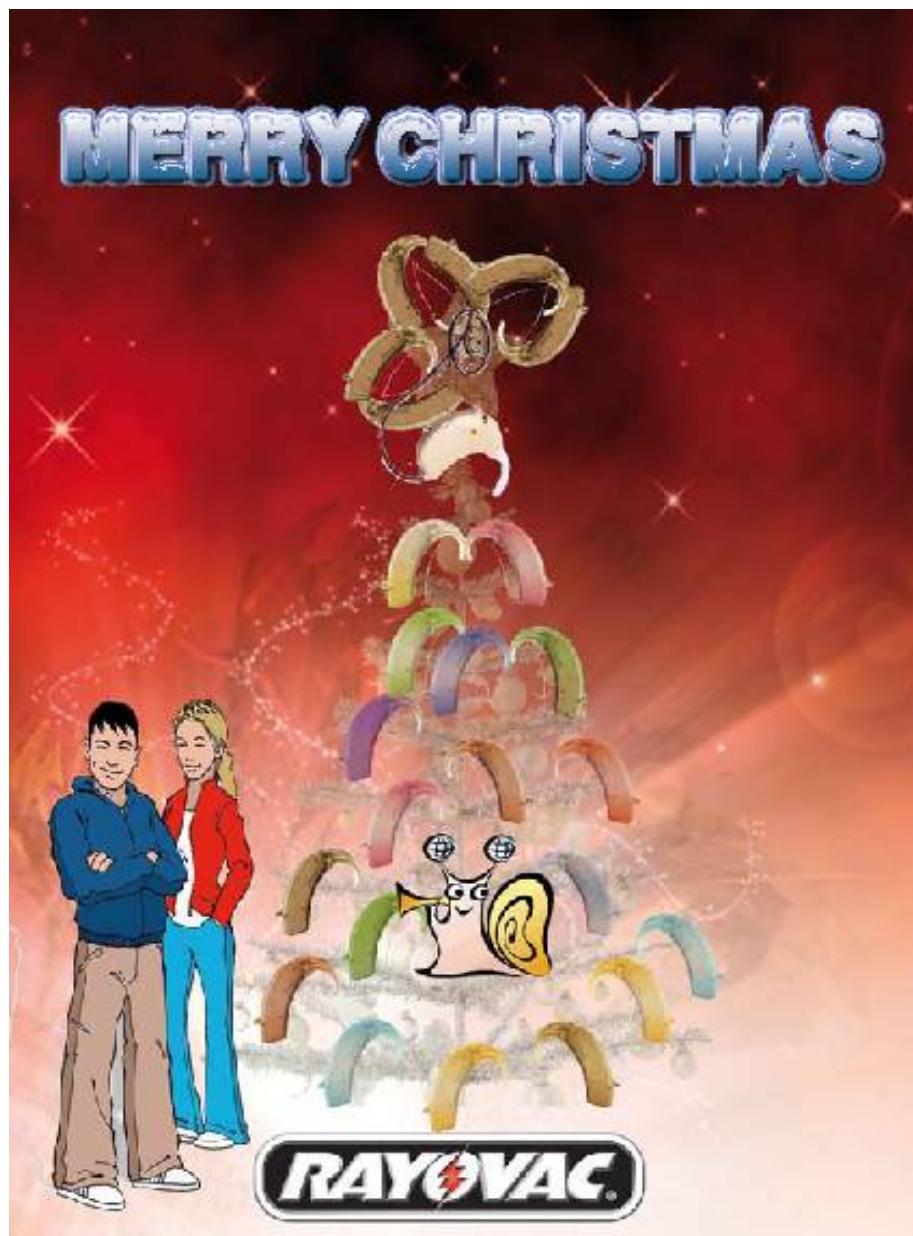


IFHOHYP NEWS

Winter 2007



*The International Federation of
Hard of Hearing Young People Magazine*

CHRISTMAS' CARD COMPETITION: THE WINNERS!!!!

All of you know that IFHOHYP organized a Christmas card competition for its members. Thanks for the sponsorship of Rayovac, we can provide prizes for the best three Christmas cards. The prizes are 150€ for the 1st prize, 100€ for the second prize and 50€ for the 3rd prize.

Firstly, the Jury wants to say *Thank you very much to all designers for your participation!* All of you have done a hard work and the results are very nice.

