



# IFHOHYP NEWSLETTER

MAGAZINE OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF HARD OF HEARING YOUNG PEOPLE

AUTUMN 2011



**The UN General Assembly Hall usually has captions only for the disability-related events. Let's bring change into the mainstream!**

## Editorial



We all know that the biggest barriers for hard of hearing youth are communication barriers, access to information and attitudinal barriers. As a consequence, hard of hearing young people face exclusion in all spheres of life - education, employment, access to participation

and culture. HoH youth are sometimes perceived through false stereotypes, such as "a hearing aid is enough to hear" (no! assistive technologies are needed), "all hard of hearing speak sign language" and "hard of hearing=stupid". With growing attention in the world to disability rights - thanks to the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UN CRPD) - awareness-raising, breaking stereotypes and developing tolerance towards hearing loss has become relevant as never before. IFHOHYP is positive about bringing gradual change in society's perception: we make our needs known and offer our advice to the international institutions, organisations and people.

All too often, the accessibility needs of youth and adults with hearing loss are forgotten in favour of more "visible" disabilities: when mass media speak about accessibility, they usually mean "ramps" for wheelchair users or Braille for blind persons. Ironically, in some countries, state authorities consider accessibility mission fully achieved when the ramps had been installed.

What about induction loops, palantype/text-on-screen, FM-systems? This is what IFHOHYP and member organisations are there for: we need to actively raise awareness, change attitudes and provide training on our needs in the society. Accessible accommodations give us an opportunity to be included, and a voice in decision making. IFHOHYP will strive to make specific needs of hard of hearing youth fully taken into account in implementation of the UN CRPD and the EU Disability Strategy 2010-2020.

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■ There will be one more **IFHOHYP Newsletter this year**, published in the end of December.

■ **Deadline** for the submission of articles for the next issue, to be published in December is: 5th of December.

■ If you wish to **submit an article** for the IFHOHYP Newsletter, please send it in .rtf or .txt form to the Editor by the deadline 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.mailing@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.

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# United Nations General Assembly High Level Meeting on Youth – a mainstream youth-focused event with captions provided (and fought for)!

By Karina Chupina, IFHOHYP President

I was honoured to represent IFHOH and IFHOHYP at the UN General Assembly High Level Meeting on Youth that took place on 25-26 July in the UN Headquarters in New York.

A long correspondence preceded my participation, as I wanted to ensure that live captioning will be provided during the entire meeting. Without the additional advocacy from my part and efforts from the UN DESA staff, the captioning accessibility would not be possible. One of the reasons was that the internal UN Secretariat-wide policies and guidelines on accessibility were still in development process. Finally, after exchange of IFHOHYP advocacy messages and internal work of the UN DESA, the captioning was fully provided for two days of the meeting. IFHOHYP advocacy worked! **A small step in the UN agenda, a big step for disability issues at the UN, for IFHOHYP and the entire hard of hearing community!**

The UN High Level Meeting opened with captioning on two big screens. Ban Ki-moon, the UN Secretary General, opened the meeting. Captioning worked excellently, only the letters seemed a little small for those who sit in the far back. However, there was no induction loop accessibility in the UN General Assembly hall, and old headphone models (one ear-phone box) were impossible to put over the ear with a hearing aid. At times there were interpretation hiccups.

Funny thing: when the interpretation or headphones did not work, hundreds of pairs of delegates' eyes were fixed on the screens with text/ captions. This is the point of inclusion - captions are helpful + useful not only for deaf/ hard of hearing, but for everyone in the society!

To people the captions on screen looked as something natural that they took for granted. If they only knew what kind of

work this involves! I spoke about accessibility needs in some interviews to press, and one short excerpt can be found here:

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► <http://www.policymic.com/articles/why-young-people-don-t-participate-in-politics>  
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It is worth noting that at previous UN meetings, captions were provided for disability-related meetings, but rarely or never – for the mainstream meetings like this High Level Meeting on Youth. A very good start for captioning to be accepted wider in the mainstream!

