

ICEVI European Newsletter

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The President's Message

Dear members and non-members of ICEVI-Europe,

'Leaving no one behind: the EBU driving full inclusion through the SDGs' is the powerful title of the 11th General Assembly of the European Blind Union to be held on 28-30 October 2019 at the Mercure Roma West Hotel in Rome, Italy.

Leaving no one behind is a challenging theme that could equally serve as an interesting and provocative challenge for a future ICEVI-Europe conference. Like the EBU, ICEVI-Europe is also fully committed to making every person with a visual impairment a full member of society. It seeks to promote a society where every visually impaired person is empowered to organise his or her own life through access to effective teaching, training and rehabilitation and through access to appropriate adaptive learning resources and technology. We advocate for a society in which all visually impaired people, including people with multiple disabilities and complex needs, are enabled to become integral members and participants who use their full potential to live, learn and work independently.

I do not yet know how this theme will shape the EBU General Assembly but I am looking forward to finding out, and at the same time I am thinking of the theme we have chosen for our tenth European Conference in 2021 in Jerusalem, "Access to Learning and Learning to Access." All members of ICEVI-Europe set out daily to equip children and young people with the understanding and skills they need to be happy and productive citizens, but education and rehabilitation methodologies for people with visual impairments are subject to constant change and development. The opportunities that conferences provide for the sharing of practical experiences and new scientific insights make them key drivers of these developments.

At the local level, and sometimes at the national level, consultations regularly take place between service providers and consumers and consumer-

organisations. This is an essential process that enables providers to learn to align their educational and rehabilitative services to the needs and wishes of both their consumers and society as a whole. I think this is what we also need to do as organisations working at a European level - we need to learn together with people with visual impairment to develop services that truly represent our consumers' interests, and in truth, we cannot do anything else. The ground breaking invitation to ICEVI Europe to participate in this 11th G.A. of the EBU, will certainly initiate a conversation on this essential topic.

On the theme of conferences, we at ICEVI-Europe, together with the Bulgarian Association for Education of Visually Impaired Children, are very much looking forward to welcoming ICEVI-Europe members and non-members from the Balkan Countries join us as participants in our upcoming 7th ICEVI Balkan Conference in Sofia, Bulgaria to share professional achievements and good practice. The theme of the conference is "Free access, real educational inclusion and unlimited technologies" and it will be held from 20 – 23 October 2019 in the Hotel Ramada, Sofia, Bulgaria. We encourage you to visit the ICEVI-Europe website and/or the conference website <https://www.baovzd.org> for further information.

I wish each of you a pleasant summer and a good holiday.

On behalf of the Board of ICEVI-Europe,

Hans Welling
President



The ICEVI-Europe Agenda of Upcoming Events

Join us at our upcoming events in which professionals will meet to share knowledge and best practices, to stimulate cooperation and create networks in order to improve the quality of services to people with visual impairments.

Looking forward to seeing you. Save the dates!

20-23 October 2019 (arrival 20 October - departure 23 Oct) **7TH ICEVI Balkan Conference in Sofia, Bulgaria**

Theme: "Free access, real educational inclusion and unlimited technologies"

Venue: Hotel Ramada

Conference Website: <https://baozzd.org>

23 & 24 April 2020 **ICEVI-Europe Professional Interest Group on Early Intervention,** **Conference in** **Leuven, Belgium**

Theme & Venue to be announced.

8-12 August 2021 (with optional days for excursions on 13 and 14 August) (Arrival 7 Aug 2021) **10th ICEVI-Europe Conference**

Jerusalem, Israel

Theme: "Access to Learning and Learning to Access"

Venue: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Save the Date: Access to Learning and Learning to Access

On behalf of the Board of ICEVI-Europe & ALEH Society
We are pleased to announce

SAVE THE DATE

The 10th Conference of ICEVI - Europe
August 8th -12th, 2021

(August 13th- 14th Optional days for excursions)
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, ISRAEL

The Conference Theme

Access to Learning and Learning to Access

The aim of the Conference is to present and share up-to-date pedagogical, technological and social venues to enhance education, rehabilitation and social inclusion of people with Visual Impairments, by modifying environment and improving technology.

Target Audience

Professionals, educational staff and academics from universities, colleges, primary and secondary schools with a specialization in inclusion or special education, representatives of associations and organizations in the field of visual impairment, inclusion and care, parents of students of elementary, secondary higher and vocational education from Europe and other continents, non-governmental organizations, manufacturers and distributors of technologies and equipment for visually challenged people, policymakers and government officials, individuals with visual impairment and people who have special interests in visual impairment issues.

Leading professionals will deliver key notes; renowned professionals will offer presentations, experts will provide workshops and individuals will present posters.

In addition we shall discuss best practice in the areas of

- ◆ Segregation versus inclusion
- ◆ Chasing support technologies for independent learning, mobility and daily living
- ◆ The challenge of employment and regulations - are they impeding or supporting employment
- ◆ Age related sensory changes and related impairments

The ALEH Society was established in 1990. Our goal is to aid and advance higher education for the blind in Israel and promote social mobility. The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, founded in 1918 and opened officially in 1925, is Israel's premier university as well as its leading research institution.

ICEVI-Europe is an association of professionals and Professional organisations that promotes equal access to appropriate education and rehabilitation of people with visual impairment so that they may achieve their desire to actively participate as full members of society.

For more information about ICEVI-Europe please visit www.icevi-europe.org

On behalf of the IHost Committee,

Tomer Rosner

Call for abstracts will be announced in August 2020

ICEVI magazine - Special Medal-Index Braille

Title:

Björn Löfstedt, Founder and CEO of Index Braille, receives Royal Medal

Last 15 May the Founder and CEO of Index Braille from Sweden, Mr. Björn Löfstedt, received the Special Medal for Enterprises 2019 from the Royal Patriotic Society at the House of Nobility in Stockholm.



Björn Löfstedt received this Medal from His Royal Highness Prince Carl Philip of Sweden because of his efforts being a successful entrepreneur and for promoting blind people's opportunity to participate in society.

