

ICEVI European Newsletter

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Master Visual Impairment: Assessment and Support

From the Board

By comparison to the newsletter of December 2011, this newsletter will be more modest in size. This does not mean that nothing is happening. The section of "events" shows a lot of activities both in and outside of Europe. Activities which all should contribute to ensuring that people with a visual impairment will be able to live their own life.

For ICEVI-Europe the European Conference of 2012 comes closer. Recently the Programme Committee had a meeting about the contents of the conference. As mentioned before, the programme will be based on the International Classification of Functioning Health and Disabilities (ICF). This also means that during the conference the necessary attention will be paid to ICF, not only during the plenary session, but also by means of workshops.

This conference is aimed not only at those concerned with children but it is also meant for those, who are working with adults and elderly people with a visual impairment. These colleagues are cordially invited to make an active contribution.

For interested persons it is important to be aware that early subscription is indeed attractive.

In the coming year the Balkan conference will take place in Cluj, Romania. Furthermore preparations are made for the sixth International Conference for the East-European countries. This conference will most likely take place in Moscow.

The next Board meeting of ICEVI-Europe will take place on the 14 and 15 of June in Athens, Greece. During this meeting we will look forward to the General Assembly. Elections will be held for the Board of ICEVI-Europe during the European Conference. Interested persons are cordially invited to come forward.

I wish you a beautiful spring and good luck with your activities with and for people with a visual impairment.



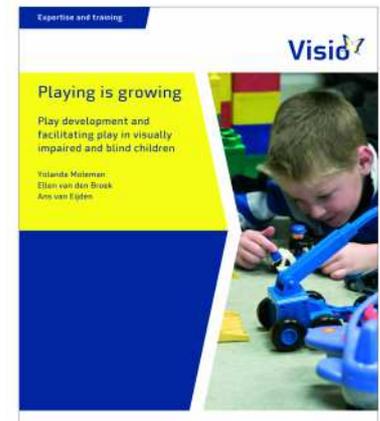
On behalf of the Board of ICEVI-Europe,
Hans Welling, Chairman

Playing is growing, play development and facilitating play in visually impaired and blind children.

*Yolanda Moleman,
Ellen van den Broek,
Ans van Eyden*
Visio 2010

Do visually impaired and blind children play in the same way sighted children do? How do blind children imitate the play of other children? Can visually impaired and blind children learn to play together with sighted children?

You can find answers on these and other questions in "Playing is growing", a publication of Royal Dutch Visio, centre of expertise for blind and partially sighted people.



Recently the English version of the reader and workbook "Spelontwikkeling en spelbegeleiding van blinde en slechtziende kinderen" is published. The main focus of the book, written by Yolanda Moleman, Ellen van den Broek and Ans van Eijden, is on play as a child's natural means of expression and an important source of enjoyment.

Many visually impaired and blind children, and children with multiple disabilities have trouble playing; the play development takes longer and sometimes there is little resemblance to the play of sighted children. Play comes naturally to children and most of the time we do not realize what it means for a child to miss out on play and the impact this has on a child's development. Through play children practice all kinds of roles and by doing so acquire social skills. Play is also important in cognitive and motor development.

This book is accessibly written and contains many practical examples from the authors' extensive experience in the fields of play development in visually impaired and blind children. Moreover this book provides a theoretical basis on play development and is full of creative ways to stimulate play in visually impaired and blind children.

The book is of interest to anyone who wants to know more about this important aspect of the social and emotional development of visually impaired and blind children.

The workbook is developed for the Play course and is aimed at professionals wishing to improve their play facilitating skills.

Information

Playing is growing, ISBN:978-90-77680-19-3 , Price: €30, Visio
webshop: www.visio.org

Spelontwikkeling en spelbegeleiding van blinde en slechtziende kinderen,
ISBN:978-90-77680-13-1 , Price: €30, Visio webshop: www.visio.org.

Contact

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Sound and Picture, A Comenius Project

Dear Colleagues

I would like to bring to your attention details of an excellent new website which has just been launched which may well be of great interest to those working with learners with multiple disabilities and a visual impairment.

Sound and Picture was an EU funded Comenius Project which ran from 2009 until 2011. Project partners came from all over Europe with the objective of:

- empowering educators in MDVI by developing modes of communication for these learners through the use of non-commercialised, sound and picture based educational resources which can be used right across the curriculum;
- empowering and enabling children to play a more active role in their own learning by developing a means of communication through which they can express their thoughts, wants and needs thus fostering a sense of self-esteem, motivation and control. Resources made use of include freeware, MP3 audio recordings, digital pictures and movies.

The project partners have produced an excellent website, full of ideas, resources and case studies for educators of learners with MDVI.

Visit www.soundandpicture.eu for more information and I attach a PDF for your use.

