



The AIEJI President Report of 2013 – 2017

The Congress in April 2013 in Luxembourg was attended by 600 participants. The theme was "All Together" with a special focus on inclusion. The global situation has placed this term squarely on the agenda during this present congress period. This has occurred in particular through political conditions in the Middle East, and the increase in people on the run that this has given rise to.

Inclusion – involving cultural meetings, coming to terms with traumas and support for life situations – has more than ever become a daily affair for social educators around the world. Regardless of whether one works at an asylum centre or in arenas where people are found who have been granted asylum or temporary asylum. There are quite substantial challenges in this work, as well as a colossal potential for including people who can make significant contributions to societal development.

Publications

During the present congress period, two projects have been conducted based upon the work programme from the latest President Report. One concerning social educational work with unaccompanied refugee minors who are seeking asylum, and one concerning social educational work for psychiatry.

Social educational work with unaccompanied refugee minors

In June 2015, AIEJI published the report "Social educational work with refugee minor asylum seekers". The report was drawn up based on interviews with social educators in Israel, Spain, Italy and Denmark, in addition to unaccompanied refugee minors to the latter two countries. Theoretical perspectives and methods have also been incorporated into the delineation of good practices for social educational work with this target group.

The AIEJI board has communicated the project to all AIEJI members and other organisations who take an interest in this very important issue. The feedback from AIEJI member organisations has been that the report has been/is very useful for the focus on the social educational work with this target group – which includes the work at the social educational working places in the respective countries.

During the preceding congress period, AIEJI was added to the list of INGOS holding participatory status within the Council of Europe, and under the auspices of such the AIEJI project concerning social education work with refugee minors was presented in Strasbourg in January 2016.

Subsequently, a presentation of the project was sought in the Council of Europe itself under the auspices of the work programme *Migrants, Asylum Seekers and Refugees in the context of major risks prevention and management*. This presentation took place in Lisbon in October of the same year, plus an AIEJI article about the project was issued in the publication *Migrants, Refugees,*

Asylum Seekers: Inclusion in Disaster Preparedness and Response, October 2016, Council of Europe. The project was also presented under the auspices of UNHCR. This is described in further detail under the reporting from the Middle Eastern Office.

Social educational work within mental health

This project was completed in February 2017 and is being presented for the first time in its finished form to the present world congress. The project builds on empirical data (interviews) from seven countries: Brazil, Italy, Norway, Russia, Spain, Switzerland and Denmark - involving both social psychiatry as well as treatment psychiatry. As in the project described above, theoretical perspectives and methods have been incorporated into the delineation of good practices for social educational work. In December 2016, the project was presented in an article by AIEJI in the Swiss magazine *SozialAktuell* (No. 12) with the title *Psychische Gesundheit und Sozialpädagogik*.

Organisational developments

At the General Meeting in Luxembourg in April 2013, it was decided that AIEJI's Board should present new Articles of Association for purposes of strengthening AIEJI's work with promoting the social educator profession. An Extraordinary General Meeting was held on 5 April 2014 in Zaragoza, Spain, where these new Articles of Association were adopted. Among other things, this means that more places are being reserved today for A members, who in their capacity as A members possess a significant reach in relation to the world's social educators.

Members

During the period of 2013 – 2017, the majority of member organisations were category A members. This is of great significance to AIEJI's volume in relation to reaching as many people as possible. Results-oriented work is currently being performed on expanding A memberships in the Baltic countries, and as will be shown under "work programme" in this report the Board is recommending that a focus area for the 2017-2021 congress period be the recruitment of more member organisations to AIEJI.

The Latin American office

The South America Regional Office has the pleasure to inform that the work in the period from 2013 to 2017 was very enriching and pleasant. We worked a long the period mentioned and all over the World, not only South America. Brazilian Social Educator from AEESP organized the World Congress this year. The most important Social Educators meeting is in Brazil in consequences of the job of all Social Educators from Brazil and others members. In 2016, the Regional Office from Brazil organized the Board Meeting. Two days where the members of the boards worked with the agenda and visits the University of UNICAMP. The Brazilians members organize the Social Educators National Meeting in 2015.

From Educators from all over Brazil, and Uruguay. In 2013, Brazil and Uruguay participated in the Social Educators First Meeting in Cuzco, Peru. The regional Office had communications with Social Educators in Argentina, Chile, Colombia and Venezuela, too. In order to close and be members of AIEJI.

The Regional Office had meeting with the Uruguayan Social Educators –ADESU- in order to be members, too.

The Middle Eastern Office

Unfortunately, the political situation in the area didn't enable the office to develop real regional activities during the current mandate. We succeeded to develop and start contacts with Palestinian social educators living and working in East Jerusalem. The director of the youth at risk division in East Jerusalem Palestinian quarters and some other senior workers in these youth services. All these people have free access to Israel and we could go and visit them several times in their work-places. They accepted to be the starting point and promised to link us in the future with other Palestinian NGO's of social educators that could become members of AIEJI on the long run. The first major activity planned was an international seminar on unaccompanied minors that should have been linked to a board meeting in Israel in November 2014. Unfortunately, the political situation and security problems in the region brought us to decide to cancel the AIEJI board meeting in Israel and also postpone the regional seminar.

