IFHOHYP
Newsletter

Magazine of the International Federation Of Hard of Hearing Young People

Summer 2012
This spring, as a person who has to travel a lot for IFHOHYP and other missions, I had to re-book my ticket with an airline company. The only way to do this was by paid calling (no online re-booking was provided).

Talking with a German-speaking lady was difficult, so they connected me to the English-speaking service man, who talked way too fast. I told him I was hard of hearing and use a hearing aid. I asked him to “please talk slowly” - but he didn’t get it. Then I started talking very slowly myself to get his attention (and understanding) - but he still didn’t get it. He thought that my problem was the English language and recommended me to call Russian-language service. Oh, he still didn’t get it: my problem was following his blabbering on the phone, not the language. As a result, the entire re-booking conversation took more than 20 minutes. For about 40 cents a minute, what a pleasure! If he talked in a better way, we would have done it in half of the time. Imagine my anger and frustration… If the staff thinks that blabbering and/or screaming to a hard of hearing client on the phone helps, then they are simply not suitable for this kind of work.

After the booking was done, I spent a few extra minutes explaining him what the communication needs of hard of hearing people are (all over again). Only after this “coaching” on the phone the understanding dawned on him. And I thought that in Western Europe, the service staff is more considerate to disability needs than in my Eastern European country.

This incident shows how much work we still need to put into raising awareness and understanding of the issues of hearing loss worldwide!

…I am writing this in a very busy period where conferences follow each other – European Disability Forum General Assembly, Council of Europe Consultative Meeting on Inclusion of Youth with Disabilities, and, soon – the IFHOH Congress (including IFHOHYP AGM)! In all these meetings, IFHOHYP was or will be represented.

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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.

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Any comments, requests or feedback on the contents of the Newsletter can be sent by email to the Editor.
New Working Group on External Relations Established

The IFHOHYP Board decided to start a new Working Group responsible for the external relations of IFHOHYP. IFHOHYP is cooperating with a lot of partners such as EUDY (European Deaf Youth), IFHOH, EFHOH, European Youth Forum, European Disability Forum, etc. At the moment the members of the group are: Coordinator Noora Penttinen – responsible for European Youth forum and Karina Chupina – responsible for IFHOH, EFHOH and UN cooperation. IFHOHYP is looking for new people interested in working with other organisations. If you are interested, please contact Noora Penttinen:
▶ newsletter.editor@ifhohyp.org

IFHOHYP Thanks James Ferguson

James Ferguson helped IFHOHYP greatly by proofreading the new Constitution. Thank you James!

IFHOH Congress in Bergen (Norway), 25-29 June 2012

The international hard of hearing congress was held in Bergen (Norway). At the same time and in the same place, the IFHOHYP AGM went on with the support of HLFU. IFHOHYP expresses its thanks to HLFU for the excellent organisation of the Annual General Meeting!

Congratulations to the new Board members elected at the IFHOHYP Annual General Meeting: Kristoffer Uppeheim (Norway) as IFHOHYP Vice-President, and Sidsel Munkebo Hansen (Denmark) as our Secretary!

At the AGM, IFHOHYP also welcomed Canadian organisation CHHA as their new member. Welcome! Poland and Turkey are preparing their applications for membership now.

Greetings from Asia-Pacific

You may remember that we the Hard of Hearing and Deafened people in Asia-Pacific countries have been networking ourselves since several years, and were planning to have our own regional platform. In this connection we scheduled to organize a workshop from 2 to 4 November 2011 at APCD building Bangkok Thailand. But due to the ever biggest flood in the Thailand history we had to decide to postpone the workshop. We are now rescheduling it for 2012. We are excited to have our own regional platform to strengthen our movement and boost our activities in our region.

Stay tuned we will be sharing update with you once available.

Muhammad Akram
Founder & Chairman
DANISHKADAH
www.danishkadah.org.pk
Year 2011 Update

By Karina Chupina, IFHOHYP President

After the IFHOHYP AGM, I went to the Youth Exchange 2011 Conference “Youth Rights: Real and Imagined” at the European Youth Centre in Budapest organised by the Open Society Foundation Youth Initiative (http://www.soros.org/initiatives/youth). There I ran the workshop “What is it like to be young and disabled? - Challenging prejudices and seeing disability as a human rights issue”.

Then I went to stay for a few months in St. Petersburg (for business and meeting family and friends). During my stay there, I visited the UN High Level Meeting on Youth in the US, where I represented IFHOHYP and about which I wrote in the previous Newsletter. I was very happy with the success of advocating together with James Aniyamuzala for captioning of the High Level Meeting.