Congratulations to all involved in the project.

With best wishes
Robert Jones, MDVI Euronet.

'Sound and Picture' Comenius Project

By Isabelle Jones, MDVI Resource Teacher, ChildVision, Ireland.

'Sound and Picture' is a resource for educators of learners with a visual impairment and complex needs which was developed and funded through an EU Comenius project which ran between 2009 and 2011. The project involved 10 schools and organisations for the visually impaired from across Europe. The aim of the project was to find ways to empower educators of, and learners with, multiple disabilities and visual impairment (MDVI). The empowerment of educators was through the development of different modes of communication, appropriate for learners with MDVI, by creating 'homemade' educational resources which use real sound and real pictures of the learner's own unique experiences to then employ them right across the curriculum.

The empowerment of learners comes by enabling them to play a more active role in their own learning and, where appropriate, contribute to the production of these personalised resources (recording the learner's own voice for instance). Learners can then develop a means of communication through which they can express their thoughts, wants and needs increasing their self-esteem, motivation and control. Resources employ freeware, MP3 audio recordings, digital pictures and movies. These individualised resources enable young people with MDVI to develop awareness that communication is reciprocal. It will also reinforce skills of choice making, recalling of events/information, sequencing, cause and effect, team-working (contributing to choosing elements to include the activity being created), independence and thereby fostering inclusion.

Parallel support material called the 5-step model (initiated in the ImPAct MDVI project, 2003-3006), was used to plan the pupil profile and design the chosen activity for the chosen pupil so each task is pupil-driven as opposed to adult-led.

WHAT IS 'SOUND AND PICTURE'?

This is a summary of our project with explanations on the methodology used to plan an individualised activity for a key pupil.

Traditional Visual Impairment (VI) population has changed to include more children with Multiple Disabilities and VI (MDVI). Many are pre/non-verbal or have severe receptive and expressive communicative difficulties sometimes leading to withdrawal or using challenging behaviour as a means of communication.

This project therefore has two aims:

- To empower educators in MDVI by developing modes of communication for these children . This will be facilitated by creating homemade educational resources using sound and pictures which can be used right across the curriculum.
- To empower and enable children to play a more active role in their own learning . They can then develop a means of communication through which they can express their thoughts, wants and needs increasing their self-esteem, motivation and control. Resources will contain freeware, MP3 audio recordings, digital pictures and movies. They will be trialled, evaluated and modified as required by each partner.

These individualised resources will enable children with MDVI to develop an awareness that communication is reciprocal. It will also reinforce skills of choice making, independence and thereby fostering inclusion.

Institutions in this partnership are the sole provider of education and support for learners with a visual impairment and cater for pupils with MDVI.

A parallel support material called the 5-step model (initiated in the ImPAct MDVI project, 2003-3006), has been used to plan the pupil profile and design the chosen activity for the chosen pupil. For more details about the ImPAct MDVI project, log on to: <http://www.mdvi-euronet.org> and on the link called "[ImPAct MDVI](#)" on the left side of the site.

For more information on the Sound and Picture project, including ways to make effective use of freely available software to create learning resources, can be found at www.soundandpicture.eu

For more details about the ImPAct MDVI project, log on to: www.mdvi-euronet.org and on the link called "[ImPAct MDVI](#)" on the left side of the site.

Dreaming Fingers

by *Philippe CLAUDET*

Les Doigts Qui Rêvent (Dreaming Fingers), a charity publishing tactile illustrated books for V.I children since 1994 and also organiser of the Typhlo & Tactus¹ international competition (www.tactus.org) is looking for partners for 2 European projects.

If I say that there are not many museums where Blind people can touch anything or even just a few things, I think I would not be wrong. If I say that there is no one way, or no one relief technique to adapt works of art in an accessible format, I guess I would not be contradicted. And if I say that Blind people who wish access to art, have this right, I know that this makes sense to them.

Having said these things, the problem still remains, that is to say, how to adapt tactilely any work of art, which technique(s) to use and at what cost. We are working on that project: to settle a European tactile art books collection.

Our idea is to find 5 European museums already involved in this type of activity or wishing to start. The curators will choose a certain number of works of art (modern art, contemporary art, and Brut art), 5 in each period with a certain consistency.

Then the relief technique will be selected because it fits with what is important in each work of art (up to each curator) and not because it is an easy or cheap one to use. Instead, the techniques have to serve, be at the disposal of the works of art.

We are looking for 5 museums from 5 different countries to apply for a European grant for a 24 months project.

Partners already found:

- A French museum
- Art sociologist for evaluation
- Producer (Les Doigts Qui Rêvent)

Contact: philippe.claudet@wanadoo.fr (website: www.Ldqr.org)

¹ Typhlo & Tactus has been a European project between 1999 and 2008 with a European grant.