Below me in the General Assembly Hall, I saw a sign language interpreter translated speeches for a representative from Sweden. Another representative with a hearing loss! It turned out that it was Malin Johansson, deaf and young official representative of Sweden to the UN General Assembly. She later gave an inspiring speech in sign language! It was a remarkable visibility of disability AND youth on the High Level Meeting! She said in sign language: "I regret that there are so few young people representing youth here".

James Aniyamuzaala, past Board member of IFHOHYP, spoke at the UN High Level Meeting on behalf of the African Network of Youth with Disabilities on the need to include youth with disabilities into youth programmes and ensuring accessibility.

All three of us – Malin Johansson, James Aniyamuzaala and I – were the only representatives of youth AND disability issues at the UN High Level Meeting.

The UN High Level Meeting on Youth could be followed at <http://www.unmultimedia.org/tv/webcast/index.html>. Un-

fortunately, though the video says that captions (CC) are “on”, I did not see them. There is still a lot of advocacy work to be done by IFHOHYP in cooperation with CCAC, Collaborative for Communication Access via Captioning.

UN HLM reflected the growing interest of international community to youth and youth issues, and the role of youth in changing the world. As one speaker aptly put it: “A nation that does not take care of its youth, does not have a future – and does not deserve one!” But behind the rhetorics, a lot needs to be done. The fact that there were few young Youth Delegates on behalf of the UN Member States, speaks for itself. State representatives were calling for more investment in youth and job opportunities, but incidentally, only a few representatives mentioned the need to pay attention to marginalized youth. The US representative of youth was a young person himself, who said he was from a poor family and his mother had a mental disability. It was his work in community that helped him to grow personally and professionally.

One of the interesting concrete proposals was to create the world scholarship fund where every government contributes.

The Side Event on Youth with Disabilities was a 1,5 hour round table discussion with inputs from Vladimir Cuk, International Disability Alliance, Fred Doulton, UN DESA, and a few other speakers from Leonard Cheshire Disability Young Voices. I spoke about the importance of training and inclusive education for youth with disabilities, stressing the value of non-formal education, and gave a brief presentation of IFHOHYP.

As a result of the event, IFHOHYP established good contacts and partnerships with the International Disability Alliance, UN DESA, Leonard Cheshire and Rehabilitation International.

UN DESA and IDA look at IFHOHYP as a possible partner in their projects and trainings related to the UN CRPD. IFHOHYP is looking forward to cooperating with them!

The resolution of the UN High Level Meeting contains a mention about youth with disabilities, but as usual, as part of “vulnerable youth”. We discussed with IDA and the UN DESA that we need more advocacy for youth with disabilities specifically and explicitly. The strategies about uniting youth with disabilities worldwide for this aim are under development and you may hear about them in the near future.

IFHOHYP expresses its thanks to IFHOH for their help in registering for the UN event, to the UN DESA and Mr. Fred Doulton for their support in pushing through the accessibility at the UN High Level Meeting on Youth - captioning on screen that helped not only hard of hearing but all participants of the meeting!

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#### Author’s note:

Before and during preparations for captioning inclusion, I was in contact with several good colleagues online, e.g. the CCAC ([www.ccacaptioning.org](http://www.ccacaptioning.org)), and others on the social media. The professional captioners also merit a big thank you, along with all at the United Nations who achieved communication access for us all.

### Editorial continued

This summer I took part in the UN High Level Meeting on Youth about which I am telling in this newsletter. Even in the UN, being provided with the text on screen was a real challenge. I am very happy that we made UN mainstream youth event accessible to hard of hearing delegates and raised awareness about it. It is the first - and successful – time after UN Youth Forums in Braga’1998 and Dakar’2001 when IFHOHYP took part in the UN High Level Meeting event.

