



IFHOHYP NEWSLETTER

MAGAZINE OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF HARD OF HEARING YOUNG PEOPLE

WINTER 2009



We wish you a very happy 2010!

Index of contents

page 02 IFHOHYP Study Session 2009

page 04 AGM 2010 in The Netherlands

page 05 EU-UN cooperation in the struggle against all forms of discrimination... and a struggle for HoH to be visible

page 07 Drawing to find the future!

page 09 Budapest Human Rights Education Forum, October 2009

page 10 International Conference on Induction Loops for Hard of Hearing People and People with Cochlear Implants in Winterthur, Switzerland

page 12 Life with SmartLink FM system



and Inclusion, because this knowledge is indispensable for working as a facilitator. Especially when one works towards the purpose to improve the quality of life of hearing impaired people by promoting equal rights for hard of hearing young people at all levels of society and rising awareness about the meaning and consequences of a hearing loss.

Every day we had an international coffee break where two countries were asked to present their national food. On one afternoon we went into town and everybody had some free time to go shopping or sightseeing. In the evening we met in a restaurant where we had Tarte Flambee for dinner. Everybody had fun and it was a joyful evening.

At the end of the week the moment of truth came: the group was split into smaller groups and each group had to plan a workshop, organise it and carry it out at the end with all participants. This was a good possibility to apply and exercise what

we learned during the week and to show that we are able to implement it. Meanwhile we were observed by the study session team who gave us valuable feedback afterwards. In my opinion this was the most enriching part of the study session. We also received informative resources for continuous independent learning.

The week ended up with a farewell party where everybody was dancing, drinking and having fun.

There is one thing the study session has taught everyone: although we come from different places and speak different languages there is one thing we share: our hearing impairment. And that's not all: we all care. We all want to change the world. How we can do this is what we have just learned. It is never too late to make a difference. I was also exposed to creative projects that take place abroad and we can import to our own country. We'll start now. Nothing will be the same after this week.



IFHOHYP Summercamp 2010
www.jugehoerig.ch/summercamp2010



Announcement

AGM 2010 in The Netherlands

SH-Jong, the Dutch organization of hard of hearing young people welcomes the current and future member organisations of IFHOHYP to participate in the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in the beautiful town of The Netherlands, Groningen!



Date

The AGM will be held from 1st – 5th of April 2010 during the Easter holidays. SH-Jong provides the accommodation and meals in Groningen. The participants have to pay for their own trips to/from Groningen, The Netherlands.

Location

Groningen is the capital city of the province of Groningen in The Netherlands. With a population of 185,000, it is by far the largest city in the north of The Netherlands. Groningen is a university city, inhabited on average by about 50,000 students.

The Martini Tower is the highest church tower in the city of Groningen. The tower is located at the Main Square, is part of the Martini Church. The carillon within the tower contains 62 bells. The citizens of Groningen call their tower “d’Olle Griezze”, meaning “the old grey one” in the local dialect. It is considered

one of the main tourist attractions of Groningen and offers a great view over the city and surrounding area.

Also Groningen has been awarded the title Best city centre in The Netherlands. A good reason to find out whether this title is merited!

So Groningen is more than worth a visit!



Official invitation and Application

The official invitation and application is online at the website of IFHOHYP:

► www.ifhohyp.org

otherwise I would not be able to use them with my hearing aid...). And I did not take with me my IFHOHYP Phonak FM system, since I was sure that text-on-screen would be right there.

At the disability panel, the EDF President stressed in his opening speech that "UN CPRD is the first ever human rights convention to be ratified by the European Community (the ratification is expected - or hoped - to take place in early 2010). The European Community will be responsible for the implementation of the Convention areas that are within its competence accordingly with the EC Treaty, such as: free movement of persons, goods and services, transport, consumer protection, gender equality and many others. Employment and education, to a certain extent, are also part of the European competences".