Before saying the winners, we want to remind that, this year, there were a few conditions that participants had to respect. The main conditions were that cards must show that we are young and hard of hearing. Those conditions helped to the jury to evaluate and decide who are the winners this year.

Now, without more comments, we'll say what are the best Christmas cards:

3rd prize is for...

KAMILKA ŠIFROVÁ from Slovakia >>>



2nd prize is for...

<<< OSCAR GÓMEZ from Spain

And the 1st prize is for...

CAMILO MASCARELL from Spain!

His card is placed on cover of this newsletter.

Congratulations Camilo!

And Congratulations Oscar and Kamilka!

This year the winner card has been printed and sent by post to all IFHOHYP members and important institutions that cooperate with IFHOHYP.

We will wait for all of you next competition in 2008.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A
HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!!**

IFHOHYP STUDY SESSION 2007 IN BUDAPEST

By Lianne de Jonge

This year, IFHOHYP organized the study session from 16-22 September 2007 at the European Youth Centre, Budapest (Hungary). The topic of the study session was 'Developing leadership skills and necessary competences with hard of hearing youth – getting stronger for the future'. There were 34 participants from 11 European countries, Canada and Pakistan.

Objective of study session

The participants arrived on Sunday to the European Youth Centre. On first evening there were icebreaking games and participants started to know each other. On Monday, the official program started and it was introduced by Karina Chupina, the president of IFHOHYP. She explained why study session is important and the objectives of this study session. One objective was to increase the ability of young people to become active in youth organisation. A second objective was to explore the concept of teamwork and conflict management because this is very important for every project in any organisation. Special attention was given to human rights education in the context of disability related discrimination. Furthermore, study session was to provide a tool for supporting development of organizations in countries with a lack of organization for hard of hearing young people, or for organisations for hard hearing young people where too few members are involved.



The program

The program consisted of presentations and active participation by workshops and discussions. The education was very intensive and participant were informed about several topics: leadership, human right education, facilitation, public speaking and project management. The workshops were interactive with a lot of discussions and active participation. Participants learned a lot of useful things.

Day 1: 17th September.

Monday was the first day of the study session. Its objectives and the involved organisations, IFHOHYP and the Council of Europe were highlighted. Secondly, the needs and expectations of the participants were determined with some surveys.

In the evening, the Intercultural evening was organized and this was very relaxed with nice foods and drinks from several European countries, Pakistan and Canada.

Day 2: 18th September

Despite the hangover that some participants had after the Intercultural evening, the lessons of this day were very useful for working in a (youth) organisation. Leadership is one of the most important skills

which are required for organisational work. Plenary discussion about the question: ‘What makes a good leader?’ was held in the morning. In the afternoon, interactive workshops about leadership were facilitated by Tatiana Glad and Karina Chupina. In the evening was the ‘Organisational market’, where every organisation informed other participants about their organisation activities. There were many differences between these presented organisations. Some organisations are quite big and others are really small. Participants could learn from various presented projects and find new ideas and inspiration for their own organisation.

Day 3: 19th September

Not only leadership is required in an organisation, ability to work in a team is very important. A good team can do much more than only one person. Also facilitation and public speaking practical skills workshops were conducted on this day.

Day 4: 20th September

As only the morning was programmed, it was a very short day but very interesting with the topics social inclusion, intercultural learning and European Citizenship. The stamps in the passports of the participants were a very interesting issue. Some participants did not have any stamps (or needed no passport at all, only ID card), other participants had quite a lot stamps and some even needed a visa for travel to Hungary. This revealed inequality in social freedom to travel around and showed, the exclusion of some people due to their nationality.

After lunch there was a free afternoon to do some sightseeing that ended by dinner in town which gave us the opportunity to try some Hungarian food and drink/beverages.

Day 5: 21st September

An other important aspect of working in an (youth) organisation is project management. Proper management, project development and planning will result in a more efficient and effective approach with a higher impact. On this fifth day, groups were formed and a possible project was designed by each group.

Day 6: 22nd September

As the last day of the study session, the project management exercise had to be finished by each group. They presented their project and the activities that have to be implemented to achieve the project aims and objectives. This was very interesting as groups had different topics for their projects.