Throughout all this time, I have been in regular touch with the IFHOHYP new Board and the IFHOHYP study session team, supporting them in their tasks. I was also helping German and Russian volunteers to collect questionnaires for the IFHOHYP Research project. In summer, I finished my work as a General Rapporteur for the Council of Europe ENTER! Youth policy seminar on access to social rights for disadvantaged young people. If you want to check the fruit of my first-time work as a rapporteur, go to:

► http://enter.coe.int/eng/Publications/Enter!-Youth-policy-seminar-report.

In June, I was nominated by IFHOHYP for the Global Advisory Panel of the Disability Rights Fund (www.disabilityrightsfund.org) and my candidacy was approved in July. I am very much looking forward to start working with the DRF as a Global Advisor next year. The work is carried out on honorary basis, but is exciting and a great learning opportunity!

In my NGO in Russia, I worked on the submission of proposals to the legislative bodies for the effective implementation of the Russian Federal programme “Accessible Environment”, so that the programme takes into full consideration specific needs of hard of hearing young people and adults.

Otherwise, I have been busy with my PhD studies, writing (my reflections on the UN High Level Meeting on Youth “Is the UN ready for serious youth involvement?” can be seen at http://www.youthpolicy.org/blog/2011/10/un-and-youth-involvement/), getting my new foreign passport (it’s valid for 10 years now!), and just with life.

It was interesting to observe the new activity of IFHOHYP this year: the freshly formed Accessibility Committee started cooperation with the CCAC (Collaborative for Communication Access to Captioning), IFHOHYP Board and some member organisations came up with the concrete policy recommendations to the UN OHCHR on measures to achieve accessibility as outlined at Article 9 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. IFHOHYP submitted its set of policy recommendations – international as well as national-level based recommendations. The work on policy recommendations related to accessibility and inclusion (also within the IFHOHYP Research project) will be continuing and addressed further to the UN OHCHR and other relevant bodies.

In Europe, Noora Penttinen has represented IFHOHYP in European Youth Forum statutory meetings last year and in spring 2012. Juliane Grosse joined the Consultation on the new strategic priorities for the European Youth Forum and brought the disability, minority, inclusion and human rights perspectives forward in the meetings. Emphasis was also made on barrier-free youth participation. In the latest meetings, a collaboration with the other minority youth organisations in the Forum was discussed.

This July, IFHOHYP is looking forward to participating in the EUDY General Assembly in Sarajevo, Bosnia and working towards concrete strategy of cooperating on accessibility issues.

And, a big step ahead on the global level – with the help of Maggie Plattner, IFHOHYP applied for the UN ECOSOC Consultative NGO status! Cross fingers for our representation in the UN! With that we are going to improve even such small but important things like changing flights on the phone.

Stay tuned for our news!

Karina Chupina, President of IFHOHYP
IFHOHYP represented at European Youth Forum’s Face-to-Face-consultation

By Juliane Große

Juliane Große represented IFHOHYP in a face-to-face-consultation concerning international Strategic Priorities in youth politics in the years 2013-18. The hearing took place on 2nd of February for the entire day.

For Juliane, it was a challenge as she was requested to go there as a substitute for the Board members who couldn’t attend this very important meeting on very short notice. Being present was not only crucial because of the significance for the nearer future but also because we are the only organization devoted to people with disabilities on this level of politics. That’s why we should take part, actively speak up for the rights of our clientele and remind people of our needs. Even more, IFHOHYP should attend the meeting because it has only been member for one year now and should regularly be updated on the processes which are going on at European Youth Forum (which is abbreviated by its French name, so it’s YFJ).

What was this consultation about?

Concerning the Strategic Priorities for the years 2013-18, the YFJ had already sent a call to their member organizations to name current topics which need to be dealt with within the next years. There have been some concrete questions such as “What is your vision of Europe for young people in 2018?”, “What are the main challenges young people will be face in the 2013-2018 period and beyond?” and “What are the most pressing issues your organization would like the European Youth Forum to address in the period 2013-2018?”. Out of the responses by among 35 organizations (IFHOHYP not included) the YFJ Board analyzed the major issues very detailedly and tried to put them into a first draft of Strategic priorities. With the analysis, it was sent to the Member Organizations in order to be revised and discussed on the respective Board. At this stage, Member Organizations were invited to send one representative in order to state the opinion of the organization.

The entire day was split up into four blocks:

In the beginning, each representative had the space to make a statement regarding the general concept of the draft, raise issues that are missing and criticize specific points that their organizations haven’t agreed with. One main point which has been repeated many times was that it was not clear what the aims (the goals, the “what”?) and what the objectives (the “how”?) were. It was interesting to see that even on such a high level of politics, the Board seem to have the same difficulties as team members of Study Sessions when they struggle with the aims and objectives (as Juliane and her team had done so in 2011). Thus, changes have been suggested such as moving whole paragraphs from one to the other area.

