

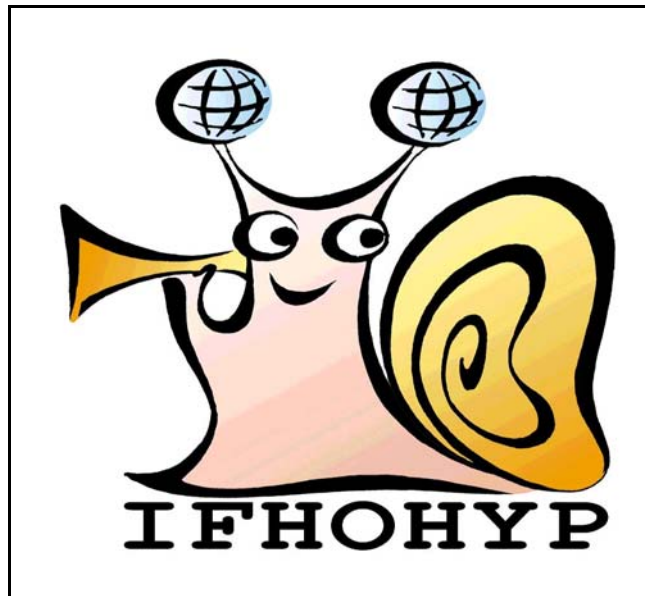
IFHOHYP NEWS JUNE 2003

This Issue

TOWARDS A BARRIER-FREE EUROPE

In May, an important conference has been held in Athens, in the framework of the 2003 year of Disability. Organized by European Disability Forum and European Youth Forum, disability problems have been discussed by disabled and not disabled people together in order to obtain mutualistic point of view of the question. IFHOHYP President and Vice President was there and reported the most important statements of the conference

*By V.Migliosi and K.Chupina,
at page 2*



Index

Athens, May 2003	2
Education & School	4
About the Board	6

A NEW FEATURE:

H-O-H EDUCATION AND SCHOOL IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

In this issue we present a new feature. An analysis of various situations and differences in hard of hearing young people education in Europe will be shown. We can see how different are treatments in each country and have reflections about

it. In this number, we will read some stories about Belgium.

By G.Penneman and J. Pelgrims at page 4

IMPORTANT

Don't forget the
IFHOHYP Study Session
At STRASBOURG
12-19 October 2003

Stay tuned for imminent application form



CONFERENCE
“TOWARDS A BARRIER FREE EUROPE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES”
(Athens, 16-17 May 2003)

The Greek General Secretariat for Youth organised with the support of the European Commission a conference entitled “Towards a Barrier Free Europe for Young People with Disabilities” which took place in Athens, Greece, on 16 and 17 May 2003 in the framework of 2003 European Year of Disabled People.

This Conference has been organised in cooperation with the **European Disability Forum** and the **European Youth Forum**. This event brought together young people, with and without a disability, from all over Europe to raise awareness on the needs and rights of young people with disabilities. But, most importantly this conference was targeted to all young people, not only young disabled people. This allowed an exchange of views, favour mutual understanding and create the opportunity to create new networks between young disabled people and young people without disabilities.

Participants

The conference gathered approximately 200 participants including, participants from EU Member States, EEA and accession countries, mainly issued from the European Disability Forum and European Youth Forum respective networks, and participants from Greek youth and disability movement, national as well as regional and local authorities.

Workshops :

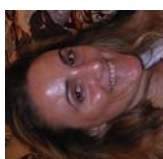
Four parallel workshops were organised to allow full and active participation of young people, disabled and non-disabled together. Each participant was able to participate in two workshops. The discussions within the workshops resulted in discovering the barriers preventing young people to fully take part in society, in decision processes at local, regional, national and European levels, and to take part in Youth organisations.

Information and Participation for All

Karina Chupina, IFHOHYP Vice- President was the speaker in this workshop and she gave a speech about: “Empowerment of youth with disabilities through active



By Vanessa Migliosi and Karina Chupina



participation and access to information: challenges and barriers “.Karina's speech centered around the barriers to participation and access to information for youth with disabilities - on European, national and local level, and provided examples of good practices for overcoming these barriers. You can read the full text of this speech on IFHOHYP website (www.ifhohyp.dk) or ask directly to Karina herself.

