

ICEVI European Newsletter

Issue 50, Volume 18 number 2, July 2012

Edited by *Mary Lee* ml@icevi-europe.org and
Hans Welling hw@icevi-europe.org
Designed by *Martina Kobolková* webmaster@icevi-europe.org

Subscription:

If you want to **subscribe** for ICEVI European Newsletter, or to **stop receiving** it, please send an e-mail message to: webmaster@icevi-europe.org

Content:

- From the Board.....2
- 6th ICEVI Balkan Conference in Cluj-Napoca, Romania3
- Report for the ICEVI from Croatia4
- IsaR International6
- Activities in the Field of Visual Impairment English Speaking Regions7
 - Wales Contact person: Nicola Crews7
 - England Contact person: Steve McCall8
 - Scotland Contact person: Janis Sugden.....9
 - Israel Contact person: Nurit Neustadt-Noy 11
- Level of a support at local school for a child with VI Pre-primary and basic education Experiences from Finland..... 11
- RoboBraille – Supporting Inclusion of Visually Impaired Students in Mainstream Education..... 14
- The 5th International Scientific – Practical Conference “Inclusive education: experience and future responsibilities.” 14-15 October 2011, Baku..... 16
- WELCOME TO ISRAEL 17
- Elections for ICEVI-Europe 18
- Membership, a reminder 20
 - The NEW international bank account number of ICEVI-Europe 20
- Upcoming events 21

From the Board

The Board meeting which was held in June was mainly about the coming European conference in Istanbul next year.

The board members were informed about the state of affairs of the preparations.

The Host Committee led by Z. Hale Aksuna works hard.

The board has discussed the themes which will be discussed during the General Assembly.

- The vacancy of the chairmanship
- The elections and re-elections of the board members
- The elections and re-elections of the contact persons

More information you will find in this newsletter.

After the board meeting a meeting of the Programme Committee has taken place. Subjects of discussion were

- the procedure of the handling of the abstracts
- the composition of the Scientific Committee
- the Keynote speakers

At the end of the meeting the agreement was signed between ICEVI-Europe and the Host Committee in Turkey, see picture. The chairpersons handed over the signed agreement.

The conference looks promising and all over Europe people talk about the conference.

Besides the meeting other matters have taken place, like the successful Balkan conference in Cluj Napoca in Romania. The conference was well prepared by our Romanian colleagues and inspired by the active participation of the 77 participants.

I wish you a pleasant vacation and good luck with your activities with and for people with a visual impairment.



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

6th ICEVI Balkan Conference in Cluj-Napoca, Romania

The 6th ICEVI Balkan Conference was organized this year in 27-29 June in Cluj-Napoca, Romania by the Special Education Department within Babes-Bolyai University in partnership with the High School for the Visually Impaired and the Romanian Association for the Blind (Cluj-Napoca branch). The title of the conference was "New Developments in Educational Policies, Research and Practices in Visual Impairment", a title that invited participants to discussions and reflections. The conference aimed at promoting the collaboration and the sharing of practices between the professionals involved in the field of visual impairment. The main topics of the conference were the following: Educational Policies, Inclusion, Education and Intervention, Research, Strategies in support of people with visual impairment.



There were 77 participants from 16 countries from all around the world, not just the Balkan region, specialists and service representatives who shared knowledge and experience regarding services for individuals with visual impairment. The opening ceremony was held in the Aula Magna of Babes-Bolyai University, a place that is about tradition, academic and international cooperation. In his opening speech, Mr. Hans Welling, Chairman of ICEVI Europe, focused on the Convention of Rights of Persons with Disabilities, focusing on the human rights , but also on the person centred services that need to be implemented. Prof.Vladimir Radoulov from St.Kliment Ohridsky Sofia University in Bulgaria, as a keynote speaker, offered a presentation about the Educational Policies and Strategies in Visual Impairment. In the second day of the conference, the keynote speaker, Dr.Aubrey Webson from Perkins International, talked about Disability Rights Inclusion in Education.

From Projects to Policy, focusing on the rights of individuals to access education and rehabilitation services.

During the two days of the conference there were presentations of 27 papers and 4 workshops, the value of them being highly appreciated by all the participants. There was time for questions and open discussions, with opportunity to sharing and gaining new knowledge, but also establishing professional cooperations and enriching personal experiences.



The conference concluded with a trip to the Turda Salt Mine, which is 30 km to Cluj-Napoca, a place that is considered the most beautiful Salt Mine in Romania.