The last evening, a farewell party was organised and participants enjoyed the time on this party. To make a memory for each other, every participant got an envelope attached to the wall. Other participants could write some nice note and put in these envelopes. This party closed the study session for 2007.



We want to thank the Council of Europe – Directorate of Youth to make this study session possible. We are also very thankful to members of the Team for arranging interesting program and maintaining positive atmosphere: Karina Chupina, Maria Lopez Garcia, Berna Çibik, Goran Buldioski and Aleksandar "Sasha" Bogdanovic!

Building the Future of IFHOHYP – you CAN contribute!

By Karina Chupina, IFHOHYP President

Finally, we got there – IFHOHYP held its own conference on strategy planning!

With the help of the European Commission grant “Support of the bodies active at European level in the Field of Youth” that IFHOHYP received this year, we were able to organise the conference and meet the wishes of AGM’2007 delegates who expressed the need for such a meeting. The conference was held on September 23rd right after the end of the study session in Budapest; the palantype service, induction loop, accommodation and meals were fully provided.

The questions that brought us together in the Council of Europe’s European Youth Centre in Budapest, were: where does IFHOHYP want to go? How strong are we now? What are our threats and opportunities? How to continue effective work with the lack of volunteers in IFHOHYP? What should be done to secure continuous funding for the projects and administrative costs? And how to involve new members in IFHOHYP? How to motivate youth to contribute to IFHOHYP, to learn and benefit from it?

It was a very important event for IFHOHYP where lots of different viewpoints were discussed. Let's admit it, it is not always easy to cooperate smoothly on an international level where one member organisation (e.g. Scandinavian) has a very different culture and approaches to work from another organisation (let's say, Asian or Spanish). Exploring many issues from different perspectives and sharing experiences of organizations from different countries allowed all of us to see challenges facing IFHOHYP as well as possible solutions, more clearly.

The conference discussions were kicked off by the presentation on Strategic Planning (and why should we care about it) by external expert Goran Buldioski. Delegates from Sweden, Finland, Bulgaria, UK, Holland, Russia, Pakistan, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Turkey and Serbia started their work in groups on SWOT (Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats) analysis of IFHOHYP. For example, it was stressed that IFHOHYP has become much stronger and active in educational and political field in the past few years - thanks to active Board team and a few volunteers. But it was also noted that there is a lack of volunteers for IFHOHYP projects and lack of the flow of information from the Board to member organizations.



In the second part of the conference, groups divided to work on the strategic plans along the following lines:

1. Financial Resources
2. Structure and membership
3. Human Resources
4. Impact of IFHOHYP on international level, awareness-raising

Some key recommendations from the groups were, to point out just a few:

- Increased membership of IFHOHYP should be one of the strategic goals as it helps to be more active in the European Disability Forum and lobby on a wider level for the rights and needs of hard of hearing youth;
- The English language in some IFHOHYP documents (e.g. Constitution) is too complicated for hard of hearing youth; perhaps a separate explanation in easier format should be done + a working group on Constitution shall be created (at the IFHOHYP AGM 2008);
- English language courses are very much needed; it can be suggested that a member organisation organises an English language course every year or so, in the same way summer camps are organised;
- To organise two meetings with member organisations and their delegates every year so that there is more possibility to exchange information;
- More accessible information is needed and more exchange of information between member organisations;
- In work on awareness-raising on hearing loss, to increase cooperation with hearing aid companies,
- And many other.

The full report on the Conference proceedings and recommendations from the working groups will be sent to all via IFHOHYP mailing in early 2008.

Meanwhile, at the IFHOHYP Board meeting on 14-16 December in the Netherlands, the Board identified (draft) key strategic goals for IFHOHYP for the next 3 years. These goals will be discussed and adjusted after the consultations with Conference participants and member organisations:

- Improving the IFHOHYP Constitution in terms of understanding and the language
- Ensuring better accessibility of information for IFHOHYP members and in general
- Increasing membership of IFHOHYP
- Increasing impact of IFHOHYP on the European level and in policymaking through existing membership in European Disability Forum and planned membership in the European Youth Forum
- Providing more opportunities for members' co-operation & networking

Last but not the least, at the next IFHOHYP AGM that will be held in Valencia, Spain (20-24 March 2008), about two days will be devoted to the continuation of the Conference and working on concrete strategic goals.

Welcome to join us next year (mark the dates in your calendars)!

