

**ICEVI European Newsletter  
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## From the board

We have almost reached the end of 2008, a year in which ICEVI has played an important role. In the last newsletter you will have read about the International Conference on Early Intervention in Budapest. In this newsletter you can read about the successful Balkan Conference in Istanbul. The content of the conference was good and it was very well organised, with great Turkish hospitality. The next Balkan Conference will be held in Croatia.

The Conference for the East European countries in Saratov, Russia was also successful. During preparations we expected 50 participants, but we ended up with more than 125 participants. The central themes were: the International Classification of Functioning, Disabilities and Health (ICF), the base for the education and rehabilitation of children with visual impairment and Inclusive Education, Experience and Prospects.

We had active contributions from several countries. The keynote speakers were Dr Joost Heutink on ICF and Dr Annemieke Mol Lous on Inclusive Education.

The intention is to organise a follow up conference next year. Three countries are willing to be the host.

Under special circumstances the ICEVI EXCO meeting took place on 27 and 28 November in Bangkok, Thailand.

Of topical interest, in between meetings, was the occupation of the airport, which was the subject of much conversation, and also the tragic situation in India.

Everyone was wondering: "How do I get home?" But all went well; it was quite an experience.

The agenda was filled with a lot of information about regional activities and the Education for All Children with Visual Impairment project. EFA-VI. The finance of ICEVI demanded the necessary attention. Interest in EFA-VI in Asia, Africa and Latin America is growing. More countries are presenting themselves as focus countries. However, the financial means are not enough to support all these projects. The Resource Mobilisation Committee is investigating the possibility of fundraising and the necessity for an invitational conference in Europe. This is because many ICEVI members have contact with colleagues in institutes in developing countries.

In January the Programme Committee will meet to finalise the European Conference from 5 to 10 July 2009 in Dublin.

We have received over 200 abstracts showing that there is a great interest in the conference. Before the conference the newsletter will pay special attention to the General Assembly, which will be held during the conference.

After this we will look forward to the 13th World Conference of ICEVI from 8 to 13th August 2010 in Jomtien in Thailand.

At the end of the year it is time for a wish.  
I wish you all happy holidays, but in the first place a good and healthy 2009, personally with family and friends, but also with your activities for the education and rehabilitation of people with visual impairment.  
If my wishes will be fulfilled it will also be a good ICEVI year.

**Hans Welling**  
*Chairman*

## **Outcomes of ICEVI - Turkey 10 years interaction**

### **Speech in the Opening Session of the ICEVI 4<sup>th</sup> Balkan Conference – Istanbul – Turkiye Oct. 22, 2008**

ICEVI-Turkiye interaction was implemented by some Turkish colleagues when they met Herman Gresnigt during the different activities of ICEVI in the mid 1990s, namely; Prof. Dr. Ayegül Ataman from Gazi University who was engaged in teacher training for visually impaired children, Asc. Prof. Dr. Nazan Baykan who was an ophthalmologist and Halil Köselier from the Turkish Blind Federation. These colleagues, in cooperation with Herman Gresnigt, organised the first activity of ICEVI which was the International Conference "Education of visually impaired" in Ankara, capital of Turkiye, on May 25-27, 1998. Lots of the professionals working with visually impaired people came together at this conference to benefit from the presentations that focused on "early intervention", "low vision" and "integrated education".

What were the significant influences of the 1998 Conference in Ankara? Professors of the Special Education Department of Gazi University continued teacher training for visually impaired children. Ophthalmologist Ayşe Turan implemented and conducted a "Low Vision Project" in a well known hospital in Ankara. Ophthalmologist Nazan Baykan conducted several projects in Istanbul, in Turkan Sabanci School for visually impaired children and Metin Sabanci Center for visually impaired spastic children. Hale Ergenc Aksuna focused on and improved the Early Intervention Program in Istanbul University together with her colleague Hale Bacakoğlu.

Why was H.Ergenç-Aksuna focused on "early intervention" ? The first reason was her experience with VI adolescents and adults between the ages of 17-35, in the Six Dot Rehabilitation Center for visually impaired people where she was the psychologist and the O&M instructor in the late 1970s. During her 3 years of employment in this centre, she was very much aware that by this age it was too late to develop the necessary skills in visually impaired people. In the following years, as a developmental psychologist, she taught about the development and psychology of VI children in Istanbul University so that her graduates could support the age-appropriate development of VI children in

their work places. The second reason was her observation of and studies with VI school children that will be mentioned in the following paragraphs. All the reasons put forth the importance of supporting age-appropriate development during infancy and early childhood in VI children.

VI children have benefited from primary education since the 1930s in Türkiye but the families did not pay attention to early childhood development for many years. Therefore, there were no institutions to give services to them. In late 1995, a couple of families referred to the Developmental Psychology Department in Istanbul University for the first time, were wondering about how to rear and train their VI babies. Working with these families was the beginnings of “early intervention programmes for VI children” in Istanbul University and also in Istanbul.

Meanwhile, the only primary school for VI children in Istanbul was on the Black Sea Coast which was far to reach. The new one, Türkan Sabancı Primary Educational School was established in 1996 and the Special Education Department of Istanbul Ministry of Education aimed for the new school to start with up-to-date qualified education. Cooperation between the psychology department and this school started by the employment of a psychology department graduate who had had experience with VI babies, as had the psychologist of the school, along with the psychology students having their field practices in this school. H.Ergenç-Aksuna & Feyzullah Güler (school president) met Herman Gresnigt during his visit to the school in 1997 and **the long lasting cooperation with ICEVI started.**

After this meeting, continuous contact with and the support of Herman Gresnigt, before and after the 1998 Ankara Conference, through meetings, e-mail messages and by providing publications, gave impetus to the “early intervention unit” in Istanbul University and all other work in relation to VI children in Istanbul. At the same time, “early interventionist training courses for VI children” were added to the psychology undergraduate and graduate programmes.

During the field practices mentioned above, it was observed that the VI primary school beginners didn’t have age-appropriate development and quite a number of the students in the following grades had learning difficulties. When the importance of early intervention and the need for pre-school education was realised by Istanbul Ministry of Education- Special Education Department, a common project with Istanbul University - Psychology Department was started in 1997, in Türkan Sabancı School on “early intervention”, “pre-school education”, “family training”, “orientation & mobility” and “habituation and rehabilitation” into which H.Ergenç-Aksuna and H.Bacakoglu were appointed.

In 1998, H.Gresnigt hosted the visit of F. Güler & N. Baykan (the other participant of the above project), to Theofaan International-Netherlands, to share information and know how about the system and education of VI

children. The school president and the three colleagues of the project, with the inspiration and encouragement of Ulku Beskardes who was the head of the Special Education Department of the Istanbul Ministry of Education, implemented the first (and still the only) kindergarten for VI children in Turkey in 1998.