This demanding list of tasks requires strong coordination on the EU level. That is why the EDF demanded that the focal point (required under Art. 33 of the UN CRPD) is given sufficient powers and resources to properly coordinate the implementation of the CRPD in Europe. EDF also demands the establishment of a strong **independent mechanism** to monitor the implementation of the Convention. Currently, there is no EU agency that could play such a role. As always, EDF supports the adoption of a strong European equal treatment directive "that would bridge the remaining gaps in protection against discrimination and be a step towards implementation of the UN Convention in Europe".

EuropeAid programme representative, Ms. Dominique Dellicour, explained the work of the EC to integrate the rights of persons with disabilities into its development cooperation. said that from 2000 to 2009 the EC has funded some 280 projects (corresponding to over 145 mln. Euros) specifically targeting people with disabilities in 69 partner countries. One of the important features of the EC cooperation in the field of disability is support of capacity development for NGOs of people with disabilities and governments (as public institutions dealing with disability are often weak and poorly financed). EuropeAid DG is now launching a new exercise to examine how effectively their past cooperation has reached persons with disabilities. See more information at:

► http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/index_en.htm

Head of the Unit of the Rights of Persons with disabilities in DG Employment spoke about the current developments

in **European Disability Policy**. A speaker from Australia gave several examples of good practices of legislation from Australia in relation to people with disabilities and told about the ways UN CRPD can combat discrimination on the basis of disability and multiple discrimination. It is important to mention, that disability delegates at the seminar, including myself, always raised the issue of disability during the panels on racial and gender discrimination, stressing that in case of people with disabilities discrimination can be manifold.

Finally, it was time to collect comments and questions. That was the right moment, I thought, to raise my voice about the **needs of hard of hearing people**. After asking questions on EuropeAid, I explained that my request to have a palantype service was not fulfilled. "I could have asked many more questions to the speakers", - I said, - "if I could follow more. It is obviously necessary to raise more and more awareness about accessibility needs for hard of hearing people. Especially when the seminar is about the topic concerning them directly." The organizers from the EC side were surprised; it turned out that there was a miscommunication between the UN and the EC as regards to what services exactly should have been provided. My remark sparked off a discussion and during all next coffee break I was explaining to EC and OHCHR representatives what is the "palantype", "induction loop", "telecoil", and how they work! I also said that European Youth Centres of the Council of Europe installed induction loops upon the request of IFHOHYP. The EC representative of the DG External Relations Human Rights unit then said: "If the Council of Europe has induction loops, then we definitely can have them too!"

The bottom line is that I suggested that EFHOH, IFHOH and IFHOHYP address a **joint letter to the EC and OHCHR on accessibility of their meetings for hard of hearing people** + submit all necessary information about the assistive listening devices, palantype service and induction loops. The letter is underway and will be submitted to the EC and the UN soon.

The seminar in part aimed to raise awareness on disability-related discrimination. I think that with the help from delegates of disability NGOs (and a bit from myself) the awareness on specific disability issues - especially on hearing loss - was undoubtedly raised.

Last but not the least, I want to extend many thanks to EFHOH for their financial support of my travel and accommodation for this important seminar.



Thuan is in my left side (on the right of the pic)



Talking with Thuan's parents and aunt

recognized that Thuan has had an aptitude for drawing, especially lacquer art.

Thuan is currently the owner and operator of Light Star Gallery in Hue, and he is also a teacher of lacquer art and karate.

The love with peers

Possessing of a good condition to develop individual capability, Thuan did not forget to help peers. Thuan and his family share their experiences supporting another family with a person with hearing loss. Thuan met and participated with the Ho Chi Minh City Deaf Association, and he wants to "establish a club or association for people with hearing loss in Hue"

Duong Phuong Hanh of the Ho Chi Minh City Deaf Association is planning a schedule to instruct him how to establish a self-help group as well as run the club. Hanh promised him a presentation at the founding meeting of his organization and help him in making the organization more established.

Effort to go in man's heart

Thuan is famous for his lacquer artwork, his family have had felt that Thuan can benefit from more education and they have sought out good artists who can give Thuan further knowledge and experience. Upon hearing about an artist known for oil painting in Ho Chi Minh City, Thuan

went there to meet with the artist and he met Hanh and the Ho Chi Minh City Deaf Association. Thuan told Hanh that "I try to study about painting to make the beautiful pictures feel and touch everyone."

