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# IFHOHYP NEWSLETTER

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MAGAZINE OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF HARD OF HEARING YOUNG PEOPLE

WINTER 2010



Photo by Curtis Les

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■ There will be four IFHOHYP **Newsletters in the year 2011**. The Newsletters will be published in March, June, September and December. The deadlines for the submission of articles for 2011 Newsletters are 7th of March, 6th of June, 5th of September and 5th of December 2011 respectively.

■ If you wish to **submit an article** for the IFHOHYP Newsletter, please send it in .rtf or .txt form to the Editor by the deadlines indicated above. Please do not exceed 800 words. Pictures should be sent in .jpg form along with captions. Remember to indicate the name of the photographer.

■ If you wish to **subscribe or unsubscribe** the IFHOHYP Newsletter, send an email with the heading SUBSCRIBE or UNSUBSCRIBE IFHOHYP Newsletter to ifhohyp.mail-ing@gmail.com from the email address you wish to receive the Newsletter to.

■ Any **comments, requests or feedback** on the contents of the Newsletter can be sent by email to the Editor.

## Editorial

They always say that the youth is the future. But does the saying also apply to organizations? Are the young people of the world still interested in volunteering and organizational politics? The International Year of the Youth started this August and is still going on for another half a year, while the European Year of Volunteering kicks off in the beginning of 2011. Is there a possibility of combining the ideas of these two years to make the Youth more interested in NGO work?



The UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stated that "Youth should be given a chance to take an active part in the decision-making of local, national and global levels." In my opinion, being active in a non-governmental organization is one of the best ways to get young people active on their own terms and on the topics they are interested in. The European Year of Volunteering is described both as a celebration and as a challenge – to celebrate the people already active and to challenge the people not yet active to get organized – in an organization of course!

We in IFHOHYP are all for youth participation and empowerment. But the road for youth in NGOs is not always straight and there are bumps on the way. The ten years I have been active in hard of hearing, and other, organizations both in Finland and internationally, have shown me that it is really

easy to get frustrated and even to burn out as an organizational activist. Some of the people who have been involved in the organizational work for a long time already can seem to think that since we are young, we have all the time and energy in the world, never mind the pressures brought on us by our studies, first jobs, families, etc. As a young NGO activist, it is important to get your priorities straight and to downsize. To choose your battles.

How can the organizations help the youth to get active and not to get burnt out before the age of 30? By cutting the work into smaller projects. Maybe the 18-year-old is enthusiastic and you would love to see her take on part of the organizational burden, but please don't make her the vice president straight away, give her the task of organizing one youth event, or writing an article for the magazine. Or when the 28-year-old father of two small children comes and asks if he can help, tell him to make a poster for the organization, as he is a graphic designer. You catch my drift.

I wish all the active people in IFHOHYP and elsewhere a Happy New Year of 2011! Remember to relax and to take care of yourselves in the midst of your personal and organizational lives.

The Editor of the IFHOHYP Newsletter  
Noora Penttinen

The IFHOHYP's Newsletter Team wishes to all the readers of the Newsletter a

happy end of the year 2010  
and a Happy New Year 2011  
full of good things to happen

## News in Brief

## IFHOHYP is now the Observer Member of the European Youth Forum!

By Karina Chupina



The European Youth Forum (YFJ) is an independent, democratic, youth-led platform, representing 99 National Youth Councils and International Youth Organisations from across Europe. The YFJ works to empower young people to participate actively in society to improve their own lives, by representing and advocating their needs and interests and those of their organisations towards the European Institutions, the Council of Europe and the United Nations.

Mission of the European Youth Forum is to be an independent, democratic, youth-led platform, representing national youth councils and international youth organisations from across Europe. The Youth Forum works to empower young people to participate actively in society to improve their own lives, by representing and advocating their needs and interests and those of their organisations.

Today, we are the only international disability and youth organization in the European Youth Forum. And the only youth organization of and by young people with disabilities in Europe, as it seems.

### Why did we want to be a member of the YFJ?

To ensure:

- Visibility of disability issues and diversity in European youth work
- Active participation in youth policy development
- Building partnerships and exchange of experiences
- Sharing expertise on how to work with youth with disabilities
- Supporting the values of inclusion and participation for All young people

### Strategic priorities of the European Youth Forum

- Education
- Youth Work Development
- Participation and Youth Policy Mainstreaming
- Human Rights
- Employment and Social Affairs

### What does YFJ Observer Membership mean to IFHOHYP in practice?

- We have the right to be present and speak at the General Assembly and the Council of Members.
- We have the right to present candidates for all non-permanent working structures of the YFJ.
- We will receive latest news and information from the YFJ about the European and international youth work field.

In a nutshell, Observer Membership gives us opportunity to make our voice heard and to raise more awareness on our rights and concerns, on different levels. Importantly, it will help us to promote mainstreaming of disability in youth policy, mainstreaming of youth in disability policies, and mainstreaming of disability and youth in all policies.

It also gives us room to develop and become eligible for the next stage of membership - Candidate membership.

#### More information:

► <http://youthforum.org/>

## News in Brief

## Launch: European Year of Volunteering 2011 (EYV 2011)

From the European Youth Forum



Yes – finally! After 3 years of campaigning and 1 year of preparation work the EYV 2011 is being officially launched. The European Commission will hold its

media launch for the EYV 2011 on 2nd December 2010, in the Berlaymont press room in Brussels. Vice-President Viviane Reding will hold a press conference to explain the purposes of the Year, its objectives and expected impacts. Additionally the EYV 2011 Tour will be launched in on December 3rd in Belgium. EU

countries will be toured over a one-year period. Each stage of the tour in each Member state will last for approximately ten days and will provide volunteers with an opportunity to exhibit their energy and enthusiasm and discuss key issues for their work. Check out the tour schedule attached, find out when the tour stops in your country and contact your National Coordinating Body if you are not yet part of the tour.