Deeply discussed was also the concreteness of the draft: In the first version, it sometimes seems too general in order to make a SMART goal out of it (which will be the next step after finalizing the Strategic Priorities – creating a working plan). Though, it should not be too concrete, because words like “inclusion” may lead to a greater “shopping list”, as the Board members kept calling it, which is too many smaller goals which wouldn’t be possible to gain within six years. This issue was reflected for the whole day, when we had the space in blocks 2 and 3 to discuss in smaller groups of up to 7 people. Wordings have been discussed (rather
“civic participation” than “youth participation”), the content of entire paragraphs. The interdependence from YFJ and its member organizations have been debated as the Strategic Priorities tackle the issue of how to cooperate in future. Also youth organizations shall be strengthened and their independency should be watched, as Member Organizations suggested.

There was a greater disagreement in the points “Youth participation”, where IFHOHYP could particularly contribute, with the UN-Convention On The Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD), add “barrierfree information” (this is, with the support of sign language interpreters, audio files for the blind, easy language for the mentally disabled…) as a pre-condition to active citizenship.

The proposed paragraph on “inclusion”, for IFHOHYP the most interesting one, needs to be completely revised, as many Member Organisations disagreed with it. There were too many issues mentioned in one paragraph, such as “inclusion”, “employment”, “education”. It will be the paragraph on which IFHOHYP will have to take a closer look when the revised draft will be published by mid-February. We will have to take care that the Board won’t cross out “inclusion” but also makes clear what it means by this word. It was also discussed if the whole paragraph should be renamed to “autonomous youth”, which in generally is a correct term because this is what is implicated by the UNCRPD. Still, we risk not having SMART goals, because it is a very broad term, and we should make sure that the UNCRPD (even if implicitly) is anchored in this paper which will determine youth policy within the next years. So, still there is a lot in progress.

At the end of the day, we had a speech by Mr. Xavier Verboven, who is the Vice President at the Labour Market conservatory. It was an overview of what they are doing there. He mentioned he is deeply concerned by the employment situation for disabled people (so much higher unemployment rate than usual). He talked about a meeting with disabled people, how this experience had moved him. As Mr. Verboven is closely coworking with the YFJ Board, we can be sure he will make sure that we will be heard.

What will be next?
As already mentioned, there will be a launching of the revised draft, Member Organizations can still make amendments. By March, the draft will be finalized. In April, there will be the next hearing, with the aim to compose a concrete working plan out of the Strategic Priorities Paper. This will be IFHOHYP’s opportunity then to insist on concrete goals such as the support of implementation of the UNCRPD, to go into detail on how the UNCRPD visions the education and employment of the disabled.

General statement about the meeting
Though it had been very short-termed for Juliane to prepare for the session, it was a great opportunity to let the voice of the disabled people be heard. Many people agreed with her statements on barrierfree information and her underlining that there are reasons why disabled people in several countries have difficulties to commit actively on local and international politics. She got feedback that some Member Organizations are happy to get to know a new point of view by IFHOHYP’s cooperation with the YFJ.

Last, but not least, the aspect which shouldn’t be underestimated: Communication went well during the meeting. Due to short-termed application, it was not possible to get a palantypist. Although there hadn’t been a good opportunity to make a public announcement in the plenary regarding communication issues, Juliane was able to follow the dialogue very well in the plenary. When it came to the discussion groups, she made every speaker hold her personal FM-microphone. This was heartily welcomed by the participants because they liked how it disciplined the flow of the discussion. Surprisingly, Juliane had been quite awake after a full day of listening and actively discussing with the participants. If that was thanks to two espressos during the day or another wonder, she still has to find out. (Could be useful for other meetings like this one, or for further co-ordination of Study Sessions…)
IFHOHYP represented in EUDY
General Assembly

By Loli Bermejo

The General Assembly of EUDY (European Union of the Deaf Youth) was held in Madrid during the 21st and 22nd October 2011, at the headquarters of the ONCE Foundation.

Delegates of national associations of the deaf youth, coming from 22 European Union countries, took part in the assembly. There were also guests from IFHOHYP, EFSLY (European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters) and EUD (European Union of the Deaf). This event was also open to observers who wanted to know how a GA (General Assembly) works.

The day began with the opening of the GA by the CNSE (Spanish State Confederation of the deaf people), the ONCE Foundation, EUDY and the Youth Commission of the CNSE (the organizers).

After the inauguration, we created working groups (workshops), to deal with different aspects of the strategic plan for the next two years (Strategy Plan 2012-2014). These reflections were shared afterward.