Writer's note

When Thuan was studying oil-painting in Ho Chi Minh City, his family heard about me and invited me to meet him at his relative's house. I am really excited in Thuan. According to my experience and knowledge on Deaf Education in Vietnam, the process that Deaf children have to be educated early intervention at kindergarten level and then special education is not wrong with Thuan. I took the opportunity to organize a sharing session between Thuan's family and the other parents of children with hearing loss as well as students of Special Education of Pedagogic University of Ho Chi Minh City.

Thuan could not hear and speak. He can use Vietnamese sign language but doesn't require an interpreter. He is strong and independent. I am thinking about a chance of overseas study for Thuan to further develop his skills and training.



Council of Europe / Directorate of Youth and Sport

Budapest Human Rights Education Forum, October 2009

By Andrea Pietrini (Italy)

In the year 2000, the Council of Europe (Directorate of Youth and Sport) organised the first Human Rights Education (HRE) Forum in Budapest. This Forum arose at the end of the initiative "Europe, Youth and Human Rights" to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Council of Europe (1949-1999), and it gathered participants and activists in youth and human rights organizations, alongside with representatives of institutions and experts. Together they checked the needs and opportunities for human rights education with young people across Europe.

The HRE Forum most important and visible outcome had been the shaping of the Human Rights Education Youth Programme, a programme running since 2001 and carrying the work of the Directorate of Youth and Sport in relation to missions and values of the Council of Europe related to human rights. The Programme had been established in order to bring human rights education into the mainstream of youth work and youth policy, mainly following the concept of non-formal education. It was developed for this purpose, the now-famous "COMPASS", a manual on human rights education with young people, providing background information on key human rights issues and practical activities to bring human rights issues closer to young people.

The "Agenda 2020" (adopted by the 8th Conference of Youth Ministers of Council of Europe in Kiev, Ukraine, in October 2008) recognised the important contribution of the Human Rights Education Youth Programme to the mission of the Council of Europe and, in particular, its youth sector. More, the Agenda confirmed the commitment of young people for human rights as a main pillar of this work. The priorities include objectives such as ensuring young people's full enjoyment of human rights and human dignity, encouraging their commitment in this regard; promoting young people's active participation in democratic processes and structures, promoting equal opportunities for the participation of all young people in all aspects of their everyday lives, implementing gender equality and preventing all forms of gender-based violence and promoting awareness education and action among young people on environment and sustainable development.

The renewed agenda for human rights education calls for a review of the achievements reached so far, as well as for a strategic reflection on how to consolidate and develop them further so as to take into account the realities of young people, human rights and non-formal education today.

The Second Forum on Human Rights Education with and by Young People, held in October 2009, discussed and provided guidelines about the objectives, approaches and methods to be pursued in the next decade (2010-2020) by the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe and its partners. The most important things discussed were the adoption of a framework policy document on human rights education (and education for democratic citizenship), and the monitoring of its implementation, especially in relation to non-formal education. More, it was discussed the need to place greater emphasis on the access and enjoyment of all human rights by all young people, in particular their access to social and economic rights, the need to increase synergies between human rights education and education for sustainable development; the process of revising and updating the "COMPASS" and the role of pilot projects and the need to take stock and learn from the actions of young people at local level. At last, the consolidation and development of national and European networks for human rights education with and by young people and the overlapping agendas of human rights education and the participation of children. Finally, were discussed issues and dilemmas related to gender equality and people with disabilities.

In the framework of the Forum there were 11 different workshops, and one of these was focused on people with disabilities. Two people from IFHOHYP participated, namely Andrea Pietrini from Italy, and Aleksandar Bogdanovich from Serbia, the former as workshop facilitator. Although this workshop had less audience than other ones, participants succeeded in post a remark about disability in the last "Final Declaration", pointing out problems and needs of people with disabilities, so often mismatched and underrated.

More, a special session or seminar/symposium organised by COE and dedicated specifically to disability issues appears to be necessary, and participants pointed out this needing during the workshop.

modern buildings with embedded metal.