Conference about the Rights of Girls and Women with Disabilities

By María López García

The women committees of the Spanish Committee of Representatives of People with Disabilities (CERMI) and the European Disability Forum (EDF) organised the Conference on 16th - 18th November in Madrid (Spain) under motto “Recognising the Rights of Girls and Women with Disabilities - an Added Value for Tomorrow’s Society”.

IFHOHYP was invited to participate as observer. Karina Chupina and me had the pleasure to attend the Conference, Karina Chupina as facilitator of a workshop and me as an observer, representative of IFHOHYP. EFHOH was also represented by Katja Pertillä, treasurer of IFHOH.

The main objective was to promote equality and improve the lives of girls and women with disabilities in Europe, within the framework of the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All, in order to mark the tenth anniversary of the European Disability Forum (EDF) Manifesto by Girls and Women with Disabilities in Europe.

On Friday, 16th of November the conference started by Registration of Delegates. There were around 80 participants from different European countries, and we had the first Plenary Session with presentations of different themes such as:

- ➔ Situation of girls and women with disabilities within the EDF and its member organizations
- ➔ Human Rights perspective on girls and women with disabilities
- ➔ European perspective on girls and women with disabilities
- ➔ 1st Action Plan for Women and Girls in Spain



Karina Chupina, Katja Pertillä and me

On Saturday, 17th of November we had parallel workshops with different subjects:

Workshop 1: *Proactive measures in disability organisations at all levels*

Workshop 2: *Developing tools to include girls and women's perspective in policy work*

Workshop 3: *How to actively involve girls and women with disabilities in policy formulation and implementation in order to improve their quality of life*

Workshop 4: *How can I, as an individual, work at local level to support and improve the situation of girls and women with disabilities*

I participated in the workshop 3, where Karina Chupina was the facilitator.

In the afternoon different workgroups presented their ideas. The objective was to create a declaration with all the conclusions of different workshops.

The day finished with a Gala Dinner organised by the EDF and CERMI in our hotel.

On Sunday, 18th of November, we had the last Plenary Session: Presentation of Conclusions and Conference Declaration. The main demands are:

- ➔ To take urgent actions towards awareness raising and develop positive action measures specifically designed for girls and women with disabilities at different levels to work together towards the same goal
- ➔ To review the EDF statutes and bylaws to ensure that women and men have equal access to the decision-making bodies of the organisation
- ➔ To promote effective work in the priority fields of women with disabilities, adequate resources, active fundraising and a fair allocation of resources need to be ensured by EDF structures
- ➔ To promote research in co-operation with the organisations of people with disabilities and develop specific action plans on how to improve the situation of women and girls with disabilities

The conference languages were English, Spanish and International Sign Language. There were also loop system, in spite there were technical problems the first day, and different adaptations for the different disabilities.

The Conference was very good and interesting.

In spite we were the only hard of hearing people, I realized that many people, inside the "disability world", doesn't know our disability and our needs. So it's very important to attend these kind of Conferences and activities to "publicizing" the hearing disability and sensitize the people.

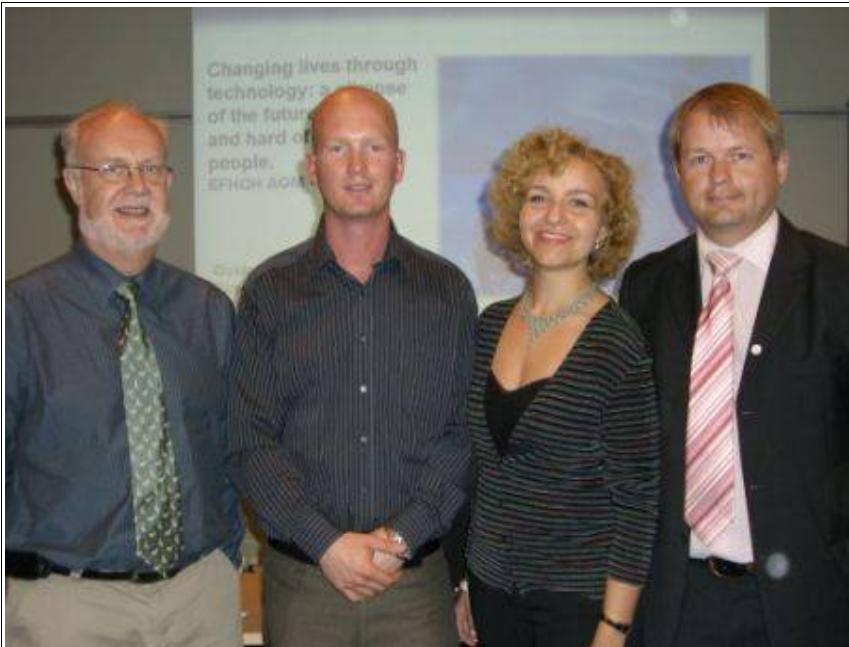
From here IFHOHYP wants to thank EDF and CERMI for their invitation and services.