Then the GA started, and IFHOHYP took part as invited association for the first time. EUDY’s President, Philippa Merricks, acknowledged our presence. At one point of the GA, the guest associations had to take part in it. I explained what IFHOHYP was, their main activities, the number of member countries, etc.

The Chairperson confirmed that EUDY and IFHOHYP would cooperate - since there are many common interests - provided that we could remove the communication barriers by using interpreters and speech-to-text. The shared activities would be fixed in the strategic plan 2012.
The Global Partnership for Disability and Development Third Forum

By James Aniyamuzaala

The Global Partnership for Disability and Development (GPDD) is a global initiative to strengthen international cooperation to accelerate the integration of disability issues and considerations into mainstream social and economic development efforts. GPDD is an unprecedented alliance of Disabled People's Organizations (DPOs), including IFHOHYP, government ministries, bilateral and multilateral donors, UN agencies, NGOs, national and international development organizations, and other organizations, committed to promoting economic and social inclusion of people with disabilities in low-income countries.

From 21st to 23rd of September 2011 in Buenos Aires, Argentina, the GPDD hosted its 3rd Disability and Development Forum and Membership Meeting, where members and partners focused on options for implementing development actions towards the social and economic inclusion of people with disabilities, particularly in light of the Article 32 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The II Conference on Monitoring and Dissemination of the Convention on
Rights of Persons with Disabilities, III Forum on Disability and Development and GPDD Membership Meeting was organized by CONA.DIS, Global Partnership for Disability and Development and together with World Bank in Argentina’s capital Buenos Aires.

The forum was officially opened on 21st September 2011 by Dr Alicia Kirchner, the minister of social development of Argentina. She welcomed the forum participants to Argentina and wished them good deliberations during their stay. Under the coordination of the GPDD Secretariat, GPDD Members and Partners focused their discussions on the conditions and factors necessary to foster the mainstreaming of disability issues into development efforts. The Forum analyzed the opportunities and challenges of the different practices and the role of key actors in implementing plans, programs, and activities related to the subject matter. During the first day, the Forum focused on a general discussion. There was an initial presentation on a draft mainstreaming matrix borrowed from the gender experience, three/four presentations of local, regional and/or world experiences, and a final reflective exercise within the framework of an interactive plenary discussion.

The opening ceremony was followed by the Development partner forum. Development Partners explored the processes undergone by various disability efforts and analyze the potentials and challenges of their different frameworks, as well as their priorities for and the role of key stakeholders involved in implementation. Australian Aid is committed to continue funding for small and big organizations in developing counties. The Finnish representative informed the forum that the government mainstreamed disability in its foreign policy and development cooperation.

The second day featured parallel thematic sessions on Women with Disabilities in Development, Inclusive Education, Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies and disability and labour. Additionally, special sessions dedicated to different topics also took place.

On the third and last day, the meeting provided an excellent platform to show how civil society organizations are contributing to inclusive development. GPDD civil society members including IFHOHYP were invited to take part in a “Show and Tell Session” on their organizations, explaining which are the challenges they have to face and the creative solutions they developed through collaborative and associative networks. Lastly, the GPDD bi-annual Membership Meeting took place; this session focused on the election of new officers and on structure and program reviews. However elections were not held because member organizations were still nominating representatives until the deadline of 23rd October 2011.
The Study Session “Striving Towards Policy Impact, Awareness Raising and Access to Social Rights” was held in 20-27 November 2011 at the European Youth Center in Strasbourg. The activity received funding from the Council of Europe. During 5 working days, 27 participants from different countries made this non formal learning activity a memorable experience.

The programme
The first days were devoted to group building and letting the participants to get to know each other. As usually, this was done with funny games the participants enjoyed a lot.

After this initial step, the activity moved into topic. For a start, group work was done to identify and share the needs and realities of hard of hearing people in different countries. Also, an introduction to Human and Social Rights was ran by our great educational advisor, Sabine Klocker. It is important to know our needs, realities and what human or social rights are at risk for us in order to take action.

Methods to take action were worked in later days. We made workshops to understand the concept of “awareness raising” and to share good practices of awareness raising. We also had very valuable input from experts.

Duane Raymond, from FairSay, delivered a stunning introduction to Campaigning. His input caused impression and was very well received and appreciated. Simona Giarratano, from the European Disability Forum, presented the UN CRPD and the work done by the EDF. The UN CRPD and the European Disability Strategy are tools we must use to strive for our needs and social rights. Irena Kowalczyk-Kedziora, from the CoE, shared with us the instruments and activities of the CoE to integrate people with disabilities. Finally, the director of the CoE European Youth Foundation came to explain us their grants and how to apply for them. He encouraged us to submit our projects to their grants.

