

ICEVI European Newsletter

Issue 51, Volume 18 number 3, December 2012

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

Subscription:

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

Content:

- From the Board.....3
- European Awards4
- COMENIUS PROJECT "TOUCHING MATHS"5
- 1st Network Conference EC Project.....8
- Memorandum of Agreement between Enviter and ICEVI..... 11
- Royal Blind School: A Strategic Plan for the Future 11
- Pay it Forward for the Blind 17
- EASPD – Barometer of Inclusive Education 21
- ECB: Second series of euro banknotes 21
- Membership 23
- Events in 2013..... 24
- Erratum: South European countries..... 24

[www . ICEVI - Europe . org](http://www.ICEVI-Europe.org)

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



8th ICEVI EUROPEAN CONFERENCE
on EDUCATION and RE/HABILITATION of
PEOPLE with VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

A CHANGING FUTURE WITH THE ICF
June 30 – July 5, 2013 ISTANBUL - TURKEY



Web: www.iceviueurope2013.com E-Mail: iceviueurope2013@gmail.com



The language of newsletter is English, but you can use Google translator service to obtain on-line translation on <http://www.icevi-europe.org/enletter/issue51.html>

From the Board



The year 2012 will be over before we realise. It has been a year in which many of you have made great efforts to support the parents of children and adults with a visual impairment. This commitment is always impressive.

2012 was also the year in which the Board of ICEVI-Europe and the Organising Committee in Turkey started preparations for the 8th European ICEVI conference in 2013.

At the same time many professionals have held meetings to share their experiences with colleagues and to try to improve the quality of education and re/habilitation for people with a visual impairment.

In Cluj Napoca (Romania) the 6th ICEVI Balkan conference took place with the title: New Developments in Educational Policies, Research and Practices in Visual Impairment.

In Chemnitz (Germany) the VBS organised the 35th Congress of the Association of Pedagogy for the Blind and Partially Sighted.

In Nantes (France) the 48^{es} Journées Pédagogiques du GPEAA took place with the title: Comment réinventer l'établissement pour enfants déficients visuels : fondamentaux et ressources.

In November the first WBU/ICEVI Conference took place in Bangkok, Thailand.

More than 1000 participants attended the conference. In this conference much attention was paid to the campaign: Education for All, Children with Visual Impairment. Several Board members of ICEVI-Europe attended the conference, in contrast to previous ICEVI Conferences, which had been accessible only for a limited group.

Now for the New Year, 2013: we look forward to our 8th European Conference, which will take place in Istanbul, Turkey.

The conference promises to be a true meeting place for people who are involved with the education and re/habilitation of people with a visual impairment of all age categories.

An important issue is that the conference is based on the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), a system that is used more and more internationally and contributes to a new concept of support and a mutual language for all involved in the field.

We will be free from the medical and social concept of support. Increasingly human rights will hold the prominent position. This is a huge development, which also places responsibility with governments and service providers.

Please do not forget to pay your membership fees of ICEVI-Europe. It will provide you with voting rights in the General Assembly, which will be held next year during the European Conference. The payment of membership fees also entitles you to a discount on the conference fee.

I wish you all Merry Christmas holidays and a Happy New Year. I hope to see many of you in Istanbul.

*On behalf of the Board of ICEVI-Europe,
Drs J.A. (Hans) Welling, Chairman*

European Awards



For the first time the Board of ICEVI-Europe has decided to present an award to three people who have made a special contribution to the lives of people with a visual impairment.

Therefore each individual or corporate member of ICEVI-Europe is invited to submit to the Awards Committee the nominees who meet the following criteria:

1. have made a significant and lasting contribution to the field of education and/or re-habilitation of blind and partially sighted people, that has had an impact beyond their own school or organisation and
2. have made a significant and long lasting contribution to ICEVI-Europe.

Nominations should be prepared in an abstract that does not to exceed two single space typewritten pages. This document should explain how the person

meets these criteria and why they would be a worthy recipient.
It would be valuable when the nomination contains letters of recommendation.



Please send nominations to the secretary,
Elly Aardoom ellyaardoom@visio.org

The Board will appoint a committee, who will judge the nominations and make a final choice.

COMENIUS PROJECT "TOUCHING MATHS"

Maths and sciences are difficult for braille users and severely visually impaired learners, because these subjects are highly visually orientated. But, when the right adaptations, alternative methods and materials are provided, maths and sciences surely are accessible for them!