Meanwhile, Emine Ayyildiz, who was noticed to be outstanding and talented in "the early interventionist training programme" and during her field practice in the "early intervention unit for VI children", finished her BA in the Psychology Department of Istanbul University and was employed at the Türkan Sabanci School as the coordinator of the kindergarten and the school psychologist in Fall 1998, where she was also expected to prepare the early intervention programme. Along with her duties in the school, she attended the MA programme on VI children.

The long-term goal in giving service to VI children was to raise them as independent, self confident and happy members of society and future qualified professionals. "The early intervention program (EIP)" in Istanbul University aimed to support the age-appropriate development of visually impaired children in order to maximise their potentials and prepare them to be ready for integrated education in kindergartens and primary schools. The Early Intervention Programme has been conducted by both home visits and services at the EIP unit and also through team work, in cooperation with the related doctors and physiotherapists in the faculties of medicine and education. After building up experience with the EI programme while the VI children were growing up to kindergarten age, several questions had accumulated and guidance was needed. H. Ergenç-Aksuna attended the seminar organised by ICEVI in Theofaan Institute – Netherlands together with Croatian and Slovenian colleagues, during April 7–12, 1999 in order to discuss questions on Early Intervention, integrated education, O&M and MDVI children. She was enlightened about her questions through the discussions in the sessions, by visiting several EI centres and institutions for MDVI children as well as accompanying home visits and integrated education programmes. When she returned back, she organised seminars in Istanbul University to share what she had observed and learned during the seminar, with the team members in the university, students, families of VI children and the kindergarten psychologists she was in cooperation with. She revised her EI programmes, guided the integrated education applications in kindergartens and updated her courses.

H. Ergenç-Aksuna was appointed as the ICEVI-Turkiye Contact Person in 2000, depending on the references of five professors from different universities, head of the special



education department of ministry of education and kindergarten directors. She was engaged with new responsibilities bidirectionally. She was responsible to ICEVI for applying its mission in Türkiye and towards Türkiye to improve and increase the services, besides training new specialists and increasing the number of colleagues to be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills concerning VI children. She continued to improve early intervention services but as the VI children grew older, the needs for new services appeared.

The goals were set step by step depending on the levels of education; pre-school, primary and secondary education. The primary goal was to intervene in the development of VI children by maximizing their potential, making them ready for integration in the next level of education. The following goals were helping sighted children to learn how to live with VI children and how to be in cooperation with them; changing the attitudes of the other members of the community towards VI people and supporting their acceptance, by learning to live together from early ages.



When the children reached primary and secondary educational levels, ordinarily developing VI children were guided to integrated education. Since the laws for integrated education was very recently prepared, neither teachers nor families knew how to apply them and all of them needed supervision. In this case, the services of Istanbul University were increased, including the follow-up of VI children who had received EI services previously, by intervening in their development; by supervising their integrated education in the sense of giving support to the teachers in order to integrate the VI child into their peer group and by the preparation of the educational and social settings in regular schools in cooperation with the Istanbul Ministry of Education.

The contact person contributed to informal education by giving speeches at public activities about development and education, in order to broaden the vision on VI children and by publishing articles for families to help them in rearing their children. She participated in the "Governmental Council for disabled children" in 1999 and in the "Istanbul Assembly on children" in 2000 by fulfilling several duties in order to contribute to advocacy for VI children. She conducted research and presented the results at several National Conferences. She published articles in Professional Turkish journals and books to share with professionals. She developed and published a "developmental inventory for VI children" to be used in assessment by professionals.



In order to fulfill the above responsibilities, H.Ergenç-Aksuna participated in several seminars and conferences in order to carry the innovations and know how to Turkish colleagues and include them in the services in Türkiye. She also contributed to ICEVI and colleagues by sharing her research on VI children.

- 2000 - Cracow-Poland - ICEVI – European conference  
*Participated in the Workshop: Early Intervention*  
*Oral presentation - ERGENÇ, H., 9-13 July .2000, The Effect of 'Early Intervention' on the Cognitive Development of Visually Impaired Children, International Conference for the Education of People with Visual Impairment European Conference, Cracow, Poland.*  
*Chairperson of Session 39: Miscellaneous (therapeutic groups, play schemas, clay treatment, active learners through play).*

- 2000 Oct. – Varna- Bulgaria ICEVI – 1st Balkan Conference  
*Participated in the Workshop: Early intervention- visually impaired and MDVI*  
*Chairman of the Plenary Session*
- 2002 – Netherlands ICEVI world conference  
*Participated in the Workshop - Early Intervention*  
*Oral presentation - ERGENÇ, H., 27.July-2.August, 2002, The development of concrete operations (cognition) in visually impaired children, ICEVI World Conference 2002, Netherlands.*
- 2005, May – Varna - Bulgaria –Together with another Turkish colleague  
ICEVI SEMINAR on Early Intervention for visually impaired children.
- 2005 – Varna-Bulgaria International conference  
*Oral presentation - ERGENÇ, H., 24-28 October, 2005. Education of visually impaired young children in Istanbul, International Conference: Educational Planning for Visually Impaired Children, Varna-Bulgaristan.*  
*Chairperson of Plenary Session: Integrated and Inclusive Education & Education of Visually Impaired Multidisabled.*

Meanwhile Feyzullah Güler lead innovations in the Türkan Sabancı School by implementing the early intervention programme and integrated education during preschool along with primary education. Emine Ayyildiz attended Perkins-Educational Leadership Programme and became specialised in MDVI children. She contributes very much to early intervention and preschool education in both VI and MDVI children. She also trains professionals in this area, so more and more skillful colleagues are working in this area. She attended;

- 2000 ICEVI European conference - Poland (together with F.Güler and other colleagues from the school)
- 2006 ICEVI World Conference - Malaysia (together with F.Güler)
- 2006 ICEVI – 3rd Balkan Conference - Serbia
- 2008 ICEVI – European Conference on early intervention - Hungary (together with Özlem Can from the school having two common presentations)

Today, the graduates of Istanbul University Psychology Department, Programme of training early interventionists for VI children are working in different settings giving service to lots of families with VI children in Istanbul, which is a very big and crowded city whose population is around 15 million people (1/5 of Türkiye). These services can be summarized as following:

- **Türkan Sabancı school** (since 1997) – as explained above.
- **Rehabilitation Centers** ( since 1998) - The more the graduates of Ergenc-Aksuna begin to work in the Rehabilitation Centres in different regions of Istanbul, the more the Early Intervention Programmes for visually impaired children are conducted.
- **GLEAM** - Association to support the education of visually impaired children (2003) was established by Dr. H. Bacakoğlu and the families who had



visually impaired children in the guidance of Ergenc-Aksuna, The Early Intervention Programme for visually impaired and multihandicapped children and follow up studies for integrated education are conducted similar to the ones in Istanbul University.

- **Istanbul Municipality – The Centre for Handicapped Children** (since 2003) When another graduate of Ergenç-Aksuna was appointed to The Centre for Handicapped Children in Istanbul Municipality, the Early Intervention Programme for visually impaired children started there also, giving services to VI children.

“The early interventionist training programme” continues in the Maltepe University – Social Sciences Institute - Rehabilitation Psychology Programme today.