EFHOH Annual General Meeting in Oslo, Norway, May 3-6 2007

By Karina Chupina, IFHOHYP President

This year, IFHOHYP was invited to be represented at the EFHOH AGM that was organized by the Norwegian HLF organisation for hard of hearing. Karina Chupina was the delegate from IFHOHYP.

The highlights of the 1st day programme were the tour of Briskeby school for hard of hearing very well equipped for the needs of hard of hearing children and very interesting inputs on the use of cochlear implant in Norway with adults and children that included personal stories of Cochlear Implant (CI) users. The next day the EFHOH AGM was held, and the programme included the following key elements:



On the photo: Jan-Peter Strömgren, IFHOH President; Johan Hammarström, the WFH pilot; Karina Chupina, IFHOHYP President; Marcel Bobeldijk, EFHOH President.

- ➔ Story of Johan Hammarström, the first ever hard of hearing pilot to make a world-round trip, the World Flight for Hearing;
- ➔ Speech by Guido Gybels of the Royal National Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing on new technologies, about the difference between analogue and digital technology;
- ➔ Accessibility issues by Rudolph Brynn, European Disability Forum and Norwegian National Archives.

It was interesting to learn that EFHOH published their own Accessibility Guidelines for Hard of Hearing (see EFHOH website, www.efhoh.org) and that they made a statement to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities underlining the importance of ensuring that translation of the Convention does not result in wording referring solely to the “deaf”. Any ratification in nation states need to appropriately reference hard of hearing persons/access. Other news was from IFHOH that they joined International Disability Association (IDA) that is closely cooperating with the UN. It was visible that in the past years IFHOH, EFHOH as well as IFHOHYP became more political in their work (e.g. at the study session in 2006 IFHOHYP produced policy recommendations to the European and International institutions).

Guido Gybels from RNID said in his presentation that in the future we can have more advanced technologies e.g. mobile phones recognizing speech, when we can put a mobile under our nose and see a text on screen. All this is not about gadgets or fancy toys - it is all about Information Society and being a citizen in today's world.

At the AGM, I made a presentation about IFHOHYP current work, Multimedia, Research projects and the IFHOHYP study session held in cooperation with the Council of Europe. This information evoked a great interest from EFHOH members. Denmark and Ireland said that due to changes in their youth organizations they lost touch with IFHOHYP but are very much interested in joining IFHOHYP and contributing to its activities. The discussion on joining IFHOHYP is going on right now. Ireland also

welcomed IFHOHYP to the next EFHOH AGM in 2008 that will be held in Dublin. Delegates from France noted that more and more children and young people with hearing loss are getting CI and therefore there will be more hard of hearing (meaning: not "Deaf") youth who can join IFHOHYP in the near future.

IFHOHYP would like to sincerely thank EFHOH for the opportunity to visit this AGM, share experiences and make contacts for consolidated cooperation between EFHOH, IFHOH and IFHOHYP.

DYS Italian Language Course in Levico Terme / Italy

By Laura Marti, Switzerland

I participated in the Intercultural Italian Language Course which was organised by the Council of Europe Directorate of Youth and Sport in co-operation with the *Fondazione Bruno Kessler*. The three-week course took place from 19th August to 8th September 2007 in Levico Terme, a small town in the heart of the Dolomites in North Italy.