Nowadays, in our western societies, children visual impairments are most of them low vision and have additional disabilities. It is not up to V.I. children to adapt themselves to books but for the books to be adapted to them. BUT, children with low vision have a wide spectrum of needs and abilities, and it is impossible for a single book to fit each V.I child (contrasts, font size, amount of elements/page...).

Our project is to gather professionals in the area of visual impairment from 3 other countries to prepare software featuring all the possible choices for parents and professionals, who can by several clicks on our web site, from a basic book, custom order all the necessary changes (planned for production) for a particular child. Of course, this huge project is not viable for a single country and this project has to find ways to make the cost of such books affordable for parents and schools.

We are looking for organisations for the Blind, schools for the Blind, parents associations... for a 24 months project.

Partners already found:

- Computer scientists (university)
- Low vision specialists
- Producer (Les Doigts Qui Rêvent)

Contact: philippe.claudet@wanadoo.fr (website: www.Ldqr.org)

140th anniversary of Strazdumuiza Residential Secondary school - training centre for blind and visually impaired children in May 2012

In May 2012 Strazdumuiza Residential Secondary school- training centre for blind and visually impaired children celebrates its 140th anniversary.

In honour of it and to improve the situation of the visually impaired in mainstream and special settings we are going to organise an international conference with discussion on the status of visual impairment in the hierarchy of special needs and in the context of the organisation of the educational process (as it had been discussed quite a lot in different conferences connected to teaching blind, visually impaired and MDVI children).

As we found in the Baltic seminar about the organization of the educational process of MDVI children (October 25, 26, 2011), this status isn't consolidated by any legislation in Baltic States. The goal of this discussion would be- to work out a resolution on the practical status of visual impairment in the context of the organisation of educational settings for blind, low vision and

MDVI children (we all know that there are many situations when, for example, the MDVI child is treated as if he were mentally retarded and the visual impairment is not taken into consideration). The resolution would be to submit it to the legislative institutions to take it into consideration when deciding about the special programmes and support according to one's special needs (including visual impairment).

We are going to invite specialists working in the field of blindness and visual impairment from all Baltic States, Nordic countries, Germany, the Netherlands, the UK, the USA. Of course, we don't know who will come for now, but I am sure that there will be representatives enough to exchange opinions and to work out a resolution. We also plan to invite responsible representatives from Ministries of Education of the Baltic States as well as from the government of Latvia.

We plan the **agenda of the conference** to be short presentations (15-20 min) from every country about the "status" of visual impairment when identifying an individual's special needs and prescribing the necessary adjustments in the educational process. Information, in other words, about the procedure that exists in a certain country, especially paying attention to MDVI children.

In the second part of the day we will summarize all the information and work out a resolution. We also can plan the time for short meeting to discuss further collaboration between our organizations / institutions.

It will be 1-day conference with the following celebration of the Anniversary on the next day. There will also be included in the programme, time to get to know our school and students.

We will offer our guests the chance to stay in our dormitories. The only inconvenience with it is that our guests will have to share 2 and 4-bed rooms.

ChildVision – a New Name in Visual Impairment Education in Ireland

By **Robert Jones**, ChildVision,
National Education Centre for Blind Children, Ireland.

St Joseph's Centre for the Visual Impaired, Dublin, has supported children and young people with a visual impairment for over 150 years. This year marks a major change for the organisation. From 1st February 2012, St Joseph's will be renamed ChildVision, National Education Centre for Blind Children.

ChildVision will maintain the wide range of services currently offered including a pre-school and vocational unit for learners with visual impairment, braille and alternative formats production for all young learners across Ireland, a resource centre for families, and a training unit for professionals. Recent initiatives include the introduction of equine-therapy for learners with complex needs.

ChildVision is also working to extend its provision beyond Dublin and its surrounding counties. Phase one of this has been achieved with the opening of a new pre-school and transcription service in Cork. ChildVision is also engaged with government and agencies to develop a much needed post-primary provision for learners with multiple disabilities and a visual impairment. For more information about the varied work of ChildVision and its plans for the future, please visit www.childvision.ie

European Dimension at ChildVision

ChildVision remains committed to extending and enhancing its European dimension through active participation in Socrates programmes as well as its membership of MDVI Euronet. ChildVision's latest project is called JOBS MDVI and builds on the successful ACTIVE MDVI Grundtvig Project. The aim of this new project, which brings together 15 partners from across Europe, is to explore concerns of professionals in addressing lifelong learning and work related needs of people with MDVI during transition into the workplace and into adulthood. At the end of the project, methodologies, advice for good practice and guidelines will be published.

"Ofek Liyladenu" – Israel National Association of Parents of the Blind and Visually Impaired

We, the parents of the blind and visually impaired aspire to build a community that will give a feeling of belonging and mutual support to parents, children and family members. We are the uniting force which advocates for our children and believe in our children's abilities. We will provide them with the necessary skills for them to become competent and independent young adults and will work with other organizations and government to insure the education and integration of our children.