Noora Penttinen is bringing knowledge about HoH youth needs and what is text-on-screen, by actively participating in the European Youth Forum members’ meetings, where more than 90 National Youth Councils and youth organisations are represented. Loli Bermejo took part in the European Union of Deaf Youth General Assembly, and it is the first concrete step to cooperation between our organisations.

While I am writing these lines, IFHOHYP team is preparing hard for its study session “Striving towards policy impact, awareness-raising and access to social rights” which is held on November 20-27 at the European Youth Centre of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. We warmly welcome all participants of the study session from Europe, Israel, Uganda, Indonesia and Pakistan! We also wish all the best and good energy to our study session team: Carlos Muncharaz, Laura Scholler, Juliane Große, Andrea Rejka Sabova and Cristina Tabacaru.

We are looking forward to the good awareness-raising products and materials that will be developed at this study session – and putting them in further action!

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**President of IFHOHYP**  
**Karina Chupina**

# Training of Facilitators involved in non-formal education with young people (European Youth Centre, Budapest)

By Juliane Große



Getting to know each other at the EYC. Each balloon has the name and face of one of the participants (Picture courtesy of Juliane Große).

As member of this year's IFHOHYP Study Session team, I was able to participate in the training of facilitators involved in non-formal education with young people, which was conducted from 21st to 28th March, 2011, in Hungary. It was my first time to be part of a training course, and the very first time to meet hearing people from various countries for a longer period. The

Training Course was strongly recommended by Karina Chupina, so I knew it would be a rather high level, and as a hard of hearing I particularly had to deal with a lot of different pronunciations in English. I took it as the challenge that it was for me, and am really happy to have grabbed the opportunity.

The Training course was crammed with basic information

about the institutions (Council of Europe, various sub-institutions of it), non-formal education, facilitation, Human Rights/Human Rights Education. Though there was a tough schedule, we got a much time for experiential learning (“learning by doing”) and discussions among other participants. The link between all of us was that everybody was organizing a Study Session, either already having a confirmation by the Council of Europe (so does IFHOHYP) or awaiting confirmation. We presented the aims of our associations, circumstances of our work. We could find out there were even two participants who did not know they were working on the same Study Session without knowing so - the contact persons between the organisation were other people. Information and experiences could be shared with each other, a creation of networks among participants was the positive consequence of it.

For IFHOHYP, the most interesting part is that there is another international organization called “Organising Bureau of European School Students Union” (OBESSU) which is working on the topic of “disabled children’s rights of education”. OBESSU is organizing a Study Session promoting the right of disabled persons to be integrated in mainstream schools. This fits to IFHOHYP’s attitude hard of hearing young people have the right of a good education and freedom of choice. The delegate of this organization and I agreed on sharing information, material and staying in touch. Maybe she could be participant of our workshop or we could do another Study Session in cooperation with OBESSU and benefit from each other’s knowledge and experience.

Regarding our work as preparatory team, we got many very concrete tips from the trainers about several aspects of team work, team-participants relationship and feedback. We often repeated the slogan “Feedback is a gift”, so by now it has become a catchy tune, but it still is useful. ;) For me, the most helpful part was to develop checklists on several steps of the so-called Study Session cycle, the preparatory part (before the Study Session), during the conduction, and – yes – the follow-up such as writing a report for the Council of Europe. It is also my first time to organize a Study Session so it had a calming effect on me to

get to know exactly what has to happen when. Even more, I had the chance to get to know “our” Educational Advisor of the Council of Europe, who will help us with the preparation and who will be there, when we finally hold our Session in November 2011, and discuss issues that I and my team needed to know.