Andrea Hathazi, ICEVI contact person in Romania

Report for the ICEVI from Croatia

CROATIAN BLIND UNION

At the moment is ongoing implementation of activities of the "Employment Integration of the Blind" Blindness as a disability with their specific needs require a separate approach to the creation of "equal opportunities" in all areas of life, including the whole issue of training for work and employment of blind and visually impaired. As this is a relatively small population is poorly covered area, which would state institutions cover.

Services and activities that contribute to the acquisition of new skills and increase the potential of people with visual impairments for inclusion in the open labor market.

Therefore, the Croatian Association of the Blind from 01 June 2011. , conducted a three-year program funded by the Ministry of Social Policy and the young.

The program is completing the system uncovered areas:

1. raising general awareness of the capabilities of blind people in the work process
2. increasing personal potential unemployed blind people, especially young
3. informing employers and relevant institutions on the possibility of blind people and increase their tendency to employ the blind.

SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED "VINKO BEK"

School "Vinko Bek" was involved in IPA project IV.Component - Strengthening human resources, education and empowerment of the visually impaired with physical disabilities in the labor market.

MALI DOM - ZAGREB

1. Mali dom – Zagreb has been involved and finished the project with UNICEF that was taking place in Croatia and covered the whole territory of Croatia.

Project "**Home based Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) service: Development of the Home Visiting service model for children (0-3) with additional support needs and their families**" was carried out by the Day care Center "Mali dom – Zagreb" who set up a network of professionals from other fields as well as representatives from different agencies and Ministries . They all took part in the project and therefore result of the project was in accordance to the tasks and objective that were set up in project panning, as well as it fulfilled the expectations of the realization of the project

There were three groups of issues that have been addressed while implementing this project:

1. Policy foundation – providing legal framework for Early Intervention Services
2. Standard Operation Procedures – ensuring the quality of implementing ECI services
3. Establishing service contents and approaches

We have more than 300 professionals from different field and professional backgrounds participating in the project in various activities , who all contributed to the „networking „ which was one of the goals of this project – good networking always lead to the engaging new activities within society – in this case in initiating the implementation of ECI service in accordance to the specific situation in each and every local region and community as well as resources that are available in those communities.

Developed model was introduced and implemented on through the period of 9 months and have had 40 families and children included , and it undoubtedly showed beneficial impact on children's progress, raised families spirits, families knowledge and their parental competencies.

2. Mali dom – Zagreb has continued to share its experiences and knowledge

with other institutions and schools, so we had 8 study visits this year and we have increased the number of children from different regions within Croatia, and even from neighboring countries in our transdisciplinary assessment and counseling , establishing therefore as the resource in the region for this type of services for children who are visually impaired and have additional developmental issues that have to be properly addressed.

3. Mali dom – Zagreb also have been in Armenia organizing three educational seminars

for the colleagues in orphanage Gyumri and in Yerevan and School for the Blind in Yerevan

4. We have also organized educational seminars and study visits

with the School for the Blind form Varna , Bulgaria, covering topics like working with parents, communication , creating IEP – s for MDVI children.

Kind regards,

Marijana Konkoli Zdesic, ICEVI Contact Person for Croatia

IsaR International

ISaR International is a data bank on inclusive services for education of people with visual impairment. The idea behind this webpage is to help everyone involved in the education of children and young persons with visual impairment. The main point is collecting information and building networks regarding inclusive education.

We have now been on Internet for more than a year. During this time a lot has happened. The link list has been rearranged and expanded in order for our visitors to find the educational subjects easily. At the moment we have over 120 links out of which more than 20 on education subjects. As the assistive technology, organizations and schools, resource centres and universities on our link list also have a number of education matters on their home pages it is impossible to tell the total number of good educational ideas to be found.

Please go and visit the link list regarding organizations and schools and universities also to see if your institute (if you have information in English) is there. If it is not, please inform us, and we will immediately add it to the list.

You will also find information about vision and visual impairment. Most reasons for visual impairment are described in detail. Information about libraries and tactile books are also found on the link list.

As the didactic pool is the most frequented page we enlarged the selection. You can find contributions of texts, slide series and links. We have furthermore added 'higher education' to the didactic pool and hope to be able to spread information about your research among your colleagues around the world. This is one of the parts of ISaR International where we sincerely hope for your contribution. We offer ISaR to educators, parents and anyone involved in educating students included in the general education system. That is why we also want teachers in inclusion to send us materials and good ideas that have worked for them. Our main purpose is to collect good practice for supporting the pupils and young people with VI in schools.

Another worthwhile matter is the expansion of the literature list. This is now being efficiently worked on with new literature as well as educational articles from the most important magazines on visual impairment. Today you will find over 190 entries in our literature databank.