In summary, ICEVI-Türkiye interaction has been very fruitful especially in implementing “training programmes for early interventionists for VI children” and the implementation, improvement & widespread development of early intervention services for VI and MDVI children in Istanbul. The most recent activity of ICEVI-Türkiye was the 4<sup>th</sup> Balkan Conference on Oct. 22-26. 2008 on VI and MDVI children organized by H.Ergenc-Aksuna, F.Güler and E. Ayyildiz. We hope ICEVI-Türkiye interaction will continue efficiently in other areas also, such as improving inclusive education and vocational education besides early intervention.

**Hale Ergenç Aksuna,**  
*Turkiye Contact Person – Organization Committee*

## **4<sup>th</sup> ICEVI Balkan Conference, 22-26 October 2008, Istanbul**

The 4<sup>th</sup> ICEVI Balkan Conference, which took place in Sabanci Centre, Istanbul was on October 22-26, 2008. We were very pleased to host more than 100 participants from all the Balkan countries, including our own. Our concern was to highlight the importance of education for visually impaired, MDVI and

deafblind children and the needs and concerns of their families; it was a great pleasure to have around 10 parents at the conference besides the teachers and specialists.

The main goal of the conference was to explore the current approaches, methods and policies in the area of education of children with visual impairment and additional disabilities and to discuss the future challenges. The oral presentations, poster presentations and workshops emphasised vital topics like inclusive education, new and effective programmes, vocational training, low vision training, Braille literacy, functional curriculums and assistive technology.

There were thirty one oral presentations, nine poster presentations and four one and a half hour workshops at the 4<sup>th</sup> ICEVI Balkan Conference. All were very impressive and beneficial in terms of having knowledge of the education of visually impaired, MDVI and deafblind students. Many of the participants stated that the Balkan conferences are a very significant opportunity to exchange knowledge and expertise. We will be more than happy to meet with all of our colleagues from the Balkans at Zagreb, Croatia for the 5<sup>th</sup> ICEVI Balkan Conference. We are sure that this tradition will continue in the future and we will see more progress year by year.

**Emine Ayyildiz,**  
*Conference Vice President, Contact person of Turkey*

## **International scientific-practical conference “Inclusive Education: Experience and Prospects”**

International scientific-practical conference “Inclusive Education: Experience and Prospects” was held in Saratov on 14-17 November. It was organized by the faculty of Correctional Pedagogics and Special Psychology of Pedagogical Institute of Saratov State University named after N. G. Chernishevsky and International Council for Education of people with Visual Impairments Europe.

The most active members of organizing committee are: Vladimir Ruchin, Marina Konovalova, Larisa Shipova, Ekaterina Vavilina.

More than 200 of people took part in the conference.

### **The participants included:**

Director of Pedagogical Institute SSU – Professor Doctor of physical-mathematical sciences Dmitry Prokhorov, Deputy Minister of Social Development of Saratov region Irina Kolesnikova, Deputy Minister of Education of Saratov region Lyudmila Safonova;

Chairman of ICEVI-Europe – Hans Welling; Professor Doctor Joost Heutink, Professor Doctor Annemieke Mol Lous;

Representatives from CIS countries –Belarus, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Tadjikistan;

Representatives from different cities of Russia: Volgograd, Moscow, Saint-Petersburg, Saratov and Saratov region (Engels, Balakovo), Samara and Samara region (Toliyatti), Nizhniy Novgorod, Penza, Murmansk region, Tchernepovets, Novosibirsk, Tchelyabinsk.

### **The participants represented:**

- Institute of Correctional Pedagogics of Russian Academy of Education – the leading scientific practical institute in Russia in the sphere of special education (Irina Zarubina, Irina Antonova)
- Higher educational establishments of Russia which train specialists in the spheres of Correctional Pedagogics and Special Psychology – Moscow State Pedagogical University (Lyubov Plaksina), Institute of Special Pedagogics and Psychology named after N. G. Wallenberg (Aleksandra Vitkovskaya), Institute of Correctional Pedagogics of Samara State Pedagogical University (Larisa Remezova), Tchelyabinsk State Pedagogical University (Liliya Druzhinina), Volgograd State Pedagogical University (Elena Lapp), Penza State Pedagogical University (Svetlana Barashkina, Liliya Blokhina), Pedagogical Institute of Saratov State University named N. G. Chernishevsky (20 participants), Saratov State Technical University (Elena Yarskaya-Smirnova), Saratov State Agricultural University (Nina Korableva)
- Higher educational establishments of CIS countries Svetlana Fedorenko from Kiev, Valeriy Ananiev, Vladimir Gordeiko from Minsk (Belarus State University), Asilbek Irgaliev from Uralsk (West-Kazakhstan State University)
- Social Organizations which help to visually impaired people (RSB, representative office of ICEVI in Russia, organizations of blind people of Belarus, Tadjikistan)

### **The conference included:**

- Heads and specialists of correctional educational establishments for visually impaired children from different regions of Russia (more than 50 persons)
- Heads and teachers of comprehensive educational establishments settling the problems of inclusive education in Saratov and Saratov region (more 15 persons)
- Students of Faculty of Correctional Pedagogics and Special Psychology of Pedagogical Institute SSU, trained as the specialists of Logopaedics, Oligophrenopedagogics and Special Psychology.

### **Workshops were attended by:**

- Chair of visual diseases of Saratov Medical University (Chairperson Kamenskikh)
- Pedagogical staff of comprehensive school No.12 in Engels (Headmistress Kosenko). It is the regional experimental ground "Inclusive Education"
- Pedagogical staff of Kindergarten with primary scholl for children "Primary school – kindergarten of compensatory type No.3" in Engels (Headmistress

Kutukova)

It makes the work on inclusive education and up-bringing of pre-school children with complex visual impairments

- Specialists of centre "Pozitive" in Engels (Headmistress Fedkulina) realize the development of programs for psychological and pedagogical accompaniment of children in sphere of inclusive education

**Vladimir Ruchin,**

*Head of Organizing Committee of International Scientific Practical Conference*

## Conference on Education in Lithuania

The Lithuanian visually impaired celebrated the 80th anniversary of education of the blind this year. Different events, seminars and conferences have taken place this year in Lithuania. As part of this jubilee activities, the Lithuanian Association of the Blind and Visually Handicapped jointly with the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania organized an international conference "Quality education – recognized right of visually impaired people" which took place in Vilnius on 16-17 October. 2008.

Lithuania's policy towards wellbeing of disabled persons has undergone serious changes over the past years. There are no doubts that the Soviet years and the social models of the organizations of the blind have left their deep mark in the minds of many people. A vigilant conference participant could easily notice slight confrontation between the older and younger generation regarding many aspects of integration of blind and partially sighted people into society, including education.

Already when planning the conference, we felt we had to invite not only teachers and academicians who are directly involved in training and education of visually impaired people, but also chairpersons of local organizations of the blind, as well as parents of blind children and visually impaired students themselves.