Integration and inclusion

More and more visually impaired pupils are integrated in mainstream secondary schools. For the maths and science teachers it is not self-evident to give them some extra attention in the classroom without depriving the sighted peers. Furthermore, these mainstream teachers aren't trained to teach blind pupils.

Especially in the field of maths and sciences, teachers have low expectations of braille pupils. Sometimes these pupils get less challenging assignments and less feedback. In some cases, fields of maths and sciences that are regarded as being 'too difficult' are left out of their curriculum. In the end, they perform at a lower level than their sighted peers. And because of this, the expectations of the teachers and the braille pupils diminish even more. We call this 'the Pygmalion effect': the impact of expectations. Only successful experiences in the field of maths and sciences can change this negative spiral into a positive one.

Because of these reasons, far too little blind and severely visually impaired pupils study maths and sciences in secondary school, and even less in higher education. Therefore we, a group of specialists in the field of education for

visually impaired pupils and students, decided to start a European school project on this topic.

The European project 'Touching Maths'

'Touching maths' is a European project on maths and sciences for severely visually impaired pupils and students. It is a Comenius partnership of six schools and resource centers. The two-year project started out in September 2010 and finished in September 2012. The following partners are involved:

- Secondary School Spermalie – Bruges, Belgium
- Royal Visio – Rotterdam, the Netherlands
- Huseby Resource Center – Oslo, Norway
- INJA – Paris, France
- Tartu Emajõe School – Tartu, Estonia
- Johann-August-Zeune Schule für Blinde – Berlin, Germany

Our goal is to stimulate greater equal opportunities for braille users in the field of maths and sciences, by providing them and their special teachers and mainstream teachers with better methods and educational materials. Our message: maths education is important for all students, including blind and visually impaired pupils. Maths & sciences may be less accessible for them, but it is possible and rewarding.

Since our target group of severely visually impaired pupils and experts in the field of maths is very small, it was necessary to gather expertise on an international level. The many positive reactions of schools for the blind, counselling centers, transcription centers, etc. all across Europe indicated the need for this kind of cooperation. All of us are looking for solutions for the same problems, without knowing what's already being done in other countries.

Cooperation on a European level

For the project we gathered the expertise of six different European schools and resource centers. We all have our own traditions, habits and educational systems. We have different points of view on education and integration, on independence and autonomy. Sometimes we crashed into intense discussions. Do we have to adapt the national maths exams for the braille pupil? Is that fair? What is the best for the braille students and their independency? Although we often had different opinions, we always discussed respectfully. It was very interesting and useful to talk about these topics.

Since there is no uniformity in the organisation of special education and itinerant teaching, it is difficult to give a uniform advice. Each system has advantages and disadvantages. And we are not the ones who have the power to change the systems.

Furthermore, every nation has its own (mathematical) braille code. In some countries all pupils work in a digital way, in others braille books are still printed on paper, although digitalisation is in progress everywhere. For these reasons

the development of technical tools has to be done locally. We believe a European mathematical braille code could have a unifying function, could enlarge the scope of the target group, and could lower the costs of technical aids and adaptations. But we also experienced this is a utopic idea on short term. Nevertheless cooperation on a national and international level is necessary to share and gather expertise.

As a final product we created the website www.touchingmaths.net, which is a pedagogical tool for pupils, itinerant teachers and mainstream maths teachers. We presented this tool on different occasions in various countries. On the 25th of May 2012 we organised a training course in Bruges, Belgium, to present our project and website. We gave 4 workshops: 'Working with graphs', 'Methods for linear calculating', 'Alternatives for calculators' and 'Relief drawings & objects'. You can find information on these topics on our website.

Our pedagogical advice

We think it is important that all students get the opportunity to develop their capacities in maths to reach their utmost potential, braille pupils included. For now, this isn't the case yet. We believe this project was a step in the right direction, but there's still a lot of work to be done. There is a need for more research and activities on a European level. For example, a project to improve cooperation in maths between the normally sighted peers and the braille pupil would be very useful.

Furthermore we believe that the expertise of the special schools for the blind should be preserved, certainly in the field of maths and sciences. Integration is a trend in European education, especially for the pupils who are cognitively strong. We support the idea of integration. But we do believe that itinerant teachers have the task to transfer the expertise of the special schools into the mainstream education. They should guard especially the level of maths and sciences of the braille pupils. Therefore they should have a scientific degree, or at least the option to ask for assistance of a colleague who's an expert in maths and sciences for braille students.

