

IFOTES NEWS

N.1/2012 - 15 July 2012

EDITORIAL

Dear friends of IFOTES,

I am glad that we can present a newsletter once again in which we can introduce two very important projects which keep IFOTES busy these days: the congress in Gothenburg and our new "baby" IFOTES-Europe.

On the 10th of July we can start the countdown for the congress. Because in exactly one year the time has come again: the international TES community meets once again from 10. to 14. July 2013 in Gothenburg in Sweden. We convene in a wonderful congress centre in a fresh summerly nordic country where the nights never really get dark and where I had the privilege to meet so many friendly and lively people already. For all the fans of Sweden I don't have to rave anymore and for those who ever wanted to visit the land of Astrid Lindgren and Abba – this is your opportunity ! See more under www.ifotes2013.org

The theme of the congress is "Vulnerability as a challenge". I believe this is a subject which we encounter often while listening as well as in our own daily life. Vulnerability can make us feel helpless or stumped easily. Vulnerability seems to be dangerous and incalculable. This is the difficult side of it. But there is also a resourceful side to it, because the accepting of and the dealing with vulnerability makes us sensitive, gives us resilience, offers us zest for life and emotional balance. Sharing and exchanging our own experiences and the meetings with each other will surely be an outstanding experience again. The organizing team will compose a comprehensive program of lectures, workshops and presentations and with all sorts of possibilities for meetings and exchange. What a magnificent experience an IFOTES congress can be, Marlies Mateijka writes about in her personal report.

Since the end of 2011 IFOTES is supported by IFOTES-Europe. IFOTES-Europe is based in Germany and it is a financial support society. Because IFOTES is based in Switzerland, it was not possible yet to apply for grants or project money at the European Union. This is possible now with this affiliated association. Furthermore IFOTES-Europe will specifically collect donations and in future also carry out projects which support or finance the work of IFOTES additionally. But of course for a start IFOTES-Europe has to grow and prosper now first, gain experience and put out feelers for possible resources. We hope that in future IFOTES-Europe can do its share to strengthen and back up the work of IFOTES. Towards the end of this newsletter you will find additional information about the objectives and tasks of IFOTES-Europe. If you should know of potential donators, trusts or projects which might be able to support IFOTES, we would be grateful if you would contact us under europa@ifotes.org . With my very best wishes

Stefan Schumacher, President

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XIX IFOTES Congress – Gothenburg, Sweden 10-14 July 2013



Vulnerability as a Challenge



The congress will focus on **VULNERABILITY AS a RESOURCE**. Being aware of our vulnerability, resilience can be strengthened. Participants are invited to experience, listen and discuss different alternatives of how to bring positive changes in our attitude towards vulnerability.

The congress is organised in collaboration with the Swedish member TES in Sweden and the Church of Sweden.



www.ifotes2013.org

IFOTES Congresses – Exploring for TES improvement

Since IFOTES foundation in 1967, congresses have been a core activity of the Federation.

The congresses have always been the meeting point for the volunteers to strengthen international relations and to share competences, experiences and good practices in TES.

In 2007 IFOTES took for the first time the managing and financial co-responsibility of the congress together with the hosting country and opened to the society, organizing the first world congress on the theme of Emotional Health.

Since then the themes chosen for IFOTES congresses stay in the wake of the Emotional Health, and the exploring of ways to develop emotional awareness and empower emotional skills.

2007: Emotional health - a new consciousness, Prato – Italy

www.ifotescongress2007.org

IFOTES members have a long experience of training non-professional volunteers to give emotional support. By developing listening skills and learning how to manage emotions, listeners benefit from better emotional health for themselves. The congress explored our understanding of emotions, their function and impact in our lives with a scientific, empirical, philosophical, artistic and research-oriented approach.

2010: Listening for peace - exploring alternatives to violence, Vienna - Austria

www.ifotescongress2010.org

Violence is a social reality and TES-listeners are confronted with this situation every day on the phone, as they assure anonymity and confidentiality, a precondition for callers to talk. The Congress explored how we can develop a world in which humans are able to recognize and manage their emotions and needs, and build non-violent relationships.