We are happy that people from nearly 80 countries have found our homepage. So, please check ISaR International and learn from it, spread the word to those in need of information regarding teaching students with visual impairment! You find us under the address: www.isar-international.com.

Together we achieve more!

Solveig Sjöstedt, Editor
solveig.sjostedt@netlife.fi

Activities in the Field of Visual Impairment English Speaking Regions

Wales

Contact person: Nicola Crews

RNIB Cymru has just completed a piece of work with specialist teachers (VI), rehabilitation officers and children's mobility officers to design a 'Visual Impairment Pathway' mapping out the gold standard for provision of services for children and young people with visual impairment. The document places children and young people into 'tiers' according to the severity of their visual impairment and outlines provision that should be made by the school, the local authority and other providers to respond to their needs. So far the document has been well received.

Downloadable from:

www.rnib.org.uk/aboutus/contactdetails/cymru/cymrumedia/Pages/Cymru_VI_pathway.aspx

Neath Port Talbot College is working with RNIB Cymru to build a 'learning and employment centre' for young people and adults with VI. The project (called Beyond Vision @ NPTC) will help to join up the journey from learning to employment by providing residential accommodation enabling them to access mainstream courses at the college whilst still receiving specialist rehabilitation support, travel training, independence skills and any specialist courses (e.g. Braille, specialist IT) that they require. The centre will also support those who wish to undertake pre-employment courses and RNIB Cymru employment advisors will support the process of job searching etc. Currently there is no centre in Wales where VI students can attend specialist provision and yet learn through the medium of Welsh. There are currently 20 VI students learning at Neath Port Talbot College before the centre has been built.

RNIB Cymru has recently completed a survey asking what Independence means to young people with visual impairment in Wales. Four main themes emerged:

- Enjoying doing things by myself without help
- Going places on my own
- Being able to care for and look after myself without support
- Being confident.

This is a good checklist against which to monitor provision for these young people in Wales in the future.

England

Contact person: Steve McCall

The British Journal of Visual Impairment is a forum for all professionals concerned with matters related to visual impairment. The editorial board has recently changed and it is now led by Dr John Ravenscroft head of the Institute of Education, Teaching and Leadership at the University of Edinburgh. The editorial board welcomes articles on research, education, health, technology etc that are of current interest.

The RNIB has published a number of research reports this year related to education in the UK including topics such as - transition, attainment of children with VI and best practice in teaching Braille to children - the reports can be found on

www.rnib.org.uk/aboutus/Research/reports/education/Pages/education.aspx

Around 120 education professionals came to Birmingham, in mid March, to attend **The 2012 VIEW conference**.

Key presentations included:

- Dr Lea Hyvarinen – Assessment of visual functioning for development and learning
- Dr Maggie Woodhouse – Vision care programme for children and young people in special schools in Wales

- Steve McCall – Reflections on a career in visual impairment
- Dr Andrew Blaikie – Diagnosing and responding to visual difficulties due to brain damage
- Julie Jennings and Philippa Stobbs – developments in government policy

All conference presentations are available to download for VIEW members at www.viewweb.org.uk/conference

Scotland

Contact person: Janis Sugden

The Scottish Sensory Centre (SSC) is celebrating its 21st birthday this year. The SSC receives core funding from the Scottish Government `s Learning Directorate Support and Wellbeing Unit. This funding has allowed the SSC to continue in its role as a National Centre, providing high quality continuing professional development provision, which reflects the requirements of teachers, parents and other professionals involved in the education of children and young people with sensory impairments. The SSC continues to develop and add resources to the extensive range of materials in its specialist library and website.

However, as with all grant-aided schools, including The Royal Blind School, Edinburgh, and other centres funded from this source, the SSC is currently being reviewed in The Doran Review.

The Doran review is an independent review to consider the learning provision for children and young people in Scotland with complex support needs. Peter Doran is leading this work and full details of the interim report are available from the Scottish Government website. My perception from the information already available is that there are some strong indications that the future funding of these establishments, access to services, and the improvement of collaboration between services are some of the issues that are being delved into more deeply by the review group.

www.scotland.gov.uk/About/DoranReview/Documents/Reports/Interimreport1

Unified English Braille (UEB)

The United Kingdom Association for Accessible Formats (UKAAF) made the decision in late October 2011 to introduce UEB to the UK, implementing it over the next 5 years. The SSC offers distance-learning courses in Braille, which are accredited by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). The following article was included in a recent SSC bulletin:

We have adjusted our course materials to take into account the decision by The United Kingdom Association for Accessible Formats (UKAAF) to introduce Unified English Braille (UEB). However, we are giving new Braille students the choice of whether to do the UEB course or remain with the Standard English Braille form. Standard English Braille (SEB), Grade 2, is the Braille with which Braille readers in the UK are familiar. The code consists of many short-forms

and contractions with their concomitant rules, as well as the Grade 1 alphabet and numerals. Unified English Braille (UEB) is also Grade 2, and in its literary form is very similar to SEB. It is the code used in Canada, Australia, and most other English-speaking countries, excluding the USA that follows its own American code. Any person already conversant with SEB Grade 2 prose Braille should not find the changes difficult to read or write. The major differences appear in more advanced forms, such as mathematical and technical Braille.