Working days never were long enough for us. We enjoyed a lot our company. Coffee breaks were made more enjoyable with international foods brought by the participants. We also had an intercultural evening where we learned facts about the countries and organizations represented in the meeting.

Accessibility was reached with two palantypists (text to screen) and FM systems. The reception of the EYC was also accessible with a portable induction loop I personally loved so much that asked permission to take it and use it in the meetings. The CoE staff was always very kind and made great efforts to accommodate us.

Of course, there was also time for visiting Strasbourg a fairy tale town during Christmas. People enjoyed walking around, visiting the biggest Christmas market in Europe (as they say) and having dinner in a restaurant in town, courtesy of the Council of Europe.

Outcomes
The most important outcome is that the participants enjoyed the activity. We received great and enthusiastic feedback from them. We made interviews to four participants (see next page), so if you want to know what it’s like to attend a Study Session please read them! Apart from that, the Study Session helped to link a group of HoH young people with common interests. Now it’s up to them to network and to strive for our rights and needs, at the same time we enjoy our friendship.

Related links:
▶ www.fairsay.com
▶ www.eyf.coe.int/fej/
Interview

Study Session Participants

Alper Coskun (Turkey)

1 - Can you please briefly introduce yourself?
I am from Istanbul, Turkey. I am 32 years old. I am vice president of the youth branch in my organization, called Hard of Hearing People and Their Families Association. It is a national organization, but we're active only in big cities of Turkey for now. I have also a full time position as software architect in a Telecommunication company.

2 - Was this the first study session you participated in?
It was my second time. I participated 2007 Study Session which was in Budapest. I am very happy to join both 2007 and 2011 Study Sessions.

3 - Can you share your impressions after participating in it?
It was a great experience to participate in the Study Session. I learned lots of things about social rights, human rights, campaigning and needs of hard of hearing people. In the Study Session there were participants not just from the Council of Europe countries, also from some other countries. We had a chance to share success stories about our needs and our rights. We had also a chance to study our action plans which are realistic and good plans. The only negative point is that I wish we could have more time.

4 - What topic would you like the next study session to deal with?
I think that all Hard of Hearing people from all around the world need to know more information about their rights and to improve the awareness about our rights in their countries. If we can have success in our regions and nations, the future will be more bright for us. Maybe it should not have the same title with 2011 Study Session, but I think it should include again the topics such as rights of people with disability and lobbying.

5 - Finally, send a message to encourage HoH people: why should they participate in the next study session?
First of all, it is a great experience to meet hard or hearing people from other countries. IFHOHYP and the European Youth Center at Strasbourg try every possible way to have a good communication and environment for all participants. You will have speech-to-text and loop system. You will learn new and helpful things from the team, some experts and also from the participants. Never think that it will be boring and useless, it is mainly non-formal education, and it is fun, and it is a chance to improve yourself about the Study Session’s topics.
Angkie Yudistia (Indonesia)

1 - Can you please briefly introduce yourself?
My name’s Angkie Yudistia, you can call me Angkie. I’m 24 years old, from Indonesia. My hobbies are reading and traveling. After completing a Master of Communication I worked in a private company as a corporate public relations. Previously, I helped a deaf foundation in Indonesia and now I founded Thisable Enterprise.

Thisable is a social enterprise with a noble mission to empowerment, enforcement, & enlighten disabled in Indonesia. We offer social business support, do research, campaign, build network, provide training, share knowledge and understanding and raise awareness of social enterprise.

2 - Was this the first study session you participated in?
Attending a study session like this was not the first time for me, but this was the first time I attended a study session in Europe and I am very excited at all to follow this activity.

3 - Can you share your impressions after participating in it?
Of course! Although when I first arrived in Paris I got into trouble with the police at the airport because I did not hear their requested to show my passport. The police were just yelling and pushing me to the ground, but it was not an obstacle. I continued my trip to Strasbourg.

Many things I learned from this study session. The new science that I know about the situation in Europe HoH were all beyond my expectations. I think Europe is quite advanced but apparently some problems are still the same as in Indonesia. I was happy when I gave a book of my work to all the participants and their response was very positive and hopefully this book will get a good response from the readers.

What interested me is how the study session was running, was really fun. I was learning techniques to convey the material and I can implement that in my country as a trainer.

4 - What topic would you like the next study session to deal with?
For the next session I believe is best to give more work focused activities for the young friends. As examples: how to make good videos, making good photographs, how to be a public speaker, and other things more enjoyable than a seminar just to hear it but to do more action. Definitely more exciting because a lot of things that we do not know more deeply the positive talents that have young friend but can hone the communication strategy.