"Ofek Liyladenu" – Our Children's Horizon, is a non-profit organization 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.

The main goals of "Ofek Liyladenu" are to:

- promote the needs of our children and advocate for services that will help them fully integrate into the mainstream of society,
- support parents of visually impaired and blind children from all over the country, and
- initiate new and innovative programming to meet the unmet needs of the blind and visually impaired.

Major activities in 2011 include:

Advocacy: During 2011 Ofek Liyladenu continued its advocacy work meeting with members of the Knesset, sitting on Knesset committees, and meeting with individuals in the Ministry of Education, Welfare and the National Insurance Institute. Our efforts this year took on special significance as many people in high level government ministries have retired and we want to support innovation in policy. A major focus of our advocacy this year was on having school books and material provided to school children in an accessible format for visually impaired and blind children. In conjunction with this effort, Ofek Liyladenu and B'zchut put in a joint petition to the high court pushing for action by the Ministry of Education to provide learning material (including matriculation exams), in Braille, large print, and audibly.

Parent Support: Central to Ofek Liyladenu approach in supporting parents is our "**Parent to Parent**" program. This consists of a group of parents who volunteer in meeting with and providing support for parents who have discovered that their children are blind or visually impaired. During the year "**Parent to Parent**" supported hundreds of parents in need of help. This included emotional support and knowledge around services available and the

rights of a child who is blind or visually impaired. In addition to this program, Ofek Liyladenu operates two **parent support groups** and have provided six "**family gatherings**", giving parents and siblings the opportunity to get to know each other, provide mutual support and relax from everyday struggles. One of the main meetings was at the Israel Guide Dog Center where our children staged a performance, and children and families enjoyed games, bike riding, karaoke and music. Additional activities included a summer retreat with over 20 families including 6 new families; an evening on the Jaffa beach with a workshop where families and children drummed together on drums, tin cans and their bodies; and an evening sing along with Ofek Liyladenu's 'graduate' musicians. Our **annual conference** this year focused on the many roles of the parent and was attended by more than a hundred members and professionals. In our commitment to keep parents up-to-date on all activities and developments in the field, we continue publishing our bi-annual **newsletter**, and distribute bi-monthly **e-letter** and operated our **hotline** for parents and professionals providing important information, referral and assistance

Public Education and Awareness: During 2011 Ofek Liyladenu continued with its public education and met with medical students at Hadassah Hospital, parents from the education department's kindergartens for blind and visually impaired; and support teachers who work in the school with students in Tel Aviv, Nazareth Elite and Ashdod. In our unique program called, "**Seeing it Differently**", youth, themselves blind or visually impaired, met with hundreds of people throughout the country explaining what it is like to be blind and how they function day-to-day. They met with groups that included national service volunteers, school children and staff, counselors in the Israeli Scouts Movement, prisoners in the Sharon Prison, staff of B'zchut - The Israeli Human Rights Center for People with Disabilities, and the Association of Civil Rights in Israel. In addition the Chairperson of Ofek Liyladenu spoke on a number of radio programs and the news paper ran stories interviewing our parents on the need for accessible school books and materials. Our **website** has also been revised this year providing updated information on services and activities of the organization.

Special Programs: In keeping with Ofek Liyladenu goal of initiating innovative program to fill gaps in services to children and youth, Ofek Liyladenu continued to operate a number of special programs. **Work on the Horizon** is a summer work program for high school youth that celebrated its 10th anniversary. This year 36 youth participated in the program which included pre-employment training and two weeks of summer employment. This summer we also carried out a **workshop for young girls**, exploring adolescence and the special needs and issues of growing up. **Musical Dreams** is a program that has made music and the study of music prominent in our programming. This year the program offered subsidized music lessons to 35 children and youth throughout the country. Home **Tutoring** is a program that provides one hour of extra help to children and youth in their homes. The

program utilizes teachers and students throughout the country to provide subsidized tutoring to 50 children. Where the amount of time we can provide is small, we have seen that it has brought results and provides additional support for students of all ages. In order to help parents in need to acquire equipment to help their children integrate into school and home Ofek Liyladenu has developed a **support fund** where it can assist in the cost of special equipment. This year we have provided eight grants to needy families from all over the country. Out of the need to provide digital materials to the blind community Ofek Liyladenu took on the initiative of developing an **Electronic Library** (the first in Israel). It provides 'on line' digital materials to the blind community, this project has begun making newspapers, magazines and books available via the internet in text to voice form. It has been met with great enthusiasm and will continue to grow in the coming years.