In order to optimize the transition from secondary to higher level, this pedagogical expertise is needed to open up options in education. Too often braille pupils are discouraged to study maths and sciences, and more difficult fields of the curriculum are being left out for convenience. A good itinerant teacher assists the mainstream maths teacher by offering accessible documents, pre-teaching to prepare the pupil for the classes, tactile objects and relief drawings, sufficient descriptions or other alternative methods. During individual sessions, he checks if the braille pupil has understood the subject matter. This solid base in secondary level is a precondition for a smooth transition to higher level education.

Concerning tasks and exams, we think it is important to permit adaptations. Doing so you offer the braille pupil the opportunity to perform on the same level as his peers. These adaptations should be made by an expert

and are designed to stimulate independency. Eg. Blind pupils will need a sighted assistant to perform non-adapted tasks based on the output of a graphic calculator. We believe it is more important to test whether the braille pupil has understood the subject matter, and if he can use an alternative and accessible calculator such as Excel, rather than to oblige him to use the same method as his peers. By expecting them to use the same method, their independency and growth are being limited.

Many mainstream teachers are afraid to teach a braille pupil in the setting of a large group of sighted peers. They are in great need of teaching tips and additional educational materials. We hope they will find inspiration and advice on our website. We believe that having a braille pupil in the classroom is an enrichment for the peers. The maths teacher is challenged to choose for a different approach and to explain subject matters in an alternative way. The use of verbal descriptions and tactile objects requires the peers to address more senses than usual. And this cumulation of experiences will deepen everybody's mathematical insight.

DOWNLOAD Touching maths leaflet [PDF, 13 MB]
www.icevi-europe.org/enletter/issue51-04.pdf

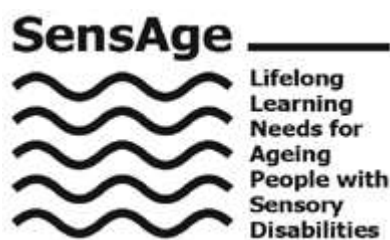
September 2012

Sarah van Liefferinge, Secondary School Spermalie, Bruges (Belgium)

Annemiek van Leendert, Royal Visio, Rotterdam (the Netherlands)

1st Network Conference

EC Project Number: 517916-LLP-1-2011-1-FR-GRUNDTVIG-GNW



The first of three Annual Conferences organised by the EC Grundtvig Network Project **Lifelong Learning Needs for Ageing People with Sensory Disabilities (SensAge)** (www.sensage.eu) took place in Zagreb, Croatia, on September 30, 2012. This **SensAge** one day conference focused on the current state of knowledge in this field, and presentations gave to the Conference the widest available review of developments in Europe and Quebec for Ageing People with Sensory Disabilities.



It was organised in association with the University of Zagreb (www.ufzg.unizg.hr).

After the Welcome by *Professor Ljubica Pribanic* of the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences, Anne Rabiller, Directrice Pôle Handicap, Personnes Agées et Soins, Mutualité Française Anjou-Mayenne, Angers, France – the Managing Partner of **SensAge** – set the tone of the meeting by emphasizing that the ageing population should not be regarded as a burden and a cost but should be cherished as transmitters of knowledge and experience and the quality of their lives should be increased. The **Key Note Presentation on Dual sensory impairment in the older population, a challenge for epidemiological approaches, prevention, rehabilitation and professional training** was given by *Marie-Dominique Lussier*, Geriatric Doctor, ANAP, France; this was followed by very informative and wide-ranging presentations by *Alan Suttie*, Teaching and Social Work, Fife Society for the Blind, Scotland, UK; *Ivona Salaj*, Educational and Rehabilitation specialist, Croatian Association of Deafblind Persons DODIR, Croatia; *Valerie Wood-Gaiger*, Retired Volunteer, Learn with Grandma, Wales, UK; *Isabella Ballesteros*, FIBHGM, Spain; *Marit Bjerke*, Special Education Teacher, Oslo Voksenopplaering Skullerud and *Thorhild Løkkeberg Pedersen*, Head of Department, OVS, Norway; *Félix Villar Gómez*, President of ONCE'S General Council's Commission for Ageing Members and Trainer of Special Needs Teachers, ONCE, Spain; *Gudbjorg Arnadottir*, National Institute for the Blind, Visually Impaired, and Deafblind, Iceland; *Krisztina Kovács*, Lecturer, ELTE University Bárczi, Faculty of Special Education, Hungary; Peter Verstraten, Senior Project Manager/Science Coordinator, Royal Dutch Visio, the Netherlands; *Stefana Cankova*, Office and Membership Officer, EASPD, Belgium; *Blaithin Gallagher*, Head of Projects & Research, NCBI, Ireland; and *Sylvie Bilodeau*, Directrice des services professionnels et de réadaptation, Institut Nazareth et Louis-Braille, Québec, Canada.