The aim of the conference was to stimulate and generate new ideas, to share good practice and experiences in the field of education. Lithuania has chosen a flexible system, which allows free option to choose either education in special schools (Lithuania has two such schools) or learning in mainstream schools. The dilemma what to choose is still hot for many parents and educators, so, the more we know about the advantages and disadvantages of both systems, the better.

All conference presentations were met with great interest, and it is no wonder, since among the presenters were Hans Welling, chairman of ICEVI Europe, Harry Swensson, expert, representing Swedish National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools. Unfortunately, Larry Campbell, president of ICEVI could not come to Lithuania, but he sent his presentation which was

red by Harry Swensson. Among the invited guests was Colin Low, president of the European Blind Union and Simon Butt, the British Ambassador to Lithuania. Colin Low enlightened the audience on the UN Convention on the Right of Disabled people, the topic which is now widely discussed in many countries. Certainly, one of the main presentations was given by Regina Labiniene, head of special Education Division of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania. She gave the overview of the changes in the education system of children with special needs over the past years.

There was one special presentation, red by Dr. Jonas Ruskus, professor of Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, which was granted special attention from the audience. The title of the presentation was " A Person between Impairment and Dignity". The author criticized promotion of too fast developments. He pointed out that as a result we witnessed only imitation of alterations. In reality nothing changed, though formally it may look otherwise. He also mentioned the silent exclusion, ignorance of dignity of disabled people when discussing all matters related to their various aspects of life. He also paid attention to the fact that when speaking about integration, quantitative data prevail and quality is often forgotten. And it is so obvious that numbers "melt away" many problems.

Two conference days were rich in information and exchange. Lots of questions and discussions, formal and informal, leading, as we all believe, to a more quality education for visually impaired children and general society as well.

**Audra Jozenaite,**  
*Project coordinator, Lithuanian Association of the Blind*

## Enthusiastic celebrations mark Visio Jubilee

**In 2008, Visio (in the Netherlands) celebrated its two hundredth anniversary. A good moment to put the spotlight on people with a visual impairment. With a number of original activities, Visio generated a great deal of (media) attention for the blind and visually impaired.**



When the first school for blind children was set up in Amsterdam in 1808, there were no trains yet in the Netherlands and Vincent van Gogh had not yet been born. No one could have imagined that this initiative would lead to the range of educational and rehabilitation options provided by Visio two hundred years later.

### Jubilee campaign

Thousands of Visio clients and students received a jubilee lottery ticket during the course of the year, giving them the opportunity of winning 200 great prizes varying from an MP3 player, a cookery book specially written for

people with a visual impairment or an introductory ski lesson. The winner of the first prize was delighted with a weekend in London including a spectacular visit to a musical.

### **Reading marathon**

In March, Visio organised a 24 hour reading marathon. Reading is vital for social participation. By organising the reading marathon, Visio wanted to show that people with a visual impairment can read too and that all kinds of support are available. Clients, celebrities and staff in four locations read aloud non-stop for 24 hours in a marathon which could also be followed live on the website. Blind and visually impaired readers used large print, Braille and speech. The marathon was closed by Princess Laurentien, member of the Royal family, in the presence of many press representatives.

### **Jubilee book**

October saw the publication of the Visio jubilee book covering 200 years of education and care for visually impaired and blind people. The book was written by an historian at the University of Utrecht and explores the 'paradox of charity' based on the developments of the institutions (and their predecessors) which are currently part of Royal Visio. The English summary is available on [www.visio.org](http://www.visio.org).

### **Experience table at Corpus**

A new attraction has opened in the Netherlands which enables the visitor to take a spectacular journey through the human body: Corpus. Visio is one of the founding fathers of this attraction and gives visitors an idea of how it is to live with a visual impairment. At the Visio table, people are able to perform various daily activities without being able to look. Through this presentation at Corpus, Visio demonstrates to 300,000 visitors every year how it helps the blind and visually impaired. More information: [www.corpus-experience.nl](http://www.corpus-experience.nl).



### **Round table meetings**

Business relations were the focus during round table meetings held in four locations. At each meeting, around 15 business relations explored the social developments expected in the coming 10 years, linking up with the trends for the blind and visually impaired. It proved to be a good formula for meeting and getting to know each other better.

### **Congress 'Looking to the future'**

A jubilee congress on 1 October looked back to the past, but above all ahead to the future. Because in order to strengthen the position of people with a visual impairment in our society, you have to know the direction in which society is developing in addition to mobilising all the parties. Two percent of the Dutch population, around 300,000 people, have a visual impairment, according to research. Experience has shown that they are perfectly capable of participating in society, with some support at certain moments in their lives. This need for support covers all areas of life. No single organisation, no single municipality, no single Ministry can offer this support alone. This was why this congress was attended by people from the political and health care arena, the business sector and lobby groups – a diverse guest list. During the congress, the visitors explored the themes which will be important to the blind and visually impaired over ten years. The results of this exploration offer the participating parties insight on which to base their agenda of the future.

### **Trends over 10 years**

Visio asked a trend bureau to look ahead ten years. During the congress, the expected trends for the blind and visually impaired were presented and the rapid technological developments were discussed in detail. Much can be achieved through technology, but this does not always constitute progress. Most computer illiterates find it impossible to keep up or find their way through all the information available. For people with a visual impairment, there are opportunities and threats. Opportunities are the possibilities to get information from the computer. But nice gadgets with touch screens and interactive commands are beyond the reach of people with a visual impairment. The Dutch market is too small to provide modified MP3 players or palm computers for the blind and visually impaired.

Another trend is the changing attitude to care. The current generation wants to find out what it can do by itself. This reflects the general trend for placing responsibility with the client: empowerment. The care provider is rather a coach than an advisor.

### **Film with audio description**

In the framework of its jubilee year, Visio has been able to arrange audio description for the new film 'Bride Flight'. People with a visual impairment can hear what is happening on the big screen through headphones. In the Netherlands, it is not customary for films to have audio description.

Bride Flight is a bittersweet drama about the longing for a new life. The film is based on the true story of the last big air race from London to Christchurch in October 1953 and was premiered on International White Cane Day. For some blind visitors, this was the first time that they had been to the cinema with a sighted friend. They were very enthusiastic about the film and the initiative for audio description.

## Tajikistan

From September 22nd to 28th, the chairman of ICEVI-West Asia, Dr Bhushan Punani and I, chairman of ICEVI-Europe, visited Tajikistan.

The Tajikistan Association of the Blind had invited ICEVI to investigate in which way Education and Rehabilitation could be improved in their country. After the meeting several schools were visited and meetings were held with representatives from the Ministries of Education, Health and Labour and Social Protection of Population.

The investigation led to the following conclusions:

**Conclusion 1:** The TAB laid more focus on revival of enterprises and establishing of computerized Braille production facilities. There is no major emphasis on the education and vocational training of persons with visual impairment. Tajikistan could continue in the ICEVI West Asia region with the possibility of seeking advice from the European region and participating in the conferences organized by this region.

**Desired Task 1:** Carrying out Situational Analysis on demographic pattern and existence of facilities and opportunities for the blind and low vision persons in Tajikistan.