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**More information:**

► <http://europa.eu/volunteering/>

## International Year of Youth going on since August 12, 2010!



In an effort to harness the energy, imagination and initiative of the world's youth in overcoming the challenges facing humankind, from enhancing peace to boosting economic development, the United Nations proclaimed an International Year of Youth that

started on **12 August 2010**.

In its resolution proclaiming the Year, the General Assembly called on governments, civil society, individuals and communities worldwide to support activities at local and international levels to mark the event. Under the theme 'Dialogue and Mu-

tual Understanding' the Year aims to encourage dialogue and understanding across generations and promote the ideals of peace, respect for human rights and freedoms, and solidarity.

It encourages young people to dedicate themselves to fostering progress, including the attainment of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which seek to slash a host of social ills, ranging from extreme poverty and hunger to maternal and infant mortality to lack of access to education and health care, all by 2015.

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**More information:**

► <http://social.un.org/youthyear/>

## IFHOHYP AGM 2011 in Serbia

The AGM 2011 will be held in Belgrade, Serbia, on 27th – 29th of April 2011. CRID/ISDC, the national member organization from Serbia, provides accommodation and meals. Participants have to pay for their own trips to/from Serbia. Note that 26th and 30th April are arrival and departure dates. Accommodation is organised in Hostel Flash, Belgrade. Deadline for applications

for the AGM is the 1st of March 2010. Those who require a visa for Serbia should contact the organizers about the proceedings.

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**More information at:**

► [agm2011@crid.org.rs](mailto:agm2011@crid.org.rs)  
 ► IFHOHYP Mailing List

## News in Brief

## MyHandicap International - For People with Disabilities

Text: MyHandicap / Translation: Maggie Plattner

Maggie Plattner presents her employer, the Foundation MyHandicap. The non-profit organisation supports people with disabilities, including deaf and hard of hearing people.



MyHandicap is influenced, in its activities and objectives, by the fate of its founder and Board President Joachim Schoss who lost a leg and an arm in a traffic accident with profound human, job and finance related consequences.

Once he has succeeded in re-establishing in life and his independence, he decided to build up the foundation MyHandicap with which he wants to support other affected people on their way.

### Purpose

The aim of the foundation is to improve people's life who are significantly impaired by a physical limitation in their daily lives, which is done by providing comprehensive information and advice about all areas of everyday life to enable people with disabilities to lead a independent life. In addition, MyHandicap wants to improve the integration of people with disabilities through raising awareness in society and economy.

### Tasks

MyHandicap offers an Internet portal where information, knowledge and experience in all areas of life with disability are published.

MyHandicap is an entry portal for affected people and their families, through which they can promptly and efficiently find desired information and contacts.

Heart of the portal is the forum where interested parties

can exchange views among themselves and with experts in order to mutually benefit from experience and support.

With the address-book MyAdress, which is also available as iPhone App, can affected

people move easier in everyday life because they can check and update addresses in the address-book where they will encounter fewer obstacles.

MyHandicap provides personal support to newly affected people through our Ambassadors. The Ambassador organisation gives newly affected people the opportunity to authentically visualise their future by being accompanied for sharing by an experienced person with a similar disability.

### Life with a disability can be fulfilled and self-determined.

MyHandicap sees their expertise in the combination of personal experience and proven technical expertise. The foundation wants to provide information and help with the portal to access existing services of third parties. Where there are none, they aim to fill gaps by generating information.

MyHandicap wants to foster cooperation and networking among people with disabilities, as well as between them and experts.

MyHandicap is a non-profit organisation that has an entrepreneurial activity in its conduct and is financed by donations, sponsorships and contributions from the founder Joachim Schoss.

### More information:

► <http://www.myhandicap.com/>

## IFHOHYP Study Session 2011 CONFIRMED!

IFHOHYP will organise a Study Session in co-operation with the Council of Europe at the European Youth Centre, Strasbourg France in the autumn of 2011. The theme of the 2011 Study Ses-

sion is "**Striving towards policy impact, awareness-raising and access to social rights**". 35 participants are expected for the Study Session that will last for 6 days.

## MEET THE MEMBERS

IFHOHYP Newsletter conducted a short interview with some IFHOHYP members during the 2010 AGM in Groningen, the Netherlands. The questions were the following:

- 1. What is your name?**
- 2. How old are you?**
- 3. Where are you from?**
- 4. What do you do in your own national / regional hard of hearing organisation?**
- 5. Why do you like IFHOHYP?**

Interviews by Noora Penttinen / Photos by Susanne Gärtner



- 1.** Laura Scholler
- 2.** 21
- 3.** Hamburg, Germany.
- 4.** I am the secretary of the organisation in Hamburg. I am also responsible for the hard of hearing students at the university and organize things like cultural and educational activities as well as parties of course!
- 5.** It is important to be connected on international level, to exchange experiences and to profit from the others' experiences. We are all working towards a common aim. It is also nice to learn about different cultures and ideas.



- 1.** Rasmus Ståbis Blomvik
- 2.** 28
- 3.** Göteborg, Sweden.
- 4.** I am involved in the local organisation in Göteborg as well as the international committee of the UH. During summers I act as a camp councillor for hard of hearing children.
- 5.** I think it is cool to meet people from all over the world and to exchange experiences and to see other peoples' cultures.



- 1.** Tor-Morten Solheim
- 2.** 25
- 3.** Bodø, Norway.
- 4.** I am a board member.
- 5.** This is my first time at an IFHOHYP activity and the AGM has been really good. I have learnt a lot about IFHOHYP.