Löfstedt's mother turned blind during his youth, and he noticed the difficulty for her re-integrating back into society. During Löfstedt's study of Engineering a prototype braille typewriter with copy function was developed, that became ready a few years later and led to the start of Index Braille. Much later this typewriter was further developed into a braille printer. The development continued, however with several ups and downs. Today, there are four different models of Index braille printers available, all with state-of-the art technology and exported worldwide.

The company name is explained the following way: "Index means the first finger – the eye for the blind. Braille stands for the inventor of the braille system – Louis Braille from France."

Mission

The company's Mission is to strive to Literacy for All. Löfstedt says that the key to success is to have a vision in which you strongly believe in and keep that for a long period of time.

Björn Löfstedt says: "For me it's obvious that blind persons should have the same opportunities as the sighted." It has been reported more than once that those blind persons that can read and write braille, are usually more successful in their education and they are more successful in finding work.

Löfstedt continues: "Reading is a fundamental skill. It annoys me that still only a small number of blind persons can read and write braille. Very often the ones that do not read and write braille will never access secondary or professional education or never really become a part of society. What makes me most proud is when I meet successful blind persons who have used Index technology during their study and have learned how to read and write braille, which helped them to get a job, to build a career, to have a family."

By making braille printing easy, Index Braille hopes to stimulate the use of braille in a positive way and to ensure that there is braille printed for those at the right moment, in the right amount, and at the right place.

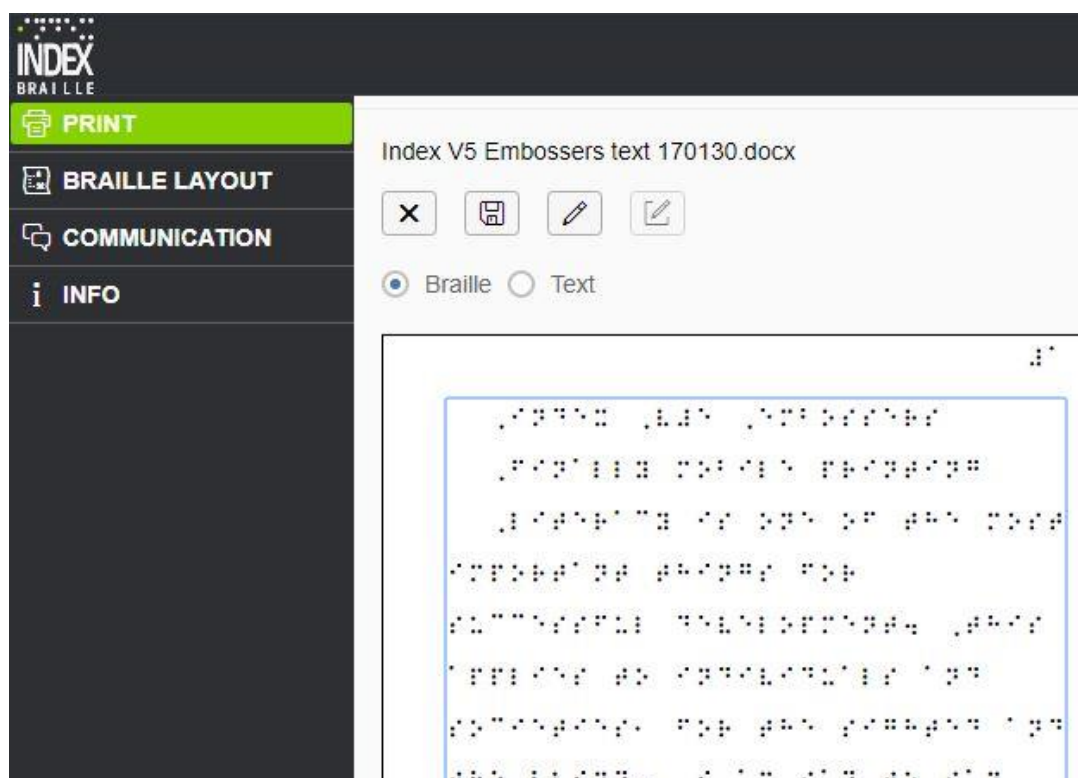
Braille printing made easy

A few years ago, Index started a project to enable modern-day, mainstream portable devices to print wireless to Index printers. A major part of braille prints are standard text files that do not really require editing. Index has made

translating standard text files into braille and printing these from a mainstream portable device such as Apple iPhone/iPad, Samsung or Microsoft tablets possible. First of all, the current series of printers is equipped with Wi-Fi connectivity. It is possible for a (sighted) teacher or a (sighted) fellow-student to connect their phone, tablet or laptop to the same wireless network as the printer is connected to. After connecting, the printer emits a BrailleApp with which the text document (.doc/ .docx/ .rtf/ .pdf) can be previewed, corrected if necessary, and then printed. Also parts or certain pages of a text document can be printed. The BrailleApp is using the open source braille tables from LibLouis which are updated continuously; currently BrailleApp is supporting more than 150 different languages.

A few times per year the printers can be updated with new firmware. These firmware updates are free of charge. These include bug fixes, updates (if any) from LibLouis braille tables and new features. Since the last firmware update it is now possible to set and change Braille Layouts in the printer. Doing this and using BrailleApp, it is now especially for sighted persons easier to make changes and set a desired Braille Layout of a document, or rapidly change to a different braille table in the printer (i.e. from UEB grade 1 to UEB grade 2 or i.e. from English UEB to French grade 2).

Also BrailleApp gives you status information about the printer and helps you make a connection to Wi-Fi. The BrailleApp also became much more accessible for screen reader users on the PC.



The BrailleApp is an exciting new tool and a great benefit for (sighted) teachers of the visually impaired. It better helps them to understand the different settings of the braille printer. It hopefully also stimulates teachers to quickly print a standard text file in braille more often. We think it will help to cover a variety of current topics in the classroom in a more ad-hoc way, because it is rather easy to print a text in braille using BrailleApp. Before class begins, a teacher can print out a text document easily and quickly that he or she prepared at home the day before.