Ofek Liyladenu continues to be the only national organization of parents of the blind that represents the needs and rights of blind children in all facets of life. The advocacy, parent support and initiation of innovative programs are essential in helping children grow and enter the mainstream of society with the skills, talent and education they need. Ofek Liyladenu's work over the years, has impacted thousands of blind and visually impaired children and has influenced policy in the education and social services provided to the community while heightening public awareness.

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Paul and Sabriye letter from Kerala

Dear Colleague,

Do you need vision to be a visionary?

When I became blind many years ago, I had this dream that one day the world would not connect blindness automatically with charity. I wished to be seen as a potential contributor and problem solver. In our Kanthari Institute we are interested to incubate problem solvers, leaders for ethical social change.

And we are especially interested in empowering talented, creative and energetic blind and partially sighted visionaries who come up with innovative ideas that make the world an equal level playing field for the blind and the sighted.

In order to reach this goal we have developed a very practical, 7 month leadership program with a difference; one that is geared specifically for people with big dreams and passion; people who have overcome adversity in their lives; people who want to help others in their struggles, or develop new solutions for our world problems. We invite participants from all over the world, and with all levels of education to bring their dreams and motivation; International experts (catalysts) conduct hands-on, practical workshops to help bring those dreams to reality.

We are looking for the following categories of change agents:

- **Red: Advocates**
Red kantharis are fiery, courageous, and resilient. They fight for a world free from discrimination, negative attitudes or harmful norms. Their goal is to provoke a mind set change in their communities through advocacy.
- **Green: Initiators**
Kanthari initiators are innovative, persistent and passionate. They create ethical social change by starting grassroots projects with innovative approaches. Schools for marginalized, training centers for the blind, environmental projects are only some of many examples of initiatives that make the world a better place.
- **Ivory: Entrepreneurs**
Kanthari entrepreneurs are focused, determined and analytic. They use business as a tool for sustainable social change. The main goal is not to make profit, but to use business to find ways to create structures that benefit those who are usually left out.
- **Yellow: Inventors**
Kanthari inventors are logical, technical, and practical. They create new products, strategies or concepts for social change. They can be active in the areas of environment, computer technology, accessibility for people with disabilities, agriculture, education and many more. The goal of their invention is to improve the living conditions of marginalized groups or protect the environment.
- **Purple: Artists**
Kanthari artists are creative, spicy, and interested in a major change. They use their creativity and art as a tool for making a difference. Musicians, painters, authors, film makers and many more provoke a positive mind set change through their work.

At Kanthari we don't make a difference between blind and sighted participants.

Everyone is equally challenged and everyone works hand in hand. What counts is an ethical attitude towards people, life and work, a lot of energy and commitment to contribute in ones society and a vision, an innovative idea how to solve old and new problems. We are looking for those who have the strength to be forces of good, not victims of circumstance.

Please apply if you want to realize your own dream for change, and encourage others to look at our website: <http://www.kanthari.org>
For those who want to listen to our Kanthari newsletter
<http://media.kanthari.org/audio/Hot-Bite/Hot-Bite-March-2012.mp3>

Looking forward to hearing from you,
With best regards,
Sabriye Tenberken, Co-Founder Braille Without Borders – Kanthari

PS Please find below the text of the **Kanthari brochure**:

Are you dreaming of social change?
Kanthari, International Institute for Social Entrepreneurs and Change-Makers
A small chilli can make a HUGE Difference!

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Trivandrum, 695020 Kerala, India
Phone: +91 471 2395677
Mail: office@iiseconnect.org
WWW: www.kanthari.org
Facebook: [facebook.com/bwbiise](https://www.facebook.com/bwbiise)

Kanthari in India, offers a 7 month leadership program for visionaries who have overcome adversity, and who are keen to drive social change. This very practical program cultivates credible, ethical and effective initiators.

Why Kanthari?

Kanthari is one of the spiciest chillies in the world. It grows wild in the homes of Kerala and is famous for its medicinal use. Kanthari thinking is fiery, strong, colourful, self-seeding and helpful everywhere. Kanthari action is courageous, innovative and wide-reaching.

The idea for Kanthari was born in the Tibet autonomous Region, PR China. There, in 1998, Sabriye Tenberken (German) and Paul Kronenberg (Dutch) set up the first training centre to empower the blind.

There were many challenges, but one of the largest was a lack of belief from international experts. "Stop dreaming! Stay on the ground!" But, in only 7 years, and against the odds, the centre had a preparatory school, a Braille Printing Press, a vocational training farm and a self-integration programme.

Paul and Sabriye then understood the urgent need for a unique institute - a "Dream Factory" where passionate people are encouraged to dream big - a

place where they can develop all the necessary skills, tools and attitudes to make their dreams real.

Kanthari is much more than a training center. It is a spring board for provocative thinkers and driven doers, for those who want to bring spice into society!