Fascination IFOTES – An International Movement that moves

In 1967 the founders of IFOTES had the idea to initiate a means of sharing experiences and learning together, and to create a forum for the meeting of core and voluntary staff members of crisis-counseling helplines. Since that time, nearly every three years a congress is held in one of the member countries. The organizers have always endeavored to convey new insights and to arrange workshops to encourage professional exchanges, as well as to make time and space available for a social interactions.

I myself have had the chance to take part in seven congresses, and served as host two years ago with the Telefonseelsorge in Austria. In the coming year 2013, IFOTES, together with the Swedish organization, extends the invitation to Gothenburg and with this contribution I would like to shed a little light on this event and whet your appetite to participate.

My personal "IFOTES-Congress-Story" begins in 1988. As a voluntary staff member of the TES in Vienna, I was asked by the leader if I would be interested in traveling to a congress in Helsinki. At this time we had a fellow volunteer who worked at



Austrian Airlines and could organize a few free flights for us (unfortunately we don't have this anymore!). I agreed to participate and was already very excited. I had learned English in school, but never had the occasion to speak it; moreover, I still had the fear from my time in school that I would make mistakes or embarrass myself.

But already on the first night of the congress - at the reception in the city hall of Helsinki - I began to converse with colleagues from different countries.

Quickly we discovered common conversation topics: "How long have you been working for your organization?" "How is your training?" "Do you have frequent callers? How do you handle that situation?"

Because most of the congress guests did not speak English as their native language, we helped each other to find the right words (in fact, in the same way we help in conversations with our callers).

The speeches at the actual congress were already at that time simultaneously translated. Only later did I learn that Gabriele Wennemer had been asked back when she was studying to be an interpreter if she could help at one of the much earlier congresses. Gabriele and a friend of hers were so fascinated by the work and the voluntary engagement of the counseling helpline staff workers, that from that time on they simultaneously translated free of charge the main and parallel lectures



at all IFOTES Congresses. (Gabriele organizes and motivates a crew of colleagues, as there are five official IFOTES Congress languages). This simultaneous translation made it possible for many of us to understand and participate in the congress at all. Many thanks to Gabriele Wennemer!

When I think back on my first congress in Helsinki, it is exactly the internationality of the meeting that fascinated me. I knew that when I returned to Vienna to sit at the phone, at the same time my colleagues in France, Sweden, Spain and Switzerland and in many other countries would be doing the same thing. I belong to a large community and we all want the same thing, to be as understanding and helpful as respondent as possible to the other person on the line.

After Helsinki it was clear to me that I wanted to be at the next IFOTES Congress. It took place in 1991 in Nordwijkerhout, the Netherlands. I remember



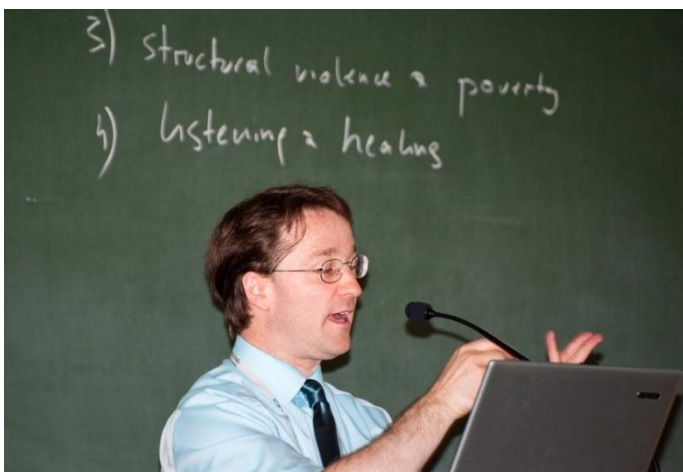
in particular a workshop that was offered on the "Theater of the Oppressed" (Augusto Boal). Thirty participants from several countries experienced wordlessly in a pantomime the different ways feelings are expressed. Since this time I have learned that I can never know exactly how someone is feeling but I can try to be understanding and respectful.

In 1994 the IFOTES congress took place in Jerusalem, Israel, but unfortunately I was unable to attend.

In 1997 in Lindau, Germany, I had the spectacular chance to experience the great psychoanalyst, Margarete Mitscherlich. As a special appreciation of counseling helpline work, I experienced the visit and speech of the German President Herzog.

Professionally, I was fascinated by the idea of Online-Counseling, which I heard about then for the first time. I took the idea back with me to Vienna, established contacts, and some time later we began Online-Counseling here in Vienna.