Details of UEB changes can be found on this website: www.ukaaf.org/formats-and-guidance/176

Scottish Vision Strategy Review.

The Scottish Vision Strategy Review, 'Success in Sight' was launched by the Minister for Public Health, Michael Matheson MSP at the 2012 SVS Conference. The original Scottish Vision Strategy was launched in 2008 as part of a global initiative 'VISION 2020: The Right to Sight'. This initiative, set out by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the International Agency of Preventable Blindness, intends to eliminate avoidable sight loss by 2020.

The Scottish Vision Strategy was established in response to this by a wide alliance of statutory health and social care bodies, voluntary organisations, eye health professionals, government representatives and service users to make a lasting difference to the eye health of the Scottish people.

Although Scotland remains a world leader in some aspects of eye-care, there have been a number of significant developments and changes in the Scottish context over the last three to four years which suggested a review of progress was required in addition to a re-focus on our priorities for the remainder of the current strategy.

The Review highlights the very encouraging progress over the last four years, outlining some of the tangible advances made and in some cases, major steps forward in the eye-care field. However, it also outlines a range of key areas where there is still critical work to do.

www.vision2020uk.org.uk/ukvisionstrategy/page.asp?section=133§ionTitle=Scotland+Vision+Strategy

Graduate Diploma: Specialist Qualification in Habilitation and Disabilities of Sight (Children and Young People).

Dr Karl Wall is the national programme leader for the above course; he is a lecturer in Psychology and Habilitation Studies, Institute of Education, University of London. Almost three years ago the mobility 21 team, (Dr Karl Wall and Dr Olga Miller) met with professionals from Scotland to discuss how the programme then being delivered in England, could be delivered in Scotland as part of developing a uniquely Scottish programme. The Scottish Sensory Centre played a crucial supporting role in the development of the programme along with colleagues at the Royal Blind School, Edinburgh. The first graduates of this groundbreaking programme - the first national standards based

practitioners of habilitation work with children and young people in Scotland - graduate this year.

Israel

Contact person: Nurit Neustadt-Noy

"Ofek Liyladenu" – Our Children's Horizon, the Israel National Association of Parents of the Blind and Visually Impaired, is a non-profit organisation of parents of blind and visually impaired children in Israel established in 1997. There are 3,000 visually impaired and blind children, who with their families, directly benefit from our work and 20,000 blind and visually impaired adults who indirectly benefit.

A long report appeared in the April newsletter www.icevi-europe.org/enletter/issue49.html#a7 outlining the wide ranging activities of Ofek Liyladenu including:

- Advocacy
- Parent support
- Public education and awareness
- Special programmes

Level of a support at local school for a child with VI Pre-primary and basic education Experiences from Finland

Orientation

In Finland pupils with visual impairments attend mainly a school near their home. This concerns as well pupils with 'only' visual impairments as children with multiple needs (MDVI). School placement in a municipality is made according to child's individual situation. The placement might be at a regular school class or at a part-time special education group/class at a regular school or class at a special school. There are no classes or schools for children with visual impairments in municipalities. A "state school" Jyväskylä School for the Visually Impaired acts as mainly as a national resource center for support services, and has a small school education unit. Models of support services to local schools are a) Counseling visits to schools, b) Support Courses for children, c) In- Service Training for Teachers and Class-assistants, d) Individual Learning Material Production.

Early and gradual support for all children

The Ministry of Education and Culture delivered 2011 a new Strategy in Special Education and made modifications in Education Law for the pre-primary and basic education in order to focus on the earlier support for each child. New model has three gradual steps to build up a support for a child at a local school level: General Support, Intensified Support and Special Support. Model stress

the early recognition of individual needs, and that a support should be provided immediately and gradually if educational or student welfare professionals, or the pupil's parents, recognize risks in the pupil's development and ability to learn.