- 1.** Rinne Oost
- 2.** 35
- 3.** Borne, the Netherlands.
- 4.** I am a project leader and I support the volunteers.
- 5.** I am here because of Rasmus! No, it's all about meeting people, speaking English and getting a challenge in my life.

## News from the Board

# What has happened since the AGM 2010?



## Lianne de Jonge

IFHOHYP Secretary / The Netherlands

Since the AGM 2010, my main focus has been on completing my master's degree and I spent the summer in Trier (Germany) to complete the field and laboratory work. Trier is a lovely nice city on the Mosel river and I really can recommend

you to visit this place and to drink some nice Riesling at a "Weinstube".

These movements and the work load of my thesis project limited my ability to do a lot of work for IFHOHYP. Although I tried to send out regularly documents through the IFHOHYP mailing list, there were also some periods of absence and hence, I offer you my apologies. I am back on duty right now and I expect to do more IFHOHYP related work during the upcoming months!



## Miia Merikivi

IFHOHYP Treasurer / Finland

After last AGM there was some silence and I was worried that the board members forgot me. And then Karina asked me to come to Stockholm for IFHOH BGM and EFHOH AGM because Laura got sick. I got free days from work and travelled to Stockholm by ferry. I liked that weekend a lot. It was nice to meet people all around world. Even though they were older than me and Karina, it was a pleasure to see that there is also federation for hard of hearing adults, that are not so young anymore as we are.

In September I travelled to Brussels for Info & Training Day organized by the European Youth Forum to learn more about funding on the European level. For me it was little bit weird

that they asked before training day that do I need something to help my hearing and understanding. Hearing people haven't asked me about my hearing needs before that and I was happy to go there. Even though they couldn't afford a loop-system I could hear well because of microphones. Unfortunately my flight there was late so I was bit late for training day and possibly missed some things from the beginning. After the training day I took a train to Amsterdam and visited my sister that I haven't seen after her moving there.

After that I have been busy with opening IFHOHYP's bank account here in Finland and had some problems with that. Finally I found way to solve problems and now waiting for getting time for an available clerk at the bank.

My life has been busy also with work, studies, continuing education and my personal life. My personal life have changed a lot in a short time and now I am just waiting for the new year and the things that will happen during the next year.



## James Aniyamuzaala

IFHOHYP Board Member / Uganda

### Human Rights Program of Columbia University

I am among the 10 human rights activist selected out of 170 applicants to participate in the Human Rights advocacy program of Columbia University in New York. I became the first

Disability rights advocate in the program and was nominated to this program by IFHOHYP. The four month program that started in August and ends in December involves sharing work experiences through presentations within and outside Columbia University, participating in the capacity building programs at Human Rights Watch (documentation and reporting), Amnesty International (organizing grassroots campaigns), fund-raising class among others. Finally networking with donor and Human Rights organisations around New York and Washington

## News from the Board

D.C. This will contribute to strengthening of the capacity of the IFHOHYP Board.

### 3rd Conference of States parties to the UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities

While in New York at Columbia University, I participated in the 3rd Conference of States parties to the UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities. I was among the three delegates who represented International Federation of Hard of Hearing (IFHOH). My appreciation to the President of IFHOH, Ruth Warick, who enabled my participation in the Conference.

### IFHOHYP at UN Youth office

On 25th October I met Nicola Shepherd the head of the Youth program at the United Nations. I handed over information booklet about IFHOHYP and discussed possibilities of IFHOHYP participating in International Year for the Youth. UN youth office is committed to inclusion of Youth with disabilities in all development programs. In celebration of 2010-2011 as an International year for the Youth, The UN Youth office is developing a handbook on the best ways to include youth with disabilities in development programs including the International and National Youth programs. Nicola advised IFHOHYP to take advan-

tage of the country Youth delegates to the UN which involves countries nominating two youth to represent Youth in the UN general assembly meetings and Youth conferences every year. Youth with disabilities should advocate for being delegates and her office is committed in helping with provision of information and recommendations.

### Meeting US State Department Special International Disability Advisor

On 4th November 2010, I met Judith Heumann who is an internationally recognized leader in the disability community and a lifelong civil rights advocate for disadvantaged people. She is the Special Advisor for International Disability Rights at the U.S. Department of State. From June 2002- 2006, Judith E. Heumann served as the World Bank's first Adviser on Disability and Development. In this position, Heumann led the World Bank's disability work to expand the Bank's knowledge and capability to work with governments and civil society on including disability in the Bank's discussions with client countries; its country-based analytical work; and support for improving policies, Programs and projects that allow disabled people around the world to live and work in the economic and social mainstream of their communities. She was Lead Consultant to the Global Partnership for Disability and Development.

### Panel on UNAIDS Side Event

In commemoration of World AIDS Day (1 December) and the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (3 December), a panel discussion on AIDS and Disability: An emerging concern was held on Thursday, 2 December 2010 at 1.15 - 2.30PM in Conference Room 7, United Nations, New York. The panel discussion was organized by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) in collaboration with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Permanent Mission of the United States to the United Nations. During the discussion, I raised an issue of involving young people with disabilities who constitute 10% of the approximately 3 billion global populations of young people.

### Meeting with International Disability Alliance

On 6th of December 2010 I had a meeting with Alexander Cote of International Disability Alliance who is the capacity building officer. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the possibility of IFHOHYP becoming a member of IDA which does advocacy for people with disabilities at UN.A Follow up is being undertaken for IFHOHYP to become a member of IDA and to benefit from capacity building programs.



Nicola Shepherd (UN youth program officer) and James Aniyamuzaala.