These are the reasons, we cannot report today about any meaningful progress in our regional AIEJI activities until now. We have plenty of new developments in AIEJI Israel, especially focusing on new social and educational programs for Israeli Arab youth who are living in at risk situations. We recently opened a new residential project in Nitzana youth village for young people from the Bedouin populations. Another one should be opened soon for young Arabs who are at risk in the North of Israel. Other relatively new programs are focused on the reintegration of Ultraorthodox Jewish adolescents who left, or were rejected by their communities and are practically living on the streets.

We have had a very meaningful activity in Israel regarding unaccompanied minors coming from Darfur and Eritrea. From 2008 until 2014 more than 400 unaccompanied minors were integrated in residential care programs. These activities were included as part of AIEJI project report on unaccompanied minors. The UNHCR (UN High Commissionaire for Refugees) that followed these activities valued them very much. Therefore Emmanuel Grupper (officer of the Middle Eastern Office) was invited to speak in a round table organized by UNHCR in Toronto, Canada, dedicated to looking for "alternatives to detention" for unaccompanied minors all over the world. This was an excellent occasion to speak also about AIEJI's activities on behalf of unaccompanied minors and propose them to look at AIEJI's important report on this topic.

We are looking forward and waiting for better and quitter days in the region that would give us the possibility to carry out all our good intentions and plans for AIEJI regional cooperation with neighbours and the Palestinians on the first place. This will hopefully be the starting point for the development of new relationships between social educators from both sides under the umbrella of the AIEJI Middle East Bureau. When these projects would become possible we have a lot of ideas about involving also other countries from the region like Turkey and eventually Cyprus (although Cyprus is members of the EU) Jordan and Egypt.

The European Office

Work programme 2017 -2021

1) *Senior citizens and people with dementia*

In the coming period AIEJI wants to shed light on working with elderly people and people diagnosed with dementia. Focus will be on the latter, since this group represents an increasing part of the world's population and calls for unique professional competences. It is crucial for people's life chances, that they get the right support in everyday life. There is a need that the social policy efforts, in favour of the elderly and people suffering with dementia, focus on and give a support, which gives the opportunity for development, participation and codetermination in everyday life. There is a need that we do not only focus on the age, getting older and there is a need that we do not only focus on the diagnosis dementia.

In this context social education is and can be a key element. Consequently, AIEJI must in the coming period initiate a project that focuses on social educators and the role of social education, tasks and the importance of the work with giving elderly people and people with dementia opportunities e.g. to participate in society, to give voice to their life situation.

The project must collect examples of social educational work with elderly people and people with dementia. The project is going to result in a number of recommendations on how social educators can qualify the work with this group of citizens. The project aims to inspire social educators around the world working with senior citizens and citizens suffering with dementia.

2) *Ethics in the social educational work*

Values and attitudes play a major role in social education. The social educational profession is the only profession that is consistently citizen-based; it is consistently on the citizens' side. Working with people in challenging life situations also requires that social educators have strong core values. It is about the view of humanity, it is about the professions autonomy, and it is about the political framework for social education around the world.

Today AIEJI already has a number of ethical principles for the social educational work (Ethical guidelines for social educators). A number of AIEJI's member organisations also have ethical core values or ethical guidelines.

This is a crucial discussion for social educators around the world. Therefore, a project that will partly identify currently ethical principles of AIEJI's member organisations must be initiated. The project is going to identify common approaches and values within social educational work. The project should lead to a new set of values for social educators. A set of values that is going to be a part of AIEJI's fundament; A set of values that also gives a number of recommendations to AIEJI's member organisations; A set of values that can also inspire social educators around the world in their daily work.

3) *More members of AIEJI – more member benefits*

Today AIEJI is the only international organisation in the world representing the social educational subject, the social educational profession and social educators as a professional group. Today AIEJI has the strongest position in Europe and Latin America. AIEJI has currently many members

around the world. AIEJI is, like many other international organisations, challenged by the fact that many places are financially strained, a world in which people increasingly focus on themselves.

AIEJI's work on specific projects about social educators' competences and tasks in a number of fields has proven that there is a need, more than ever, for an international professional association of social educators. If an association like this did not exist, there would be a risk that social education would be reduced from a separate profession to a method within social work.

Therefore, it is important and essential that AIEJI continues to be strengthened; that more organisations, which represent social educators, join AIEJI.

In this context, it is vital to focus on and highlight benefits of an AIEJI membership. First and foremost, an effort that aims to get more members, first and foremost national organisations that represent social educators, is going to be initiated – next more social educational institutions that represent the social educational practise. The effort will at the same time develop and highlight what benefits there are and should be for members of AIEJI. This includes working with a communication platform, where social media sites like Facebook are included, as a key element.

Benny Andersen

President