During the Conference, **Life is for Living: Let's Live it!** – a DVD presentation by Joe Ballard (Ireland) – was introduced and shown by Blaithin

Gallagher (NCBI) and the short video was amazingly inspiring and motivating for all.

The topics of presentations and discussions ranged from dual sensory loss in older people to the European context and covered various topics such as Education and rehabilitation of elderly deafblind in Croatia; Creating an international network for Intergenerational Learning, Deaf people in hospital situations; Ageing people with sensory disabilities - deaf and hearing impaired, Social services by and for the ageing members of ONCE; Ageing People with visual impairments - the Icelandic approach; The role of functional vision assessment in the overall rehabilitation of ageing people with visual impairment; A project in the region of Den Bosch with three aims: setting up a local network, implementation of vision screening in nursing homes, and transfer of expertise; and Independent living and acquired vision loss in older people - rehabilitation services for ageing people with sensory disabilities in Québec, Canada.

The conference included an introductory presentation on the set-up of the **SensAge Interactive Knowledge Base** by *Erica Smit*, Knowledge Broker, Royal Dutch Visio, the Netherlands, *Froukje Veenstra*, Senior Knowledge Broker, Royal Dutch Visio, the Netherlands and *Katinka Bergmans*, Functional administrator intra- and internet, Royal Dutch Visio, the Netherlands, followed by examples collected by CENTICH on ICT for Autonomy – SensAge by *Erve Sylvie*, Head Manager, CENTICH, MFAM, France and *Jawad Hajjam*, Development Manager, CENTICH, MFAM, France.

John Harris, SensAge Project Coordinator, Vision Europe Limited, UK gave the closing speech and emphasized the need for developing resources and a knowledge base in the theme of the Project for the future of Europe.

The participants found great potential in the transfer of know-how and the sharing of knowledge on a European level. At the moment, too little information is available on a European level about the learning needs of ageing people with sensory disabilities and the Project aims to be a cornerstone and the reference point within the European Union for developments in lifelong learning and enablement for ageing people with sensory disabilities in order to maintain their independence and to improve their quality of life

If you would like to keep in contact with **SensAge** and become part of our growing network of correspondents, please contact our Coordinator

John Harris, *Vision Europe Limited*
johngharris@btopenworld.com

Memorandum of Agreement between Enviter and ICEVI

The presidents of Enviter, Steven Scheffer and of ICEVI-Europe, Hans Welling have signed an agreement of cooperation.

Both organizations will inform each other about actual matters. Also managerial exchange will take place. In this way the objectives of both organizations will be better realized.

For further information about this agreement visit our website www.icevi-europe.org



Royal Blind School: A Strategic Plan for the Future



THE ROYAL BLIND SCHOOL



Context of the Strategic Review Process

The Royal Blind School in Edinburgh is the only residential school in Scotland for children and young people who are blind or visually impaired (VI). The school caters for those whose single disability is VI, together with those who have VI and additional support needs (ASN) and those who have severe and complex multiple disabilities and visual impairment (MDVI).

The Royal Blind School is one of only seven national Grant-Aided Special Schools (GASS) in Scotland. Although the grant comes from the Scottish Government, who set the broad general guidelines for education in Scotland, decisions about education are devolved to the 32 Local Government Authorities. Legislation makes a 'presumption to mainstream' except in specific circumstances.

Over the past 5 years, the pupil roll of the Royal Blind School has been declining as pupils are increasingly educated in the mainstream or in areas close to the family home. At the time of writing the total population is 62 pupils across both campuses although the school is able to accommodate in excess of 120 pupils including 54 with MDVI.

In early 2012, the Board commissioned the principal of the Royal Blind school, Julie Fardell, to undertake a Strategic Review of the Royal Blind School, whose purpose was to provide a basis for firm decisions regarding Royal Blind's contribution to the education of children and young people with VI in the medium and long-term future.

The Scottish Government had, in 2010, commissioned Peter Doran to carry out the broader 'Strategic Review of Learning Provision for Children and Young People with Complex Additional Support Needs'. The Doran review was subsequently published in November 2012.

The Royal Blind Board considered the findings and recommendations of the Royal Blind School Strategic Review at the end of June 2012, and the result is a new long term strategy for the school. This report is a summary of the important findings of the review.