Also in other situations the BrailleApp opens up new ways of quickly printing braille from standard text documents in .pdf format which are used in banking or insurance companies, governmental facilities, or the hospitality industry (hotels, restaurants, events). Even persons that have no real knowledge of braille, are now able to print braille from standard text documents, using BrailleApp on their own mobile phone or tablet.

Multisensory garden

NEW: The multisensory sculpture garden, Hortus Oculus (The Netherlands).

By Birgit de Bruin - curator and guest lecturer

Address:

Foundation Land Art Delft: Hortus Oculus: Rotterdamseweg 205; 2629 HD Delft: The Netherlands.



Hortus Oculus:

The recently opened multisensory garden, Hortus Oculus (The Netherlands), is especially designed for people who are blind or visually impaired and for the fully sighted. The free accessible landscape and sculpture garden is situated near the beautiful historic center of Delft (famous for Royal Delft Pottery) and the campus of the Delft University of Technology (TU Delft). Here artworks will be experienced through a combination of different senses and vision impairment will be no impediment to experiencing its power. This inspirational place has been designed to give the other senses the opportunity to display their potential.

Hortus Oculus Is an initiative of Foundation Land Art Delft and has been developed by Paula Kouwenhoven (director of Land Art Delft and artist) and Birgit de Bruin (guest curator, engineer and guest lecturer of TU Delft). Both are inspired and fascinated by the rapidly changing international world of art and technolog, and share an aspiration to contribute to an inclusive society.

Several sculptures are co-creations realised together with the Delft University of Technology who have provided the technical support for various facets of the project. A unique example is the development of innovative 'bio-concrete': a special type of concrete on which mosses can grow and add value to the material and to how it is experienced by the senses.

Currently eleven artworks are featured in the Hortus Oculus. Most of the artworks were specially designed for the multi-sensory garden during the Artists in Residence sessions in Summer 2018. This Summer, during August-September, new artworks will be realised through this inspirational 'Artists in Residence' concept. In addition several 'old' Land Art Delft artworks have been moved and replaced in the garden.

Artists:

Toshitaka Nishizawa (Japan), Els Otten (Netherlands), Dodog Soesono (Indonesia), Paula Kouwenhoven (Netherlands), Marcel van Zijp (Netherlands), Kouji Ohno (Japan), Frank Eerhart (Netherlands), Sarantis Gagas (Greece) and Yubu Furtani (Japan), Gaku Hashi (Japan).

Realisation

After an entire year of inspirational preparation, the implementation of the garden started last year in May 2018. First, ideas for the garden were submitted, the art committee selected international artists who sent in their proposals and designs in the Spring. The soil of the precious landscape garden was made ready for construction.

Gutters were installed for the drainage of the area. Carpenters constructed the framework for the foundation of the artworks and installed wooden bridges. Paths were created and in early July the artists themselves got to work. The marble shipment from Turkey via Greece and Antwerp for the artwork of Toshitaka was delayed, but eventually a huge block of 22.000 kilos arrived in its container and a large crane was ready to unload it.

Every day the artists in residence worked passionately. At 6 o'clock in the morning they were already chopping and cutting the marble, continuing until it got dark to work any further. It would often be midnight before they could enjoy a warm shower, a glass of wine and some much-needed sleep. The artists repeated this rigorous schedule for three weeks. Assistants drove back and forth to TU Delft for the artwork of the self-repairing concrete, to the construction market for even more grinding wheels and to the blacksmith to remeasure the foundation for the glass object. The crane had to be hired again and again to position all the artwork. Very precise placement was necessary to achieve the right contrast, carefully examining the lightness and darkness that affected the target group.

During the international World Sight Day, October 2018, the Hortus Oculus was opened by the famous Dutch writer and performer Vincent Bijlo together with ir. Bas Vollebregt, the representative of the municipality.

In November 2018 the Hortus Oculus was successfully presented at the Thessaloniki Art Fair as an integrated project. A synergy between art, nature and technology designed for an inclusive society.

The artworks are now in their perfect places in the green grass. The Hortus Oculus has become a new meeting place for all of us to share nature and imagination with each other.

Partnerships

In the transformation of the imaginary idea into a real sensory garden for all people, the Hortus Oculus was generously supported, constructively supported and co-created by a variety blind and visual impaired organizations and platforms, including: Royal Visio, Bartiméus, Foundation KUBES, Oogvereniging, Dedicon, MuZIEum, Musea op de Tast and the inspirational Foundation Het Lot der Blinden. This initiative couldn't have been realised without this flow of expertise and joy.

Co-creation with the Delft University of Technology

Together with the Delft University of Technology, Hortus Oculus combines high-tech solutions with innovative experiences. The sculpture of the Japanese

artist Kouji Ohno is the result of a co-creation between the biologist and researcher dr. Henk Jonkers and the artist. Dr. Henk Jonkers is Chair of the research group Sustainability of the Section Materials and Environment at the TU Delft. The artwork is a synergy between Japanese culture and state of the art environmental and material science.

Since November 2018 Honours students have been challenged to create "State of Art" products for people with [vision impairment](#). In the interdisciplinary programme entitled "Eye.Oculus", four student teams came up with their own statements of problem and developed different prototypes to tackle that problem. They learned about needs and wishes of visual impaired people and developed innovative and effective technological tools to improve their experiences. They were invited to contribute to an adventurous multisensory world, creating a world of no limits for the blind and visual impaired.

The Hortus Oculus constitutes a real-life testing ground for future applications that can be applied to all kinds of non-visual situations .

The students interviewed blind and visual impaired people and visited the MuZIEum for a darkness experience. Immediately they were emotionally impressed and highly motivated to contribute value with their knowledge and future learning experiences. In autumn a review (in English) will be available.