In the millennium year 2000 IFOTES met in Seville. At this time the mobile phone generation had practically reached all of Europe and so too all of the counseling helpline organizations. I remember a lecture about new technologies and a timid confession about receiving many prank calls. According to the speed of the translators, a delayed murmur and groan went through the lecture hall that finally erupted in laughter. Each had the thought "I know this from my experience, but the others also have to deal with this challenge." That was great. We are not alone in this regard.



Aside from the personal encounters, the experiences of learning, expanding horizons, and also the knowledge of these common challenges make the IFOTES congresses so valuable for the individual counseling helpline organizations and staff workers.

From Ljubljana in 2003 I remember the title of the congress: "Joy of Life." There we had the chance to experience the famous Marshall Rosenberg, who spoke about his theory and the practice of "nonviolent communication." In 2007, our Italian colleagues from Telefono Amico invited us to Prato. Completely different approaches were offered for the theme "Emotional Health." The congress took place in a lovely theater and a brilliant pianist accompanied throughout the whole congress.



"Listening for Peace - Discovering Alternatives to Violence" was the motto of the last congress that took place two years ago in Vienna. As project leader, I of course also experienced how much work goes into a congress and now know more than ever to appreciate what will be carried out in Gothenburg. But first and foremost I feel a great gratitude for the good run and that we also had in Vienna the chance to offer the relaying of knowledge, of learning and encounters at an international level for interested colleagues from twenty-five countries!

I'm looking forward to Gothenburg and I hope that you will come too.

Marlies Matejka Project Manager Congress 2010

**The newsletter is also available on
IFOTES web-site www.ifotes.org
e-mail info@ifotes.org**

IFOTES Europe

IFOTES EUROPE e.V. is a registered charity foundation, devoted to the support of the International Federation of Telephone Emergency Services (IFOTES).

All funds are allocated in close cooperation with the International Committee of IFOTES.



FUNDING

Donations will support:

- Current IFOTES projects
- In depth efficiency analysis of telephone and internet based counseling
- Suicide prevention
- Crisis Intervention
- Training of Volunteers
- Additional development of projects aimed at personal, as well as email and chat based counseling
- Raising further awareness for the importance of emotional health
- Endorsing the establishment of new Telephone Emergency Services

CURRENT PROJECTS

IFOTES EUROPE e.V. seeks to raise national and international funds for IFOTES' various projects, such as:

Training: "Transforming Aggression into Balanced Emotions" and "Preventing a Crisis"

Congress: "Vulnerability as a Challenge", July 10th -14th 2013 in Gothenburg, Sweden

Manual: "Preventing Suicide – How to set up a helpline", in cooperation with WHO and ESA

Internet: Online Directory of Telephone Emergency Services, in cooperation with ESA

General support of individual initiatives that are concerned with the formation or development of Telephone Emergency Services

www.ifotes.org/europe
europe@ifotes.org

IFOTES News

Preparation of the World Suicide Prevention Day 2012

The theme of this year is "Suicide Prevention across the Globe: Strengthening Protective Factors and Instilling Hope" Considering the general situation of crisis that affects many parts of the society and individuals, we strongly recommend members to promote in their countries initiatives aimed to prevent suicide, and to provide a correct information on the topic and on services able to help and support those in need. On IASP website www.iasp.info you can find and download the tool Kit and Press Package which will help you to approach the Media on the subject.

We appreciate that you keep us informed on any initiative or event that you will organize. It will be published in the Autumn edition of IFOTES newsletter and will be mentioned in IFOTES web-site and external communication

World Suicide Prevention Day Tool Kit.

(<http://tinyurl.com/85mleh3>)

World Suicide Prevention Day Press Package.

(<http://tinyurl.com/6sqvebz>).

Please submit your WSPD activity online(<http://tinyurl.com/7lwer9o>).

MEMO

- ✓ **10 September 2012** World Suicide Prevention Day
- ✓ **22-23 October 2012** IC Meeting Madrid (Spain)
- ✓ **10-14 July 2013** XIX IFOTES Congress Gothenburg (Sweden)
- ✓ **24-28 September 2013** XXVII World Congress of the International Association for Suicide Prevention Oslo (Norway)