Summary of the Strategic Review

Method

The methodology used to carry out the Strategic Review included:

- Reviewing relevant legislation, literature and prevalence data
- Analysing enrolment trends and influences
- Surveying and interviewing key stakeholders and analysing the responses
- Evaluating alternative service delivery strategies

Key Findings

- The number of pupils enrolled at the Royal Blind School has decreased over the past few years. This has resulted from fewer new-pupil enrolments and later referral of pupils. However, referral patterns over the past 5 years, although lower than the previous ten years, have been relatively stable.
- Survey responses from Local Authorities (LAs) indicate that they expect to refer about 16 pupils to the Royal Blind School over the next 5 years, an average of approximately 3.2 pupils per year. Two main factors mitigate against higher referral levels:
 - The legislated presumption to mainstream
 - The preference for children to be educated in their local area to preserve family and community relationships
- The long-term role for the Royal Blind School will be to enrol the small number of children with VI whose complex needs cannot be met by the Local Authority (LA) without assistance.

Feedback from Key Stakeholders

Local Authorities

- The main reasons that LAs give for not referring pupils to the Royal Blind School are:
 - Local facilities are adequate to meet the need
 - Presumption to mainstream legislation
 - Young children should live at home with their families rather than attend a boarding school
 - It is better for children with disabilities to be enrolled in inclusive mainstream settings
 - Cost of provision at the Royal Blind School
- Perceptions of what the Royal Blind School can offer were very mixed, but the 5 main identified strengths were:
 - Reputation and history
 - Well qualified and experienced teachers in VI
 - Appropriate environment and resources for VI
 - VI-specific training such as mobility, independent living skills and Grade 2 Braille
 - Provision of integrated programmes of education, care, therapy and nursing
- In the past, the Royal Blind School has been utilised as a national special school for all children with VI. The surveys indicate that this has changed and that children with VI only are most likely to be educated in the mainstream, while those with MDVI are likely to be enrolled in some form of special education setting in or near the local area.

Staff

The staff is rightfully proud of the School and what it has achieved for many pupils over the years. While they would like to see the school return to the full enrolment of 120 pupils of mixed abilities, most realize that this is highly unlikely and that we have to change our staffing and practices to reflect current and future needs. They presented many ideas for diversification of both Royal Blind School and Royal Blind services which can be used to inform future development.

Parents

There was unanimous agreement on what were important considerations for enrolling their child at the Royal Blind School:

- Reputation and history
- Meeting individual needs
- Well qualified and experienced teachers
- Appropriate environment and resources for VI
- A range of VI specific training (eg: mobility and independent living skills)

The considerations graded as less important were:

- The expertise to teach grade 2 Braille
- Strong links with universities for research and training
- MDVI expertise such as Canaan-Barrie signing

Government

Although not explicitly stated as a condition of GASS funding, the school has always operated on the understanding that part of its national remit is to provide a range of outreach services to support learners with VI across Scotland. However, there is at present no explicit mechanism for funding these services.

The key elements of our forward strategy

- Feedback from key stakeholders and the analysis of enrolment trends, indicates an ongoing need for the provision of a national specialist school in VI. Therefore, we will continue operating the school in the long term for all our existing pupils and will continue to accept referral of pupils in all the need categories we have previously served. However, the School will be amalgamated onto a single campus instead of the existing 2 campuses.
- We expect that pupil numbers will continue to decline, stabilising at about 25 pupils, approximately half of whom will be residential. It is expected that these pupils will predominantly have VI and ASN. We expect the pupil age range will be concentrated in the secondary department with a small number of pupils in upper primary.

- Although the pupil population at the School will become smaller, the School will continue to play an important roll in the continuum of educational services available to children with VI across Scotland. In partnership with others, we plan to develop as a National VI Educational Resource Centre for Scotland, to support children and young people with VI and ASN to overcome their barriers to learning and realise their potential, irrespective of where they attend school.
- Consistent with the Scottish Government-led Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), pupils will study a broad, general curriculum until the end of S3 (Year 10) and greater depth of study in the Senior Phase: S4 to S6 (Years 11-13). This will necessitate maintaining a team of specialist subject teachers in addition to class teachers, educational support staff, residential care workers, therapists and nurses.
- In response to the anticipated age profile of pupils, there will be a strong emphasis in the Senior Phase on vocational learning, independent living skills and the knowledge and skills required to aid successful transition to adult life.

Scottish Government response to the Doran Review

As previously mentioned, the Strategic review of the Royal Blind School occurred concurrently with the Scottish Government –commissioned Doran Review, the 'Strategic Review of Learning Provision for Children and Young People with Complex Additional Support Needs'. On 15 November the Scottish Government published the report produced by the Doran Review.