The communicational part was very obliging. Before I went to Budapest, I contacted the trainers about the palantypist and the induction loop. Thus, both were recognized and used. (As the only hard of hearing person there, I had a palantypist all for myself.) I introduced me and my “special needs” (people should address me directly because of lip-reading) to the other participants on the first morning and got an encouraging reaction. Of course, people tended to forget it but were very patient in repeating and repeating again, particularly in the beginning when I had to get used to everyone’s specific pronunciation. On the second day we heard a speech about Human Rights and Human Rights Education and there was the inclusion of minorities mentioned but not explicitly the position of disabled people. Surprisingly, from after this very speech, participants began to remind each other to look directly at me, to speak up, to use the microphone and much more. Before the workshops which we participants had to hold for our colleagues, people started to ask me on the beforehand if this or that procedure would be okay for me because the microphone (linked to the induction loop) could not be used for some minutes then or other

concerns had been raised. All in all, during the eight days there have been minor difficulties because of forgetting that I need the induction loop (room changes were the consequence) or people were speaking too fast for the palantypist to transcribe it. Still, everybody kept being engaged. This was a very fruitful experience both for me and the other participants, as they told me at the farewell.

To sum it up, the time in Budapest was a valuable journey for me, both on the physical meaning of the word but also on the symbolic way. I have got much information I can use now, got to know many new and interesting people and international organizations I have never heard of before. Now I hope I get the chances to put everything into action.



**In Welcome Space the participants shared their ideas and got to know each other better (Picture courtesy of Juliane Große).**

# My first time at an European Youth Forum Council of Members meeting

By Noora Penttinen

## Thursday

I arrived to Antwerp on Thursday evening and after leaving my bags to the hotel, I went for dinner with my lovely speech-to-text reporters Norma Wortley and Julia Jacobie, whose services the European Youth Forum (YFJ) were happy to cover. Later on in the evening I took part in an introductory session for new delegates, where members of the YFJ board and secretariat explained the general course of the meeting and for example what the colours of the name badges meant (mine was blue, which meant I was the official delegate from an observer or candidate member organisation, therefore giving me the right to speak in the meeting, but not to vote) and how we would be seated in the meeting.

## Friday

Friday was the first actual day of the meeting, and we got to hear the first roll call. The roll calls call out loud the names of all the member organisations and whether they are present or not. The Head of the European Youth Foundation was present as a guest and spoke to us about Council of Europe funding for youth. The first open workshop I attended was on volunteering, especially the second youth convention on volunteering, that was organised in Brussels in September.

The second open workshop I took part in was on Youth Rights. The Council of Europe parliamentary assembly has started a process towards a convention to ensure a solid legal basis to a rights-based youth policy in Europe. The issues YFJ stresses are: participation in decisionmaking – lowering the voting age to 16, youth employment, especially quality internships and age-based discrimination such as the mosquito device used by many countries to repel young people lingering in places they shouldn't be (the mosquito device emits high pitch sound that can only be heard by young people, not by the old). African Youth Charter and the Ibero-American Convention on Youth Rights already exist.

The open workshop discussed actively about whether the

YFJ should be pushing for an actual convention, or whether the existing ones would be enough to protect the rights of young people and that youth rights should be dealt with in another way. YFJ had already organised a conference on hard and soft law and different kinds of measures to tackle this issue with actual convention or softer policies. It was said that soft law cannot function without hard law and vice versa. The reasons provided by the YFJ are the specificity of the age group, the fact that there is no legal framework for youth and that the Council of Europe has a pioneering role as the defender of Human Rights. The YFJ calls for the rights to autonomy, education, civic and political participation, decent employment, freedom from discrimination, decent and affordable housing and for sexual and reproductive health for the young people.

The last part of the evening was an interactive workshop on rights-based approach to volunteering. We were given different statements on rights of volunteers such as "I have the right to a contract with my volunteering organisation stating my responsibilities as a volunteer". We discussed the statements in small groups and voted yes or no whether we agreed with the position or not. Some of the statements were more controversial than others.

## Saturday

On Saturday morning I took part in a thematic square titled "NFE for anti-discrimination and inclusion". It was organised by Youth for Exchange and Understanding. They had a project going on including "normal" youth and youth with disabilities titled "Eurogames". The project is funded by EU Youth in Action programme. In May they published a resource package on non-formal education with disabled youth. We did an exercise in which four people were given specific roles: one was blind, one in a wheelchair, one hard of hearing and one mentally disabled. The conclusion was that we couldn't really take their disabilities into account because they didn't themselves actively bring them to the discussion. For example the "blind" person

just stated that he cannot draw, which I understood just being difficult. Therefore it is equally important for the persons with disabilities to explain their own situation as it is for the rest of the group to take them into account.