5 - Finally, send a message to encourage HoH people: why should they participate in the next study session?
They have really to follow a study session like this, because it is very pleasant. We will meet new friends, friends from diverse countries with unique characters and cultures. We’ll get a lot of new knowledge that can be implemented in our country, because we all surely will be social agents to perform a social movement that will change people’s lives, especially for the HoH... Dream what you want to dream, go where you want to go, be what you want to be, because we have only one chance to do all things we want in life.

I had a dream of going to Europe and my dream became a reality. I went to travel more than 30 hours and return to my country in almost 20 hours but I really enjoyed during the trip and got positive results that I can share with friends and country. I am very proud as a representative of Indonesia to be one of participant in an IFHOHYP activity.
1 - Can you please briefly introduce yourself?

My name is Donatas Pocesiunas. I am 25, from Lithuania. In 2006 I finished secondary school in Siauliai and in the same year I also got a diploma for successful studies in Siauliai Art School.

In 2011 I graduated from Vilnius Art Academy, Department of Architecture (bachelor's degree).

In 2010 I studied in Bremen University of Applied Sciences (Germany) for the winter semester as an Erasmus exchange student. I won some prizes in students’ competitions of architectural and design ideas in Lithuania and Germany.

After finishing studies I started to work as an architect’s assistant in an office of architecture in Vilnius. I worked as a volunteer in L’Arche Community in Brussels in 2008.

My hobbies are reading, traveling, drawing and painting (watercolour), communication, participation in architecture competitions and attending open lectures on architecture.

2 - Was this the first study session you participated in?

My first international experience in HoH activities was in Sweden in 2002, where I participated in the Youth Exchange program “Connecting Ears”. The project partners were hard of hearing youth from Lithuania, Italy, Sweden, and Spain. I participated in the Days of Disabled Youth in European Parliament in Brussels in 2004. I was invited to give lectures on disability problems for students of Siauliai University in 2010.

I took part in various conferences with different people about cultures, economies, politics and other subjects in some foreign countries. The last international HoH experience was in Strasbourg in 2011; there were lectures and discussions about social rights.

Participating in Strasbourg was very useful and interesting. I learned a lot of things about how to analyse situations of the world. I liked very much to listen to lecturers. It was interesting to learn about aspects of education, economies and politics in all European countries and in some countries from other continents. I learned that the level of life depends very much on education, economies, cultures and communities.

I do not enjoy participating in different games and dancing. I also do not like to read very often on the problems of HoH and disabled people. In general it looks that there have been the same problems for about 10 years. It would be good to discuss something new and analyse more situations of the world.

4 - What topic would you like the next study session to deal with?

My idea about next session is to invite famous professors, politicians, members of organizations to give lectures about situations of the world. I think it is very important for HoH to learn how to think and get information about the world. In my opinion, information management is very important for HoH, and how successfully discuss and integrate with hearing people in their native countries.

On the other hand, there could be some new organizations according to professional groups, traditions, etc. in IFHOHYP. HoH could organize events according professions to develop qualifications in some universities or conferences so the members could be more successful in integration with hearing people.

5 - Finally, send a message to encourage HoH people: why should they participate in the next study session?

A successful person is a person with a good international information management and qualifications regarding profession.
My name is Magdalena and I’m from Poland. I’m 25 years old. I participated in the Study Session 2011 as a representative of the Academic Circle of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students; known as ‘SurdusLoquens’. It is a students organization that works at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin in Poland where I fulfil the role of coordinator and I’m responsible for international cooperation. The main aim of the organization in which I am involved in is the integration of students with hearing loss and their friends at my university. This is a unique and one of the youngest undergraduate organizations in Poland.

I was encouraged to participate in the Study Session 2011 by Mrs Lidia Smolarek-Best who was my Mentor from the European Federation of Hard of Hearing. The Study Session was the first European training for me. The training included providing tools and knowledge about raising awareness, campaigning, lobbying and human rights education. However, the education was based more on practical fulfilling task. The study required being involved in diverse projects, cooperation within group and communication in English. I admit the training is only a small part of education. In fact, the study starts after the training and it depends on us how we develop our knowledge.

Reasonably interesting topic for future participants of study session could be simultaneous translation in the form of text (speech-to-text, note taker), which are not only facilities for deaf students during lectures or classes, but also in public and cultural life. We would like to get to know more about introducing/implementing the speech to text services at universities, because IFHOHYP is youth organization and considerable part of participants at trainings are students. Therefore, we should strive for the support at universities in form of loops and speech to text report-ers as sing language users have. At the next study session, IFHOHYP could devote most of its attention to technological solutions that have an enormous influence on the quality of education.