After lunchtime there were several presentations by various speakers on the situation of people in their countries, for example from USA, Sweden and the Netherlands. The people who gave a presentation were Janice Schacter, Bert de Jong of the NVVS, Emma Harrison, Jan Lambry and Siegfried Karg. Janice Schacter showed us a PowerPoint slide show with photos of loop installations from all around the world. After the presentation there was a panel discussion with speakers.

Once the conference's day was finished, we took the train to Zurich where we had a boat trip across the lake "Zurichsee" to Rapperswil and back to Zurich. During the trip we got salad, pasta and ice cream with fruit. This was sponsored by Ampetronic Ltd, United Kingdom.

Sunday, September 27th, was the last day of the conference. On this day workshops were held. You could choose between 2 workshops. The first one was about "Basic planning and testing of induction loop systems". You could follow this workshop in English or German. The second one was about "Strategies of Hard of Hearing / CI organizations in the social and political arenas, with suggestions for practical implementation", which included some short presentations by:

- **Dr. Hannes Seidler**, Germanwings Hard of Hearing Organization DSB, Questionnaire concerning accessibility for hard of hearing people in churches, cinemas, lecture halls.
- **Brenda Battat**, Executive Director (Hearing Loss Association of America, Hearing aid compatible mobile phones (FCC regulation) and their relevance for afile; Brenda told us about the success of HLAA to support the requirement of volume-controlled, hearing aid compatible phones.
- **Erwin Gruber / Hans Willi**, Pro Audito Switzerland: Training people for afile quality control.
- **Daniel Ziegler**, IGGH Switzerland: Mapping afile via "Google Earth".

After the presentations we made a resolution, which included some recommendations on the topic:

1. Hearing aid manufacturers, manufacturers of cochlear implants, physicians, audiologists and hearing instrument specialists shall communicate the benefits of hearing aid/cochlear implant tele-coil receivers for phone listening and assistive listening and educate people who are hard of hearing accordingly.
2. Venues and service points where sound is broadcast shall offer assistive listening, such as induction loop systems designed to the IEC 60118-4:2006 standard, that broadcast sound directly to hearing aids and cochlear implants, enabling them to serve as customized, wireless loudspeakers (without the need for extra equipment).

Karina and I opted for the second workshop. I think it was an interesting workshop to follow.

At the end of the workshops there was a final presentation by Dr. Sc. Tech. Michael B uchler about the uses of technology for people with hearing loss. Following this speech there was a discussion about the future and about the resolution that was made in workshop 2.

At 15.00 p.m. the conference was finished and it was time to go home again.

My experience

It was an experience in itself. It was very different to what usually happens in IFHOHYP and by my own national organisation. It was a conference at a high level and I had to really keep my attention on the topics. I also had the chance to meet many people and acquaintance. All in all it was a fun and interesting experience.

revert to lip-reading. Another situations where FM system should be useful is in school lectures. As I now don't study, I can't comment on it. Only used it once in work-related training, where I put it on the table before colleagues who were running presentations. I decided to put it on table instead of having them wear in on the neck because speaker was changing very often. The sound was quiet, but better than without FM system.

That brings me to next point, sensitivity of the microphone. I found the microphone too sensitive to air blowing from the mouth of the speaker, noise caused by friction to clothing and by handling when speaker holds FM transmitter in the hand. I noticed it even when testing during AGM and asked Phonak engineer why they can't do anything with it, like adding a filter. He rolled his eyes and said, of course there are filters. After more experience I can't buy this explanation, because even cheap mobile phones handle such circumstances (contact with hair, blowing air from mouth, etc.) better. It does not always happen, just that you may be occasionally negatively surprised, and it could contribute to telephone voice quality problem described below. For example I expected to be able to hang the SmartLink around the neck of a person I am talking with, while we are both walking. But the noise kicked in so the sound, while usable, isn't as great.

Transmitter and receiver

SmartLink FM transmitter range is adjustable by attaching one of two antennas. According to the manual, it should be usable even without antenna for very short ranges, but I got interferences even in below 1 m distance from receiver. So I always have at least short antenna attached and it works flawlessly in several meters range. The long antenna, named "lavallier cord" can also serve as a loop for hanging around speaker's neck.