### **2. Insight into Health Initiatives – Meeting with Ms. Saida Jabirova, First Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health :**

The Deputy Minister and 3 senior officials from the Ministry received the visiting team well and share the following concerns:

*Cost of Surgery:* The Ministry is promoting eye care and eye surgeries across the country. As the cost of cataract surgery is almost US \$ 200, the country is not able to provide free-of-cost eye surgeries. The country is having limited resources for promoting further eye surgeries. Even the medicines are expensive and sale of medicines is handled by the private pharmacy stores, hence the Ministry was not a position to provide free medicines. For promoting eye care in the country, the country is looking for financial support. There is no insurance system at present. The Ministry is however thinking to introduce a system of family doctors.

*Vision 2020:* She explained that she was not aware about the Vision 2020 campaign or any other major international organizations including CBM which are supporting eye care programs. She showed keen interest in establishing



contacts with the Vision 2020 campaign as well as international Association for the Prevention of Blindness.

*Eye Screening of Children:* The Ministry has introduced the system of eye screening at the eye hospitals and promotes eye treatment of children. There is however no system of eye screening of children at regular schools.

*Kindergarten:* The Ministry has introduced a unique system of attaching a kindergarten to the eye hospital. All the children with eye problems are admitted to the Kindergarten while under treatment. This is a good system on child development while under treatment for eye ailments.

*EFAVI Campaign:* The Ministry showed willingness to sign any Memorandum of Association (MOU) with the ICEVI and local organization in respect of promoting eye screening, assessment, treatment, child preparatory services and provision of low vision devices as part of EFAVI Campaign. It was however pointed out that the Ministries of Education as well as Social Protection also would be required to be involved in respect of signing the MOU.

**Conclusions 2:** The Country needs guidance in respect of recent developments in the field of eye care and economical methods of conducting eye surgeries. The system of running Kindergarten under the Ministry is an important initiative and it desires active participation of the Ministry in nation-wide screening, early intervention, treatment and child preparatory services.

**Desired Tasks 2:**

1. Providing information regarding availability of low cost IOLs and sutures.
2. Establishing contacts between the Ministry of Health and the Vision 2020
3. Observe functioning of the kindergarten and suggest means of ensuring further involvement of the Ministry in child preparatory services.

**3. Understanding Approach to Social Protection – Meeting with Mrs. Taghoyeva Sumangul Saidovna, First Deputy Minister, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population**

**Features:** The Deputy First Minister and 3 other officials from the Ministry shared their concerns as below:

- There is a high percentage of unemployment and it is 20 percent at present
- Many people migrate to other countries for seeking employment
- The new economical system which is technology and profit oriented has adverse consequences for the labour market
- The Ministry looks after areas including employment, labour market, social work, houses for the elderly and pension
- It also provides microcredit as launching money for encouraging self employment and income generation.
- There is a sanatorium for providing medical care and there possibilities for rehabilitation

- It also encourages and support adult education
- It has a open attitude for collaboration and developing a policy to integrate people with limited abilities in the labour market

*Enterprises for the Blind:* In a response to a question on the miserable condition of the enterprises, the Deputy First Minister explained that the products manufactured are not saleable. It requires lot of financial resources to reactivate and modernize the operations of the enterprises. The enterprises need to understand market dynamics to survive. While the pension of the members has been increased, it is difficult to resolve all the problems. Solving all these problems is not the responsibility of Government alone; the organizations for the blind also take up this responsibility.

*Employment:* The First Deputy Ministers emphasised that the Persons with limited abilities are also entitled to get jobs like any body else. In case, there application was rejected, they can seek recourse to the court of law. There was any mention about any special quota for such persons in the jobs.

*Legislation:* While there is no national law on disability related aspects, a new legislation on social protection of persons with limited disabilities is on the anvil. It was also suggested to provide free transport to such persons to encourage their education, employment and travel.

**Conclusion 3:** There is a good condition for working together with the Ministry and to develop a new strategic for promotion of employment and self employment of for people with limited abilities inn the labour market. The likely enactment of new legislation on social protection is a welcome step.

#### **4. Towards a Joint Program – Visit to Ministry of Education: Meeting with Director of Education and the Officer-in charge of the Boarding Schools**

*No Participation in Round Table:* The Director explained as most of officers were busy with Ramazan Program of the President of the country, they could not attend the Round Table. Because of this reason, even the First Deputy Minister of Education was not available for a meeting.

*Summary of Round Table:* The visiting officials explained the outcome and proceedings of the Round Table and impressed upon the need for providing access to all persons with limited abilities to education.

*Visit to Schools:* The visiting officials provided a summary of their visit to blind schools, boarding school and the special class in regular schools. They explained the importance of capacity building of teachers, introducing assessment of low vision children, provision of low vision devices, large print and other educational devices; and promoting inclusive education. The also explained the situation regarding shortage of Braille books, Braille paper, assistive devices and the system of providing Braille books completely free of cost. They also impressed upon as to how blind and low vision children are

being treated alike and taught Braille irrespective of extent of loss of vision and specific needs of children with low vision.

*Experience of Other Countries in Inclusive Education:* The visiting official shared information about various international declarations in respect of education for all and the inclusive education. They also explained the process of inclusive education and right based approach being followed by other developing as well as developed countries. They explained as to how some countries have already developed National Policies on inclusive education. The Director pointed out that her Ministry was positive in respect of promoting inclusive education and it is planning to promote this concept. She also expressed her views that the existing teachers also need to be trained and inclusive education needs to be implemented step by step. However, the Ministry needs resources and technical support for this purpose.

*Signing of MOU with ICEVI on EFAVI Campaign:* The Director pointed out that her Ministry will be very willing to sign such a MOU for ensuring education of all children with visual impairment. She however pointed that a letter on intent with all the details and appropriate should be submitted by the ICEVI and TAB seeking participation and involvement of the Government in this campaign. She will be pleased to discuss the matter with the Minister and to place the letter for consideration. She expressed her willingness to follow up this matter with the appropriate authority.

**Conclusion 4:** The Director expressed lot of positivism in respect of promoting inclusive education, capacity building of teachers, and introduction of low vision component and promotion of EFAVI campaign. This however would be possible once an official's letter outlining role of Government and explaining the procedure of achieving these objectives was submitted to the Ministry.

## **5. Child Preparatory Services while under Treatment - A visit to Kindergarten (KG): director Yarmuhamedoue Garhar**

*Salient Features:* This is the only KG of its kind established by the Ministry of Health in the country with the following salient features;

- Attached to an eye hospital
- Admission to children with eye problems, low vision and blindness till 7 years of age
- Services of an Ophthalmologist are available for eye check up, refraction and treatment.
- 40 children come daily from home and other 30 children are provided boarding & lodging 2 until 7 years. The children are at home in the weekends. The children are provided treatment twice a day.
- All children are provided child preparatory services while under treatment and even after treatment. There is regular eye check up and treatment along with child preparatory services.
- Children are encouraged for walk, swimming and play activities

- Even the young blind and low vision children who do not need further treatment continue to study here.
- At present there are 70 children (34 boys and 36 girls) and many children seem to be low vision children.
- After 7 years of age, they may shift to a nearby special school for the blind.
- The parents pay for the travel costs of children attending the KG.