The next suggestion is that the trainings could be shared with experienced and qualified people from European Federation of Hard of Hearing, because they can share with us their experience and thorough knowledge. They could be proper people who mayequip us with the knowledge about, among others, raising awareness.

To sum up, I would like to encourage young hard of hearing people to participate in the study session organized by International Federation of Hard of Hearing Young People. The training is meant for people who want to be involved in hard of hearing people matters, have good knowledge of English and like to get to know hard of hearing people from other countries.

I recommend the Study Session - an unforgettable experience!
**Torn Between Two Worlds**

By Mona Bell

To give an accurate definition of hearing loss we can’t find an exact term for it but we can start by comprehending the meaning of hearing impairment: It mainly covers wide ranges of hearing loss from severe to light loss, however it varies according to the disabled themselves how they can process to the communications skills and their response to it.

Many cannot combine between deaf and hearing impaired by the conviction that they are placed in the same category for not being able to understand and hear the sounds.

As a hard of hearing I was diagnosed as a disabled person who is not able to communicate with other people and I was recommended to wear hearing aids in both ears. They are rather amplifiers. With them I was able to detect all voices in a loud level. I was never ever able to detect the words people say. I had been using hearing aids for more than six years, however casual and seemingly throw away remarks were inevitable.

Throughout my childhood, I was never able to connect with deaf people because I could never manage the sharp differences, for me I was acquiring linguistics and speech of my mother tongue while the others were learning sign language and ambiguous sounds. I ended up by being rejected by them, not to mention the insults I endured during my preparatory school for deaf.
As a result, I threw away my hearing aids after 6 years. The last one was my third one. However I was studying all the time in my house with my mother’s help and later with the help of an assistant who gave me private courses. I was also getting orthophonist training which helped me drastically in acquainting the language grammar and writing skills. I was always fond of literature. However, I lived in a hearing world where all my family members are normal people. I somehow convinced myself that I am a hearing person who can hear sounds and I never saw myself as hearing.

But in my college years, my life has collapsed totally, I chose to follow literature branch in English language. Nevertheless, it was a different world where everyone rely on social interpersonal relationships and total attention and concentration to the teacher. The situation got worse when I found myself stuck in an ambiguous foreign world I was taught not in my mother tongue but in a foreign language. I found it very difficult and I realized that I need more phonetics training in English language.

For some extent my self confidence was deteriorated, and I figured out how lonely I was due to the compulsory social isolation and instant rejection from people especially the opposite sex. I was rejected by both my family members and old friends. I plunged into depression for more than three years. It was the most troublesome years of my life: fatigue, traumatic sleepless nights, insomnia and short time memory loss. By the grace of God, I was seeking out anything that might help me to get out of the vicious cycle. I got new hearing aids and I started listening to English songs and following lyrics. I started making new friendships in spite of risk of being ignored. I didn't mind the difficulties and surprisingly I was motivated to connect with different people to realize their way of thinking and the words they speak and their way of expressions was not easy.

I finally figured out that all people are individuals and we all have our needs but it differs from one another. At this point, I stopped focusing on people and blaming them for everything it was a turning point in my life where I started recovering. I also forced myself to read various books and that was an essential factor for healing along with meditation, listening to classical music and painting. Now thanks to my strong will and persistence and I speak four languages: Arabic, French, English, Turkish and a little Spanish. I also plan to study more Spanish.

I am also planning after graduation to pursue my study in deaf and hearing impairment world by learning sign language in languages I previously learned.

Being hearing impaired doesn't mean that you are disabled or unable to do things in normal ways. We are all created equal before god. Somewhat every individual has his strength and weakness and everyone should find its way to make his needs met by trying to accommodate oneself in life circumstance and accepting oneself. The most necessary step for hearing and deaf persons should do is to maintain self esteem and acquaint oneself with skills he/she can perform his/her talents.

Also one should accept the fact of not being able to perform things that normal people can do it is very important to play your role in accepting the limitation and not depressing others by being disgruntled and upset all the time.

Being born with disability means that you are endowed with secret gift by god and it is your own responsibility to find it out and make it bloom and flourish. You should not be ashamed of your disability because you are given virtuous things that normal people there is no wrong in being deaf or hearing impaired keep your faith in your heart and have an optimist vision you will realize that you are not different from others. There things you can’t do but you can do things that normal people can.

Somewhat every individual has his strength and weakness and everyone should find its way to make his needs met by trying to accommodate oneself in life circumstance and accepting oneself.