The students were representing the faculties of Mechanical Engineering, Industrial Design Engineering, Applied Physics, Aerospace Engineering and Architecture & the Built Environment. The program Eye.Oculus was developed by ir. Birgit de Bruin and mentored together with Prof.dr. Sylvia Pont, dr. Jess

Hartcher-O'Brien, dr.ir. Birgit Jürgehake, dr. ing. Chris Verhoeven (Robotics Institute).

The honours programme is an additional programme for students who wish to take on more than the regular study programme. This challenging programme varies from developing in-depth knowledge of high-tech subjects, to working on multidisciplinary projects, and honing skills such as leadership, debating and philosophy. A key to the programme is the students' ability to use their own initiative based on their own interests.

Engineering Education - Applied Sciences, focusses on implementing science and technology in society. Through both in-depth knowledge and an interdisciplinary holistic approach, students are prepared for a dynamic rapidly changing global world with complex problems. The awareness of an inclusive society challenges these future engineers to create designs and products with societal impact.

In November 2019 the second edition of Eye.Oculus at the Delft University of Technology will start in corporation with the Honours Academy of the University Leiden.

Future Plans:

In Springtime new flowers and trees will be planted. Their year round blossoming and scent in the Hortus Oculus will help to optimize the users' experience of the circularity of nature and the seasons.

Soon, in July the first prototype of twelve 'listening' benches will be created. This integrated artwork and educational project is designed by Paula Kouwenhoven. During Autumn pupils (age 9 – 12 year) will participate in an especially developed educational program to study the typical Dutch polder landscape. After being informed by an expert and having visited the landscape and sculpture garden Land Art Delft they will continue this project at school by studying and interpreting poetry and descriptions about nature. The pupils will translate their impression of the landscape they have seen into a poem or short story to share their experience through sight and other senses with the visitors of the Hortus Oculus. Through an audio fragment (QR code) it will be possible to listen to a selection of these poems and stories while sitting on the comfortable benches. A friendly gesture from a child to the garden visitor will offer a moment of inner connection with all the senses of nature guided by an honest voice.

In September the artist Kouji Ohno will continue the co-creation with dr. Henk Jonkers (biologist, researcher and lecturer at TU Delft) to create an artwork with living materials: innovative concrete. Kouji will express his exploration in all possible processing techniques to give the sculptures a human tangibility. The variety in the concrete that will be specially created for these sculptures is intended to inspire a unique material experience. Also this experience will provide an insight into the future properties and applications of mosses integrated in high tech bio-based concrete through the manifestation in refined Japanese art.

In July an Art Tour for cyclists and walking enthusiasts was launched. This art tour will connect the artworks of the artist Kouji Ohno situated in the historical

polder landscape Midden Delfland, in the landscape garden and at the Delft University of Technology campus. In Delft it is possible to rent a tandem bike.

A 'Parallel World Art Delft' has been initiated to develop the Oculus Inn, an inclusive pavilion for visitors of both the Hortus Oculus and Land Art Delft. In the Oculus Inn visitors can access information, ask for navigation tools and relax for a cup of coffee or tea.

We will keep you informed.

Practical Information:

The Hortus Oculus is free accessible during sunrise and sunset.

Guide tours are available.

For more information feel free to connect with us:

Mail:

info@landartdelft.nl

Website: (*English translation is in development*)

www.hortusoculus.nl

www.landartdelft.nl



Braille Mathematics - Teaching and Training

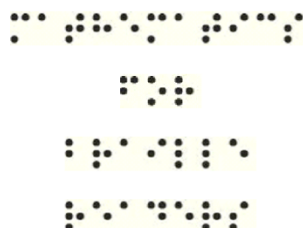


ICEVI-Europe Professional interest group, Teaching and Teacher training Conference

16-17 April 2019 • INSHEA, 58 Avenue des Landes, 92 150 Suresnes, France

Theme:

**What is good, can always be better
Wondering how to improve the mathematical performances of blind
students?**



A Conference Report by Annemiek van Leendert

'Two graphs start at the origin of a coordinate system. In the beginning, the graph of the linear function $g(x)$ has the greatest rate of change. However, in a short time, the graph of $f(x)$ catches up and exceeds $g(x)$ at $(5, 1)$ and continues with an increasing rate of change.'

It is difficult to understand this description without an image, but this is a very familiar situation for students who are blind. They need assistive devices such as a tactile diagrams to access and explore graphs and they need braille or speech synthesis to be able to read mathematical expressions. These assistive devices affect the teaching and learning of mathematics.

Across the world, mathematics teachers of blind students try to integrate these assistive devices into their lessons and do their best to improve the mathematical abilities of students who are blind. In most countries, only a handful of mathematics teachers get to work with students who are blind, and that is why we organised a conference for mathematics teachers of blind students.

In April 2019, the ICEVI-Europe Professional Interest Group for Teachers and Teacher Training held a conference entitled “What is good, can always be better. Wondering how to improve the mathematical performances of blind students?”. The two-day conference was held at INSHEA, a university institute that, among other things, trains teachers to teach students with special needs. It is a beautiful and very inspiring place. About 40 participants, from 14 different countries, took part in the conference. Most of the participants were mathematics teachers or visiting teachers of blind students. Some of them were researchers, producers of assistive technology or professionals working at an centres that offer transcription services and make information accessible for blind students. About 13 participants gave a presentation. The topics of the presentations included: the mathematical braille code; reading mathematical expressions in braille or with speech; solving mathematical problems using Excel; tactile graphs and drawings; auditory and tactile perception and inclusive education. All the presentations were of high quality. In addition, small group discussions were organised. The participants discussed assistive technology, training opportunities for mathematics teachers of blind students and mathematics examinations for blind students. The group took advantage of the diverse range of skills, knowledge and expertise of the participants. This resulted in very inspiring discussions. In addition, we have developed 10 top tips for teachers of students who are blind (see below).