Unfortunately there were no young people with disabilities in the organising team, I hope that in the future this project will include young people with disabilities more so that the motto "nothing about us without us" is adhered to.

After lunch the actual COMEM started. The meeting accepted a policy paper on non-formal education as well as a recommendation on sustainable development. The board introduced

the progress report for the beginning of the year 2011 and presented the process towards the new cycle of strategic priorities. The finances were presented in a very well structured and understandable way with pie charts and easy language. The last point of the meeting was the membership review of NAYORA, the Azerbaijani youth council. There were some reservations concerning the age of the members of the board of NAYORA as well as the laws and politics of Azerbaijan, but in the end the COMEM supported NAYORA's membership in the YFJ.

The next COMEM will be organised on 18th to 19th of November 2011 in Braga, Portugal.

POUR LES  
DROITS DES  
JEUNES.



# Message from Japan

By Airi Nishikawa



Airi (in the middle) visiting a deaf school in Fukushima area (Picture courtesy of Airi Nishikawa).

This past summer I visited all four schools for the deaf in Fukushima, Japan. There were very strong, patient, and sweet children in Fukushima, and I provided gifts and donations from Tennessee, United States of America.

As you know, Fukushima is one of the earthquake and tsunami disaster areas in Japan and many people are suffering from radiation problems from the damaged nuclear power plants. Some Fukushima citizens have left their town to protect their children. However, most people cannot leave Fukushima due to the economical and psychological problems. If you leave your hometown, you have to find new schools, jobs, homes and friends. "This is one of the reasons why we cannot leave Fukushima," said the schoolmaster of deaf school in Iwaki City, Fukushima.

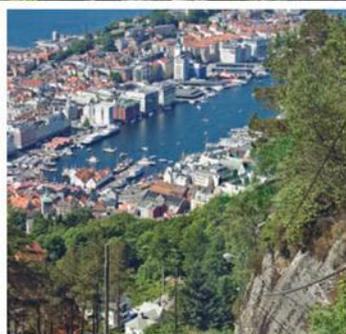
At the deaf school, I met a lot of sweet deaf and hard of hearing children and I saw a lot of shining smiles. Ac-

ording to the one of vice-principals in one of the deaf schools, most children are disappointed about the radiation problem. Some children do not understand why some people hate their hometown, Fukushima.

Before I left the deaf school in Iwaki City, one seven year old child asked me with sad eyes, "You will come see me again?" Her concern was that most volunteers seldom visit Fukushima, even though they need help.

I would like to tell you with a loud voice, "Please do not misunderstand about Fukushima and Japan!" Both Fukushima citizens and Japanese people are still fighting with earthquakes. It is very difficult times for us, but I am sure that we will rebuild the land of Rising Sun.

All Japanese hard of hearing people appreciated your sympathies after March 11. When we rebuild our country, please come visit Japan. I believe that this is the most important gratitude to you and your country. Thank you!



You cannot miss the IFHOH World Congress 2012 in Norway, the Land of the Midnight Sun!

The last World Congress was in Vancouver, Canada in 2008.

The next one will be in Bergen, Norway, June 25 to 28, 2012!

The theme for the World Congress in 2012 is "A Better Quality of Life!"

À ne pas manquer, le Congrès mondial IFHOH 2012 en Norvège, le pays du soleil de minuit !

Le Congrès mondial précédent a eu lieu à Vancouver, Canada en 2008.

Le prochain sera à Bergen, en Norvège, les 25 au 28 juin 2012 !

Le thème du Congrès mondial 2012 est « Une meilleure qualité de vie ! »

**WWW.IFHOH2012.NO**