- > Education: First Step towards an Inclusive Society
- > Mobility - Independent Living
- > Voluntary Service

Aims of the conference

By focusing on the main issues of the EU White Paper on Youth policy, the objectives of the Conference were :

- to increase the political participation of young (disabled) people,
- to mainstream disability in youth policy,
- to set up a disabled youth network.
- a common Declaration was adopted at the end of the Conference which will be disseminated widely. You can find it in the IFHOHYP website (www.ifhohyp.org) and EDF website (www.edf-feph.org)

Many discussions circulated around the adoption of the Declaration, and especially notable was the heated plenary discussion where deaf representatives (sign language users) stood against mainstreaming education. Others, as well as hard of hearing representatives (Vanessa and Karina) were saying in response that deaf and hard of hearing should have a free choice of educational institutions and methods, as level of integration and rehabilitation varies greatly among both deaf and hard of hearing youth. Vanessa and Karina also tried to explain the difference in understanding common concepts of "hard of hearing" and "deaf". Conference participants felt that this issue required a deeper insight and more time for discussions.

In this declaration is stated: “The European Disability Forum and the European Youth Forum commit themselves to continue to work together in the future and to undertake some joint actions, to cooperate actively on the topics highlighted and to widely disseminate widely this Declaration. We also recognize the need for further discussion on issues not raised in this conference, for example employment, education for deaf people and other issues which impact on young people’s lives, and work towards equal opportunities of young people with disabilities”.

This declaration was concluded with the following sentence:

We are, first of all, young people, then young people with disabilities

NOW LET’S TURN THE THEORY INTO ACTION !

School and Education for Hard-of Hearing people in....



BELGIUM



Jurgen says.....

As I became deaf at a later age, I can't write something down about my experiences in the first school (from 6 to 12 years old). At that time, I was a normal hearing child and I didn't had any difficulties at all. The problems started when I became hard of hearing at the age of 15. It was a very hard time as I had a lot of difficulties to communicate with other people. I had no experience with lip-reading, sign-language and the people in my environment were also not used to communicate with a hard of hearing person. When I finally had some contact with other hard of hearing and deaf people, my hearing loss had been evolved to a profound hearing loss. After a few years, I was totally deaf and I decided to have a cochlear implant. This is shortly something about myself to make clear that my experiences can't be compared to someone who is hard of hearing or deaf since birth.

At high school, I didn't receive a lot of understanding for my situation. Due to this misunderstanding, I didn't pass the second year of high school. I still find it a very hard and very unfair decision. Now, I realize that the situation is very dependent from school to school. Some schools do a lot of efforts to help the hard of hearing/deaf student as much as possible, other schools don't do any efforts at all... But when you want to go to school in Belgium as a hard of hearing person, you have to prove yourself more than anyone else.

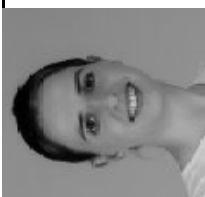
Since the beginning of this school year (hopefully my last one), I got some help with writing interpreters. It is not a very big help as the interpreter has no experience at all. In Belgium, the education to become a writing interpreter has started one year ago. So, at this moment, there are no certified writing interpreters available. Maybe, the situation with writing interpreters will be better within a few years. But for me, it will be too late.

I also think that hard of hearing people receive more chances at school than someone who is totally deaf. But I also realize that it's a hard situation for everyone who is hearing impaired.

Greet says...

Well, I think the situation for every deaf or hard of hearing (hoh) person is very different. Even time plays a huge role in it. When I compare my own situation with those of deaf children today, there is a lot of difference. The main difference is that deafness can be found much earlier compared to 25 years ago. I think it's a very good evolution because the earlier deafness is recognized, the more attention is paid to the child's language and speech development.

by Greet Penneman and Jurgen Pelgrims



About education, I will first explain how education in Belgium is in general as I realize that it differs from country to country. There are 4 study levels: kindergarden (from 3 to 6 years old), primary school (from 6 to 12 years old), secondary school (from 12 to 18 years old) and high school/university (from 18 to 22/23/... years old). For a deaf/hoh child, you can say that education is starting sooner, as those childs go to “logopedy-center” as soon as possible (about 1 year old) and several days a week (not the whole day, just a few hours a day).