10 Top Tips for mathematics

teachers of blind students

Mathematics teachers should

1. .. know the mathematical braille code.
2. .. have some basic knowledge about the assistive devices that blind students use.
3. .. be able to support and assist blind students with reading mathematical expressions in braille or with speech.
4. .. be able to support and assist blind students with reading tactile graphs with their fingertips.
5. .. know where to find resources for blind students and share these resources with other mathematics teachers.
6. .. do their utmost to make inaccessible mathematics assignments accessible for blind



students.

7. .. have high expectations of the mathematical abilities of blind students.
8. .. not give up trying to improve the mathematical abilities of blind students.
9. .. participate in conferences about the mathematics education for blind students.
10. .. keep on smiling: you're doing a GREAT job!!!

Figure. On the left, a top 10 of tips for mathematics teachers of blind students. On the right, two pictures of INSHEA. INSHEA used to be an open-air school. Now it is a university institute.

We look back on a wonderful conference where there was ample opportunity to share our perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, knowledge and experiences. All participants felt that we should meet regularly to exchange experiences and knowledge. This will certainly be a possibility at the ICEVI conference in Jerusalem in 2021.

Annemiek van Leendert (annemiekvanleendert@visio.org;
A.J.M.vanLeendert@uu.nl)

Report over the 1st ICEVI

Report of the 1st ICEVI-Europe Rehabilitation Conference

“Expanding Independence at all Ages”

31 May – 1 June, Budapest

By Beáta Prónay¹ – Gabriella Varga²

ELTE BGGYK Institute for the Psychology of Special Needs¹

FPSZ Látásvizsgáló, Gyógypedagógiai Tanácsadó, Korai Fejlesztő, Oktató és
Gondozó Tagintézménye²

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With promotion from ICEVI-Europe, the Hungarian national organization LÁRESZ held, for the first time, a rehabilitation conference in Budapest this year. The initiative was originated by Panagiota Leotsakou the immediate past president of ICEVI-Europe who in 2016 proposed an ICEVI Professional Interest Group in Rehabilitation. At the 9th ICEVI European Conference in Bruges 2017, in accordance with the plan envisioned by the late Betty Leotsakou, the General Assembly of ICEVI-Europe ratified the proposal and the current president Hans Welling expressed his wish to organise a conference on rehabilitation. B. Prónay, as the board member in charge of the Rehabilitation Interest Group was successful in raising funds for organising the conference with support coming from the Ministry of Human Capacities (EMMI) and the organisation ‘Equal Opportunities of Persons with Disabilities Non-profit Ltd.’ (FSZK).

Before the first day of the conference there was an informal get together in downtown Budapest in the so called “party quarter” in a small restaurant. Participants from countries including Finland, Sweden, Poland, Israel, Czech Republic and the host committee together with Hans Welling had dinner and talks together.

The conference welcomed international delegates from 16 countries together with 56 participants from Hungary. In total there were 92 participants and 4 exhibitors. The conference languages were English and Hungarian and there was simultaneous translation for the whole conference. There were 34 presentations, 14 in English, 20 in Hungarian plus two workshops in English.

The topics of the presentations included:

O&M Classical approaches:

O&M in early intervention

O&M with special groups: the elderly, children with CVI, children and people with physical disabilities, deafblindness, etc.

O&M with GPS

O&M with guide dogs

Using maps, new trends in tactile graphics

ADL:

Meeting challenges across the age and ability range

Sports & recreation as tools of rehabilitation – the role of arts and crafts

Social skills

Meeting the psychological challenges of VI

Empowerment and self-determination

Assistive technology & communication skills

Vocational - occupational rehabilitation

The first day of the conference started with the official opening hosted by B. Prónay. A.I. Simon dr., Deputy State Secretary for Social Affairs, Ministry of Human Capacities (EMMI) was the first guest speaker and he greeted the conference participants. In his speech he emphasised the importance of rehabilitation for visually impaired individuals, and talked about the history of rehabilitation in Hungary and the support for rehabilitation that the Ministry has offered in the past and will continue to provide in the future. He mentioned the legislative actions at hand to secure rehabilitation services all over the country. He was followed by Zsolt Szilaj, from the organisation Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities Non-profit Ltd. (FSZK). He outlined to the audience the part that his organization had played in the stabilisation and improvement of rehabilitation services and in the education of rehabilitation specialists on the field of visual impairment. He described how FSZK is taking an active role in promoting legislative activity for the rehabilitation of VI individuals. The next speaker was Gabriella Varga, president of LÁRESZ Association. She introduced the Association and outlined its efforts to support rehabilitation workers through its umbrella association

throughout the country, supporting and providing new professional resources and organising events like this conference. She expressed her acknowledgement to ICEVI-Europe, to EMMI, FSZK and the practical organizers. Last but not least Hans Welling, president of ICEVI-Europe greeted the audience and talked about the role of the organization in providing an international forum for sharing professional activities throughout Europe.

The keynote speaker for the first day was Edward C. Bell, PhD, Director of the Professional Development and Research Institute on Blindness, Louisiana Technical University, USA. He spoke of the role of rehabilitation in establishing self-determination, positive self-esteem, independent living and decision making. As a blind professional himself he stressed that one of the basics of successful rehabilitation lies in the degree of belief that the rehabilitation specialist has in his/her client's ability and capacity for independence. He gave an example from his personal life where rehabilitation techniques helped him to face the challenges he faced this year when his home was partly ruined by a hurricane. He had the confidence and skills to explore the ruins, make decisions, and to find a way to overcome this drama and support his whole family on this way. His presentation was a powerful start for the conference!

In the first session, the next three presentations were on the topic of psychology under the title: MEETING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CHALLENGES OF VI. The first presentation (by J. Csákvári PhD and K. Billédi PhD ELTE Bárczi Gusztáv Faculty of Special Needs Education, Institute for the Psychology of Special Needs) covered the lifelong learning needs of rehabilitation professionals under the title: 'Support for professionals in the field of rehabilitation.' They were followed by presenters Cs. Hanko, M. Pohárnok Dr., K. Lénárd Dr. University of Pécs, with the presentation 'Family planning among women with visual impairment'. The presentation was based on data from psychological and disability studies. The research included 10 sighted and 10 VI women aged 21-40. The analysis was made using qualitative methods. The next step planned is to involve pregnant women in the research. The last presentation was given by E. Jókai PhD, Óbuda University under the title: 'Applying work ability testing tools to support career guidance of youngsters with disabilities and special educational needs - research results'. This presentation was a report of research on assessing work abilities, and on innovating new methods and instruments for this purpose involving people with VI and other special needs populations.