We are searching for talented people who have the guts to challenge the status quo and the spirit to come up with innovative solutions for old and new problems.

Kanthari dreams of a world-wide community: Individuals starting programs based on empowerment, like schools for the blind, or training centers for the disabled; Individuals planning environmental projects, or creating technical innovations; Individuals changing mind-sets by offering new ways of thinking and challenging harmful norms.

Kanthari trains participants in public speaking, finance, innovative project planning, writing proposals, fundraising and social marketing campaigns. Participants learn about legal aspects of starting a project and how to set up effective and ethical programs. All hands-on, practical workshops are conducted by international experts (named "catalysts").

Kanthari fosters participants from all over the world. Some have university degrees while others have little to no formal education. Some are blind or physically disabled, others have no disabilities at all. Important is a sense of ownership, motivation, creativity, talent and passion to make the world a better place and the strength to be forces of good rather than victims of circumstance.

Apply now: www.bwb-iise.org/apply.

Examples of projects realized by Kanthari graduates:

Tibet - PR China - *Kyila*: Kiki's Kindergarten
Kyila, a Braille Without Borders student and IISE graduate (2009) runs the first inclusive kindergarten on the roof of the world.
www.kikikids.org

Japan - *Yoshimi Horiuchi*: Always Reading Caravan
Yoshimi runs a mobile library which promotes the joy of reading amongst people in rural areas of Thailand.
www.alwaysreadingcaravan.org

Nepal - *Khom Raj Sharma*: Inclusion Empowerment Center
Khom, a blind Kanthari alumni, is running a computer training center and a language school for blind and partially sighted adolescents in Pokhara, Nepal.
www.iecnepal.org.np

Announcement: International Master's Degree Programme



Master Visual Impairment: Assessment and Support

Visual Impairment: Assessment and Support for professionals in the education, care and rehabilitation of people with visual impairment and people with intellectual and visual impairment

How can professionals provide good support to people with visual impairment or people with intellectual and visual impairment if their expertise in low vision and its consequences for daily life is limited and not up to date? Vision is one of the body's most complex functions and many disciplines are involved with vision science.

Support for people with visual impairment requires an interdisciplinary approach. Up-to-date knowledge and new developments in vision research should be part of daily practice. Research findings need to be translated to practice, aiming at smart solutions for daily-life problems. Organizations need professionals with interdisciplinary expertise in vision, visual impairment and the combination with intellectual and multiple disabilities – professionals with the skills to translate interdisciplinary knowledge into adequate support in rehabilitation, education and care.

The ICEVI-Europe (International Council for Education and Rehabilitation of People with Visual Impairment) has recognized the need for such professional training. In 2010, cooperation was begun in the Netherlands with Royal Dutch Visio, Centre of Expertise for blind and partially sighted people / the University of Groningen, Department of Special Needs Education & Youth Care, and the Research Centre on Profound and Multiple Disabilities / LEVRETA (Leonardo European Vision Rehabilitation and Education Training Association) / and the WHO-FIC Collaborating Centre in the Netherlands. As a result, the University of Groningen will start in September 2012 an International Master's Degree Programme Visual Impairment: Assessment and Support.

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

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

Detailed information and application forms:

<http://www.rug.nl/prospectiveStudents/degreeProgrammes/mastersProgrammes/masters/croho66607vi> or www.rug.nl and the keywords Master Visual impairment.



More information:

Curriculum coordinator: Dr. *P.L. Looijestijn*,

Course director: Professor *C. Vlaskamp*

Academic advisor: *A.M. Arendshorst* LLM, e-mail: a.m.arendshorst@rug.nl,

**Research in education and rehabilitation sciences
Third Announcements and Call for Papers**

Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences University of Zagreb announces the 8th international conference RESEARCH IN EDUCATION AND REHABILITATION SCIENCES

Dear Sir/Madam, the 8th international conference, organized by the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Zagreb (www.erf.unizg.hr) in cooperation with Indiana State University, FEDORA-European Forum for Student Guidance, European Association for Mental Health in Intellectual Disabilities (EAMHID) and British Psychological Society - Faculty for Learning Disabilities, will take place in Zagreb, on September 27-29, 2012. Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences has been the seat of learning and development of these disciplines in Croatia over the last 50 years.

Plenary lectures:

- Kelley Johnson, Ph.D , University of Bristol, UK
Topic: Inclusive research;
- Laura Justice, Ph.D., Ohio State University, USA
Topic: Profiling the Emergent Literacy Skills of Young Children with Disabilities: A Key Mechanism to Early Intervention for Reading Problems;
- Linda Liebenberg, Ph.D., Resilience Research centre at Dalhousie University, Canada
Topic: Fostering resilience in vulnerable youth: The role of responsive services
- Josipa Bašić, Ph.D., Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences University of Zagreb
Topic: Social and emotional learning – Positive development and prevention of children and youth's risk behaviors

Programme Committee:

Rea Fulgosi-Masnjak (Chair), Willy Aastrup, Nigel Beail, Ante Bilić Prcić, Sandra Bradarić Jončić, Emica Farago, Branka Jablan, Zora Jačova, Nivex Koller Trbović, Irma Kovčo Vukadin, Mojca Lipec Stopar, Branko Nikolić, Miroslav Prstačić and Sudipto Roy.

