

helios

flash 16

Exchange and information activities 1995 (EIAs)

Below are the summaries of the final reports of the exchange and information activities (EIAs) for 1995. The reports will be available from mid-July, in 11 languages, from the documentation service of the HELIOS Team of Experts. They will also be sent out as a matter of course to EIA participants, so they need not order copies.

Functional rehabilitation: coordination towards good practice

The 1995 report is a synthesis of the experiences, discussions and ideas of the 13 theme-based groups collected at the study visits, training sessions, study group meetings and seminars in the functional rehabilitation sector.

This year, the concept of functional rehabilitation gradually evolved. The various dimensions of the field as well as complementary factors in optimal rehabilitation are described. Ethical questions in relation to rehabilitative intervention received special attention. The involvement of disabled people and non-governmental organisations increased.

Elements and examples of good practice were discussed with a view to improving the quality of life of disabled people and their families.

Education: educational work at all levels of education

The education report contains the results of the work of the 13 theme-based groups in the field of educational integration. Each group has endeavoured to summarise the key points of its work during study visits in 1995 and illustrate them with specific examples.

The first chapter discusses the broader, "vertical" themes relating to all levels of education: pre-school (and early intervention), primary, secondary, higher and adult education.

A number of concepts were shared by the groups and may be seen as a frame of reference for an optimal, high-quality educational process: the involve-

ment and full participation of parents and students; the central role of the pupil/student in any educational approach; the importance of a holistic approach; effective cooperation and coordination between services; and the preparation for transition through the levels of education to employment and adult life. Chapter 2 describes the results of those groups which have focused on common activities or situations which occur at various stages of the educational process.

The key concept is the quality of education, the foremost component of which is flexibility in structure and content. But quality also requires pedagogical innovation, the use of computer technology, training for those involved in the education process, the streamlining of services and transparency of access to them.

Economic integration: vocational training, transition and cooperation

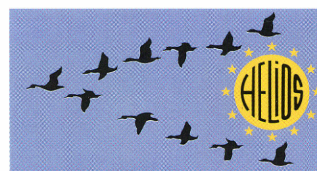
The themes of the 1995 report for the economic integration sector are the three issues central to any endeavour to secure employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

The key factors are as follows:

- with respect to the issue of vocational training (Chapter 1): flexibility, core skills, training methods, use of new technologies, training of trainers, quality;
- with respect to the issue of sheltered employment with a view to transition to open employment (Chapter 2): participation of employers, influence of the natural environment, competition with businesses on the open labour market, involvement of the disabled person;

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newsletter
of the
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disabled people

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From 1 March
the Helios Team
of Experts has a
new postcode:
1000 Brussels.

CEE: V/102

NGOs

- with respect to the issue of cooperation with employers (Chapter 3): information for employers, preparation and training, job-coaching, follow-up in the workplace, networking among services and employers, the role of the unions and legislation.

Social integration: elimination of technical and socio-psychological barriers

The theme of this report is the elimination of technical and socio-psychological barriers as a significant element in working towards the goals of an independent life for individuals with disabilities and for furthering possibilities for integration in society.

The report is based on the work of the 14 theme-based groups which form the social integration and independent living sector of the HELIOS II programme.

With respect to technical barriers, the report examines the main features and presents an explanation of the main concepts and terminology concerning accessibility. It describes and analyses the main problems and indicates avenues of progress which can lead to the removal of barriers in the environment and in transport.

With respect to socio-psychological barriers, it examines the main concepts of autonomy and independent living, then identifies the barriers which prevent independence from developing and finally proposes strategies for eliminating such barriers.

1996

The 59 theme-based EIA groups are due to conclude their series of study visits in October 1996. Icelandic and Norwegian representatives have been taking part in the groups' activities since February. At the end of the year, the results of the three years of EIA activity will be reviewed at four European seminars:

- functional rehabilitation: in Wien (A) from 29 November to 1 December;
- integration in the field of education: in Luxembourg from 7 to 9 November;
- economic integration: probably in Belfast (Northern Ireland) from 14 to 16 November;
- social integration and independent living: in Álava (E) on 22 and 23 November.

A new European Disability Forum is born

The articles of association of the new European Disability Forum were signed in Brussels on 6 May. The new organisation's remit, building on the work of its predecessor, is to secure progress on disabled people's rights and promote equal opportunities among all relevant European institutions and international organisations, in line with the principles of non-discrimination.

The existing European Disability Forum was set up in 1993 as one of the advisory bodies to the HELIOS II programme. It comprises a representative of the national disability councils from each EU Member State (plus one each for Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway), one member from each of 12 European disability NGOs and one representative each of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and the European employers' association. The European disability NGOs act on behalf of various integration sectors and types of disability, including learning difficulties and mental health problems. The forum will be wound up when the programme comes to a close on 31 December 1996.

The forum's member organisations founded the "independent" European Disability Forum on 6 May in a bid to ensure continued action at European level. It is independent in that it is not related to a specific European Commission programme and has separate legal status (as a non-profit-making association under Belgian law). The new forum will be in touch with all the European institutions and will retain the official title of "European Disability Forum".