General Support

Support at general level is for each child and in practice it might be general guidance and support, differentiating in instructions and study methods, flexible teaching groups etc. When general support is not sufficient, teacher/s, other experts, parents with a pupil draw up a pedagogical assessment. This assessment provides knowledge of general support effects and review the pupil's learning abilities and pedagogical needs and the status of pupil's learning and schooling, pupil welfare or other arrangements as a whole.

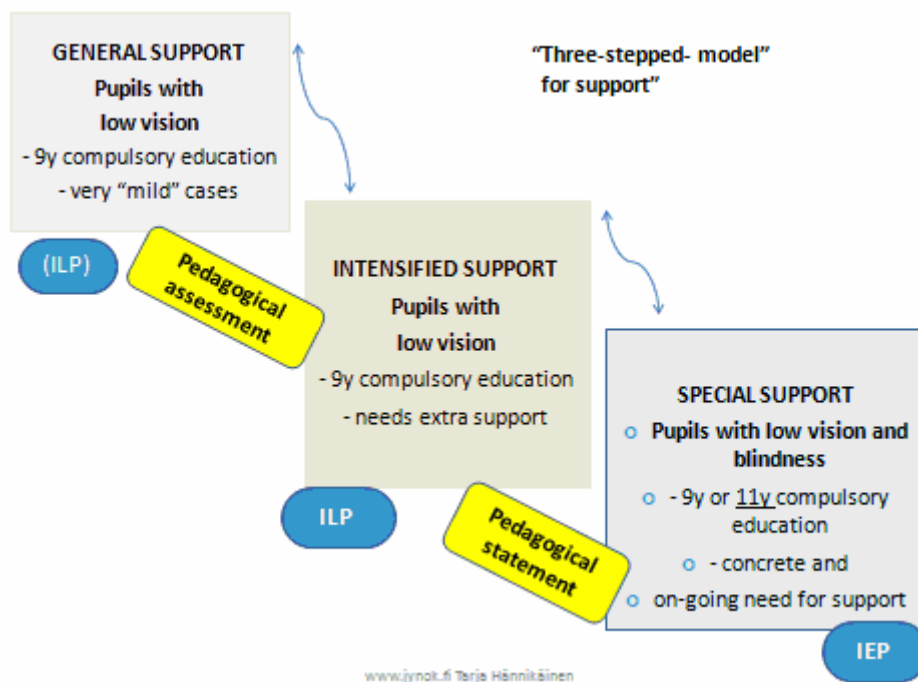
Intensified Support

If pedagogical assessment shows that general support has been insufficient, a school has to organize support at intensified level, which main idea is to prevent problems from escalating. Mostly then a pupil has a need for regular support or need of several forms of support at the same time. In practice this support might be e.g. part-time special-needs-education, individual counseling, flexible teaching groups and remedial teaching. Teachers among multiprofessional team and parents with a pupil draw up an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) which is strongly based on pedagogical assessment and rehabilitation. ILP shall be monitored and assessed regularly. If a follow-up shows that a child's situation has improved, transition back to General Support is made. When Intensified Support is not adequate for a child, there is a need to prepare a pedagogical statement in order to plan Special Support.

Special Support

The strongest level of educational support is Special Support and is possible, when a child has a strong need for holistic and systematic support. Making decision for special support is the only official administrative procedure. Before decision, education provider has to prepare pedagogical statement of child's situation, obtained support, and gather crucial information by teacher/teachers, multiprofessional team, parents, pupil and other experts needed.

Decision on Special Support has to express explicitly and bindingly issues like the place where the special education is to be given (regular education, part-time remedial instruction at school clinic, small special class in a regular school etc.), the resources needed (class assistance, group size, specific support services by resource centers, specific materials etc), individualized curriculum (or other individualized plans) and pupil's welfare services. After having a decision on special support a child will have to have an IEP (Individual Educational Plan), in which the school year organization of all details written in decision are made in practice.



Closing

The reform in special education strategy and legislation has enhanced municipal -as well as state level- to reorganize the different ways and models to run inclusive education and which levels on support are needed. Any kind of support should be seen as a result of co-operation for a child's best.

Basic ideas of general, intensified and special support concerns naturally all pupils with visual impairments. The school together with parents and professionals need to evaluate and determine individually the level of support needed. So nowadays it is not necessarily that e.g. a pupil with low vision has a statement for "special education", before reaching support and services. Although generally all pupils move gradually through these support steps, there are some exceptions, when a decision for Special Support can be made directly. This is possible for pupils with severe disabilities, like pupils with blindness and MDVI.