Organization Committee:

Daniela Bratković (Chair), Vesna Čavić, Ivana Jeđud Borić, Marina Milković (conference secretaries), Maja Ceganec, Daniela Cvitković, Dora Dodig, Dalibor Doležal, Andrea Fajdetić, Gordana Hržica, Jasmina Ivšac Pavliša, Ana Leko Krhen, Natalija Lisak, Martina Lotar, Ivana Maurović, Josipa Mihić, Anja Mirosavljević, Renata Mohr Nemčić, Miranda Novak, Tihana Novak Delić, Ljiljana Pintarić Mlinar, Jasmina Stošić and Sanja Šimleša.

| IMPORTANT DATES | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Extended Submission deadline | April 1, 2012 |
| Acceptance notification | May 15, 2012 |
| Posters abstract submission deadline | April 30, 2012 |
| Posters acceptance notification | June 15, 2012 |

As a preconference event of the 8th international scientific conference "Research in Education and Rehabilitation Sciences", the 6th International Foster Care Network Conference will take place in Zagreb, at the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences, on the 25th of September 2012.

For more information about the conference and preconference please refer to www.conference.erf.hr.

You are welcome to join the scientific discussion among international and Croatian experts about the new topics in education, rehabilitation and similar scientific disciplines. We are looking forward to our cooperation.

Sincerely,
on behalf of Organizing and Scientific Committees
Daniela Bratkovic, Ph.D., Vice- Dean for Science

JOINT LETTER TO THE MEMBERSHIPS OF WBU AND ICEVI



Dear Colleagues:

As you will recall from articles in the WBU E-Bulletin and the Educator, for the past two years the ICEVI and WBU have been working collaboratively with the IAPB through the establishment of the Vision Alliance, which has its objective to enhance opportunities for cooperation and synergy among our organizations. One of these areas of cooperation has been discussions around the possibility of holding the General Assemblies of both WBU and ICEVI at the same time and in the same place. This discussion came about following the need for ICEVI to cancel its assembly planned for Bangkok Thailand in 2010, their subsequent decision to move their General Assembly year to 2012 and the plans that WBU had already commenced to look at Bangkok as a possible venue for its own General Assembly in 2012.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

With warm regards,
Lord Colin Low, President ICEVI
Mrs. Maryanne Diamond, President WBU

National news from EBU

Austria

From Austria, news of important legislation to oblige taxi drivers to transport guide dogs. The law came into force on the first of January 2012. Also, in another subject close to EBU's heart, the Austrian Federation of the Blind and Partially Sighted used the handing over of the first Austrian-produced electric car to call for mandatory minimum noise levels for electric and electric-hybrid vehicles. *More about Austria...*

http://www.euroblind.org/newsletter/online/2012/jan_feb/newsletter/online/en/newsletter/national-news/nr/1137/

Norway - NABP excited about development of magazine

Our friends in Norway would like to share information about their colourful and popular quarterly magazine, which is offered free of charge and has received good reviews. It is published in cooperation with media giant Aller, which takes care of layout and assists in editorial work. *More about Norway...*

http://www.euroblind.org/newsletter/online/2012/jan_feb/newsletter/online/en/newsletter/national-news/nr/1175/

Poland - New Opportunities for the Blind

An important project in Poland examines the position of blind and partially sighted people in the labour market, and offers support and practical solutions to the problems exposed. This project is a useful addition to the Hidden Majority report for Poland, produced in 2011 by Fred Reid and Philippa Simkiss. *More about Poland...*

http://www.euroblind.org/newsletter/online/2012/jan_feb/newsletter/online/en/newsletter/national-news/nr/1135/

Portugal - A conference on Inclusive Design

ACAPO, the Portuguese Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted, is organizing a conference on Inclusive Design which will take place over two days in Lisbon at the end of June. It is expected to attract around 200 participants from various professions who shape the world we live in. *More about Portugal...*

http://www.euroblind.org/newsletter/online/2012/jan_feb/newsletter/online/en/newsletter/national-news/nr/1141/

Slovenia - Adults with special needs in lifelong learning

In Slovenia, different rehabilitation, educational and occupational programmes are carried out by the regional branches of the Union of the Blind and Partially Sighted of Slovenia. They aim both to improve autonomy, self confidence and levels of reinsertion, particularly among the elderly, whom, as

we know, constitute a significant proportion of the blind and partially sighted community. *More about Slovenia...*

http://www.euroblind.org/newsletter/online/2012/jan_feb/newsletter/online/en/newsletter/national-news/nr/1176/