We are hearing impaired, we are very normal individuals and we live in this earth like any other normal live but we have our own culture and community that adapts to our needs and we are recognized as intelligent and hard working persons so we should not compare ourselves to others and endeavor to overcome the obstacles. Furthermore we are warm heated and very tolerate we strive to build bridges to let the others pass through it and communicate with us. We have also to express our needs and make them know what we cannot do for avoiding any misunderstanding and misconceptions.

At last I can say I am very proud of being hearing impaired because I am grateful for what god gave me; intelligence, responsive eyes and motivation. For some might think tat they are secondary stuff but for me they are great blessings and I am thankful for that.
In July 2011 19 teenagers with cochlear implants from five European countries arrived at St John’s School for the Deaf, Boston Spa for a week’s summer camp organised by The Ear Foundation and supported by EuroCI Users Group.

Plenty of challenges
When the young people arrived from Finland, Norway, Belgium, Turkey and throughout the UK, neither they nor the adults with them knew quite what to expect. There were big challenges: this was the first time that these young people had met each other; some had never been to England or stayed so far from home; they had a variety of languages; they had different cochlear implant technologies to manage - between them the teenagers had seven different types of cochlear implant processors.

Different languages and communication
It immediately became apparent that they were a great group of good communicators. There were 8 bilaterally implanted young people and 11 with single implants. They spoke Norwegian, Dutch, Finnish, Turkish and English, with vast difference in their competence at English but that did not matter at all; as Ketil, the adult volunteer from Norway commented: “These kids were great communicators….if we had a group of hearing kids the problems would have been greater.”

Ilse, the adult from Belgium commented: “The fact that they’re all deaf is not an issue – they speak to each other and are happy to use sign.”

Many of the young people used several languages: for example Sigurd used Norwegian, English, Swedish, Danish and Sign Language. For those from other countries it was a great opportunity to develop their spoken English.

An Exciting Week of Activities
The young people took part in many different activities including visiting the York Castle Museum, Jorvik Dig, a day trip to Whitby, swimming, film-making and lots of different sports. Each evening one of the groups gave a presentation about their home country, in amazing English. They provided a range of traditional fare: Belgian chocolate, Turkish Delight, Parkin from the moors of Yorkshire, Norwegian cheese and chocolate with liquorice from Finland. Each of the teenagers contributed to their presentation and everyone learnt something new.

There were also inter-delegation games such as badminton, table tennis and draughts that the young people enjoyed taking part in. The Belgians were very happy to be crowned the winners at the end of the week.

During the week the event Facebook page was kept up to date with photos and quotes so that parents and friends could keep up to speed with what was happening. Since everyone has
returned home the Facebook page is still being used to share photos videos and thoughts.

A set of stars!

Perhaps not surprisingly, the communication between all the youngsters was brilliant and it was often hard to tell to which country each belonged as they mixed so well. Friendships were forged which will last well beyond the camp. It was inspiring to see the confidence and aspirations of these young people as well as their proficiency in language and communication.

Next Year The Ear Foundation are planning the 2nd International Friendship Week at St John’s School for the Deaf in Boston Spa, Yorkshire from 23rd to 27th July 2012. The cost is EUR1000 for each delegation (NOT EACH PERSON).

There are places for 6 countries with a maximum of 5 delegates per country including an adult. Selection will be on a first come first served basis.

What people said

Lorna Lord, Family Co-ordinator at The Ear Foundation:
“Our first international teens week was a great success. To see the profoundly deaf implant wearing teenagers talking together and having such a great time was inspirational! The way they bonded over the week was a credit to all the teenagers, their families and everyone involved. Special thanks to those adults who brought groups from other countries, to all our volunteers and all at St John’s School for the Deaf.”

Annabel (UK):
“I have really enjoyed meeting new people, especially deaf people from different countries... I don't know that many people who are deaf and I knew barely anything about Norway, Turkey, Finland and Belgium.”

Silja (Finland):
“It’s so different to Finland – I’ve learned to listen to English and to talk.”

Peppiina (Finland):
“During the camp I spoke a lot of English – it was the best time ever in the camp.”

Heather (UK):
“I have really enjoyed meeting new people and learning their languages. I can't describe how much fun it was this week. It was fun having a laugh with other friends from Europe without the language barrier.”

Ketil (Norwegian adult):
“At last, an international place for our teenagers with cochlear implants – where they can meet others around ordinary teenager activities – exactly the same things as other teenagers – but with professional input...Difficult to find words or signs to describe the sensational experience of all that happened during those days. Once in a lifetime experience, I would guess. AWESOME!!”

Filiz (Turkish adult):
“I feel the relief for them – they don’t have to remember the technology – it’s just managed and its importance recognised.”

For more information or a booking pack, please contact Lorna on:

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