The next two presentations addressed the topic: ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY & COMMUNICATION SKILLS. Mihály Szuhaj from the 'IT Foundation for the

Visually Impaired – INFOALAP', Budapest, spoke about the software licences available to the visually impaired through the Country Licence program. The program is supported by the Ministry of Interior and other governmental organizations and offers speech access for people who are VI or have other difficulties in reading. Their international partner was 'Freedom Scientifics', a member of Vispero Group. The next presenter Katalin Sebestény also represented INFOALAP and spoke to the title 'From sheets to speech - the "Lapról hangra" initiative.' This is a program built on concepts of social responsibility in which volunteers record audio versions of articles from newspapers and periodicals. The talking newspaper service carries 8200 articles in audio form and there is free Android support for the service. The beneficiaries of this programme have to provide official proof of VI because of copyright protection law.

After the lunch break Zsolt Szilaj (FSZK) was chairman for the whole afternoon session under the theme BASIC and VOCATIONAL EDUCATION - OCCUPATIONAL REHABILITATION. A paper on 'Parental Satisfaction with Early Intervention Services for Children with Visual Impairments and Multiple Disabilities in Thessaloniki' was presented by

Neofotistou Konstantina, from the Eleni Department of Physical Education and Sport Science, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece. She presented the results of a survey of the only home-based early intervention service in the country. The survey used a modified version of the Dakota Project with 36 questions covering five areas. Her results suggest that active participation and partnership in the intervention process by parents positively influences their satisfaction because they can bring their needs and opinions to bear directly on the planning and practice of intervention. Á. Somorjai director School for the Blind, Budapest gave a presentation called 'Who has to change? They are changing - are we changing? It was about the challenges professionals face in the special schools for VI children in all levels. She showed statistical tables of the changes of the special school population in Hungary. She highlighted the different conditions and diverse difficulties of the children (eating, sleeping, moving independently, toileting etc.) and the wide range of specified methods they have to implement and innovate in everyday life. Myasnikova Ludmila, PhD, Faculty of Pedagogical and Special Needs Education, Saratov State University, Russia, presented on 'The System of Education of the Blind and Visually Impaired Children in Russia'. She reported that blind individuals have access to all 5 levels of education from EI to tertiary education in both mainstream and special settings. For example, students can participate in colleges for medical and musical studies and there is also an opportunity to study in the Russian State Specialized Academy of Arts. M. Szuhaj from INFOALAP Budapest talked about IT innovations in teaching mathematics for

visually impaired students. Erika Anita Baráth from the School for the Low Vision Students Budapest talked to the title 'Habilitation and rehabilitation activities for students with low vision'. She focused on the difficulties of meeting complex challenges.

The presentation of Csaba Bíró from the School for the Blind in Budapest was about a very interesting new vocational training established in the school last year, the title was 'New ways of social integration - making or baking the future.' The vocational school has incorporated bakery training for VI students and is building a brand for the artisan bakery products. Szilvia Dávidházy's presentation from the same vocational school had the title 'An introduction to the Computerised data-recorder part of vocational training in the School for the Blind Budapest.' In her thorough presentation the audience could follow the school's well designed training process.

Yael Weisz-Rind, Guila Seidel, Ofek Liyladenu from the Israel National Association of Parents of Children with Visual Impairments in Jerusalem, directed us from school-based training to another area of effective intervention. In their presentation 'Summer Employment for Youngsters with Visual Impairments' they introduced us to their successful practice in the 'Employment on the Horizon Program'. It offers training and practical work experience to youngsters with visual impairment between the ages 14-19.

After the coffee break the rest of the afternoon was concerned with the subject of tactile diagrams. First the audience heard a presentation on tactile graphics by Boguslaw (Bob) Marek Dr. hab., from John-Paul II Cathlic University in Lublin. The almost one hour long presentation provided a detailed introduction to the work of the dedicated presenter. Professor Marek is an internationally well-known expert in this subject, and was awarded an Order of the British Empire medal from HM Queen Elizabeth II for his "English for the Blind" programme. His lecture and the workshop with preregistered participants he was an excellent end of the flow of presentations of the day.

Before the evening reception and concert there was an exhibition in the School for the Blind, The tactile exhibition was created by the Kézzelfogható (Tangible) Foundation and blind guides helped visitors under blindfold through the exhibition. The evening programme was held in the beautiful auditorium of the School for the Blind and started with a concert of blind musicians and their sighted musician friends. A flute ensemble, organ and piano players and a soprano singer played and sang Bach, Handel, Beethoven, Chopin,

Charpentier, Bornschein, Toldra, R. Strauss and Bartók. After the concert a small reception closed the evening programme.

The chairman for the second day was Hans Welling, president of ICEVI-Europe. The keynote speech was given by Inger Berndtsson PhD, associate professor from the University Gothenburg, Department of Education and Special Education and was entitled 'Step by step to a more independent everyday life: expanding horizons and shared experience.' This very impressive presentation was concerned with how lifeworld phenomenology and philosophy can be used as a tool for understand how people can re-establish an active life after the onset of visual impairment or blindness. She talked about the results of her qualitative research based on lived experience and narratives.