As I mentioned, I have built-in FM receiver without any on/off switch and as the dealer said "You don't need to pair it with transmitter. It will pick up the strongest signal without you having to do anything. It is an advantage". In practice, however, any time there is a FM transmitter around, the receiver will turn on automatically, starts beeping and receiving, whether you intend it or not. If not desirable for me, I have to switch whole hearing aid into 'music' program, where FM receiver is completely deactivated. But then I also lose noise-reduction features of the hearing aid. It happened to me often during IFHOHYP study session.

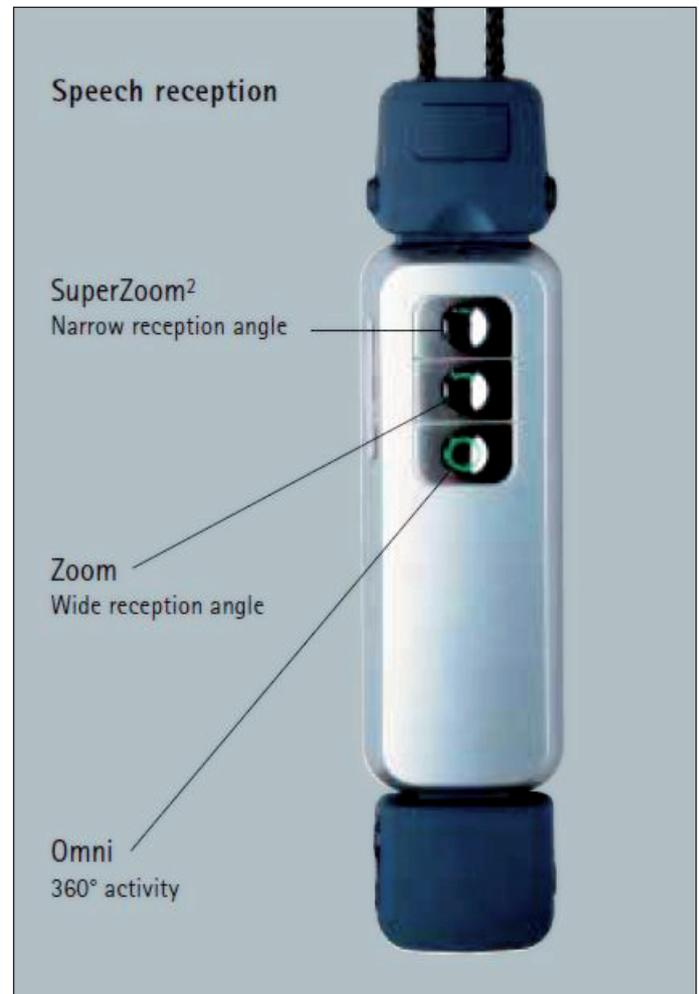


Photo of Smartlink transmitter with explanation of microphone settings. On the top, a "lavallier cord" - neckloop antenna is attached. On the bottom, removable interface for connection of 3,5" audio jack, charger and external microphone is seen. Without both attachments, Smartlink is 9,8 centimeters long.

Because people having transmitters use the longest antenna (with strongest signal) by default, the receiver regularly picked up a signal even through floors/walls of reinforced concrete.

I found the built-in FM receiver more sensitive to humidity than hearing aid alone. I wear hearing aids during sporting, without aids it would be no fun. As my FM receiver cannot be detached, it got its share of sweat. After several weeks of usage it started to activate randomly and produce loud noise. After I started to use desiccant every night, this problem subsided. So this is a reminder – even if you don't have any problems, the hearing aids need proper care.

