



IFHOHYP  
NEWSLETTER WINTER 2015  
Winter



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Courtesy of Sidsel Munkebo Hansen

## Letter from the President

By Sidsel Munkebo Hansen

President  
of IFHOHYP



Happy New Year! This year will be an exciting one with new opportunities waiting to be seized – not least for our organization IFHOHYP. In November 2014 a completely new IFHOHYP Board was elected and first and foremost we would like to start shaping the future work of IFHOHYP by inviting hard of hearing young people all over the world to join as volunteers in IFHOHYP!

On 23rd of November 2014, IFHOHYP held its Annual General Meeting in Strasbourg, France. One of the most important points on the agenda was the election of an entirely new board. In this first letter from me as the new President, I would like to take the opportunity to mention the former board members and their efforts.

Anna Vita Ross from Denmark has been the treasurer of IFHOHYP in 2011-2014. I would like to thank her for her work with the board in this period. Her efforts to improve the financial procedures and structures of bookkeeping and other financial matters, should be especially mentioned. The future board will benefit from this work. Astrid Fejrø from Denmark, Nomy Bitman from Israel and Maggie Plattner from Switzerland contributed in the board as secretary, board member and vice president respectively. Unfortunately they had to resign from their positions in the board before time, but none the less they should still have a big thanks for their contribution to the results of IFHOHYP during the period when there is a lack of financial and human resources.

Finally I would like to thank Karina Chupina. Karina is without a doubt a very big part of the soul and essence of IFHOHYP. Karina got into IFHOHYP 20 years ago, when she attended her first study session in 1994. Since then Karina became a part of the board in 2000 and later as President for 10 years. Karina should be acknowledged for a long list of achievements of IFHOHYP. A specific area I would like to mention is the expansion of IFHOHYP – both when it comes to new members of IFHOHYP as well as new advocacy platforms and co-operations. Thanks to Karina and her encouragements of volunteers, IFHOHYP have had a great expansion to new continents and now have members in Africa, Asia and North America. Moreover, new co-operations were established as IFHOHYP became a member of the Youth Council of the Global Partnership on Children with Disabilities, of the Youth Committee in the European Disability Forum, of the European Platform of Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deafblind and a stronger mutual understanding between IFHOHYP, the International Federation of Hard of Hearing (IFHOH) and European Federation of Hard of Hearing (EFHOH), was established – just to mention a few.

I am grateful for the opportunity and trust that the members have shown my fellow board members and I in taking over the lead.

IFHOHYP has for a long period achieved very good results on expanding the list of members and establishing new professional international co-operations – and we must keep on reaching new parts of the world and new hard of hearing young individuals as well as maintaining our status in the different international platforms and our opportunity to do advocacy. But it is also time to look inside of IFHOHYP and look to how our organization can create spaces and events, where hard of hearing young people can develop and grow, getting new skills as volunteers with big responsibilities and gaining new knowledge and confidence from exchanging experiences across borders.

It requires a stable and strong organization with human and financial resources – this will be my overall priority of 2015.

There is a lot of work to be done – I'm ready together with the rest of the board, but we need your help. Join IFHOHYP as volunteer and seize the opportunity of personal development and experience with the work of an international NGO. Walk with us down a visionary and ambitious road of IFHOHYP!

Let us show the potential of hard of hearing young people – are you ready for 2015? ■

It requires a stable and strong organization with human and financial resources – this will be my overall priority of 2015.



## Sidsel Munkebo Hansen, M.A. - President

Place of Residence: Copenhagen, Denmark  
Education: M.A. in Anthropology, University of Copenhagen (Speciality in Cochlear Implants and the related social processes)  
Level of Hearing Loss: Moderately severely bilateral  
Assistive Technology used: Hearing aids  
Activities & Hobbies: Going out for concerts and music festivals

*"It's good to be back!"*

*In 2012 I was elected for the board of IFHOHYP and now I'm excited to step back into the board as president and continue fighting for the rights of and improving the circumstances for hard of hearing young people all over the world.*

