



Europe's Children Our Concern asbl

Supporting children and young people with learning difficulties

Under the Patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Mathilde

"Together we do make a difference"

Annual Report (June 2008-June 2009)

Introduction

ECOC is a voluntary organization and registered charity, founded in 1993 in Brussels. It is run by a core group of volunteers, with the additional assistance this year of a two-day a week stagiaire, employed during April, May and June.

ECOC's members come from many different countries; its working language is English, using translation and interpretation services where available and appropriate. As a voluntary organization ECOC has no secure and ongoing source of funding and therefore runs fundraising events on a regular basis, along with its core activities.

ECOC has recently updated its mission, following a period of consultation with its members.

The mission now reads:

To promote opportunities in order that young people and children with any form of learning challenge are included, respected and supported by the teaching process in mainstream education.

Core Activities

Annual Conference – Recognizing and Reaching Children with Learning Difficulties, ADHD and Related Conditions across Languages and Cultures

This one-day conference, sponsored jointly by Europe's Children Our Concern (ECOC) and ADHD Belgium and part-funded by the King Baudouin Foundation, took place in Brussels on 8 October 2008. The event attracted some 60 participants from a variety of backgrounds: teachers, child psychiatrists and psychologists, parents and others interested in the field of learning disabilities.

The four speakers were:

Dr Laurent Victoor from Belgium. A child and adolescent psychiatrist and specialist consultant for children, teenagers and adults with AD/HD.

Dr Steve Chinn from the United Kingdom. An expert in dyslexia and mathematics and dyscalculia.

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Sari Solden from the United States of America. A psychotherapist in private practice, Sari's specialisms includes gender issues affecting women and girls with AD/HD, and inattentive AD/HD.

Dr Ellen Littman from the United States of America. A clinical psychologist, Ellen works across the spectrum of attention disorders, focusing on the high IQ AD/HD population.

AD/HD Workshops

The first of two workshops for professionals in the education field and parents took place on 7 May 2009, with 25 participants. It was led by Dr. Laurent Victoor, child and adolescent psychiatrist and specialist consultant for children, teenagers and adults with ADHD. The second workshop is scheduled for October 2009.

Children's St Nicholas Party

Around 50 children with physical and/or learning disabilities gathered together at Espace53 on 6 December 2008 to welcome St Nicholas in the traditional fashion. They came from Les Coccinelles, La Cite Joyeuse and Claire Martin – schools that focus on children that need extra support.

Information, Advice and Support

Website Development: Ongoing work to update contents and improve look and feel.

Newsletter: Produced quarterly and circulated electronically, it goes to all ECOC members plus a further 796 people with an interest in the organization.

Networking and Profile Raising: Every opportunity is taken to promote ECOC and its mission, participating in networking events, fairs and informal meetings are the main channels for this.

Christmas Carols at European Union offices: A traditional ECOC fundraising event. Over €3000 was raised this year, from eight separate performances and from the sale of the choir's CD's. The proceeds were shared with The Giraffe Project, which benefits schools and children living in poverty in Africa.

Nosing & Scotch Whisky Tasting Evening: Held on 5 September at the British & Commonwealth Women's Club and presented by Malcolm Andrews, a whisky expert and master class organizer. The evening raised 120.00 euro.

Future Plans

ECOC has extended its partnership with Turtlewings, adding a link direct from the ECOC site to that of Turtlewings, and will continue to publicize its workshops on the ECOC site over the next year.

From November 2009, ECOC will operate from the Expatica Café in Woluwe-Saint-Pierre. This 3 storey building provides us with office space; meeting rooms, a bar and grill allowing us to extend the services we can offer our community. The venue will open 7 days a week from 10h00 until 22h00 and host a library of books and other learning materials.

The Expatica Café provides an opportunity to expand on our expert speaker sessions and workshops. We have been asked to host a regular Teachers Café and have been approached by some additional interesting partners.

We plan to host our annual St. Nicholas event in collaboration with Autoworld and intend to hold a carol singing fundraiser.

Over the next 12 months we will take the opportunity to review and bring up-to-date our statutes given the many changes that have taken place.

ECOC Facts and Figures

Income and Expenditure: [As foundation donations \(specifically the King Baudouin Foundation\) were not awarded this year, the total expenditure exceeded the income for ECOC, but at a manageable amount. The total income amounted to 8,473.18 with expenditure at 9,157.55.](#)

Chair: Richard Chalks Corriette (from June 2008)

Treasurer: Matt Schlarb (from June 2008)

Core Group (from June 2008): Sarah Venter (Membership Secretary), Giuseppe Borsalino, Maria Doyle, Corinne Foster, Isabelle Howe, Carol Humphrey, Maggie Inglis, Laura Steenson (stagiare), Joanne Norris, Penny Steel, Patricia Thomson, Patricia Vandenplas.

Membership:

Understanding our membership base is a “work-in-progress”. However we do know that we currently have a total of 38 individual members. Corporate members amount to 18, some of which are honorary and some active.