To decide the level of support for a child with visual impairment is quite a new process for local schools and also for professionals on visual impairment. There are no predetermined lines, how to set the level of support for pupils with need in visual impairments; support is meant to be planned individually for each child with multiprofessional teams. Counseling teachers by Jyväskylä School for Visually Impaired consult local schools in decision making, but the final decision is made at local level. Experiences of counseling teachers show that all levels of support are in use in local schools. There are some pupils, who reach support at general level, e.g. pupils with mild low vision challenges and regular curriculum. Quite many pupils with low vision reach intensified support,

changeable of course according to their individual needs. And almost all pupils with severe low vision challenges and blindness reach special support.

All educational professionals have also responsibility to follow and assess how suitable the level of support is for a child. The decision to offer support is always a temporary solution, and has to be pedagogically evaluated during child's school year or when ever needed. Special support has to be also officially revised at 2nd & 6th grade.

Tarja Hännikäinen, Counselling teacher

The Jyväskylä School for Visually Impaired Pupils in Finland

National Support Centre for Inclusive Education

PL 319, 40101 Jyväskylä, Finland

+ 358 50 309 3773

e-mail: tarja.hannikainen@jynok.fi

web: www.jynok.fi/English/mainpage.htm

RoboBraille – Supporting Inclusion of Visually Impaired Students in Mainstream Education

As a visually impaired or dyslexic individual, a key element of being fully included in mainstream education or vocation is the ability to access the same written material as everyone else. At a school or academic institution, this includes access to textbook material, lecture notes, exam papers, tests, presentations, scientific papers and more. In a job situation, access to business documents such as manuals, instructions, presentations, reports and meeting minutes is essential.

From a practical point of view, making documents available in accessible formats such as Braille, mp3 files, structures audio books and e-books, require significant skills and resources, and the conversions are often performed at centralised resource centres. Not only is this a time consuming and costly process subject to significant delay; by relying on others to convert documents into accessible formats, those with a print impairment become dependent of others, and risk losing their independence and privacy.

RoboBraille was developed by the Danish National Centre for Visually Impaired Children and Youth (Synscenter Refsnæs) to support the full integration of visually impaired students in mainstream education. The vision was to create a self-service solution available to individuals as well as institutions that can convert documents into a variety of accessible formats without delay and available at all times. In order to address the foreign language requirements amongst students in Denmark, RoboBraille has been implemented in collaboration with partners throughout Europe and elsewhere. And to ensure a critical mass of users, RoboBraille has been made available to everyone with a need including the dyslexic, people with poor reading skills,

people with learning disorders, the illiterate, foreign language students and even mainstream users. Access to the service is free and anonymous, and the only limitation is that use must be non-commercial.

At present, RoboBraille serves in excess of 30,000 user requests each month from print disabled users who require documents converted as part of their education or job. The service is available 24/7, and in most cases, users can expect to receive the results of their conversions within minutes of submitting a request.

In brief, RoboBraille attempts to reduce barriers in the information society by making the print impaired self-sufficient and independent by providing a self-service solution that is always available. The service supports inclusion of the print impaired socially, in education and on the labour market by making textual material available in alternative formats without delay. RoboBraille ensures the rights of privacy amongst users by not relying on a third party to have documents converted. And finally, access to RoboBraille extends beyond the enrolment in an educational institution, thus supporting students with print disabilities once they have graduated.

RoboBraille is available through email or via an accessible web interface. To try RoboBraille, please visit the web form at www.robobraille.org/web

RoboBraille was recently complemented by a digital library for alternative media. Operated in accordance with the Danish copyright legislation, Biblus is a repository for copyrighted educational material in alternative formats that allows visually impaired students, teachers, VI professionals and relatives to access digital versions of educational material. Subject to proper access rights, material can either be delivered directly to the user in the formats stored in the library or indirectly via RoboBraille as mp3 files, Daisy full text/full audio, e-books or Braille books. Already available in Polish and American English versions, future versions of Biblus will be available in multiple languages, support multiple copyright regimes and include improved digital rights management as well as support for decentralised contribution of material.

Biblus is available through an accessible web interface. To try Biblus, please visit www.biblus.dk.

Synscenter Refsnæs and Sensus are currently involved in a number of projects that will expand the geographical coverage, language support and conversion capabilities further. With financial support from a private foundation, RoboBraille and Biblus are being implemented in Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania. Collaborating with Stanford University and other academic institutions, RoboBraille is being made available to students and faculty at academic institutions through a campus-based subscription model. Furthermore, the team is working on adding support for new input (e.g., PowerPoint) and output formats (e.g., Tagged PDF, Math Daisy) to the service. Organisations and institutions who are interested in collaborating in a

RoboBraille or Biblus project are encouraged to contact the authors to discuss possibilities.