*I wish to make a difference for HOH young people across borders in the world. In 2009, at my first study session in IFHOHYP, I experienced how useful, inspiring and important it was to meet, learn from and discuss HOH related issues with young people like myself from all over the world. I think that young HOH people can gain a lot from exchanging experiences and knowledge from their own lives and countries - and I wish to be a part of expanding and strengthening these networks of exchange in the future.*

*I bring experience from 5-6 years of deep involvement in the work with and for youth with disabilities on different levels - personal, volunteering, political and not least as a professional in different national and international NGO's. Next to that I want to contribute with my specific experience from my past work in the IFHOHYP board, where I did organizational planning and development as well as representations and advocacy work in different political networks and forums as European Youth Forum and European Disability Forum and so on.*

*"I can't wait to get started!"*



## Alper Co kun - Vice President

Place of Residence: Istanbul, Turkey  
Education: MSc in Computer Science and Engineering  
Level of Hearing Loss: profound bilateral  
Activities & Hobbies: traveling, reading and writing stories

*Hello everyone, my name is Alper Coskun. I am currently a software architect at a technology company in Turkey. I have profound hearing loss, but I cannot get benefit from hearing aids and cochlear implants. I am an active member of our local HoH organization. Also, I participated AGMs and study sessions of IFHOHYP, in which I was a planning team member of IFHOHYP Study Session in 2014. I am very happy to be a part of the new board of IFHOHYP, and I look forward to work with all of you. Hopefully, with the help of our members and this excellent board, 2015 will be a very active and strong year for IFHOHYP.*



## Ece Saygi - Secretary

Place of Residence: Istanbul, Turkey  
Education: BSc in Electrical&Electronics Engineering, Koc University, Istanbul  
Level of Hearing Loss: Severe profound hearing loss (bilateral)  
Assistive Technology used: Cochlear implant on right ear  
Activities & Hobbies: travelling

*Happy new year to everyone!*  
*Since my childhood, I have always dreamed to facilitate HoH people's lives. Therefore, I chose Electronics Engineering department to develop hearing aids with the help of my both academic and personal experience. 4 years ago, I*

*had deaf and HoH friends at first time in my life and after I learnt sign language to break the borders with all the deaf and HoH people. Now I am happy to be able to communicate with all the people who have hearing disability. Good communication between all of us is important to fight for our rights!*

*In 2012, it was my first IFHOHYP experience as I attended AGM 2012 in Bergen. I remember that I was so happy to see that there is such an active international organisation for HoH people. After, I have never missed IFHOHYP meetings and become more enthusiastic to be a part of IFHOHYP. This led me to take more active role as a Secretary :) I am really excited to work with the new and quite active Board and am sure that in 2015 we will have great works with your support.*



**Daria Panicheva -  
Treasurer**

Place of Residence: Los Angeles, USA  
Education: M.D. in Printing Arts  
Level of Hearing Loss: profound bilateral  
Assistive Technology used: hearing aids  
Activities & Hobbies: traveling and botanical drawing

*I grew up in a hearing community and always considered myself a person of art rather than accounting. My interest in IFHOHYP grew gradually, from study session to study session, and so did my background. Several years ago, I became a co-owner of a small company what involves a lot of paperwork and bookkeeping and I was performing secretary's (and many other) duties in IFHOHYP before being officially elected its treasurer. So I am very happy to continue my work in the Board, and I trust that with the new and strong Board we will be able to do a lot of good together.*



**Bowen Tang, B.Sc. B.Ed. -  
Board Member**

Place of Residence: Vancouver, B.C. Canada  
Education: M.Ed. Candidate in Deaf Education,  
Smith College  
Level of Hearing Loss: severely profound, bilateral  
Assistive Technology used: hearing aid (R),  
cochlear implant (L)  
Activities & Hobbies: watching all Oscar-nominated films

*Hello and Happy New Year! I cannot tell you how excited I am to be part of the IFHOHYP Board, the first of which I hope to be for many years to come. Many of us had different obstacles to overcome in our journeys and there will be new challenges ahead. For me, I could not have done it without the tremendous support from my family, friends, and professionals who are dedicated to their work in providing exemplary services. This reflects the vital importance of an inclusive community which invites persons with hearing loss to maximize their potentials. I strongly believe that each of us, regardless of our nationality, should be entitled to full accessibility at any levels of society so that we can pursue our dreams just like any others. As Glinda the Good Witch from Wizard of Oz would say, "You've always had the power". In addition to working closely with my colleagues on the Board, it is one of my goals this year to promote IFHOHYP visibility in North America and Asia so as to increase youth involvement, create opportunities for collaboration, and make a step further to establish IFHOHYP as an international federation. Here is to 2015: a year where old boundaries will be expanded to explore the new frontiers.*