In this course 10 countries were represented and all 19 participants are working for an international, national or local organisation. This were mostly exchange organisations but also other kinds of organisations were represented e.g. Scouts, Youth for Human Rights and National Agency. We were accommodated full-board in a very nice and comfortable hotel, which was located a bit out of town. On the first day, we were separated in two classes. Therefore, we had the chance to have lessons in small groups. Usually, we had 3 hours grammar in the morning where we did grammar exercises. In the afternoon, our trainer prepared activities and games in connection with intercultural learning, and relating to actions of our organisations. It was only on the first day when we had to prepare a poster and present our organisation in front of the class. This was a very good opportunity to practice the Italian language and to learn about the aims of the other organisations.

There was also a cultural program offered: On the first Saturday we visited Lake Garda and in the evening we saw an Italian opera in the Verona amphitheatre. We also had an multiethnic dinner, on which every participant cooked and provided typical food and dishes from his country. On another day we went to the nearby mountains where we visited a mountain dairy farm. In the evening there was a optional drama workshop which was arranged by a local theater group. This workshop offered the opportunity to speak Italian in audience to improve the enunciation and also to conceive difficult phrases and word plays. We had a full and intensive program each day and not very much leisure time to ourselves. Every day two people were responsible for creating a diary entry – needless to say in Italian! At the end of our course every participant got a compilation of all entries.

As expected I was been the only participant with a hearing disability in this course. On the one hand, I made good experience with the other participants. I informed them of my disability and explained how they can support me. My radio-aid system was a big help and I could understand my teachers very well. On the other hand there were difficult moments too. During the oral lessons I only understood little of what my classmates were saying. After all, we were all in the same situation. We all had the ambition to learn Italian. Speaking different native languages it was also not been easy for hearing people to understand each other. It was the exchange with young people with different backgrounds I liked the most. Very quickly we found common interests. We started exchanging CDs and teaching dances to each other.

To future participants I recommend to apply for a language course like this one. I would suggest to take your own radio-aid system or to organise a portable system. It was extremely helpful and I could take it along with me everywhere and I could also give the microphone to others on field-trips.

My experience of the CoE English Language course in Ireland

By Katerina Monakhova, Russia

From 01 July to 28 July 2007 I participated in the Intercultural English Language Course, organized by the Council of Europe Directorate of Youth and Sport and the National Youth Council of Ireland.

I arrived in Dublin at 29 July 2007 year. I met with some girls from other countries in the airport who were also going to this Course. I realized I was the only hard of hearing person in the group.



Our group

When we arrived to the hostel, where the course was held, we went into dining-room. Youth talked and laughed. We didn't know what do. We felt uncomfortably. One person saw me and approached me. He introduced me to people. Marta from Slovakia decided to inform everyone in advance that I am deaf. There was a silent pause. Then one guy broke the silence by introducing himself: "Jan from Czech Republic". I smiled and nodded.

When we were in bedroom, I found out that I will live together with Amina (Austria), Carmen (Spain), Marta and Lenka (Slovakia), Eden (Hungary). I suggested my neighbours to have a walk in Dublin. In an informal atmosphere, in one of the pubs, we talked a lot and learned a lot about each other.

We waited our organizers on next day who came and announced the start of the lessons. Then there was intercultural evening where I presented our organization IFHOHYP. I said about our work, about future plans. I made wall newspaper where I shown activity of our organization.

When lessons began, organizers gave us tests for understanding our level of knowledge of English. After passing tests they announced about three groups. I learned that our group includes Natasha (Belarus), Lewan (Georgia), Tolya (Russia) and Carmen (Spain). Our schedule was: breakfast at 8.30, our lessons from 9.00 to 13.00. From 13 to 15. After lunch from 15.00 to 18.00 there were discussions and workshops on different subjects. After dinner we had free time. Our teacher was Colleen Dollard from USA. She is a very good teacher. She didn't know at first how to teach me English but after our talk she found the right method. If I didn't understand something, she wrote on blackboard and showed with emotion and expression. It was easy. I understood her.

Colleen suggested going to teacher's theatre. We learned scenario of performance. It was a detective «An Inspector calls». We saw performance in theatre with interest because we learned roles and everybody thought that he is actor.



After that, we began to prepare our own performance, named «Death by chocolate». We had to take the role of any character from the scenario and organize real detective. It was a very interesting show. I took the role of lady-businesswoman of chocolate manufacture. We changed clothes and waited for a surprise. All was ready. Design of tables was beautiful. The names of the main characters of the show were on the tables. Everybody took the plate with their role, then we acted in our roles, talked and asked questions to each other. The aim was to find out who is a killer (nobody knew that). Action reached such a degree, that we started intensive arguments. At the end we ate delicious hot chocolate. By the end of performance we all found out who are killer. We liked this “exercise” very much.