After this strong start the first theme was THE ROLE OF ARTS AND CRAFTS IN REHABILITATION. The first presenter was Rita Hoffmann PhD, a freelance scholar at ELTE and the Bárczi Gusztáv Faculty of Special Needs Education Institute for Disability and Social Participation, Budapest. The title of her presentation was 'The Metaphors, Memoirs and Narratives of Blindness'. She did not aim to provide a detailed historical overview of the concept of blindness in literary masterpieces but rather gave some examples of the fact that blind people are too often misunderstood, and how blindness is misconceptualized. She suggested that we should recognize and accept that fine literature is full of misunderstanding, and false conceptualizing about blindness. She stated that "writing about disability from the inside is one of the most high-profile forms of disability narrative" Thousands of books of disability narratives, including memoirs have been published in numerous countries in recent years. She highlighted the importance of the words that disabled people use themselves. Her presentation aimed to express what it means to be locked in metaphors, but she insisted that until the language is changed, the images, metaphors and associations will remain the same. Her presentation was followed by two others about music and then two about the arts. The first one was from the Israel National Association of Parents of Children with Visual Impairments Jerusalem and was delivered by Yael Weisz-Rind and Ofek Liyladenu with the title 'Musical Dreams – Music Education for Children with Visual Impairments'. The presenters explained how Music has an essential role in the lives of blind or visually impaired children and develops the child's creativity, self-expression and skills, emotional, sensory and social development. They ran a survey and the results suggested that music has a significant positive impact on self-confidence, a sense of success, experience of excellence and personal competence. Half of parents and participants agreed that participation in the program had contributed to the children's integration in society. The next presenter was Maria Flamich PhD, School for the Blind, Budapest, ELTE Bárczi

Gusztáv Faculty of Special Needs Education Institute for Disability and Social Participation, Budapest and the title of her presentation was 'The Role of Music in developing Blind Persons' Social Responsibility'. She expressed that. Notwithstanding the myth that all blind people are talented in music and other aspects of the listening, nonetheless, music is of major importance in most blind persons' lives. It also plays an important role in blind persons' social inclusion and social responsibility. The presentation strongly relied on lived experiences, and thus, impressively illustrated how people with diverse abilities move through the world. With the title 'Tactile art for everyone', Erzsébet Móga Sebők, the president of the Kézzelfogható (Tangible) Foundation, Budapest. Provided rich illustrations of the work of the foundation in introducing art to persons with VI and in introducing artwork by VI and deafblind individuals to society. Activities of the foundation include the provision of Accessible exhibition areas, the Foundation of an archive and methodological/information centre, promoting international relations, granting Scholarships and awards, organising art camps and conferences, publishing books, journals and methodological brochures, the accreditation of training courses, employment of individuals with disabilities in arts and handcrafts and raising disability awareness. Last but not least Tanja Parlov from the Center 'Vinko Bek' in Zagreb presented about Visual Art and Visual Impairment. She has worked for this organization for 22 years and gives classes to individuals with VI including those with additional disabilities from preschool education, through the primary school education, high school therapy and art therapy with adults. "What works well for a child with vision may not be as effective for a child who is blind ". But if we reverse it and take it in a opposite way: "What works well for a blind child works just as well for a child who is sighted" then we have a solution. She began to think in a completely different way. She said "We need to build a tactile experience and simplify everything in order to be able to express ourselves artistically. So I set up a program that goes from a spatial world into a panel, from the real world to illusion, with the use of an art language to describe and simplify visual experience so a blind person can understand it." Important steps include: space, object, surface, colour, shape, dot and line. She concluded "it is very important for blind children to be confirmed as creative and imaginative persons, to show us their vision of the world and not to impose our patterns on them."

After coffee break the theme of Orientation and Mobility with the very young began with the presentation of Erika Kiss from the ELTE Bárczi Gusztáv Faculty of Special Needs Education, Institute for the Methodology of Special Needs Education and Rehabilitation and Budapest/Early Intervention Center. The title of her presentation was 'Me and Space:- early orientation and mobility in young children with cortical visual impairment.' She described the assessment and also the intervention process illustrated with photos to the

audience. Minna Nevalainen, Timo Ylikarhu from Finnish Federation of Visual Impaired, Helsinki also presented about early intervention and their presentation was entitled 'From Little Cabin to Discovery Wheel.' After describing the general status of a VI child they introduced their approach to the first steps of O&M and exploring. They have developed the 'Discovery Wheel' which is a pre-cane aid and also the 'Little Cabin' which is similar to Nielsen's little room. Secil Arikan, Engin Yilmaz, Canan Cam Yucel from Istanbul then introduced us to 'The Tactile Material Workshop/Library Project', They planned to organize Map/Sketch Workshops, to prepare tactile maps to be used in these workshops, to contribute to the increase of map literacy of the individuals with visual disabilities who live in Istanbul, and to increase their orientation and mobility skills by developing their spatial perception with the help of these tactile maps. A systematic approach to orientation and mobility teaching for visually impaired persons was presented by Zsigmond Fehér from the School for the Blind, Budapest. This perception-based system of instruction is unique and is highly appreciated in Hungary among O&M instructors and it also being implemented in O&M courses for students in special education training.

Before lunch break the last presenter was Éva Nagygyörgy from the Creative Forms Foundation, Szeged. She represented one of the social service providers in Hungary. The title of her presentation was 'Home teaching and ambulant care in the South Great Plain Region'. She spoke about typical practical difficulties in the provision of services in rural Hungary and suggested some solutions including decentralised service locations, one or two per county, that could house community facilities; itinerant rehabilitation specialists employed by each county; capacity-building projects; initial mobility teaching followed by home teaching; and opportunities for participation in self-support groups. Her suggestions might not only provide remedies for our own national difficulties but might of use for be similar challenges internationally.

