

INTERVOICE Newsletter

October 2009

Working across the world to spread positive and hopeful messages about the experience of hearing voices

Courage, Determination, Creativity and Optimism are the core messages delivered at The First World Hearing Voices Congress, Maastricht, 17th - 18th September 2009

Thank you very much for those of you who were able to attend in the 1st World Hearing Voices Congress - and - the INTERVOICE meeting too, if you went to both events. It was great to share your company and to be alongside you in experiencing an extraordinary event. If you were not able to attend we have provided links to the materials presented at the congress below and hope we will meet you at next years congress.

350 people who heard voices, psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses, social workers, managers, researchers, families and policymakers from 21 countries were present at the largest event of its kind in the world. At the congress over 90 voice hearers, researchers and therapists presented key note speeches, ran master classes and themed presentations focusing on important aspects of the recovery process. The Congress also included discussion around difficult issues such as the disease concept of schizophrenia and the use of medication. The themes and stories heard at the Congress went beyond theory and engaged participants in the everyday lives of voice hearers and the possibility of recovery. Over

The core messages coming from the congress and INTERVOICE meeting is that collectively and individually the supporters of hearing voices movement are courageous, determined, creative and optimistic. Courageous in the way we are taking on the negative social and medical perceptions of the voice hearing experience and showing recovery is real; determined to bring about change in own lives and for all people who hear voices by challenging services to change; creative and optimistic in finding new ways to assist people who hear voices live their own lives and sharing them with the world.

INTERVOICE meeting, 14th - 16th September 2009

The INTERVOICE pre-meeting was attended by over 120 voice hearers and INTERVOICE members in Valkenburg (near Maastricht), Netherlands. The meeting was a great success and the biggest INTERVOICE meeting held so far. Discussions on new ways of working with voices were presented and lively discussions took place during the open space sessions on the second day of the meeting. Representatives from the national networks met together to elect a new board for the organisation, you will be hearing more about this important new development in our next newsletter. Some examples of what people told us about their experience of the congress and INTERVOICE meeting:

*What a fantastic conference. It was so amazing to meet and listen to the world's experts on hearing voices. It was one of the best conferences I have ever attended. **Robin Buccheri***

*Congratulations on a fantastic conference, a great achievement, I don't think I have ever been to a conference (not in living memory at least) where the presentations were uniformly of such a very high standard! **Peter Barham***

*Best congress I ever attended: Inspirational, provocative and practical. As everybody I was touched by all the stories. The full importance of pride was something I realized for the first time and i will certainly try to fit it into my talks with patients. **Mark van Gaalen***

*What an excellent bunch of people. I felt like I was welcomed into a warm family. I have long believed that more attention needs to be paid to the emotional processes of people who experience 'psychosis' and the meaning of the content experienced. I was very happy and inspired to meet a lot of people who feel and think the same way. **Matthew Winter***

You can read other accounts by people who attended [here](#)

You can see some our photo album of the event [here](#) - by the way, if you took photographs of the event we would very much appreciate it if you can send copies as attachments to this email address add I will add them to the album.

If want to read the presentations and other materials you can do so by clicking on the links below:

You can view and download many of the presentations and other material presented to the meeting [here](#)

You can download a hard copy of the full programme [here](#)

You can read the Abstract booklet which includes summaries of the presentations and presenters biographies [here](#)

If you were unable to attend the 2009 event or enjoyed it you can't wait for the next one you will be pleased to learn our next congress to be held in the autumn of 2010 in England.

Opinion

Just a few lines to state online that the psychiatric definition of mental "illness" changes from generation to generation. Black slaves who ran away from their "duties" were once deemed by psychiatry to be mentally "ill". The psychiatric "illness" was, as you may already well realize, known as "drapetomania". Irascibility or impertinence on the part of a black slave was deemed by psychiatry to be a mental "illness". The psychiatric "condition" was known as "dysthaesia Aethiopica". Single mothers were deemed by psychiatry to be mentally "ill". In the communist Soviet Union certain political dissidents who wished to emigrate were deemed by Russian psychiatry to be suffering from "sluggish schizophrenia". Homosexuality was once regarded by western psychiatric orthodoxy as a mental "illness". For psychiatric orthodoxy all voice hearing is a sign of mental "illness" but now such thinking is gradually changing thanks to the work of the hearing voices movement and others. I hope that the above paragraph may help you and colleagues in INTERVOICE throughout the world. **Hywel Davies, HVN Cymru**

News

Normal Difference, Mental Health Kariobangi: a new project supported by INTERVOICE in Kariobangi, one of the many ghettos in Nairobi (Kenya). The project is offering respectful and empowering support for people suffering from conditions like depression, anxieties, delusions or unusual experiences. You can see photos & read their aims and objectives [here](#) and find out more about the organisation & how you can help [here](#).