We travelled across Ireland every weekend. We were in Galway, Aran Island, mysterious place with strange name Tara and other. The best travel was Galway, where we were 2 days, which on the coast of West Ireland. Young people in our group got used to me and sometimes forgot that I am hard of hearing, they talked to me in spite of that. I understood them very well. We chatted, walked on coast of the sea. I suggested making photos in style of photo model. Everybody liked the idea and we started to make photos. Then they thanked me for their successful photos. It was night already and we wandered on coast of the sea. We remembered visiting the theatre Riverdance in Dublin. It was very beautiful.

We made national dishes for farewell evening. People from the National Youth Council of Ireland visited us. Tolya and I treated them with our Russian pancakes. They were satisfied.

I made friends with youth and I was sorry that course finished. Young people were very friendly. I communicated with people very easily. They treated me very well. I made friends with some people and had a good time that flew away very quickly. I left to Russia at 4 o'clock in the night, but young people from our group suggested to help me carry my bags to the city centre. I was pleasantly surprised.

During my stay in Dublin I met not only with youth, with which I learned English together, but also I had friendly relations with teachers, administrator and his friends, even with a cook - with everyone, with whom I was together in Ireland, who was near with me and helped me.

Thanks to Karina Chupina, President of IFHOHYP, who accepted my application for this course and recommended me to the Council of Europe for this opportunity to learn together with hearing people. I got more knowledge and I hope that it will help me in my future and my future work for IFHOHYP.

FIVE MINUTES WITH....

By María López García

IFHOHYP has had a lot of projects and activities the last 2 years, for example a study session in Strasbourg, another study session in Budapest and the Multimedia project.

There have been people that, without being members of IFHOHYP, collaborated in those projects/activities voluntary and their work has been very important for IFHOHYP.

From here we want to say THANK YOU VERY MUCH for your hard work and you are welcome to work with us whatever you want!! ☺

Here you have some of those people. Do you want to know them?

KARTHIK VIJAYANANDAM (GREAT BRITAIN)

What is your age?

20

Where do you live?

A small village called Denbigh in Wales, Great Britain

What are you doing now?

Undergraduate studies in Engineering mathematics at the university of Bristol, England, Great Britain

Are you involved in any organization in your country?

Am a deaf role model for the national deaf children's society and do various volunteer work for several HOH/Deaf organisations.



In spite you are not member of IFHOHYP, why do you collaborate with them?

Because I identify myself to be hard of hearing rather than Deaf and believe in IFHOHYP's aims and work in advocating rights of HOH people across Europe.

What have you done in IFHOHYP? which activities or projects?

I helped out at the Multimedia project as the UK co-ordinator and Editor.

What do you expect from IFHOHYP?

I expect IFHOHYP to grow into a more powerful organisation than it is now and recruit more member countries not only in Europe but across the world.

Why are you HoH?

No idea! I do not know if I was born HoH or became HoH after birth but was diagnosed as HoH at the age of 2.

What do you think about the hearing disability?

It is tough being HOH but on the other hand its great as you discover exciting opportunities, new skills, talents that you could never have if you were hearing. Having a hearing disability makes you unique as you don't want to be the same as every one else. It makes you more special not less special.

A message for the newsletter readers:

Be proud of being HOH. Life is not that easy being HOH but you can live a fulfilling life if you focus on the positives of what you have in life right now. MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU.



**EMINE BERNA ÇIBIK
(TURKEY)**

What is your age?

I am 24 years old.

Where do you live?

In Ankara, Turkey.

What are you doing now?(study or work)

I am studying Food Engineering at Middle East Technical University in Ankara, and am going to get a degree in January 2008.

Hopefully when the readers are reading this newsletter I will be graduated and looking for a job ☺

Are you involved in any organization in your country?

Since 2004. I am actively involved in "Engelsiz ODTU" (University Without Barriers) a student society in my university that organizing activities with people with any disabilities, to raise awareness towards disabled people. Nowadays, we are preparing for an international meeting in February 2008 about university students with disabilities (www.maximus.metu.edu.tr).