After the lunch break Emma Vandamme, and Lisa Vanhove from the Counselling Centre

(Begeleidingscentrum) Spermalie, in Bruges,Belgium, spoke about their work and programme entitled 'GET THE FEEL! - SEX EDUCATION'. This was a presentation and an introduction for the workshop that closed the day. They started with the following important questions 'Why is extra attention is needed to sex education for children and youngsters with VI? What information about sex and sexuality do children and youngsters with visual impairment miss out on? They briefly introduced their programme to overcome the gap and the accompanying study book . Participation in the workshop itself required preregistration

The next session was 'ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY IN A SPECIAL GROUP AND THE ROLE OF SPORTS IN REHABILITATION'. The presenters of this session were Judit Gombás PhD and Lilla Vásárhelyi from ELTE, the Bárczi Gusztáv Faculty of Special Needs Education, Budapest . The theme was Marathon Running with Visual Impairment:- Challenges, Benefits, Achievement. The presentation started with the advantages that regular physical activity (PA) offered to the overall quality of life of VI people and the crucial role it plays in successful habilitation and rehabilitation processes. Next the results of a survey were introduced to the audience. The participants were 9 marathon runners: 7 male, 1 female aged 29-51 years; 2 totally blind, 7 low-vision) who participated in semi-structured interviews. Some results of the survey concerned motivation aspects like health, aesthetics, social inclusion, appreciation from the public, and the challenges of planning sufficient training hours with sighted guides, navigation etc. This presentation was followed by Irina Sumarokova PhD from 'Perspective', Nyizsnyij Novgorod, Russia. She introduced the "Perspective" NGO organization where the leisure center has worked with 20 deafblind people ages 19 to 83 since 2015. Their work combines rehabilitation methods and organized leisure activities. Before the closing ceremony the delegates enjoyed a Skype question and answer session with Maricar Marquez, Coordinator of Independent Living Department, Helen Keller National Center. She talked about the lived sport experience of an individual with deafblindness. Maricar Marquez is a marathon runner who runs with the help of a guide dog. She explained the advantages of having a dog guide as partner in running. She is not only training with the dog but also taking part in competitions. She had a tactile sign language interpreter at her side who gave her voice to the audience in Hungary and we had a live interpretation of her speech to Hungarian participants. Her contribution to the conference was unique and very inspiring. This presentation was a huge positive exclamation mark at the end of the conference.

The closing words were made ahead of the last event, the 'Get the feel!' Workshop. Hans Welling thanked the presenters for their efforts and preparation, and the organizers for the quality of their work which had ensured the success of the conference. He invited remarks and suggestions from the audience to help with the planning for the next rehabilitation conference and he closed the conference with an invitation to the 10th ICEVI-Europe Conference to Jerusalem 2021.

After Hans Welling closing words, those who pre-registered to the workshop had the opportunity to see the programme and the materials of Get the Feel and could ask questions from the authors.

The organizers are pleased with the interest and satisfaction expressed by the attendees. We can declare that it was a successful conference and we are looking forward to the next one!

CVI mini-conference _Hungary

CVI mini-conference with professor John Ravenscroft, PhD at ELTE Bárczi Gusztáv Faculty of Special Needs Education (Budapest, Hungary)

Anita Adrienn Tóth, PhD student

Eötvös Loránd University Bárczi Gusztáv Faculty of Special Needs Education

It is really important for qualified teachers of visual impairment to expand their knowledge in the field of CVI (cerebral visual impairment). As in other developed countries, the number of children with CVI in Hungary is growing. This is why Eötvös Loránd University of Sciences Bárczi Gusztáv Faculty of Special Needs Education decided to invite Professor John Ravenscroft PhD of the University of Edinburgh, a leading expert on CVI, to explain the causes, diagnosis and assessment of CVI. John is the head of the Scottish Sensory Centre and is also Editor-in-chief of the British Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness. In his second lecture John went on to share detailed information on inclusion strategies to promote the education of children with CVI in mainstream settings. Over 100 qualified teachers of visual impairment, academics, students of visual impairment and ophthalmologists took part in the mini-conference on April 05, 2019.

The second presenter, Gabriella Varga, president of LÁRESZ Association, a qualified teacher and rehabilitation therapist in visual impairment, described the Hungarian Rehabilitation System for Adults with CVI and shared her dilemmas and questions.

The presentations were followed by a forum, where participants had the opportunity to discuss challenges and perspectives in the support, education and rehabilitation of individuals with blindness or visual impairment.

Sport competition Slovenia Report



International Sports Games for Visually Impaired Youth

Ljubljana

31. 5. - 3. 6. 2019

Gašper Tanšek

Centre IRIS Ljubljana

In the year 2019 the IRIS Centre in Ljubljana is celebrating the 100th anniversary of formal education for children and young people with visual impairment in Slovenia. To mark the occasion we have organised a range of events, some of these have already taken place and others will continue until the end of 2019.

One of the biggest scheduled events was the International Games for Visually Impaired Young People that took place between in Ljubljana in the first week of June. We hosted more than 50 young athletes from seven different schools for the visually impaired from five different countries: the Czech Republic, Hungary, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia. In total we hosted more than 70 participants including athletes and staff. Athletes competed in 5 different sports: showdown, goalball, athletics, swimming and tandem cycling.

The Games attracted some of the stars of sport for the visually impaired including Sandi Novak, the Slovenian blind marathon racer who has twice participated in the Paralympic Games; Roman Kejžar, the best Slovenian marathon racer of all time; Peter Zidar, the Showdown world champion; Tanja Oranič, one of best showdown players in the world; Gregor Habjan, the Slovenian Showdown national team coach; Matej Ledinek, one of the best goalball players in the world and Ivan Vinkler, the Slovenian goalball national team coach and the greatest Slovenian goalball player of all time.

The Games programme enabled every athlete to compete in all sports

The Games registration and the Showdown tournament took place on Friday 31st, and on Saturday the official opening ceremony and the athletics competition was followed by the swimming competition in the afternoon. In the evening we organised a sightseeing tour for participants around the centre of Ljubljana.

On Sunday morning athletes competed in tandem cycling, and in a goalball tournament in the afternoon. In the evening we officialy closed the Games with the awards ceremony and a party. Awards were given to the best women and men athletes and the best teams across all competitions in the 5 different sports.

The best athlete of the Games in the women's category was Eva Lesova from the GOA Prague team, and the best male athlete of Games was Robi Kogovšek from Centre IRIS Ljubljana team. The champion team of the Games was the GOA Prague team.

You can find more information, pictures, videos and lists of results on the Games website: <http://centeririssgt.splet.arnes.si/>