At the child’s age of 3, parents have to choose whether they want their children to go to a deaf school or not. If not, the deaf child is integrated in a class with hearing children. It’s also very usual that deaf children are going to the deaf school first and change to a “normal” school at the age of 6 or 12 years old. Most hearing impaired people choose to be integrated in a hearing class during secondary school, as the level of education in deaf schools is unfortunately very low...The situation now, is that most hearing impaired children are going to a “normal” school but I want to make clear that there are still some schools who simply don’t want to accept disabled children. Parents can force the school in juridical way to accept the child but most parents prefer to choose another school where director and teachers are willingly to give extra attention to their child. Extra attention is the most important thing to make integration of deaf/hoh children a success. Furthermore, a lot of hearing impaired children make use of a FM-system during lessons, they can get extra explanation when they have difficulties with some lessons from G.O.N.*, they can follow lessons using interpreters, etc. These are just technical ways to improve the child’s understanding during lessons. At high school/university, the situation is a little bit different. As these schools are much much bigger than primary or secondary schools, there is less personal contact between the deaf/hoh student and his/her teachers. It depends a lot from school to school whether the school is understanding for the student’s disabilities or not. If you’re lucky, then you can receive some adaptations but in most schools, you are completely on your own...

In Belgium, the use of interpreters during class lessons has evolved only during the last 5 years. It was a huge step forward as deaf people using sign language could finally completely be integrated in a hearing class. Before, some deaf people did follow normal education but they couldn’t use a FM-system and lip-reading all the time was very energy-wasting. Suddenly being able to follow the lessons in sign language was completely new and impressive for a lot of deaf people. The only disadvantage is that there are not enough sign interpreters to fulfill the needs of all deaf students. For this reason, students can only receive signing support for about 4 to 8 hours a week (not very much if you know that there are about 32 hours lessons a week). Hoh people who don’t know sign language at all, can make use of writing interpreters, but it is only from this month that certified writing interpreters are available in Belgium. As Jurgen wrote, writing interpreters are a new phenomenon in Belgium and it will take some years before it’s completely developed. The main problem is the same as with sign interpreters: too few interpreters...

In general, I think the situation is much better than 20 years abut there are still a lot of things to be changed and to be developed. I am sure that the situation will be hugely improved within 20 years. At the other hand, I realize that the situation is not very good for deaf schools. My personal opinion is that it would be better to have only one particular school for deaf/hoh students at all study levels, instead of several deaf schools where there are only very few students per class...

* G.O.N.: a kind of system where several teachers are working. These teachers go to the school of the deaf/hoh student to keep in contact with the teacher and also to give soms extra lessons (up to 4 hours a week) when the child has difficulties with some lessons.

**More info about H-o-H in Belgium? Look at <http://allserv.rug.ac.be/~gpennem/>
Or <http://www.avi-v.be>
The “Auditory Verbal Integration website of Flanders”**

ABOUT THE IFHOHYP BOARD...

IN THE VALENCIAN 2003 AGM, THE NEW IFHOHYP BOARD HAS BEEN VOTED.
LET'S GO AND DISCOVER THESE PEOPLE....

From an idea by Maria Pantaleeva, Bulgaria

VANESSA MIGLIOSI, ITALY

-What's my age ?
31 years old

-Where do I live?
In Rome, Italy

-What am I doing in my life now?
I am doing research and diagnostics on human genetics.

-...and what I will going to do in the future?

I hope to get a position and to continue to do what I have done so far, because I like this job.

-What's the thing I like in the Ifho-hyp ?

Meeting hard of hearing young people from all the world, exchanging ideas and intercultural learning.



Vanessa Migliosi, IFHOHYP President

-...and what I don't like instead?

I wish that IFHOHYP were a strong organization with a political impact to show really the needs and require-

ments of HOH young people to governments at national and international level.

- What would I change in the deaf/hard of hearing world?

The attitude that hearing impaired people have towards normal hearing people.

- My favourite activity/sport is...

Swimming in the sea in summer time.

- My favourite dish is....

I like cakes and sweets in general and I like the most tiramisu (Italian popular cake made with mascarpone cheese).

- A thing I can not resist to is...

I can't survive without having sauna for more than one month...



Jenny Marie Westh, Secretary

JENNY MARIE WESTH, DENMARK

-What's my age ?
would you believe I'm 31 years old

- Where do I live?
I live in Copenhagen, Denmark

-What am I doing in my life now?
-...and what I will going to do in the future?

I work as a Kindergartenteacher (Pedagog) for deaf/hard of hearing children and that is also what I want to do in future too

-What's the thing I love in the Ifho-hyp ?

I really like the social part of the meetings, too meet people from all over Europe.

