrably improved accessibility in fundamental aspects of city living, with a coherent approach over four key areas of accessibility: the **built environment and public spaces; transport and related infrastructure; information and communication, including new technologies (ICT); public facilities and services**. The winning city is committed to continued improvements in accessibility in a sustainable way and

can act as a role model to encourage the adoption of good practices in other European cities.

The other three finalist "runners-up" are also given recognition for developing comprehensive plans to address accessibility in the competition's four areas.

This year, in each of the four areas of the built environment, transport, information and communication - including new technologies (ICT), and public facilities and services, the European jury has also selected a city which will be awarded with a special mention for notable successes and results.

The competition

The application phase for the Access City Award 2012 closed on 20 September 2011 with 114 cities from 23 EU member states joining the competition.

National juries composed of representatives of national disability councils, accessibility and aging experts with the support of the Age Platform Europe, and public administration, made a pre-selection to identify cities that qualify for entry to the final assessment by a European Jury, with a maximum of two national candidates per country.

In total, 31 cities (alphabetical order by country) were shortlisted that way for the Access City Award 2012:

No	Country	City Name
1	Austria	Salzburg
2	Belgium	Leuven
3	Belgium	Gent
4	Bulgaria	Burgas
5	Czech Republic	Olomouc
6	Finland	Helsinki
7	Finland	Turku
8	France	Nantes
9	France	Grenoble
10	Germany	Marburg
11	Germany	Wiesbaden
12	Hungary	Szolnok
13	Ireland	Dublin City
14	Ireland	South Dublin
15	Italy	Venezia
16	Latvia	Daugavpils

17	Luxembourg	Luxembourg
18	Poland	Krakow
19	Poland	Gdynia
20	Portugal	Loulé
21	Portugal	Viseu
22	Romania	Bistrita
23	Slovenia	Ljubljana
24	Slovenia	Maribor
25	Spain	Terrassa
26	Spain	Santander
27	Sweden	Borås
28	The Netherlands	Venlo
29	The Netherlands	Dordrecht
30	United Kingdom	Sheffield
31	United Kingdom	Brighton & Hove

European Jury

The European Jury faced an arduous task in selecting the winner, the top three runners-up and four special mentions from among the many excellent applications pre-selected at national level.

The European Jury is composed of:

- **The Chairman, Marek Kamiński**, Polish Polar explorer, the only person to reach both Poles in a single year without external assistance; founder of the Marek Kamiński Foundation which is running educational programmes, fund-raising for prostheses for those in need, and integrated camps for the disabled;
- **Inmaculada Placencia Porrero**, Deputy Head of the Unit "Rights of persons with disabilities" of the European Commission, DG Justice;
- **Silvio Sagramola**, European Disability Forum, Director of Info-Handicap and EuCAN project coordinator;
- **Julia Wadoux**, Age Platform Europe, responsible for health and new technologies;
- **Ann Frye**, international specialist on the transport needs of disabled and older people;
- **Monika Klenovec**, architect, access consultant and university lecturer;
- **Luis Azevedo**, Technical University of Lisbon;
- **Jesús Hernández Galan**, accessibility director at the ONCE Foundation.

Award Ceremony

The overall winner will be revealed at the Award Ceremony in Brussels on **1 December 2011** on the occasion of the Conference marking the European Day of Persons with Disabilities.

Follow us on the Award Website (www.accesscityaward.eu), to be among the first to know the winner!

Events in 2012

11-13 July 2012

Thirteenth International Conference on Computers Helping People with Special Needs, Linz (Austria)
Pre-Conference on 9-10 July 2012
ICCHP focuses on all aspects related to AT (Assistive Technologies) and ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) for people with disabilities. User involvement and user-centered design are the underlying general topic of ICCHP leading to an interdisciplinary discussion of all stakeholders in the value chain that allows social innovation in the information society. For further information visit
website: www.icchp.org/node/295 or write to
e-mail:icchp@jku.at

30 July - 3 August 2012

35th Congress of the Association of Pedagogy for the Blind and Partially Sighted, Chemnitz (Germany)
With this year's motto "Diversity and Quality", discussion about inclusion will be pursued. To this end, four symposia will cover the following topics: Inclusion - Development of educational institutions and professionalism; (Multi-)cultural diversity of learning opportunities; Inclusive living environments of adults with multiple disabilities; Specific offers in education and rehabilitation. For further information visit
website: www.vbs-2012.de/en/home or write to
e-mail: info@vbs-2012.de

27-29 September 2012

8th International Conference "Research in education and rehabilitation sciences", Zagreb (Croatia)
First Announcements and Call for Papers
(http://www.icevi-europe.org/enletter/47-zagreb.pdf)
website: www.conference.erf.hr