Limitations: This unique initiative of the Ministry of Health has the following limitations:

- This is the only KG in the whole country; hence even children from the remote and distant areas have to come to this centre for treatment.
- The intake capacity is limited and other children have to wait for admission.
- The 8 teachers do not have any formal training in vision assessment, low vision management or child preparatory services.
- The concept low vision assessment, provision of low vision devices, vision stimulation and provision of large print etc.
- All children irrespective of extent of vision and nature of loss of vision are provided similar services.

**Conclusion 5:** An excellent and unique initiative by the Ministry of Health. The quality of intervention in respect of child preparatory services, low vision intervention, provision of low vision devices and quality of teachers need to be improved.

**6. Special School for the Blind – Meeting with Mr. Shoev Goib, Vice Director: Located close to the KG is the School for the Blind with the following features:**

- The school provides day-care special education till 4th standard only.
- At present there are 40 students
- Many children from the KG join this school and other children whose parents can not afford travel cost remain at home without access to education
- The school is supported by the Ministry of Education.
- The school is facing the problem of Braille production, access to educational devices etc.
- While there are number of low vision children, the concept of functional assessment, provision of low vision devices and large print has not been adopted.
- The teachers have not gone through any formal training in handling blind or low vision children

**Conclusion 6:** The school provides education till 4th standard only and quality of education especially for low vision children need to be improved; teacher needs to be provided training and concept of low vision assessment needs to be introduced.

**7. Visit to a Boarding School in Gissarkom – Meeting with Ms. Solehova Surayo and Vice Director, Mr. Caruxoba Cyfxe: This is**

**the only State Boarding School for the Blind since 61 years in the country with the following features:**

- There are 122 blind and low vision students of 7 to 18 years of age,
- Most of them stay in the hostels.
- There are 11 kindergarten teachers and 24 school teachers
- There is a additional programme for independent living
- The options available to students after completing education from this schools are to join the university, stay at home or join an enterprise
- The school intends to get Braille books from TAB without making any payment. There is no system of payment for the Braille books
- The terminal examinations are conducted by the teachers under the supervision of the University and the University grants the certificates. The examinations are conducted under the special conditions and they are exempt mathematics and science.
- In Tajikistan all the schools use the same books
- The school has recently conducted 5 TV Interviews for enrolling blind students who are present not studying anywhere in this school but there was not much response. May be the parents are poor and not in a position to send children to the school

**Limitations:**

- Availability of Braille books and Braille paper is a problem.
- The Director has taken a short course at Bishkek and has no other formal training.
- The Ministry of Education does not provide any additional budget for purchasing special equipment and devices.
- The approach to all children is the similar and even low vision children are treated as blind children.
- There are no low vision devices, large print or vision stimulation.
- There is no provision for providing vocational training to students.

**Conclusion 7:** The quality of education can be improved by capacity building of the teachers regarding low vision and inclusive education. There is also a great need for providing Braille books, low vision devices and large print

**8. Visits to Enterprises of the Blind:**

**The enterprises we visited are located in: Gissarski, Vahdat, Isfara, Dushanbe and Khanibadam**

**Features:**

- All the enterprises have the similar experiences after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the civil war.
- The most common products at these enterprises are rope making, wire-net making, inside lid packing material etc using very old machines and outdated technologies.

- There is a lack of materials and some times it is impossible to sell the products
- The consequences are that many employees have been unemployed, for example, number of worker has gone down from 200 to 24 in one of the enterprises)
- The buildings are old, dilapidated and in a bad state
- The machineries are not working, beyond repairs and old fashioned.
- Former employees are mostly unemployed and get pension only.
- For the products they made still now, elsewhere modern technologies are being used so their production is not competitive and viable.
- Sometimes the enterprises have to wait for orders that mean that workers have part time jobs only.
- Some enterprises have started renting out part of their premises to enhance the income generation.

Limitations:

- The future of these enterprises is very unsure in the new economy.
- Modern technologies make production system cheaper than the old technologies which mostly depend upon manual labour.
- The society does not have real interest in the products made at these enterprises.

**Conclusion 8:** There is an urgent need to make financial/economical analyses of these enterprises. Based on such analyses, it should be possible to make a proper business plan. Probably some factories must be closed and buildings used for some other productive purposes. Other enterprises need renovations and repairs. The entrepreneurship skills of the people need to be developed and they need to take initiative in respect on introducing newer products and adopting new technologies.

It is relevant for the future to promote inclusive production centres for all and to develop a policy for supporting people with visual impairment to participate in the labour market.

**9. Braille Production Unit: The Tajikistan Association for the Blind has established the Braille production Unit by installing the following equipment:**

- 2 Stereotyping machines – operated with the use of electricity
- 2 Braille Embossing machine operated with the use of iron sheets
- One paper cutting machine
- One stapling machine

*Outdated Technology:* The TAB is using is the old system of using the iron sheets which are used as master sheets. The stereotyping machines are used for embossing Braille dots and then four sheets are used simultaneously for embossing Braille on paper with the use of Braille Embossing machines. At present only one stereotyping machine and one Braille Embossing unit is

operational. The other set of machine is not operational as spare parts are not available. There is no thermoform machine or any computerised Braille printer. Hence complete dependence for Braille production for the whole country is on this Braille embossing Unit.

*Comments:* Firstly, the technology is completely outdated. It is difficult to repair and maintain the machines as spare parts are not easily available. The use of iron sheets for the masters makes the process very slow and expensive. Whenever there is a change in course curricula for any subject, new masters are be embossed. The TAB is facing shortage of Braille paper as well as iron sheets.

*System of Sale of Braille Books:* At present, all the Braille books are provided to schools for the blind and the kindergarten completely free of cost. A system of cost recovery should be introduced. In other words, the organizations placing order for the Braille books should also make the payment for the same. It would enable TAB to continue producing and supplying Braille books.

**Conclusion 9:** To reduce the cost of production, to make the process faster and to reuse the master files, it is advisable to establish a computerised Braille press. As the demand at present is generally less than 100 sets for any book, a small machine of the nature of Everest 100 should be installed. The TAB should approach the Dutch Foundation Force for seeking advice in respect of establishing such unit as well as large print unit.

**10. A Step Towards Inclusion – Visit to a Special Class in a Regular School in Kurgan Tyubes – During visit, we met the Director, Mr. Jamshed who has established a special class in a regular school with 3 special teachers and 5 children and 4 adults. The special class has been established as the parents wanted the children to go a regular school.**

**Well Equipped:** The special classroom situated at the first floor of a very large school is well furnished with Braille books, Braille writing frames and a computer.

**Teaching Braille:** All children, mostly low vision, are taught Braille irrespective of visual acuity and the field of vision. Most of these children can read the print material if provided the appropriate low vision devices and the large print. The Director however insisted that as these children may lose their present vision, hence teaching of Braille was essential.