By **Lars Ballieu Christensen** and **Tanja Stevns**
Synscenter Refsnæs and Sensus ApS
Torvet 3-5, 2.tv., DK-3400 Hillerød, Denmark
{lbc;tanja}@robobraille.org

**The Fifth International Scientific – Practical Conference
“Inclusive education: experience and future
responsibilities.”
14-15 October 2011, Baku, Azerbaijan.**

On October 14-15 2011, at the Ambassador Hotel and Azerbaijan Teachers Institute, Baku, Azerbaijan, took place the Fifth International Scientific – Practical Conference entitled “Inclusive education: experience and future responsibilities.”

The Conference was organized by the Ministry of Education of Azerbaijan (www.edu.gov.az), UNICEF, Azerbaijan Teachers Institute and International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI-Europe).

The aim of the event is to find ways to involve disabled people in inclusive education, specify the prospects on their integration into society and environment without the barriers, as well as create conditions for professionals working in this field to become familiar with the successful experience of other countries.

Speaking at the opening of the conference, Education Minister Misir Mardanov noted that during the years of independence, Azerbaijan became a part of several international agreements and conventions on human rights, and performs all the obligations undertaken by him within these documents. He noted that, currently, there are 60 thousand disabled children living in the country; 1105 children receive an education at special schools, 2664 – at special boarding schools (1353 of them stay overnight); 7750 children involved in homeschooling and 268 children get inclusive education.

Noting that the right of disabled people to education is enshrined in the Education Act of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Misir Mardanov stressed that the Ministry of Education implemented Development Programme for the education of disabled children to develop inclusive education in Azerbaijan in 2005-2009.

The Education Minister touched upon steps taken within the State Programme on de-institutionalization and alternative care (2006-2015). Keynote speakers, Professor of the Fontys University, the Netherlands, H. Schuman and rector of Institute of Special Pedagogy and Psychology, St.Petersburg, DBiolSc, Prof. L. Shipitsyna have given scientific reports.

More than 100 professionals participated on that Conference. Electronic version of full Abstract book on three languages (Azerbaijan, English, Russian) you can find on

www.icevi-europe.org/topics/baku2011articles.pdf

Liliya Plastunova, ICEVI EE representative
lp@icevi-europe.org

WELCOME TO ISRAEL

Beit Yael, The Center for the Advancement of the Blind, is located in Safed, Northern Israel. Beit Yael's life changing programs are focused on aiding the sight handicapped to function effectively and to reach their maximum potential. They are directed by a highly professional, qualified staff.

We know that holiday programs for those who are visually impaired are not always available. Therefore, Beit Yael is opening its doors and offering you the following unforgettable experience. Here is our suggested program:

FACILITY: You will arrive in Safed on Sunday and will stay here until Thursday. You will be provided with full room and board. This includes: double rooms with heating as well as air conditioning depending on the season: each room has an adjoining bathroom and shower; three meals a day; afternoon coffee time; use of an Internet equipped computer lab and the gym. Sheets and towels are provided.

PROGRAMS: Programs to be arranged before arrival. You may choose from some of the following: a tour of the ancient mystical city of Safed; morning walks and picnics in the forest; massage and reflexology treatments; yoga; evening programs of music, movies, stories of the Galilee and of Israel; a bus trip to Tiberias where you will enjoy a meal of St. Peter's Fish; a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee; a visit to Nazareth; to local wineries; to Hamat Gader's hot springs; the baptismal spot at Yardenit at the southern end of the Sea of Galilee; Capernaum; Mount of the Beatitudes and other Christian sites; bird watching in the Hula Valley during migration season, etc.

On Thursday you will move to Jerusalem and/or the Dead Sea for a complete spa experience. This part of the program will be up to each group to arrange. We will be pleased to offer suggestions regarding hotels or places to stay, tour guides, etc.

WHEN: October – December or March – May.
WHERE: Beit Yael, Safed, Northern Israel
WEBSITE: www.beityael.org
EMAIL: info@beityael.org

COST: 500 Euro per person all inclusive for five days at Beit Yael. Additional costs for flights, transportation, tours, hotels etc. will be up to each group.

We look forward to hearing back from you and to working with you to plan a successful and enjoyable visit to Israel. In addition we trust that you will be able to share this email with other European centers or with those who might also find this option of interest to them.