## News from the Board



## Laura Scholler

IFHOHYP Vice President / Germany

My name is Laura, I'm 21 years old and I live in Hamburg, Germany, where I study law. This year I passed the intermediate test and moved on to the advanced study period.

In Hamburg we also have a Youth Group for hard of hearing young people where we again had different kind of activities this year. One of it has been the panel discussion about the possibilities of inclusive education of deaf / hard

of hearing people in Hamburg. It took place at the University and many deaf people came and had a motivated discussion.

In my position as IFHOHYP's Vice-President I started together with other dedicated members and volunteers of IFHOHYP (Rinne Oost, Karina Chupina, Cristina Tabacaru, Margrit Plattner, Carlos Muncharaz, Andrea Sabova, Juliane Große) the preparation of the Study Session which should be held in Autumn 2011. Its topic will be "Striving towards policy impact, awareness-raising and access to social rights". Now we hope that the Council of Europe will accept our application and we can continue with our work.



## Karina Chupina

IFHOHYP President / Russia - Germany

It was a period busy with IFHOHYP work!

### EU Presidency Conference on Disability and Personal Autonomy through Education, Employment and Universal Accessibility, Spain

It was a first event after the AGM where I represented EFHOH, IFHOHYP and the Youth Committee of the European Disability Forum. You can read more about it in this newsletter.

### EFHOH AGM and IFHOH BGM, Stockholm

In July I and Miia Merikivi represented IFHOHYP at the EFHOH AGM in Stockholm. The meeting was held in conjunction with IFHOH BGM. The board of EFHOH got a new member, Lidia Best (UK). I also took part in the Joint IFHOH - EFHOH - IFHOHYP Board meeting. IFHOH has new President, Ruth Warick (Canada), and new Secretary General, Ulf Olsson (Sweden). EFHOH invited me to run a training workshop on Gender Mainstreaming at the next EFHOH AGM in 2011 in Vienna, Austria.

### Summer camp for HoH Youth, Borken, Germany

In the beginning of August I visited German summer camp for HoH youth in Borken, where I disseminated information about IFHOHYP to participants and, with the help of Juliane Große, collected about a hundred of questionnaires for the IFHOHYP Research project. Austrian organization representatives who

were in the summer camp, are now interested in applying for IFHOHYP membership since next year.

### World Youth Conference, NGO Global Meeting, Mexico

On August 23-27 I represented IFHOHYP in Mexico at the NGO Global Meeting within the framework of the World Youth Conference. I happened to be the only delegate on behalf of the Russian Federation and the only international NGO delegate to represent disability! This has to be changed. So I had a challenging task to make the voice of people with disabilities heard and seriously considered. And I think I managed this well.

What was the NGO Global Meeting about? The selected 208 young NGO leaders around the world came together to provide their input to decision-makers on the priorities to be put on the global agenda of youth development, as well as to hold the governments accountable about the promises established in the MDG and other international treaties. My role was informing the delegates of the rights and concerns of youth with disabilities - and paying attention that "youth with disabilities" and their specific needs are mentioned explicitly in all conference statements (instead of a "vulnerable youth" generalization). I took part in the discussions in the following thematic groups:

- Poverty and Exclusion (contributed with concerns on youth with disabilities, accessibility and mechanisms for inclusion).
- Education (contributed with concerns on promotion of non-formal education, access AND accessibility of education for all young people, and human rights education).
- Employment (contributed with suggestions on employ-

## News from the Board

ment creation policies and programmes, capacity development, the role of formal and non-formal education, inclusion of young people with disabilities).

I've also networked with participants from "Health" and "Participation" working group trying to achieve as much representation of disability, inclusion, human rights and non-formal education issues in the final document.

Learn more about it at:

► [www.youth2010.org](http://www.youth2010.org)

You will see the mentions of disability, inclusion and non-formal education throughout the Statement of the NGO Global Meeting at:

► [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Resources/Documents/2010\\_WYC\\_NGO\\_Statement\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Resources/Documents/2010_WYC_NGO_Statement_en.pdf)

The regret of all NGO Global Meeting participants was that there was a gap between NGO Meeting Statement by young people and what governments agreed to later, in the Governments' Declaration. Still, the very positive outcome was strengthening the voice of youth on international level, and learning to use the statement as a lobby tool in the future.

### European Disability Forum and ILGA-Europe cooperation

In October, I was invited at the ILGA-Europe (International Lesbian and Gay Association) Conference "Expressing our differences, challenging our prejudices, developing our alliances" on 28-31 October in Hague, the Netherlands. I was invited as a representative of ILGA-Europe partner organisation, the European Disability Forum, and as a trainer. At the conference I ran interactive workshops on challenging disability prejudices and forming alliances with disability NGOs. We found out that there are lots of similarities in discrimination towards people with disabilities and LGBT. There is a lot we can do together!

To learn more about activities of ILGA - Europe and the EDF, visit:

► [www.ilga-europe.org](http://www.ilga-europe.org)  
 ► [www.edf-feph.org](http://www.edf-feph.org)

### European Youth Forum General Assembly, Ukraine

On November 17-20 I represented IFHOHYP at the European Youth Forum General Assembly in Kiev, Ukraine. I made a

presentation of IFHOHYP explaining our concerns and why we want to be involved in the European Youth Forum. And the member organizations (National Youth Councils and INGYOS) votes YES! So the great news is that IFHOHYP is now accepted as the Observer member of the European Youth Forum and is actually the first international disability youth organisation in the Forum! To learn more about European Youth Forum (also abbreviated as YFJ) and its numerous activities in youth policy, human rights and participation, go to:

► [www.youthforum.org](http://www.youthforum.org)

Many thanks to the previous Board and Noora Penttinen for help in preparing application documents for the YFJ membership.