The report, entitled "The Right Help at the Right Time in the Right Place" is the result of a thorough review of the system as it operates at the moment, taking in views and evidence from parents, pupils, professionals and organisations.

- Dr Alasdair Allan, the Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland's Languages, in his ministerial foreword to the Scottish Government's response to the Doran Review (November 2012), placed emphasis on 'doing things better, being more joined up [and] working more closely together'.
- It stated that services need to be 'inclusive, efficient, equitable and effective'.
- The response confirmed that 'the presumption to mainstreaming remains [but] that for some children and young people their needs will be better met in specialist provision rather than mainstream schools and where this is the case the exception will continue to apply'.
- An Advisory Group will now be established to determine how best to take forward the recommendations of the Doran Review.

There are many recommendations in the report that aim to maintain and improve opportunities for children in mainstream schooling and Scotland's resource pool of experts in the specialist fields that are needed.

Importantly for the Royal Blind School, the report recognises the great value of the grant aided special schools and argues strongly that this provision on a national level is needed. The report also endorses the value of new services like the resource centre that the Royal Blind School is already planning to develop. Also encouraging is that the Scottish Government has issued a response accepting the recommendations.

Much of the report sets out an agenda for future actions. Among these is the need to establish a new way of commissioning and funding the special schools.



Concluding Comments

- The findings of the Royal Blind School's Strategic review are consistent with the outcomes of the Doran Review.
- Although the pupil population at the School will become smaller, the School will continue to play an important roll in the continuum of educational services available to children with VI across Scotland. This is consistent with the mission of Royal Blind, the outcomes of the Doran Review and, most importantly, the needs of children and young people with VI throughout Scotland.
- One challenge is to maintain the diversity of staff needed to deliver personalisation and choice through the Curriculum for Excellence and to continue to maintain the VI expertise and qualifications that have been built up over a long period, to enable the delivery of high quality, specialised VI support in both education and care.
- A key part of the strategy is our intention to create a National VI Educational Resource Centre for Scotland, the purpose of which is to support children and young people with additional support needs overcome their barriers to learning and realise their potential. Both rolls are consistent with the stated purpose of the GASS grant and the

Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (as amended 2009).

- During the transition phase to this new model of delivery, there will need to be significant and substantial sharing of information and consultation with key stakeholders including the pupils, their families, staff, the Local Authorities and the regulatory bodies: the Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland.

Julie Fardell, Principal
Royal Blind School, Edinburgh (Scotland)

Pay it Forward for the Blind

Eden College Durban

www.pay-it-forward-for-the-blind.wikispaces.com



Overview

This project has an interesting history, but has evolved to primarily offer blind children an opportunity of listening to children's stories anywhere, anytime, as the stories are saved in MP3 format and available on the internet (similar to *Tape Aids for the Blind* – but rather *MP3 Aids for blind children*).

History

The original project had 3 sub-sections and all of these are represented on the website –

1. Braille Memory Game cards
2. Educational games and toys for blind children
3. MP3 Aids for the Blind

The main focus has become the MP3 stories. Whereas *Tape Aids for the Blind* is for adults and needs a repository, fine-tuned admin and logistics as

well as an efficient postal service, *MP3 Aids for the Blind* is focused on blind children aged 4 to 10 years and is internet based. It is therefore available 24/7 around the globe; its only limitations being that you need a computer and the internet.

My grade 8 English class at Eden College Durban seemed weaker at reading than I expected, and I needed an intervention. I offered them their own voice and a real world audience. Working collaboratively and using their mobile phones as recording devices, they were able to improve on their reading and writing skills and have fun whilst interacting with modern technology. The confidence and improvement in their reading ability jumped markedly over a two week period.

Although the process started out as a 'sighted children reading for blind children in English' project, it has developed substantially since then with adults and celebs becoming progressively more involved. The pupils were challenged to *Pay it Forward*, and have done so. They requested pages for various languages so they could challenge their friends around the world – not just in Anglophone countries. I was hesitant because of the sheer scope of this 'little project', but ultimately relented and stories in various languages have now begun filtering through. Plans are currently underway for managing the data on a far larger scale and more permanent basis as it appears that potentially, a huge number of stories may soon be directed at the site. The site has had over 1 500 visitors in August 2012 (as at 15/08/2012).