The fast growing **Italian Hearing Network** has a new website, you can visit it [here](#). Our congratulations are extended to Marcello, Angelo, Cristina and Alessandra for their hardwork in developing the national network. They will be hosting a forum for Italian speakers as part of the INTERVOICE Forum very soon.

HVN Australia has launched a new website, you can see it [here](#)

Become a member of the **INTERVOICE facebook page** [Join our new Facebook Group here](#) and spread the word on the social network!

[Embracing the dark voices within, BBC News Online, 03 September 2009](#) Rufus May and Peter Bullimore from the UK speak to the BBC about hearing voices and the voice dialogue approach.

Wellington, New Zealand. We are pleased to say that a Hearing Voices Network Support group is starting in Wellington, New Zealand. More details [here](#).

New Hearing Voices Network set up in Victoria, Australia Voices Vic is an exciting new program of Prahran Mission which supports the development of peer support groups for people who hear voices across Victoria. More details [here](#).

A NETWORK is being set up to support the estimated 20,000 Tasmanians who experience voices. Hearing Voices Network Australia soon will be operating in Tasmania under the auspices of Richmond Fellowship Tasmania. More details [here](#).

Głos Wewnętrzny: Poradnik praktyczny dla osób słyszających Głosy Hearing Voices Information now available in Polish [here](#).

New Hearing Voices Group set up in New South Wales (NSW), Australia Our congratulations to the newly established Hope Hearing voices Network for NSW and Sydney, Australia. You can visit their website [here](#).

New Publications

Living with Voices: 50 stories of recovery, Marius Romme, Sandra Escher, Jacqui Dillon, Dirk Corstens, Mervyn Morris. A new analysis of the hearing voices experience outside the illness model resulted in accepting and making sense of voices. This study of 50 stories forms the evidence for this successful new approach to working with voice hearers.

Marius Romme and Sandra Escher have revolutionized our understanding of voice hearing, and their work has led to a radical new way of helping people who have had this type of experience. In this timely, accessible and important book, they bring together the lessons they have learnt over more than two decades, and provide an opportunity for 50 voice-hearers from across the world to tell us their stories. This is essential reading for mental health workers of all professions, which challenges conventional thinking, empowers mental health service users, and looks forward to a more humane approach to psychiatric care.' **Richard Bentall, Professor of Clinical Psychology, Bangor University, Wales** For book details and how to buy the book go [here](#)

The voice inside: A practical guide for and about people who hear voices, Paul Baker

An introduction to the experience of hearing voices; with advice about how to cope and make sense of the experience and descriptions for voice hearers and workers of new ways of helping to cope better with troubling voices. For book details go [here](#)

How to Set up and Run a Hearing Voices Group DVD produced by Working to Recovery. Find out how you can set up and run a successful hearing voices group. The DVD includes the opportunity to see hearing voices groups in action; interviews with members and group facilitators. This step by step guide includes information and discussion material. Price: £30.00 plus p&p. You can order the DVD [here](#)

Events

Recovery: A human Right, 4th November - 5th November Asylum Associates in Association with Mind Freedom Cork presents a two day conference. This conference will explore not just ways of recovering from mental health difficulties but how to move on in your life and thrive. [More information here](#)

Setting up and Supporting Self help and Peer Support Groups for People who Hear Voices, One Day Training Workshops, Leeds, Wednesday 18th November 2009 and Birmingham, Thursday 19th November 2009. Paul Baker, the coordinator of the international hearing voices movement will lead this participative workshop where we will learn about setting up and supporting hearing voices groups, based on work from around the world and harnessing our own ideas and experiences. Statutory sector £95 inc VAT; Voluntary sector £80 Inc VAT; Unwaged Inc £55 Inc VAT. The price includes a copy of the new DVD ["How to Set up and Run a Hearing Voices Group"](#) (sale price £30.00). Download the flyer and booking form [here](#), Online booking [here](#)

Making Sense of Voices with Dirk Corstens and Eleanor Longden, 3rd November 2009, London. Making Sense of Voices: How to make sense of voices in relation to life history and how to talk with voices in order to improve the relationship between voice hearer and voices. For more information and to book online go [here](#). Download the print version of the flyer and booking form [here](#)

Working with Voices, 7th December 2009, Littlemore, Oxford Hearing voices is one of the most common experiences that people diagnosed with a psychotic illness have and research has shown that many people continue to hear voices even after prolonged use of medication. Find out how to help people cope with their voices with Ron Coleman. [More information here](#)

Hearing Voices Group Facilitation Training, January/February 2010, London, England. The London Hearing Voices Groups Project is running a 4 day training courses for people interested in becoming group facilitators. The course is designed to help both voice-hearers, and non-voice hearers, develop the skills necessary to facilitate a Hearing Voices Group. [More information here](#)

7th Making Sense of Psychosis Conference, 10th April 2010 University of Auckland, New Zealand. First call of papers: Hosted by the New Zealand Branch of I.S.P.S. The Keynote Speaker is Jacqui Dillon, Chairperson, UK Hearing Voices Network. [More information here](#)