### My other related professional duties...

#### Open Society Institute youth policy conference

In October I was invited by the Open Society Institute Youth and Media Support Programme in Kazakhstan as an expert on youth policy at the "ZhasCamp" youth event in Almaty.

You can read about the ZhasCamp event at

► [www.zhascamp.org](http://www.zhascamp.org)  
 ► [www.soros.kz](http://www.soros.kz)

#### Council of Europe youth policy seminar "Access to social rights for young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods"

On December 1-3, I worked as a general rapporteur at the Council of Europe expert seminar in Strasbourg "Youth policy approaches for access to social rights for young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods". The seminar is held within the ENTER!

Learn more about ENTER! at:

► <http://enter.coe.int/>

On a professional level, I applied for the post of the Educational Advisor in the Council of Europe Directorate of Youth and Sport. This meant three rigorous selection rounds that started in spring. Out of 700 applicants, only five persons in the end were considered as qualified for working at this position. I am in this Top-5 and I am placed on the reserve list. Is this a great achievement or a loss? Depending on how you look at it.

# Deaf and HoH finally work together

By Maggie Plattner / Translation by Padraig McCarthy

Up until now, the two largest organisations for youth and young adults with hearing disabilities IFHOFYP (International Federation of Hard of Hearing Young People) and EUDY (European Union of the Deaf Youth) have fought alone for the interests and acceptance of young people with hearing impairments. At the IFHOHYP annual general meeting in April 2010 the two organisations finally decided to join forces.

When Dennis Hoogeveen, Secretary of EUDY, learned that the annual general meeting of IFHOHYP was to be held in his home town of Groningen, the Netherlands, from 1st to 5th April 2010, he contacted Karina Chupina (Russia), President of IFHOHYP and suggested to introduce his organisation at the meeting and at the same time take a look around.

## Future collaboration

"I found it very interesting here," Hoogeveen said at the meeting. "Although there are differences, we basically want the same thing!" Especially in regards to the subtitling of TV shows and movies screenings, access to Sign Language and palatypists and technical and visual aids such as induction loops, projectors, etc. for public and semi-public events.

What the future collaboration will exactly look like is still undecided, as the objectives and the plan of action will only be discussed in further meetings between the two organisations. Since both organisations have already done some work to achieve the above mentioned goals, the two directors will draw up a plan of joint action and lobbying in the next steps. "The larger the organisation, the more impact we can have," commented Noora Penttinen, former secretary of IFHOHYP, on the necessity of this cooperation.

## Two organisations - two languages

IFHOHYP is an international non-governmental organisation of national and regional youth organisations, that is dedicated to hard of hearing young people all over the world. The priority of the organisation is to improve the quality of life of hearing impaired youths worldwide and the equality of treatment for hearing impaired young adults between 18-35 years in society. Besides this core task, the organisation also promotes the worldwide exchange of young adults with a hearing impairment. IFHOFYP is so far the only youth organi-

sation for young people with disabilities working with the Council of Europe. Switzerland is represented by the organisation Jugehörig.

EUDY (European Union of the Deaf Youth) is an umbrella organisation for associations for deaf youths in Europe and is also a non-government organisation. In addition to equality and international exchange, the goal of EUDY is to promote the recognition of Sign Language and to give deaf people the same rights as hearing people. Sign Language and deaf culture should be fully accepted as part of European culture. The Swiss member organisation is the SDY (Swiss Deaf Youth).

The divide between the two organisations has primarily a linguistic background. IFHOFYP's main language of communication is the spoken language (English), while at EUDY communication is mostly in Sign Language. However, since accessibility is a priority for both organisations, this linguistic boundary is blurred and no longer a reason for secession.

## Bilingualism as a solution

"Deaf and hard of hearing people often have misconceptions about each other. Hearing implants, such as the cochlear implant (CI), blurs the line between the two groups even more," said Karina Chupina on the convergence of the two organisations. This issue is still hotly debated in the deaf and hard of hearing communities. A simplification of the situation can be the acceptance and use of both languages as is already the case in Scandinavian countries. Especially in Sweden, bilingualism is a priority. The Swedish Association Unga Hörselskadade (swed.: Young Hard of Hearing) also a member organisation of IFHOHYP ñ has published a brochure in English, something which also pleased Hoogeveen at the annual meeting: "Sign Language is important, also for hard of hearing". "Bilingualism is a practice that we can both use," agrees Karina Chupina.

The President looks with great confidence to the future cooperation: "With the experience and resources of our organisations, we will be able to achieve our common goals." Even at EUDY one is certain: "We can happily say the contact and the future cooperation with IFHOHYP will be warm!"

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## More information about EUDY at:

► <http://www.eudy.info/>

# TV Subtitling in Bulgaria

By Yana Domuschieva

I am sad to report that people with hearing loss in Bulgaria still do not enjoy easy access to information. Bulgarian television channels mostly ignore us as an audience, preferring to do voice-over translation of foreign shows and movies as it makes TV watching easier for hearing people. While foreign channels such as National Geographic and Animal Planet are translated via subtitles in Bulgarian, no subtitling is ever performed for the sake of accessibility. Bulgarians with hearing loss have very limited access to news in Bulgarian and no access to national political and entertainment programming such as Bulgarian cinema, talk shows, documentaries, political debates and sports commentary.

Accessibility for people with hearing loss is not defined in any national legislation. Only the state-supported channel, BNT, is required to ensure that it has programming for people with disabilities. For those who can't hear BNT provides Bulgarian sign-interpretation to the ten-minute daily news at 16:00 and a twice-monthly show titled "For People with Hearing Loss" which is entirely in sign language. This 30-minute show is beyond absurd, combining a children's program, news, religious content, beauty advice and job performance advice, all told by the same sign-language interpreter. This show has run, largely unchanged, since the 1980s.