Endorsements

- *The KZN Society for the Blind* accepted Braille Memory Game cards and educational toys and games made by the Eden pupils involved in this extensive project as well as a disc with MP3 Stories read and recorded by Eden Pupils. These are now being used in their classrooms.
- The project has been endorsed by the *Pay it Forward Foundation* in the USA that operates in 75 countries. It is featured on their website and has attracted attention internationally.
- *MPower Radio*, Based in Nelspruit, Mpumalanga, conducted an interview on Tuesday 14 August at 2:00pm. Their studio staff appeared to be motivated by the project and there may be a follow-up after they have submitted stories.
- *CCFm*, a community-based radio station in Cape Town South Africa has booked an appointment for an interview and insert for their programming.
- *Microsoft Partners in Learning* – this project was one of 4 winners in the 2012 Most Innovative Teachers' Forum in South Africa. Charli Wiggill, its creator, will represent South Africa in Morocco at the Pan African PiL, presenting the project at a forum where others represent countries from across the African continent and the Middle East.

- *Adobe Youth Voices* – The project was featured on the AYV website and the organisers emailed its details to the AYV membership of 135 000 teachers and community workers around the world.
- Various celebrities have shown an interest and have begun reading and recording for the site.

Goals

This project started out with a bang, but has grown organically since then. At present the future plans include:

- Initially, the main aim is to develop a substantial body of work for South Africa and the wider African continent.
- Eventually, we hope to have at least one story from as many languages as possible uploaded to the site so a blind child anywhere in the world will be able to listen to at least one story in their own language.
- To encourage younger readers to record for the blind. At present there is a 5-year-old and an 8-year-old who have read for the site.
- To encourage 2nd language speakers to practise by reading and recording. As the stories are fairly short and simple, considering the target market, most 2nd language readers should cope easily and build their confidence in the language.
- Challenging celebrities to read and record to raise the profile of the site. This aspect has already begun.
- Instituting an annual **Read-A-thon for the Blind Day** where people assemble and read en masse as well as others reading at home.
- Attracting sponsors for recording devices (i.e. a few mobile phones) and airtime (for uploading the files), as well as for a professionally managed website to ease the load and demands on all involved.
- Procuring a PR/Marketing firm to raise the profile in order to grow the number of stories on offer and to make schools for the blind aware of the site's existence so they can use the resources on offer.
- Twinning with other schools and cities to raise awareness of the plight of the blind and to add more stories to the virtual repository. Durban/EThekweni councillors appear to be keen to use this project to twin with sister cities around the world.
- On the African continent, it is expected that there will be more than 735 million mobile phone subscribers by the end of 2012. Meetings have already commenced for the next step: Partnering with mobile phone operators so that stories can be 'pushed' to mobile phones. There is a possibility that, with sponsorship, this could be a free service for the blind, but at present, the cost would be R1-50 per sms/download, should this service be set-up.

Difficulties

The main issues encountered included:

1. Extraneous noise because of recording without a sound-proof booth or studio
2. Technical issues with converting **amr.** files to **MP3** format
3. Slow bandwidth leading to delays in uploading files to the site. However, it must be noted that once uploaded to the site, the tracks appear to play very quickly and evenly without a hitch.
4. Managing to contact the correct authors and publishers for permission to use their stories; although this is an on-going process and responses are being received. We are making contact with Tape Aids for the Blind in an attempt to work synergistically where possible. We are also attempting to attain a blanket license for copyrighting issues to alleviate this aspect.
5. Getting all the required information from volunteers 'out there' who submit stories to be uploaded.

Contact us

Should you have any further queries, please contact Mr Charli Wiggill at charliwiggill@gmail.com OR on school phone at +27 (0)31 205 3357 OR mobile phone at +27 (0)72 2971 639

Best wishes

*Mr **Charli Wiggill**, Deputy Principal
Eden College Durban*

Tel: +27 (0)31 205 3357

Mobile: +27 (0)72 2971 639

www.pay-it-forward-for-the-blind.wikispaces.com

EASPD – Barometer of Inclusive Education in Selected European Countries

Inclusive education is strongly endorsed by the UNESCO Salamanca Statement of 1994 and by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 2006. The European Union and most member states have committed themselves to carry out the necessary changes at all levels to achieve inclusive education. In this context the general aim of the European project 'Pathways to Inclusion' (P2i) coordinated by the European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD) is to contribute to national and European implementation processes of inclusive education for persons with disabilities who have special educational needs (SEN). The P2i-project aims to raise awareness of the rights of pupils with disability and to develop ways to ensure they can benefit from high quality education in an inclusive setting, where special needs are taken into consideration and pupils do not face discrimination due to their disability.