# Committees

## INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE

Communication is a crucial issue for IFHOHYP. Improved channels of information will make IFHOHYP voice stronger by facilitating effective communication between IFHOHYP and its member organisations. Main communication and information tools of IFHOHYP are IFHOHYP website and the newsletter. These tools of external and internal communication of information should be more efficient.

Information and communication committee currently consists of four members: Ece Saygi, Irina Ivanova, Natalia Kondrateva and James Ferguson have already published several newsletters, but more members are needed to make us be better heard! You can try yourself as an editor, proof-reader or designer - and our current members can provide support to help you build these skills, so you do not necessarily need to have related experiences to join. You are always welcome to share your thoughts with us by sending us an article!

### DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- To enhance an effective communication structure within IFHOHYP bodies.
- To collect information about organizations for/of hard of hearing young people.
- To collect information about various aspects of hearing loss.
- To design and prepare a newsletter by collecting, editing and proofreading articles.

## STUDY SESSION COMMITTEE

Study Session is an event aimed to provide young people with necessary skills, knowledge and competences to run civil society projects and initiatives. In other words, study session train multipliers who will return to their countries and disseminate the skills and knowledge. Every study session is conducted through highly interactive, hands-on non-formal education methodology, so it is quite different from a traditional conference format. The topics of the study session vary each time.

We need volunteers to be a part of the Study Session preparation committee, who either have experience of taking part in a study session or of organising one in the past. A geographic and gender balance should be observed in the team. We also seek balance of skills and competences in the Committee.

The Committee should prepare the application for the next study session. Generally it is expected that those who are in the Committee, also become members of the Study Session Team, which is responsible for actual organising and running of the study session in fall 2016.

### DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- To check work priorities of Council of Europe Youth Department, and to choose a topic corresponding with these priorities.
- To identify aims and objectives and providing a brief outline of the Study Session 6-days programme.
- To prepare the application for the next Study Session with the guidance and help from the board.

*Camilla Mattjus, Pavel Novikov and Sasha Lemesova have signed up to be on the Study Session committee. Experienced members of the previous Study Session Committee, Cristina Dimitru and Mona Belhouane will be available to provide support.*

## EXPANSION COMMITTEE

The growth of IFHOHYP will create more opportunities to defend the rights of hard of hearing young people and to help them be included into the society. This priority relates to establishing links with organizations of and for hard-of-hearing people worldwide, as well as the links between IFHOHYP and regional and/or national organizations for hard of hearing youth.

The goal of this committee is to expand IFHOHYP to Asia, Africa, North and South America where possible, and to consolidate IFHOHYP position worldwide.

### DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- To research and map organizations and groups of/for hard of hearing young people.
- To contact these organizations and to educate them about IFHOHYP.
- To improve inclusion of member organizations in IFHOHYP.

*Alper Co kun and Rasmus Drankler have been involved on this committee for several years and they would love to welcome new people to join. If you would like to represent IFHOHYP in many places, communicate with people or organizations to get new members of IFHOHYP and tell them what a great federation IFHOHYP is, this committee is definitely for you.*

## PROJECTS & FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

This committee is a very crucial part of an organization. Without a solid financial foundation, an organization and its projects will be in a very vulnerable position. This committee is a very challenging, but nonetheless a very essential committee. As a member of this committee you will take part in the planning of the financial strategy of IFHOHYP, such as grant applications, co-operations with sponsorships and exploring other relevant funds - and determining the rationale framework for why IFHOHYP should be supported.

### DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- To make an overall financial strategy reflecting the work programme of IFHOHYP.
- All the steps of a fundraising process.
- Research for relevant grants, funds, partners.
- Make the Logical Framework Approach (LFA), including objectives, budget in co-operation with the board.