United Kingdom - RNIB serves legal proceedings on bmibaby

The Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) is taking legal action over low cost airline bmibaby's failure to ensure web access for blind and partially sighted customers. Despite receiving expert advice the bmibaby website remains inaccessible to those using screen readers or those who cannot use a mouse. *More about United Kingdom...*

http://www.euroblind.org/newsletter/online/2012/jan_feb/newsletter/online/en/newsletter/national-news/nr/1142/

Announcements

Innovative products from RNIB

Over the years RNIB has developed and made available a wide range of accessible products for blind and partially sighted people throughout the world. In this article John Godber presents two new products; iGlasses, designed by RNIB and Ambutech, a low cost option to help wearers avoid injury to their upper body and head from hazardous obstacles and the RNIB PenFriend which is an audio labeller available again at low cost. Two innovations which may help to make your lives easier. *More about Innovative products...*

http://www.euroblind.org/newsletter/online/2012/jan_feb/newsletter/online/en/newsletter/announcements/nr/1139/

Feature

Copyright and book sharing.

Our feature this month looks at the complex issue of copyright and the sharing of books and literature amongst the blind and partially sighted community. This topic is one of the key issues in EBU's campaigning and lobbying policies. Dan Pescod, who is at the forefront of our campaign, provides a comprehensive overview of the situation. Following this is an article on an accessible book project from Italy, designed to make more digital publications available on the Italian market in a format accessible to blind and visually impaired people, in full respect of the rights of both authors and publishers. *More about Copyright and book sharing...*

http://www.euroblind.org/newsletter/online/2012/jan_feb/newsletter/online/en/newsletter/feature/nr/1140/

Contact us

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This year's WBU members conference notices and links:

- **May 6 to 10:** the 5th General Assembly of the International Council on English Braille is taking place in Johannesburg, South Africa: for details go to: <http://iceb.org/>
- **May 15 to 18:** IKK International Congress of War Blind, in Pretoria South Africa: www.ikk2012.org.za
- **September 17 to 21:** The 13th International conference on Mobility and Transport for Elderly and disabled persons will take place in New Delhi, India. To register go to: <http://www.transed2012.in/>
- **September 17 to 20:** IAPB 9th General Assembly, in Hyderabad, India. For details go to: <http://9ga.iapb.org/>
- **November 8 & 9:** AFUB 7th General Assembly, Bangkok, Thailand.
- **November 10 to 18** – WBU/ICEVI General Assemblies - Bangkok, Thailand. Our website is now up and running so you can read more about this exciting event: www.wbu-icevi2012.org
- **November 26 to 28** - Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) 1st World Congress, to be held in Agra, India. To learn more link here: <http://www.cbrglobal.org/>

Upcoming events

27-29 June 2012

6th ICEVI Balkan Conference, Cluj Napoca (Romania)

New Developments in Educational Policies, Research and Practices in Visual Impairment

Extension of the *deadline for registration and submission of abstracts* until **April 15, 2012**

e-mail: icevi2012ro@gmail.com

website: <http://psihoped.ubbcluj.ro/icevi/>

11-13 July 2012

13th International Conference on Computers Helping People with Special Needs, Linz (Austria)

Pre-Conference on 9-10 July 2012

ICCHP focuses on all aspects related to AT (Assistive Technologies) and ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) for people with disabilities. User involvement and user-centered design are the underlying general topic of ICCHP leading to an interdisciplinary discussion of all stakeholders in the value chain that allows social innovation in the information society.

For further information visit **website:** www.icchp.org/node/295

or write to **e-mail:** icchp@jku.at

30 July - 3 August 2012

35th Congress of the Association of Pedagogy for the Blind and Partially Sighted, Chemnitz (Germany)

With this year's motto "Diversity and Quality", discussion about inclusion will be pursued. To this end, four symposia will cover the following topics: Inclusion - Development of educational institutions and professionalism; (Multi-)cultural diversity of learning opportunities; Inclusive living environments of adults with multiple disabilities; Specific offers in education and rehabilitation.

For further information visit **website:** www.vbs-2012.de/en/home or

write to **e-mail:** info@vbs-2012.de

27-29 September 2012

8th International Conference "Research in education and rehabilitation sciences", Zagreb (Croatia)

Third Announcements and Call for Papers [PDF]:

<http://www.icevi-europe.org/enletter/49-zagreb.pdf>

website: www.conference.erf.hr

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

30 June - 05 July 2013

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

e-mail: icevieurope2013@gmail.com

website: www.icevieurope2013.com,

<http://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.