Download EASPD materials in PDF format:

1. Barometer of Inclusive Education [PDF, 813 KB]
www.icevi-europe.org/enletter/issue51-09EASPD1.pdf
2. Leaflet Training course Salzburg - Building the School for all [PDF 182 KB]
www.icevi-europe.org/enletter/issue51-09EASPD2.pdf
3. Report: Analysis of the use and value of the Index for Inclusion [PDF 2 MB]
www.icevi-europe.org/enletter/issue51-09EASPD3.pdf

ECB: Second series of euro banknotes

European Central Bank, EUROSISTEM
Contact person: Vicente Ventura
Tel.: +49 69 1344 7876
E-mail:
vicente.ventura@ecb.europa.eu



8 November 2012

We would like to inform your organisation that a second series of euro banknotes will be launched in May 2013, starting with the new €5 banknote.

The banknotes of the second series will be introduced gradually over several years and in ascending order. Thus, the €10 banknote will follow the

€5. The second series will have the same denominations as the first: €5, €10, €20, €50, €100, €200 and €500. After the introduction of the second series, the first and second series of banknotes will circulate in parallel for some time. The date on which banknotes of the first series cease to be legal tender will be announced well in advance. More information on the second series and, in particular, on the new €5 banknote is available online in the official EU languages

(www.ecb.europa.eu/euro/html/index.en.html and www.newfaceoftheeuro.eu).

For visually impaired users, the second series of euro banknotes shows the value numeral in large bold letters and in raised print, which is easy to feel, on the front of the banknote. The distinct main colours of the different banknotes remain the same in the second series to make it easy to distinguish between the individual denominations as before (neighbouring denominations have sharply contrasting colours, for example grey for the €5, red for the €10 and blue for the €20). These features are also expected to be of help for the elderly population.

For users with no residual sight, the denominations can be told apart from each other by their individual dimensions. When partitioning their wallets prior to making purchases, blind users can easily feel the different sizes of the banknotes. As a further aid, tactile marks near the edges of the banknotes will be included in all denominations of the second series, including the new €5.

Finally, from January 2013 short video clips containing general information on the second series of euro banknotes and descriptions of their security features will be available at the internet addresses cited above. This video material will have subtitles and voice-over in the official languages of the EU. We would ask you to consider including a link to this information on your website. We would also suggest that you circulate this letter among the members of your association.

Should you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Mr Vicente Ventura at the ECB (**Tel.:** +49 69 1344 7876; **e-mail:** vicente.ventura@ecb.europa.eu).

Yours sincerely,

Elisabeth Ardaillon-Poirier, *Director Communications*
Ton Roos, *Director Banknotes*

Kaiserstrasse 29, 60311 Frankfurt am Main, Germany
Postfach 16 03 19, 60066 Frankfurt am Main, Germany
Tel: +49 69 13 44 0,
Fax: +49 69 13 44 60 00,
e-mail: postmaster@ecb.int

Membership



Please use your membership of ICEVI-Europe:

- It gives you voting rights
- It gives you a discount on the conference fee

But pay your membership fee on time.

ICEVI-Europe cannot exist without your financial support. Therefore, here is a reminder for membership 2012 and the following years.

The membership fees are:

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

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

ING, account number: 4890207

BIC: INGBNL2A

IBAN: NL90 INGB 0004 8902 07

Contributions can be made by Internet or payments can also be made during the European Conference in Istanbul.

Please be aware that the conference fees for workshops and the European conference are considerably less expensive for members.

Please also read the newsletter of July 2012, where you will find important information about the conference and the General Assembly.

Events in 2013

20-21 April 2013

Dance, Arts & Visual Impairment Symposium, Tallinn (Estonia)

website: <http://fragiledance.com>

Please download the submission forms word documents, and send your proposal to marianne.bilger@baerum.kommune.no

THE DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS: October 31th 2012

6 -13 May 2013

Workshop of Pro Retina e.V., the German association of visually impaired people, Berlin (Germany)

web: www.noisyvision.com

e-mail: europe@noisyvision.com

30 June - 05 July 2013

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

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

e-mail: icevieurope2013@gmail.com

website: www.icevieurope2013.org

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.

21 - 27 September 2013

Building the school for All. Comenius Course, Salzburg (Austria)

Goedele Avau, research & development officer at EASPD

e-mail: Goedele.avau@easpd.eu

Erratum: South European countries

Ana Isabel Ruiz López will continue being the representative of the Southern European Sub region.