**Low Vision Services:** It is essential to introduce the concepts of functional assessment of low vision, provision of low vision devices and use of large print. It was demonstrated that all the children could benefit by using the big letters on the board and changing the seating arrangement.

**Island:** This special class in such a beautiful regular school where blind and low vision children remain confined to this special and isolated room is like a small island in a big ocean. The efforts should be made to send these children to the regular classes after providing them child preparatory services, low vision devices and teaching of Braille in case of blind children. It was observed that these children would be easily integrated after the 4th class.

**Conclusion 10:** While the parents are interested in sending such children to a special class, there is need for capacity building of teachers in respect of handling such children, low vision assessment and understanding the process of inclusion. One the teachers should devote himself to child preparatory services in the school, 2 other teachers could be used as Itinerant Teachers in other schools with children with blindness and low vision. It could be a model demonstration unit for explaining the concept of inclusion, low cost and acceptance of children in the mainstream.

In cooperation with the Tajikistan Association of the Blind, ICEVI West Asia and Europe is being investigated in which way, together with the ministries, how education and rehabilitation can be improved in the next years.

*Hans Welling,  
Chairman ICEVI-Europe*

## **Hommage to Louis Braille, 04/01/1809 to 06/01/1852: My journey through life with his script**

In April 1928 – when I was six years old – I sat in the 1st grade of the blind school at Soest. A metal slate lay before me with words written in Braille. I learned to read and write the Braille script there. Information about how Braille is written, read, and how individual letters appear can be found on my homepage [www.ma-ha-schulze.de](http://www.ma-ha-schulze.de) under "Nicht verzagen, sondern wagen - praktische Ratschläge für Altersblinde", chapter 4.1.

"German Braille contractions" were introduced in 1932. Stenography and Braille music, and later codes for mathematics and chemistry as well as contractions for French and English Braille were introduced in 1936.

Starting from 1936 – schooling then consisted of only eight years – I was trained in Soest for three years in stenography, telephone operating and re-caning. The latter helped me after 1961, when I worked as an advisor to Christoffel Blindemission with regard to vocational training in developing countries. Everything thus has a purpose in life, although we may not recognize it immediately and sometimes never. My blindness also had a purpose, as I have indicated at the beginning of my homepage.

In 1939 I was employed at the regional court in Dortmund. I took dictations on a shorthand machine, where text is written on small strips of



paper. I then typed out the entire text in full on a typewriter. Since the judgements that were dictated to me primarily consisted of facts, which originated from the current hearing, I was confident that I would be able to draft them myself, and studied law. With the help of Braille books, I began preparing for the entrance exam of the Carl-Strehl school of German Blindenstudienanstalt. It is still incomprehensible to me as to how it was possible for me to quit my job at the regional court on 31.01.1944, as there existed a huge shortage of manpower at the end of the Second World War. In April of this year, I moved to Marburg and completed college in 1945.

Thereafter I taught Braille to the newly blinded war veterans. From January 1946 when the university resumed its operations again, I studied law and political economy. I wrote down the lectures, if essential, on the shorthand machine, and later converted them into full text. This small machine also helped me during all my exams.

I, however, wrote in Braille, all my assignments during my course, both the public exams, my dissertation and later all my judgements when working as a judge. I also collected all the preparatory material in Braille. This often amounted to several pages when working at the Federal Supreme Court.

I also wrote most of the material that is currently on my homepage, as well as numerous articles in "Horus" and other magazines for the blind in Braille.

I used the shorthand machine at the provincial court in order to take down statements of affected parties and witnesses. I also used the machine again during retirement, in order to take down minutes at board meetings of the Evangelical Association of Blind and Partially Sighted in Baden-Württemberg as well as in the senior circle of my community.

I no longer read German books and magazines – except for "Geistig fit" – in Braille, but rather listen to them. I however still read magazines in English contracted Braille from India and South Africa and a few exercises from an English grammar book for advanced learners in Braille, in order to keep myself mentally active. Starting next year, I plan to refresh my knowledge of Latin, which would serve the same purpose.

While in bed, when exercising, while at Mass or when traveling, I often recollect some task that has to be completed. I therefore always keep a Braille slate handy, in my case a postcard-sized slate and a stylus. The slate consists of a base plate with indented holes, each with six slots, which make up the Braille dots. Paper is placed in it and the lid with six "cells" is clamped on it. A metal pencil-like device called the stylus is then used to punch dots into the cells. The stylus is held in the palm with the index finger gripping it.

Since I write shorthand, I am able to use the slate and stylus with great speed. Braille is written in inverted form from right to left, and is thereafter read from left to right with fingers.

I had a memorable experience in 1954. Two years earlier, to mark the occasion of the 100th anniversary of his death, the remains of Louis Braille were entombed in a Panthéon. My wife and I searched for it and spent a few minutes in front of the well-protected alcove where his sarcophagus lies.

*Judge at BGH a. D. **Dr. Hans-Eugen Schulze**  
(Justice Dr. Schulze rtd. German Federal Court of Appeals)*

## Ali Hope News October 2008

### Our Little Base with plenty of Activity!

While some of us were at a Deaf Blind Communication Seminar in Holland early November 2006 we received a fax with great news that our dream had become a reality and that Ali Hope Foundation Israel had become a registered non profit foundation in the State of Israel.

Now looking back over the past two years as to how the foundation was birthed and developed has been a great encouragement to us.

We are pleased to announce that we are continuing to function and have a base which serves as the training center for the dogs, activities for the deaf and deaf blind, skill training and also a little office as we maintain projects.

It indeed has been very hard work getting set up and developing the center over the past months.

We are very grateful for your interest and valuable support to enable this important task to take place in Israel. Thank you!

At one stage we had 7 dogs at the base. Now we have 5 which is a better pace to train them in.

Here is an overview of highlights over the past two years:

- **Oct 2006** – Ali Hope Foundation was registered by the State of Israel
- **Nov 2006** – Seminar in Holland about Deaf Blindness
- **Dec 2006** – Our first 3 puppies for training were born
- **Jan 2007** – We had our first annual board meeting (7 members on the board of AH foundation) to discuss further developments
- **Feb 2007** – Sol, Lev and Tara (puppies) arrived for training – first we started off training them in the apartment
- **March 2007** – A very challenging time as we were all searching for a center to rent to train the dogs. We continued to house train the puppies in the apartment
- **April 2007** – Two people came from Holland to do an exchange project to come and see our foundation set up and about our dog training methods
- **May 2007** – Our two exchange guests from Holland helped us move to AH Base in a very central location in Israel and helped set it up.