Sincerely,
Mrs. **Rena Cohen**, Director of Development and
Ms. **Ruth Dekel**, Program Director
Email: info@beityael.org
Phone: 972.4.692-0445/6
Fax: 972.4.692-2338
SKYPE: beit.yael

Elections for ICEVI-Europe

During the next ICEVI-Europe Conference from June 30 – July 5 2013 in Istanbul, Turkey the General Assembly of ICEVI-Europe will take place. An important part of this meeting will be the elections of the new Board. The coming months are important to prepare these elections in sub regional and national meetings. I gladly invite you for this.

Chairman

The chairman, Hans Welling, will resign after two terms and will not stand for re-election.

Therefore the board is looking for interested persons for the chairmanship and would like to receive possible candidates.

Further information about the function of chairman ICEVI-Europe you will find on the website.

Board members

Baltic and Nordic countries

Peter Rodney will not stand for re-election. Therefore this region will have to nominate a new candidate

English speaking countries

Mary Lee will not stand for re-election. Therefore this region will have to nominate a new candidate

French speaking countries

Mira Goldschmidt will stand for re-election.

It is possible that other persons also are interested. After all we have elections

South European countries

Ana Isabel Ruiz López will not stand for re-election. Therefore this region will have to nominate a new candidate

German and Dutch speaking countries

Dieter Feser will stand for re-election. Other candidates are welcome too

Central European countries

Terezie Hradlikova already has ended her board membership because she accepted another function. For Central Europe a new candidate is necessary

East European countries

Liliya Plastunova will stand for re-election. Other candidates are welcome too

Balkan countries

Betty Leotsakou will not stand for re-election. Therefore this region will have to nominate a new candidate

Contact persons

Depending on the population rate each country has one or more ICEVI-contact persons. At this moment this means:

Number of inhabitants	Number of contact persons
< 20 milj	1 contact person
> 20 milj < 50 milj	2 contact persons
>50 milj	3 contact persons

This means that all countries have 1 contact person, except Countries with more than one contact person

Country	Number of contact persons
Belgium	2 contact persons
France	3 contact persons
Germany	3 contact persons
Italy	3 contact persons
Ukraine	2 contact persons
Poland	2 contact persons
Romania	2 contact persons
Russia	3 contact persons
Spain	2 contact persons
Turkey	3 contact persons
United Kingdom	3 contact persons

At this moment we do not know yet whether all contact persons will stand for re-election. In all cases contact within own country and with the board member is desirable.

For the profile of the contact persons, please see the website www.icevi-europe.org/national/description.html

In the future newsletters the elections will be a returning subject. In case you have relevant information from the countries or sub regions the chairman would like to be informed

Hans Welling
hw@icevi-europe.org

Membership, a reminder

ICEVI-Europe can not exist without your financial support. Therefore herewith a reminder for membership 2012 and the following years.

The membership fees are:

- individual member 25 Euro per year / 100 Euro for 4 years
- individual member from Eastern Europe and from the Balkan countries 10 Euro per year / 40 Euro for 4 years
- corporate member without own budget 200 Euro per year
- corporate member with less than 100 employees 350 Euro per year
- corporate member with between 100 and 200 employees 500 Euro per year
- corporate member with more than 200 employees 800 Euro per year

The NEW international bank account number of ICEVI-Europe in Huizen, The Netherlands is:

ING, account number: 4890207

BIC: INGBNL2A

IBAN: NL90 INGB 0004 8902 07

The contributions can be done by using internet.

Naturally payments can also be made during the European Conference in Istanbul.

Please be aware that the conference fee of workshops and the European conference is considerably less expensive for members.

Upcoming events

Events in 2012

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)

3rd Announcements and Call for Papers [PDF]:

www.icevi-europe.org/enletter/49-zagreb.pdf

website: www.conference.erf.hr

30 September 2012

1st International Conference "**Education and Rehabilitation of Ageing People**: Research, Experience and Prospects, Zagreb (Croatia)

e-mail: ljubica@erf.hr, plastunova@yandex.ru

website: www.sensage.eu

To apply, please, fill in the registration form (www.icevi-europe.org/enletter/1sensage-registration.doc) and send to: plastunova@yandex.ru. Submission deadline is **30 August 2012**.

Infoletter 02: www.icevi-europe.org/calendar/1sensage-infoletter2.doc

15-18 November 2012

Meetings and General Assembly of International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI), Bangkok (Thailand)

website: www.icevi.org

Events in 2013

30 June - 05 July

8th ICEVI European Conference on education and re/habilitation of visually impaired people, Istanbul (Turkey)

e-mail: icevieurope2013@gmail.com

website: www.icevieurope2013.org

Invitation: www.icevi-europe.org/istanbul2013/index.html

We are looking forward to meet you at the conference to share information and knowledge together about the visually impaired people of any age, in order to include them in the community and the daily life.