In spite you are not member of IFHOHYP, why do you collaborate with them?:

I met IFHOHYP in April 2006 in Study Session in Strasbourg, that meeting allowed me to broaden my vision on hard of hearing people by sharing experiences and ideas with friends from all over the world. After that meeting, I continued to contact with members of IFHOHYP and become more familiar with its aims and activities. As I know more, I wanted to contribute more; combining HOH's from many countries with different experiences, different languages, and different life stories but having similar problems attracted me to do whatever I can.

What have you done in IFHOHYP? which activities or projects?

Since I know about IFHOHYP, I am following its activities and news. This year I was involved IFHOHYP Study Session 2007 as a team member which I found every minute very valuable experience. Also, last year I could make some contribution on multimedia project by spreading the information through HOH people in Turkey.

Hoping that in the future I can contribute more in near projects.

What do you expect from IFHOHYP?

I expect IFHOHYP to reach more people who are not aware of its activities.

Why are you HOH?

The reason is not known exactly but it is guessed that an illness with much fever in my childhood caused this.

What do you think about the hearing disability?

Being hard of hearing is an invisible disability, that can not be realised easily, especially if you can speak, it is difficult to explain people about HOH. I am happy with my hearing loss but sometimes people's behaviours make things difficult. We have much way to go to raise awareness but besides all the disadvantages in communication, it is still allowing me to see the life in a different view.

A message for the newsletter readers:

I want to say; being hard of hearing offer us many opportunities, let us try to be aware of them and do not be afraid from the failures.

At last, I want to wish all friends Happy New Year!!!

**YANA DOMUSCHIEVA
(BULGARIA)**

What is your age?

27

Where do you live?

I am originally from Sofia, Bulgaria, but now I live in the United States, with my husband who is Russian.

What are you doing now?

I am learning how to hear again with a cochlear implant. Soon I will be looking for a job, but meanwhile I am involved with various activist projects in Bulgaria.



Are you involved in any organization in your country?

No, there is no organization for the hard of hearing in Bulgaria. I am sad to say no one is doing much for the hard of hearing in my country.

In spite you are not member of IFHOHYP, why do you collaborate with them?

I love IFHOHYP! In 2003 I attended a study session in Strasbourg and I felt so great among other hard of hearing people. I had never met anyone else like me before. So I was very excited and after the study session was over, I got in touch with Karina with some ideas and that's how it goes.

What have you done in IFHOHYP? which activities or projects?

I was on the team of the 2006 study session in Strasbourg and I was the coordinator for Bulgaria for the Multimedia Project. I also helped a lot with the brochure and the general section of the DVD.

What do you expect from IFHOHYP?

I expect that they will continue to help young hard of hearing people to be stronger, to defend their rights, to speak up. IFHOHYP really motivated me to take a stance and I feel they should do this to other people too!

Why are you HOH?

I was born with Osteogenesis Imperfecta which is known mostly as a bone disorder. But it gave me hearing loss. I just recently lost all of my hearing and became medically deaf. Now I have a cochlear implant and I can again listen to music and talk to people.

What do you think about the hearing disability?

It's very hard not to be able to hear. You get cut away from other people and you have to explain, again and again, that you can't hear. It's very tough. Sometimes I think I wish I had been born with blindness or a motor disability, so I can at least have an easier time talking to people. But it's probably better not to make such comparisons.

A message for the newsletter readers:

Happy New Year! I am glad you all care about the world of hard of hearing people! It's because of people like you that hard of hearing people in a big part of Europe have certain rights and the accommodations.

The mission of IFHOHYP

IFHOHYP is committed to promoting equal rights for hard of hearing young people at all levels of the community. We believe that hard of hearing young people have the right to a good education, freedom of choice, the right to equal treatment at labour market, necessary support and technical aids they need to assimilate to life in the hearing community.

- ② To encourage a better understanding of hard of hearing young people and their problems among the general public.
- ② To defend the interests of hard of hearing young people and express them towards international bodies.
- ② To serve as a platform for cooperation and exchange of information between organizations of hard of hearing youth.
- ② To establish links with organizations of and for hearingimpaired people, improve communication and cultural interchange between all hard of hearing young people worldwide; to receive new information from other international youth or disability organizations and provide with it hard of hearing youths in different countries.
- ② To collect and make available all information on different aspects of hearing loss, on technical advances, facilities and assistive listening devices for hard of hearing people.

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