Bulgarian organizations for the deaf and hard of hear-

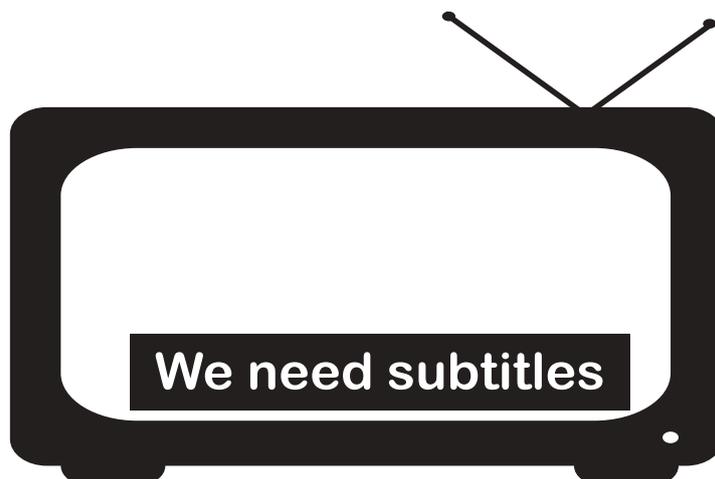
ing, which are of course aware of this issue, have for decades remained passive in advocating for accessibility. This spring however, an informal group of young people united around a blog targeted at people with hearing loss (<http://www.reporter.com>), decided to take action. We initiated a conversation with the Director of Programming of BNT who was receptive of our complaints, but largely uneducated about the role of modern technology in subtitling. The Director maintained that subtitling of live shows is technologically impossible. It became obvious that she had never heard of palantype and speech-to-text software, and that she didn't know foreign television channels have provided live subtitles for decades.

It is a long road ahead for those of us who want to see subtitles for people with hearing loss on Bulgarian TV. We plan to continue liaising with TV channels and educating the public about the need for subtitling and the ways to achieve it. In addition, we will consider a complaint to the national anti-discrimination commission, and possibly lobbying for legislative changes. We continue to hope that the Union of the Deaf and other NGOs will awake from their slumber and join the fight.

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**More information from Yana by e-mail:**

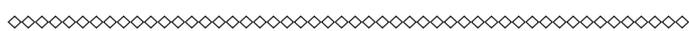
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# Conference on Disability and Personal Autonomy through Education, Employment and Universal Accessibility: a brief overview

By Karina Chupina

I was invited to represent the EFHOH and IFHOHYP at the Conference on Disability and Personal Autonomy through Education, Employment and Universal Accessibility held on 20 and 21 May in Zaragoza, Spain. A day before the conference, a 3rd Informal Meeting of Ministers in charge of Disability policies was held. The Vice President of the Commission and Commissioner for Jus-



The objective of the conference was to debate and encourage the implementation of the UN CRPD, to promote and develop policies that ensure the rights of people with disabilities and to promote a new European Disability Framework 2010-2020.



tice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship, Viviane Reding, and President of the Disability Intergroup of the EP, Adam Kosa also took part in this meeting. Apart from exchanging the information and proposals on the implementation of the UN CRPD in the EU, the informal meeting also welcomed the initiative of a European Award for Accessible Cities that has been launched later this year.

The conference was organized within the programme

of the Spanish EU Presidency and had a threefold objective: first, to debate and encourage the implementation of the UN CRPD. In addition, it sought to promote and develop policies that ensure the rights of people with disabilities on equal footing with other citizens of the EU. Lastly, it aimed to promote a new European Disability Framework 2010-2020, which should also contribute to the implementation of the UN CRPD in Europe.

I took part in one of the three parallel workshops: Participation and Personal Autonomy in the New Strategy. The speakers included:

- **Jan Jarab**, Regional Representative of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Brussels Office (the first UN human rights office in the EU which I mentioned in my previous articles)
- **Giampero Griffo**, European Disability Forum
- **Thorsten Afflerbach**, Head of the Division for the Integration of Persons with Disability, DG Social Cohesion, Council of Europe
- **Marta Colomer**, Head of Volunteering, Zaragoza City Council

At this workshop, experts shared their experiences and told about the work of their organizations accordingly. In the Questions and Answers session I drew attention to the issues of accessibility and education (which were mentioned in the inputs). I expressed a regret that even though the overall organization and accessibility of the Conference were very good, including text-on-screen

in the plenary hall, workshops were less accessible for hard-of-hearing delegates like me: no text-on-screen was provided. I said that access to participation goes hand in hand with access to information. Therefore it is crucial to raise more and more awareness on what accessibility means for different groups of disabilities, especially for the ones that are less visible – such as people with hearing loss.

In terms of access to participation, I also mentioned the importance of the role of Non-Formal education that can be more inclusive for people with disabilities than formal education. Non-formal education is centered on the needs of learners and provides “soft” skills important for employability that cannot be attained only through formal education – communication, being able to work in a team, conflict management, project management skills, intercultural competences, problem-solving skills and many other. I was happy that my remarks were taken very well and were supported by the delegates.

It was nice to meet again Inmaculada Placencia-Porro of the Unit for Integration of persons with disabilities (EC DG for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities) and feel her support of the issues related to hard of hearing people. It was especially good to meet in person Adam Kosa, the first deaf President of the Dis-

ability Intergroup in the European Parliament – and to see that he shares concerns of both hard-of-hearing and deaf groups.



It is crucial to raise more and more awareness on what accessibility means for different groups of disabilities.