- **June 2007** – We set up the office and did lots of repairs at the Base.
- **July 2007** - Got familiar with the area and got to know our local vet as we continued to train the puppie
- **August 2007** – Agus arrived for training for a year
- **Sept 2007** – Puppies got spayed
- **October 2007** – Our three volunteers arrived to volunteer for a year instead of army in our foundation project
- **Nov 2007** – We started our bi-weekly deaf blind activity center at the base. An opportunity for those who will get the dogs to get to know their dogs that are being trained for them.
- **Dec 2007** – A little deaf blind boy came to the base to learn communication skills with the dogs who understand sign language. Also time for him to get to know his future dog.
- **Jan 2008** – Continuing with our bi-weekly deaf blind activities and intensive dog training.
- **Feb 2008** – We had to go to UK to do presentations for sponsorship for the Foundation to keep functioning as funds were low (it is a non profit foundation so we rely on donations to function)
- **March 2008** – We had a lot of repair problems at the foundation base and the owner did not want to see to it, this took a lot of time to get over these challenges. Since the foundation is on a Jewish settlement in the green zone (West Bank) as it is cheaper to rent. We were seriously looking at possibilities for further support for rent to move out of the “green zone” to Israel.
- **April 2008** – We looked at possibilities to find another base but it was beyond our budget to rent out of the “green zone”
- **May 2008** – We had our annual board meeting with all the members of the foundation to discuss the situation and how to proceed.
- **June 2008** – Keshet had TV news interview to find other deaf blind persons in Israel which we did find: [www.keshet-tv.com/VideoPage.aspx?MediaID=39328&SourceID=23](http://www.keshet-tv.com/VideoPage.aspx?MediaID=39328&SourceID=23)
- **July 2008** – We went to the Ministry of Welfare to talk about partnership and they said they don’t help foundations that are under 5 years old. So our expenses have to be covered by donations
- **August 2008** – YNET interview, see film of how our dogs work. The goal was to advertise the foundation: [www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-3582885,00.html](http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-3582885,00.html) We also went to talk with our accountant and handed him all the documents and applied for tax clearance receipts for our donors (the foundation had to be one and a half years old to be able to qualify for this)
- **Sept 2008** – Our 3 volunteers who served for a year moved on to attend a kibbutz program. We miss them very much!! Also our first dog Agus was placed into a family where she is very helpful and appreciated
- **Oct 2008** – We continue to have our bi-weekly meetings with 6 deaf blind attendances. Due to funding we are not able to collect more people. There are a dozen more deaf-blind people from all over the country who really

want to come to the base, this is where we need help to expand. AH foundation is 2 years old now and it is time for further project developments and to move on

We do have urgent needs at the moment to enable the foundation to continue functioning:

- Rental payment
- Need two more pieces of training equipment for the dogs that are being trained
- Vet expenses that will be coming up in the next month
- Dog food expenses
- Purchase a dog trailer (attach to a vehicle) to transport the dogs to city venues to be trained in the city
- Transportation expenses to collect and take home the deaf blind persons who come to learn at the foundation base We are all volunteering at the foundation and also really do need extra volunteer help in all areas to enhance the foundation work – e.g. advertising, publishing, repairs at the base etc...

We thank you very much for your interest in the foundation

***Tamara Meirovich**, Director of Ali Hope Foundation*

***Tracy**, Deputy Director of Ali Hope Foundation*

***Sarah, Mishi, Edna, Fira and Varda**; Board of Ali Hope Foundation*

Our Website is: [www.alihope.com](http://www.alihope.com)

P.S.: We simply did not attach photos as some of you have downloading difficulties. Should you wish to see some photos of the work here, please ask and we will happily send them to you.

## **Jomtien, Thailand - The venue of the 13<sup>th</sup> World Conference of ICEVI**

We are pleased to announce that the 13<sup>th</sup> world conference of ICEVI will be held in **Jomtien, Thailand** from **8 to 13 August 2010**. The Education For All movement originated at a meeting of Ministers of Education convened by UNESCO, UNICEF and The World Bank in Jomtien in 1990. It is quite symbolic that ICEVI will hold its 13 World Conference at the same location some 20 years later to draw the attention of the world to the educational needs of all children with visual impairment.

The Thai Host Committee, consisting of organisations of the Thai Blind Union and voluntary organizations, is headed by **Pecharat Techavachara, President, Foundation for the Employment Promotion of the Blind in Thailand**. The conference will be held at the **Hotel Ambassador City**,

**Jomtien**, which has excellent facilities at a beautiful seaside location. Do mark your calendar to join your colleagues from around the world and be prepared for an excellent conference and a relaxed time. Watch the ICEVI website, [www.icevi.org](http://www.icevi.org), and the next issue of The Educator for the Call for Papers and information on registration and costs.



## Reorganisation in Sweden

On July 1, 2008, a new Swedish national agency entered the arena – the National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools. Through this reform the government wanted to gather all previous agencies involved in special needs education, into one single agency.

Resource Centre Vision, once known as ERC and TRC, as well as the three other national resource centres (deafblindness, deafness with additional impairment, and speech and language), belongs to the new agency. The regional advisers on special needs education, also do the production of educational material. The new organisation also includes the six special schools for the deaf and hard of hearing.

At the same date Ekeskolan, the special school for the visually impaired with additional disabilities (MDVI) was re-opened. The school was formally closed in 2001, but students enrolled at that time received a guarantee that they would finish their compulsory education at the school. Since 2001, new students have been admitted to a programme, limited in time, while waiting for their home community to get ready to offer an appropriate education.

You will find a brief presentation in English of the new agency on [www.spsm.se](http://www.spsm.se). Those of you who have a person working at Resource Centre Vision in your address book, should immediately *change the e-mail suffix @sit.se to @spsm.se*

**Harry Svensson**

## **The Blind Photographers Project**

The Blind Photographers Project is preparing an exhibition entitled "Life"... with the participation of one blind photographer and one writer from each country.

Each blind photographer will receive a few minutes of training to use the camera. And then, s/he will be given a polaroid camera to take 10 pictures about "Life". Using the tape recorder provided, the photographer will also record his/her motives while taking these photos.

In the next stage, a writer from the same country will listen to the tapes and look at the photographs, and then will produce a text for one of the photographs s/he chooses.

10 photographs from each country will be exhibited, together with the writer's text in the braille alphabet. This way visitors will be viewing the photographs while the visually impaired will be reading the text in braille.

This exhibition of "Photograph meeting Literature via Blindness" will travel to all the participants' countries.

We are looking for one blind person from each country!  
If you are 100% visually impaired..  
If you think about life issues and worry about expressing yourself..  
If you care for conceptual art..  
We are looking for YOU!

This project invites you to think and to make others think about "seeing".

100% blind by birth! Would you like to apply for the Blind Photographers Project? Please send an email to present yourself to: [bfplife at gmail.com](mailto:bfplife@gmail.com)  
Website: [www.blindphotographers-project.org](http://www.blindphotographers-project.org)

## **Book: Didaktik des Unterrichts**

*Book title:* Didaktik des Unterrichts mit blinden und hochgradig sehbehinderten Schülerinnen und Schülern

*Authors:* Markus Lang, Ursula Hofer, Friederike Beyer

This book has been published by W. Kohlhammer in Stuttgart. It is a comprehensive book, which is worth reading.

***Hans Welling***