The founder members of the new forum are the national disability councils of the 15 EU Member States and the 12 NGOs on the current forum, together with their partner NGOs. The two sides of industry and the national disability councils of Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway will have observer status. A two-year transition period is provided for to enable the member associations to comply with all the clauses of the new articles of association - in particular those stating that the majority of members of the associations represented must be disabled people or relatives of people who cannot act on their own behalf.

European day of Disabled Persons Equal opportunities - Equal participation

As in previous years since 1993, the European Day of Disabled Persons will be held on 3 December. This year's theme, "Equal opportunities - Equal participation", was chosen mainly to encourage practical implementation of both the United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities and European instruments promoting equal opportunities and individual rights. The high point of the European day will be a meeting in Brussels on 3 December, but the geographical scope will be far broader than that. Other initiatives may be organised, and some are indeed already planned at local and national level.

By way of preparation for the meeting on 3 December, a debate is being organised on six issues: employment, lifelong learning, multiple and severe disabilities, accessibility, women and disability/double discrimination, and the involvement of organisations of and for disabled people. Various NGOs on the European Disability Forum are drafting reports on the six issues, which will be debated at meetings in Brussels on 13 and 14 September before being submitted to the European political institutions and national authorities. The debate is open to any organisation or individual who can provide the secretariat of the European day with information on good practice, legislation and regulations in the areas discussed, documents on the degree of genuine integration of disabled people in European programmes, etc.

In addition, material designed to raise awareness among schoolchildren of the need for equal opportunities for disabled people will be available from the secretariat of the European day from September. Local and national disability organisations are invited to use and pass on the message of the European day and contact either the secretariat or national disability councils for further details.

The Commission has entrusted the organisation of the European day to a consortium of three NGOs representing the European Disability Forum: ILSMH-EA (International League of Societies for Persons with Mental Handicap-

European Association), Autism Europe and ERC-WFMH (the European Regional Council of the World Federation of Mental Health).

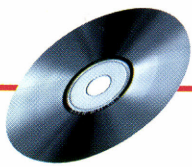
The report of the 1995 European day ("Disabled Persons' Status in the European Treaties: Invisible Citizens") is available from the secretariat of the European day in English, French, German and Spanish.

*Secretariat of the European
Day of Disabled Persons
Boulevard Clovis 7
B-1000 Bruxelles (Belgium)
Tel. and fax: +32.2 280 14 12*

Europrogrammes

Details of some of the Europrogramme activities scheduled for the last months of 1996 are given below. Titles and dates are not necessarily definitive. Further information can be obtained from the organisers or the coordinating European NGO mentioned.

- **European meeting on self-advocacy and general assembly of the European Association of the International League of Societies for Persons with Mental Handicap**
Cardiff, Wales, 23-26 and 24-28 August 1996
*Org.: MENCAP
Info.: ILSMH-EA
Tel.: +32.2 502 77 34
Fax: +32.2 502 28 46*
- **Regional conference on policies for disabled people in the run-up to the year 2000**
Reykjavik (ISL), 29-31 August 1996
*Org.: Nordic Association of Persons with Disabilities
Info.: FIMITIC
Tel.: +49.228 956 40 130
Fax: +49.228 956 43 11*
- **"Keeper of the heart, who will take care of me when my parents are gone?"**
Milano (I), 27-28 September 1996
*Org.: Oltre Noi...la Vita
Info.: Coface
Tel.: +32.2 511 41 79
Fax: +32.2 514 47 73*
- **Conference: "Employment in the year 2000"**
Bruxelles (B), 21-22 October 1996
*Org. and info.: AEH/CEEH
Tel.: +33.1 45 89 14 07
Fax: +33.1 45 89 45 01*
- **"The future of people with severe multiple disabilities as citizens of the European Union"**
Roma (I), 25 October 1996
*Org.: Unione famiglie handicappati
Info.: Coface
Tel.: +32.2 511 41 79
Fax: +32.2 514 47 73*
- **Conference on "Creating an adapted environment for disabled people - a learning process"**
Strasbourg (F), 24-26 October 1996
*Org. and info.: FIMITIC
Tel.: +49.228 956 40 130
Fax: +49.228 956 43 11*
- **Conference on multiple disability**
Luxembourg, 20-23 November 1996
*Org.: EASE-ARFIE-FICE
Info.: EASE
Fax: +32.9 380 14 80*
- **HARMONY project, review and general meeting**
Strasbourg (F), 28 November-1 December 1996
*Org. and info.: CEEH
Tel.: +33.1 45 89 14 07
Fax: +33.1 45 89 45 01*
- **European conference on sign language interpreting and preparation for the conference on "Professionalism, our challenge for the year 2000"**
Barcelona (E), 6-8 December 1996
*Org.: EFSLI
Info.: European Union of the Deaf
Tel.: +32.2 735 72 18
Fax: +32.2 735 53 54*
- **"Creating an environment conducive to the development of intelligence"**
Lisboa (P), 7 to 10 December 1996
*Org.: AEMAM-EAMC
Info.: ILSMH-EA
Tel.: +32.2 502 77 34
Fax: +32.2 502 28 46*
- **European seminar on mental health policy further to the United Nations rules**
London (UK), December 1996
*Org. and info.: ERC-WFMH
Tel.: +32.2 280 04 68
Fax: +32.2 280 16 04*
- **Eight meetings on women and disability are scheduled up to the end of 1996.**
*Info.: Programme available from the NGO department of the HTE
Fax: +32.2 735 16 71*