- Establish contact and present IFHOHYP and the relevant project.
- If necessary filling out an application.
- If relevant be a part of carrying out the project/event (this is not obligatory).

## STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

You will be a part of the work to assist the Board in developing a strategic plan for IFHOHYP in the next 5 years: 2016-2020. The Plan should be developed in 2015 and approved at the AGM 2015. The committee will insure the involvement of all member organizations under a carefully planned process. This process can involve collecting views and opinions from the member organizations and/or preparing and carrying through a meeting with representatives from member organizations.

### DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Plan in details the process by which the new IFHOHYP Strategic Plan will be carried out.
- Be responsible for undertaking the process, which can include:
  - Electronic survey with member organizations.
  - Collecting data and input from the member organizations.
  - Writing a draft in close co-operation with the board.
  - Preparing a face-to-face-discussion of the draft at the AGM 2015.
  - Other tasks as determined by the Board and committee members.

### GENERAL NOTES:

- Each committee generally will have 5 seats for volunteers, and should at least consist of 2 persons. Among these there will be elected a chair of the committee who will be the contact person for the Board.
- The committees regularly communicate with the Board member who is responsible for it. The Committee can address the responsible Board member with requests, questions and for consultation if needed.
- Final report on committees' work should be sent 1,5 months before the AGM to the Secretary.

If you are interested in joining any of the committees, please email [info@ifhohyp.org](mailto:info@ifhohyp.org) and specify the name of the committee(s). We will then put you in touch to get started!

(Team picture of facilitators; Photo credit: Bowen)  
(Purple checkered shirt: Bowen; White shirt on right: Joy)  
Courtesy of SBowen Tang, B.Sc., B.Ed.



## Peer Support Program for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing Youth

### History.

The Peer Support Program was founded in 2012 by Bowen Tang & Joy Gong, who both have a profound hearing loss. Our goal is to create a platform where Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals from age 13 to 23, in their secondary and post-secondary education, can be empowered to foster active leadership, provide peer support, advocate and promote awareness of hearing loss in their communities.

By Bowen Tang, B.Sc. B.Ed.



Bowen Tang, B.Sc. B.Ed. -  
Board Member of IFHOHYP

## The Peer Support Program provides services in three different tiers: Peer Mentorship, Workshops and Social Events.

During her speech at one of our events, Marilyn Dahl made a reference on how promoting advocacy in her generation made it possible for our generation to benefit from equipment and services such as, captioning and FM systems. In order for us to have continual access to communication, we must keep ourselves informed of changes made to government policies, and take action when our interests are at risk. This is one of the key factors in driving the Peer Support Program, to cultivate the young people in our community today so that we can work together to build a better tomorrow.

The Peer Support Program provides services in three different tiers: Peer Mentorship, Workshops and Social Events.

### 1:1 Peer Mentor Support

The 1:1 support is the core component of the program, in which the goal is to connect a youth with a suitable young adult based on location and/or interests. For example, if we receive a request from a youth who is interested in studying Arts at the University of Toronto, then we will seek out a mentor who is currently enrolled in that institution or has graduated, or possibly from the same program as well.

### Post-Secondary Transition Workshops.

In Fall 2013, we had the privilege of working with Post-Secondary Communication Access Services (PCAS) and the Western Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in developing a workshop with a focus on post-secondary transition. The aim of the workshop was to prepare students by helping them understand the differences between secondary school and a post-secondary education, and to recognize how their rights and responsibilities may change. We also provided information on the process of accessing services and adaptive technology, with emphasis on utilizing the Disability Resource Centres and support networks that are readily available. ■