Non-formal education can be more inclusive for people with disabilities than formal education.



Let’s not only watch what changes are gradually taking place, but take action! It proves very important that EFHOH always sends their representatives to the EU events for more partnerships, exchange of information and visibility.

**Key ideas that were stressed in the conference:**

- It is important to include disability mainstreaming in the new European political cycle and its key instruments;
- It is essential to ensure universal accessibility, by accessibility standards in the single market for goods and services, and the promotion of accessibility by establishing a European Award for Accessible Cities;
- E-accessibility should be achieved by establishing the regulatory framework that would cover broadband and mobile communications, as well as by re-defining the concept of universal service. Binding e-accessibility legislation should be adopted;
- Participation and personal autonomy of people with disabilities should be ensured, facilitating the transition from institutions to community services and eradicating any degrading treatment. In this sense, Structural Funds should be used as an instrument for change, and the debates on a new Directive on Non-Discrimination should continue;
- Inclusive education is necessary, aiming at a model that addresses diversity, as well as making a realistic analysis of the educational environment situation;
- A new European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 should be adopted as soon as possible, in cooperation with Member States and civil society.

# Our 2010 IFHOHYP Summer Camp experience

By Curtis Les, Jonathan Nicoll and Monique Guterres / Photos by Curtis Les and Monique Guterres



July 2010. Switzerland. Summer Camp. We will never forget it. Many friendships created, mountains climbed, sports played, and way too many potatoes eaten. Three members of CHHA and the Young Adult Network had the opportunity to attend our first summer camp put on by the International Federation of Hard of Hearing Young People (IFHOHYP). The IFHOHYP summer camp is a tradition that has been held since the sixties. Its main purpose is to “bring hard of hearing young people from different countries together, so that they can get to know each other as well as the environment and culture of the place where the camp is being held.” Each year, a different IFHOHYP member organisation takes on the responsibility to arrange a summer camp, and for 2010, it was organised by Jugehörig, a Swiss Hard of Hearing Organisation.

The age group at this year’s summer camp was 18 to late 30’s, which was a perfect opportunity to network, make friends, develop role model relationships, and the potential to meet partners (this definitely happened!). With approximately 50 young adults from all over the world, the summer camp was a 12-day cultural mosaic! The experiences that we were able to share with others bridged the gap among North Americans, Europeans, Asians, and an African from Burkina Faso!

We learned a lot about Swiss culture: we observed that the Swiss had an absolute necessity to have a coffee after every meal; we had a variety of back-to-the-land activities in which all campers had to milk a fake cow while sitting on an one-legged stool, hammer a nail entirely into a block of wood, and throw a rubber boot at some cow bells hanging

from a post; we also walked in a stream flowing down on a mountain side, and had a shower in the freezing cold water (best known as Kneipping). We visited the ski-resort town of Zermatt, where we saw the most photographed mountain the world, the Matterhorn; hiked from the old center of Sion, Switzerland, to the Château de Tourbillon, and through the vineyards where we stopped to savour some wine, sparkly water, prosciutto, raclette, and rye bread. Last but not least, another highlight was watching the sunrise on top of the Eggishorn, which is a mountain, overlooking the Aletsch Glacier at 6:12am!

Despite being at a camp in the small town Fiesch (population: 1,000), the camp facility and the town offered numerous activities, such as tennis, mountain biking, and soccer (better known as football to the Europeans). During a break, we had an opportunity to show both HOH TV episodes, and there was discussion about potentially doing an international version of HOH TV! While we strove hard to communicate clearly with all of our peers despite of having different levels of competency in English, German, and Swiss Sign Language, there is also something to be said about the nature of communication at the summer camp. Being in a relaxed environment brought out plenty of humorous moments (many said that the Canadians had 'infectious' laughs and a unique sense of humour!), enabling us to be more open with others. The atmosphere was often lively, and at times, filled with sleep-deprived people who chose to stay up until the wee hours chatting away in spite of our usual early wake up calls! One of the true benefits of attending the summer camp is that you come away feeling refreshed, renewed, and absolutely unstoppable to face whatever challenges that come your way.

Our experience at the summer camp also enabled us to generate more ideas for the CHHA YAN. Canada, compared to Europe, is a much larger country and with much interest in holding a summer camp in Canada, it may be time to start stepping up to the plate. According to Karina Chupina, the current President of IFHOHYP (2006), "these camps also motivate social action in developing international projects and local community empowerment initiatives". The YAN is still young, and we have much to learn from IFHOHYP. Lastly, we would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to the nine members of Jugehörig. These nine team members bravely took on the formidable task of finding sponsors, organising the endless stream of activities available, and as well as providing us with food, shelter, and local transportation. Without their commitment and unwavering enthusiasm, the 2010 summer camp would not have been feasible.



Jonathan, Monique and Curtis cheers from the Matterhorn.



# Living with a Cochlear Implant - when you are not young anymore!

By Andrea Pietrini

I guess you already know what is a cochlear implant (CI), often referred to as a bionic ear. It is a surgically implanted electronic device that provides a sense of sound to a person who is profoundly or severely hard of hearing. Since cochlear implants are often used with children, it was thought that adults “don’t get a CI when you are too old, because you will have too many problems.” When I turned 41 years old I decided to get a CI.