handynet

CD-ROM No. 11

The HANDYNET CD-ROM went on sale on 1 September 1995, price ECU 200. It is available from IMEXPERT/HANDYCOM, 5 rue Jacob Mayer, F-67200 Strasbourg (F), fax: +33.88 77 73 75. Updates of the CD-ROM are issued three times a year at a price of ECU 75 each.

The 11th issue of the CD-ROM was released at the beginning of May this year.

Seminar on information technology

As part of the activities organised to mark the end of the HELIOS II programme, a European seminar on information technology (IT) and disabled people will be held in Córdoba (E) from 24 to 26 October 1996. It will bring together representatives of the IT industry, the business community, public authorities and users. The member organisations of the European Disability Forum are directly involved in coordinating and preparing for the event; the conclusions are expected to be released at the end of 1996.

Alongside the seminar, an exhibition will be organised to demonstrate a number of IT applications in the field of equal opportunities and integration for disabled people.

*For further information, contact:
PROMI, Fuente de la Peidras s/n,
E-14940 Cabra (Córdoba),
Fax: +34.52 05 87.*

Other news

International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps (ICIDH)

Representatives of the European Disability Forum met with representatives of intergovernmental bodies such as the WHO, UNESCO and the European Commission, and Council of Europe specialists on disability issues in Strasbourg at the end of March this year to discuss the ICIDH and its revision.

The workshop, entitled "The use and usefulness of the ICIDH" and hosted by the Council of Europe, provided a platform for discussions on the future of the ICIDH between the current "subjects of classification", i.e. disabled people, and experts involved in the revision of the ICIDH. Thanks to careful preparation and training of the EDF representatives, led by Rachel Hurst of DPI and supported by Josyane Pierre of HANDYNET, the input of the disability organisations was well focused and resulted in fruitful exchanges of views.

The NGOs' aim was to emphasise the importance of a human-rights-based approach in the future revised version of the classification, notably by endorsing the concept of a "social model" of disability, as opposed to the "individual-orientated approach" currently applied. As stated by Dr John Henderson, president of ERC-WFMH, "while the ICIDH stimulates a common language for national as well as international studies, it is itself handicapped by an absence of social and environmental components. Its greatest handicap is the medicalisation of dis-

ability." Fear was also expressed by disabled people that, with extended use of the classification, in for instance assessment for employment, they would be classified and given code numbers, which in turn would define the incapacities of the disabled person. Instead, assessment situations where the disabled person him/herself leads the process were promoted.

Concerning the use of the ICIDH in statistics, Dr Henderson also stated that "the use of statistics is recognised and welcomed for purposes of prevention, promotion, to foster the education of society, to combat prejudice and discrimination and to further social participation in the planning process. However, it is essential that much greater attention be given to the disabling factors influencing and affecting people with impairments." Professor Pacifici, the Italian national council representative on the EDF, further stated: "disabled people do not want to be catalogued according to what is inevitably an imperfect and to some extent arbitrary classification system. In fact I would go further: disabled people have a horror of being reduced to statistics."

As the debate progressed, the message of the NGOs was repeatedly stated and it was clear that many of the participants reached a better understanding of the views of disabled people on the classification. The often all too apparent gap between views was partially bridged. The importance of involving disabled people and their organisations in the revision process was also clearly stated - not only to work out a

formula satisfactory to all parties involved, but also to ensure better credibility for the revised classification. Only a few EU Member States today use the ICIDH. A functional classification would support efforts to improve human rights, living conditions and equal opportunities for disabled people.

M. Brättemark

No Problem Orchestra

Readers will remember that one of the 1995 HELIOS prizes was awarded to the No Problem Orchestra, a group of mentally disabled musicians. Its performance at the award ceremony in Brussels in December 1995 and its upbeat rendering of the European anthem will still be fresh in the minds of all those who were present that afternoon... In response to queries from a number of readers, here is the address at which No Problem Orchestra's CD can be obtained (for the equivalent of US\$ 10):

*No Problem Musiktherapiezentrum
Priesterhausgasse 8
A-9020 Klagenfurt
Fax: +43.463 51 20 07*

HELIOS Flash

The next issue of HELIOS Flash, No. 17-18, will be devoted to a report on participation of disabled people in the HELIOS activities. It is due out at the end of the summer. The following issue, No. 19-20, will be available at the end of December 1996.