-...and what I don't like instead?

the long time it takes to make a decision during a meeting because we all have different point of view, different cultures and ways to do things...but that is also one of IFHOHYP strength

- What would I change in the deaf/hard of hearing world?

Does it need to changed?? Isn't the surrounding world who need to be changed? Like loops everywhere, free accesibility, equal possibility and so on.

- My favourite activity is...

okay then, it is to swim, bike and walk around shopping.

- My favourite dish is....

some spicy stuff...I really like indian food.

- A thing I can not resist to is...

CHOCOLATE!



KARINA CHUPINA, RUSSIA

-What's my age?

23. Maybe it's strange, but sometimes I feel like a tired traveler, and sometimes like a little child betaken with surprise...

-Where do I live?

In St.Petersburg, Russia – beautiful and enchanting city with an inimitable atmosphere. It is called “cultural capital of Russia”, also a “criminal capital” sometimes (perhaps that's a merit of Dostoevsky, too)...but most fondly, the “Venice of the North”.

-What am I doing in my life now?

. I am have a master study at an International Journalism department in the University, work as a volunteer press secretary and project coordinator in the local Fund of Assistance to Disabled Children and Youth

-...and what am I going to do in the future?

Feel life! But seriously, I am going to organise local and international thematic training courses for hard of

hearing youth, for youth with and without disabilities. Of course, I plan to continue everything I am doing now.

-What's the thing I love in IFHOHYP?

Communication, sharing, meeting new people and friends for life! It was in IFHOHYP, back in 1994, when I for the first time felt the luxury of free intercultural communication.

-...and what I don't like instead?

Bonds between member organizations should sometimes be stronger, and exchange of ideas more free. What I would like to improve, is cooperation of IFHOHYP with other youth organizations – not only disability ones - on European and international level.

- What would I change in the deaf/hard of hearing world?

I can speak of the “deaf/hard of hearing world” only in relation to the “ordinary” world we live in...I would like hard of hearing youths to have more self-confidence and motivation that will help them to overcome obstacles, to live and enjoy their life in so-

ciety. I have many concerns about situation for hard of hearing youth, especially in Russia, but I can't use all space here to express them.

- My favourite activity/sport is...

Today, dance, wheelchair dance, biking and swimming, socialising. In future, I hope to practice yoga.

- My favourite dish is....

Depends on my mood, but I like Oriental cuisine, Armenian, Mexican cuisine and seafood.

-A thing I can not resist to is...

Dance!!! And music!!! (even though I am hard of hearing)...maybe traveling, too...even when it's only a work related travel.



Karina Chupina, Vice President

**ERVINAS KLIMAVICIUS,
LITHUANIA**

-What's my age ? Where do I live?

31 years old, living in Kaunas city, second large city of Lithuania

-What am I doing in my life now?

President and board chairman of Lithuanian association of hard of hearing people (LNA) that unites three groups: hard of hearing youth, hard of hearing adult people and parents to hearing impaired children organizations. Accounting in NGOs

-...and what I will going to do in the future?

To live in Italy and make business
And more amusement

-What's the thing I love in the Ifho-hyp ?

Finding new friends and visiting new countries. Sharing self experience about daily life

-...and what I don't like instead?

When IFHOHYP activity is over stuffed with papers...

- What would I change in the deaf/hard of hearing world?

Would you welcome if for biomedicine, genetic science the world of deaf/hard of hearing decline?

- My favourite activity/sport is...

Basketball, dancing and tourism (climbing, canoe)

- My favourite dish is....

Fried fish

- A thing I can not resist to is...

That is hard question, somehow my taste currently changes. Maybe life experience influences it.



Ervinas Klimavicius, Treasurer

●
**THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF HARD OF HEARING
YOUTH PEOPLE NEWSLETTER**

Andrea Pietrini –Coordinator
Maria Pantaleeva
Bo Jacob Larsen
Jurgen Pelgrims
Giulia Cicchetti

For any question about this newsletter, please contact
andreapietrini@inwind.it

WHAT IS IFHOHYP ?

IFHOHYP has existed since 1967 and works mainly to arrange Summer Camps for young hard of hearing, Conferences dealing with different aspect of being hard of hearing in the modern world, training of youth leaders and language-courses especial tailored for hard of hearing young people.

Our Goal is to help hard of hearing young people to live a better life and enable hard of hearing to participate fully in society.

**We are on the web
at www.ifhohyp.dk**