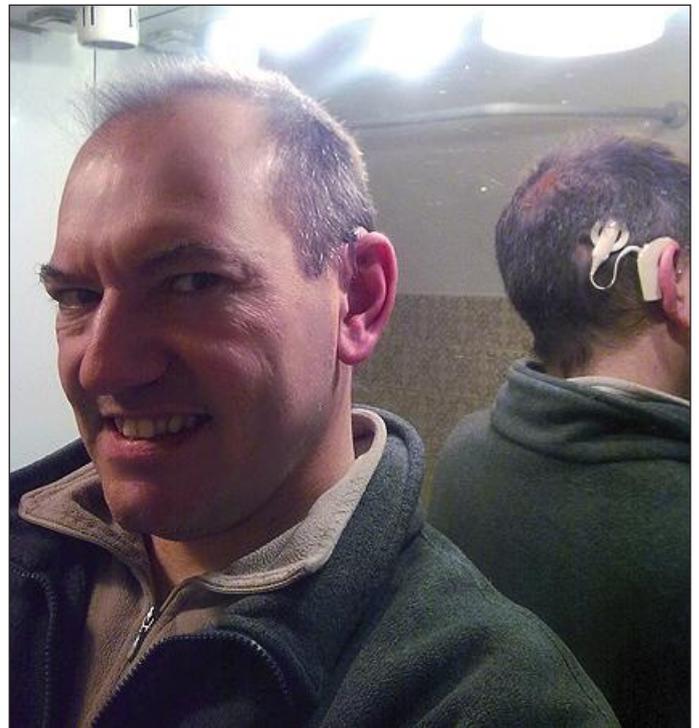
What was my reason for getting a CI later in my life? Simply said, I completely lost my hearing in left ear and a hearing aid was not useful anymore. The CI option was a last option for me to decide on.

After many months of searching for a hospital and after speaking with surgeons and specialists, I found a hospital 700 km away from my home. I went in for consulting with doctors twice and had my hearing checked in every possible way. I had to choose what type of CI to use (there were two or three different brands available). I also had to do a couple of exams with magnetic resonance and tomography at my local hospital.

Three months later I returned for surgery and I will say that surgery is a terrorizing experience, but it is much more comfortable than anyone could imagine. The surgery lasted one hour and 30 minutes, an improvement from operating times of four to five hours in past operations. CI operations use total anesthesia and after two days patients can go back home, albeit with a slight pain in their heads.

One month after the operation I returned to the hospital for the activation of my CI. This means the CI will be switched on for the first time. I think there are no word to describe such an effect. I could hear inside my head the ‘switching on’ of the electrodes. It seems like the starting of the engine of a car and then the feeling rapidly disappears. This was not painful but new CI patients can get some really new, confusing sensations. Then after a few seconds CI patients can start to ‘hear’ sounds.

It was astonishing, because sounds were very different from before I had my CI. I had to restart and rebuild my sound memories. Sounds however are richer than before in that I can hear



almost every sounds, both high and low ones. The biggest problem is “what is this new sound I can hear? A car? A dog barking? The sound of dripping water? The clock on the wall?” In other words the main problem was correctly identifying the sound.

These are the problems I spoke at the beginning of this article: when people are not children anymore, they will have to restart all processes of identifying sounds using a CI.

In a sense, having a cochlear implant requires patience in acquiring sound. If CI patients are impatient, they will feel uncomfortable with the CI. They need time to let their brains adapt to knowledge with new sounds using a CI.

But in the end, having a CI is better than the hearing aids, because the CI will bring more sounds than before. CI will benefit from learning how to ‘hear’ sounds in the long term, as it did for me with my own CI.

# Are we different or it is just an exception?

By Muhammad Akram

I still remember one of our group projects during the IFHOHYP Study Session 2007 in Hungary in which we had to make a project to develop a self-help organization. All of the members in our group were not very experienced, but we developed and presented our project. Besides other things one question some participants rose on our project presentation was that “how can you develop an organization WITHOUT any funds?” We had been shown nothing in project budgeting. We said that we will do things on our own by self-help. I tried to explain it but I saw the participant was not satisfied at my answer, and we had to proceed with the program.

At that time Danishkadah (Akram’s organisation in Pakistan, editor’s note) was just a baby, and I was wondering if starting an organization without concerning the funding was a mistake. Today, after 3 years I am sitting here thinking if it is a difference between Europe and Asia, or it is just an exception that an organization started with no concern about funding and made many good things (including supporting IFHOHYP to grown internationally) in these three years, and gaining strength with every passing day. But I believe regardless Europe or Asia it is the will, passion and commitment that made it happen.

It is not that I am saying money is not needed. Of course without funding an organization can’t go much far and cannot take big projects. What I tried to explain in 2007, let me try to explain it again, you still have the right to disagree.

In my opinion the first and the most important things are the will, the passion and the commitment. Money comes latter. If we are really willing we can do a lot at our own by the basis of self help. If I have a PC I can develop a poster; if a friend has

printer, he can get it printed; if another friend has a bike, he can distribute that poster to schools and colleges in nearby areas, for awareness rising. If we think it “professionally” then we need money for designing, for printing and for distribution, we have to make a budget and run around to find the fund. If we get the fund, then do it. If not, then say this project is not feasible because we are unable to collect funds.

My philosophy is, let’s start and do whatever we can do by self-help, even if it is very little, things can grow gradually as Danishkadah is growing. This not only gave us working experience but also developed visibility, credibility, and proved our commitment with the cause. Now we are planning big projects that sure need big funding but now we are much confident that donors will consider our projects and will join with trust.

Here I’d like to share Danishkadah’s storybook that we developed in cooperation with Asia Pacific Development Center on Disability (APCD), some of

you may have read it already at Facebook. Now you can read it at our website:

► [http://www.danishkadah.org.pk/sbkm\\_story/English/Page-01.html](http://www.danishkadah.org.pk/sbkm_story/English/Page-01.html)

At end, I’d like to share a few quotes from our story book:

- “Knowledge is Power”
- “We can do a lot without money, but we can’t do much without knowledge”
- “Nothing is impossible if you have the knowledge and the will to do it.”

