

MINUTES OF AIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY, OCTOBER 5 2007, BRUSSELS

Attendants:

Netherlands: Monique Lindhout (President), Dirk Epke (Secretary General), Eric Schuurin (VP), Janneke van Zandbergen

United Kingdom: Phillip Dann (Treasurer), Janet Rockliffe (VP)

Italy: Franco Denes (VP)

Sweden: Marianne Åkerlund (VP)

France: Jean Dominique Journet (VP), Mr. Boucrot, Mrs. Boucrot (observers)

Finland: Terttu Elo (Board), Marika Railila (VP)

Luxembourg: Gaby Zeimet-Schloesser (VP and session interpreter)

Austria: Christiane Pons (VP)

Hungary: László Philipsz, Zsuzsanna Dallos (observers)

Belgium: Philip Smets (VP), Martin Heller

Notification of absence: Luc Meijer, Sue Gilpin, Jacqueline-Ann Stark.

A. Opening General Assembly

New members introduce themselves (Janet Rockliffe, Franco Denes). Five new observers are present (Mr. And Mrs. Boucrot, László Philipsz, Zsuzsanna Dallos and Janneke van Zandbergen).

The President announces that during this meeting the future of the AIA will be discussed.

Therefore most important points on the agenda will be addressed first to leave some time for discussion. Attendants approve the agenda.

B. reporting session

Annual report 2007:

This is a concept. Changes in the content of the activity report can be suggested by e-mail till December 31.

Financial report 2006 and financial situation 2007:

The financial report 2006 is to be completed when bank figures are received by the treasurer. This is taking longer than anticipated. The final financial report 2006 will follow.

The financial situation 2007 is clear, attendants have no questions. (Late) payment of the annual fee is still an issue. It is to be expected that some countries will not pay. This will result in a slightly lower budget than currently stated.

Reports from members:

Janet Rockliffe (United Kingdom), gives an update on the activities of Speakability.

Especially of interest is the possibility of acknowledgment of the visual impairment (hemianopsia) which many people with aphasia suffer from.

The acknowledgement of this impairment by the national organizations for the blind and visual impaired can give the individual with aphasia and impaired eyesight the right to use aids such as a walking stick.

This starts the discussing how to make people more aware of the different problems that occur besides aphasia. Aphasia is often more than just language difficulties. It could be a good idea to consider the possibilities of visualizing aphasia (what is it like to be aphasic) and the problems that can exist besides the language impairment.

Jean Dominique Journet (France),

Tells about a book ('Aphasique é l'aphasique' – aphasia and the aphasics) that has been published in France about the history of aphasia rehabilitation.

Jean Dominique mentions a European stroke federation (SAFE). SAFE is about stroke awareness. It might be interesting for the A.I.A. to investigate the goals, purpose etc. of this federation. Jean Dominique as well as Marika Railila will send some additional information to Monique Lindhout. Monique has close contacts with the future president of SAFE, Jos Slagers. He is the president of the Dutch Stroke Association.

Marianne Åkerlund (Sweden),

Gives an update about Swedish aphasia association and their 2nd anniversary of the national day on Aphasia. For this occasion two DVD's are composed about how aphasics and their partners experience aphasia.

C. Statutory affairs session

Change of board:

There has been no response on the call for new board members.

Monique Lindhout, Dirk Epke and Phillip Dann are accepted as board member for another term.

Three board members resign:

Luc Meijer couldn't join the A.I.A General Assembly, but is thanked for all the work he did founding and serving AIA as a board member. Luc Meijer will receive a silver pin of the A.I.A logo as a thank you for all his hard work.

Sue Gilpin wasn't able to attend this meeting but is, as a former A.I.A. President thanked for her commitment. For this she will receive a silver pin of the A.I.A. logo.

Terttu Elo is thanked for all the work she has done, during the years of very active membership and the last year as a board member. Terttu received a typical Belgian gift and is to enjoy her well served retirement.

With every year fewer countries that join the meetings, meetings that are for the most part about statutory affairs and finances, the future of the A.I.A is discussed.

The question is, if the A.I.A should proceed in the current form or that changes should be made. All attendants agree that changes could help to make the A.I.A a more open association which focuses on sharing knowledge, active cooperation between countries and with the possibility of reaching a much larger group of people with a special interest in aphasia.

The form in which these changes are to be made is to be decided before December 31 by all members of the A.I.A.

Generally the 3 options are:

1. Keep it as it now is (no changes)
2. End A.I.A and form no new official organization at all
3. Form a simple foundation (no annual fees, open to everybody etc)

But: save name, save logo, save website and save goals

More information about this important topic has been sent to all members by the president so that they can make a well considered decision. No vote in favour of one of the options as mentioned above ***before December 31*** will result in a count in favour for option 3.

Countries that not have paid there annual fee over the year 2007 are excluded from this vote.

All attendants, except Sweden, approve on a mandate for the current board to take care of all (administrative) tasks concerning the possible change of the A.I.A. As the majority is in favour this decision is therefore accepted.

By January 1 the appropriate procedure can be started. Of course the board will keep everyone informed and will ask for advice in the decisions to be made.

Tentative budget:

Even when there would be a change in the current state of the A.I.A. the association is not to be changed before the end of 2008. This means that the tentative budget is up to date no matter what changes might come.

D. Rotary-Project

The A.I.A is very proud to present a website with general information about aphasia in 32 different languages. The website is launched on October the 6th in Brussels.

The Internet site has arisen on the initiative of late Raymond Bassem, who was a member of Rotary club Brussels-North and who suffered from aphasia. It was his dream to inform people in all countries of the world concerning aphasia, the consequences, and possible ways to learn to deal with this language handicap.

For the financial support which made it possible we return thanks to the Rotary Clubs from Bruxelles-Nord (Belgium), Schouwen Duiveland (The Netherlands), Echternach and Moselle (Luxembourg), Doorn-Heuvelrug (The Netherlands) and Koblenz (Germany) and the Meyer family. Besides the financial support many Rotarians helped in decision making, the content of the texts and marketing strategies.

The board thanks members who where involved in translation or made translations possible. Everyone is asked again to help translate the texts in as many languages as possible by using the personal network. Franco Denes will provide translations in Italian.

E. Presentation of a new e-mail application for people with aphasia

A Dutch speech pathologist, Barbara van Olffen and web designer/student Marcel Rummens present a new e-mail program. The website is specially designed for people with aphasia. Through this website they can practice the use of e-mail and contact others with aphasia. Because of the very simple lay-out, limited functions and the possibility of using precomposed sentences the e-mail website is much more accessible than regular e-mail programs.

More information (PowerPoint presentation) will be send to you separately.

Arnhem, November 8th 2007

Janneke van Zandbergen
Monique Lindhout