Interfacing to mobile phone

I have looked forward to this functionality with most enthusiasm. Using mobile phone in normal way is often not possible for me because of ambient noise and sound distortion. To get as good sound from the phone as possible, I used to have wired hands-free always attached to phone, and when calling I put the earbud behind my hearing aid and switched on the T-coil. This meant unraveling cables every time the phone rang, or when I made a call. With SmartLink it should be easier – it is connected to the phone as a bluetooth headset. I tried it with both my two Nokias, and with computer, the pairing was straightforward and basically it worked. But later, whenever I dial or accept a call, it always takes several seconds for SmartLink to wake up itself, then wake up FM receiver. Then it beeps for another second and then finally it is ready for me to listen and talk. Together it can be around 5 seconds. This delay means that when you start dialing with SmartLink in standby mode, the other party can accept the call before the “headset” is active, then everyone is confused and whole situation turns awkward. I found inquiry about this on Phonak website and they recommend to turn on keys sounds on the phone, so that SmartLink wakes up earlier. This also means you have either to hear the annoying beeping of phone keyboard transmitted directly to your ear when doing anything with the phone, or you have to turn it off and on all the time.

After starting to use SmartLink with phone regularly, I started to receive complaints about sound quality from people on other end of the line. I was surprised, yet there was clearly a distinction for them. They could not say what was exactly the problem, sometimes breathing or ambient noise, sometimes unusual colour of the sound.

Needless to say, if above would be standard features of bluetooth headsets, I doubt anyone would use them.

Battery

With bluetooth on, battery lasts maximally two days in standby mode, when it is used it is even less. Without bluetooth it is several days, but it is hard to estimate because of variety of things you can do with SmartLink transmitter. The battery allows fast charging in 2 hours using provided charger, what is helpful. I don't like that charger can't be connected directly to transmitter, but it needs the adapter which is small and can be lost easily.

External audio

SmartLink enables you to connect any external audio source via standard 3,5” jack. There is also external microphone jack, but I didn't test that one. Both inputs need provided adapter to be attached.

The dealer was rather surprised when I was asking him if I could listen to stereo audio, with FM receivers on both ears. He presumed I want to hear exactly the same mono sound in both ears and it took me quite a while to convince him that I, despite my severe hearing loss, expect true hi-fi stereo. At least now I know exactly what “audism” means. But no, SmartLink can't do it, nor any industry standard FM system can. So I decided only for one FM receiver and for listening to music I prefer headphones. After connecting the audio source, SmartLink turns on only after some signal is detected. The whole system, including receiver, seems to react faster than with bluetooth connection. Actually, I even tried connecting the phone this way, instead of bluetooth and it is more usable this way. Because I speak to the phone, not to SmartLink, the person on the phone gets the sound s/he expects, as well. If it wouldn't be unwieldy and funny – the phone strapped to SmartLink by cable – I would actually use it this way.

Remote control of hearing aids

According to the manual, the SmartLink allows to change volume, change program and turn on/off the hearing aid microphone when FM receiver is active. Unfortunately, on my SmartLink this is not working. I realized it only later after a purchase and now it is in warranty repair. So I had no chance to test this functionality until time of writing.

Conclusion

Overall, I enjoy the microphone functionality, it is often helpful in noisy environment. However, I must say that the usability with phone was a total disappointment for me: it is not reliable for everyday use at all. The external audio functionality is OK when mono sound is sufficient. I am looking forward to when remote control would be fixed. All in all, after this own personal experience, I'd likely prefer another or cheaper FM system without bluetooth.



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.

To encourage a better understanding of hard of hearing young people and their problems among the general public.

To defend the interests of hard of hearing young people and express them towards international bodies.

To serve as a platform for cooperation and exchange of information between organizations of hard of hearing youth.

To establish links with organizations of and for hearing-impaired 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.

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.

IFHOHYP Board

President:

Karina Chupina (Russia)
karina.chupina@gmail.com
(and CC: travelmind21@yahoo.com)

Vice-President:

Noora Penttinen (Finland)
noora.penttinen@gmail.com

Secretary:

Lianne de Jonge (The Netherlands)
lianne.ifhohyp@gmail.com

Treasurer:

Christi Oost-Menheere (The Netherlands)
christi-ifhohyp@home.nl

Board Member:

James Aniyamuzaala (Uganda)
janiyamuzaala@yahoo.com

IFHOHYP Newsletter

Newsletter editor:

Juraj Variny (Slovakia)
rini17@gmail.com

Newsletter designer:

Carlos Muncharaz (Spain)
muncharazcc@gmail.com

Learn more about IFHOHYP at

www.ifhohyp.org