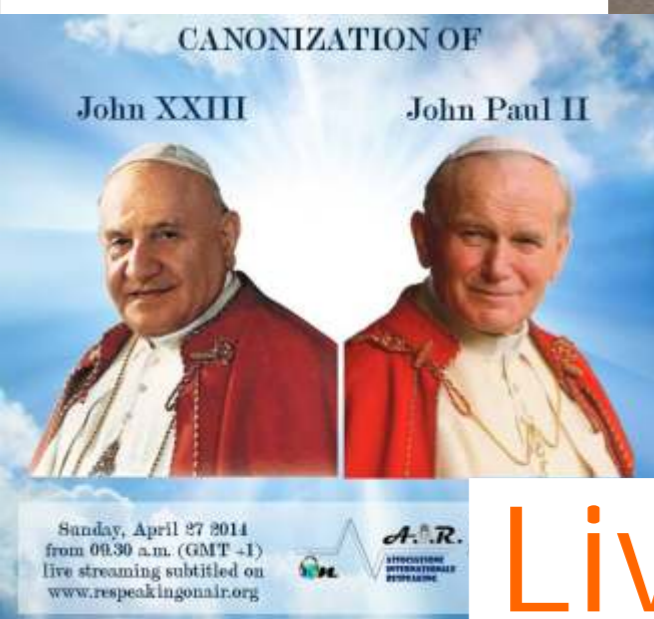
For direct inquiries about the program, please contact :



Bowen Tang  
(bowen.tang@shaw.ca)



& Joy Gong  
(gong.joy@gmail.com)



## Live subtitling of Pope's speeches

By Giacomo Pirelli

A.I.R.'s Manager  
for the Communication  
with Deaf Associations



On March 29, 2014, on A.I.R. the papal hearing was organized by the Little Mission of the Deaf-mute and the Apostolic Movement of the Blind, warmly welcomed in Vatican City. On A.I.R., live subtitles gave the chance to those connected to the association website to follow the meeting with the Holy Father and also to understand his words.

The people on A.I.R. offered their services for free, thanks to their volunteers made of professional subtitlers and interpreters. Along with the association CulturAbile and the 64 sign-language interpreters, on A.I.R., managed to captivate the interest of the deaf audience.

The beautiful words by Father Delci da Conceição Filho deeply moved the audience. He stressed the need to work in order to reach the social inclusion of the 'sensory disadvantaged'. He also clearly appreciated via A.I.R. by stating:

*"If in this moment I asked the volunteers that are working in the subtitling in Italian to stop working, if I said to take the projector and that screen away. If I asked to stop the Internet broadcasting that allows your words and ours to reach the deaf that are using their smartphones to read the subtitles, if I told these Italian Sign Language interpreters, 64 volunteers, to stop signing basically 6.000 people in this*



*room would be left with no communication. This is important to us. I have to say, Holy Father, that you talk of a Church that reaches out, with open doors, that moves outwards in order to reach the outskirts of mankind. In our parishes and in the dioceses all over the world, there are so many deaf people that find the church's doors closed! They are left with no catechisms, no sacraments, no community, no love. They can't have a personal encounter with Jesus Christ because he is a stranger. There is no one to interpret for them, no one to subtitle for them in our churches."*

The hearing was focused on the lack of services concerning the usability of the evangelical message by deaf people. Pope Francis spoke about two opposite cultures, the "culture of the encounter" and "the culture of excluding". Beyond every prejudice, as the Pope said *"disabled or ill people, with their fragility and limits, can testify the encounter with Jesus which leads to faith and essence of life. In fact, only people who are able to admit their limits can build up fraternal and generous relationships, in society as well as in the Church."*

It was a great success, in that on April 27, 2014, in which the Vatican Television Centre (CTV) wanted to confirm a few weeks later by asking A.I.R. to subtitle live the great live streaming event of the canonization of Popes John XXIII and John Paul II in four languages - Italian, English, Spanish and Polish. The subtitling of those languages was a great success! For one last ambitious

project, A.I.R. relied on 40 volunteers and 3 software-houses, involved at various levels and different phases. The two main characteristics of the event were *international cooperation* and *technological support*.

A.I.R. is a young and dynamic international non-profit association. Its main activity is pre-recording and live subtitling and it is composed of experts, professionals, young people undergoing vocational training, deaf and hard-of-hearing people. Their main goal is to promote the social inclusion between hard-of-hearing, deaf and hearing people, be they Italian or foreigners, in the everyday life through real-time and pre-recorded subtitling.

For further information see A.I.R. website at <http://www.respeakingonair.org>



# To speak or to sign - struggling for identity

I was born a hearing person in Uganda and then one day I lost my hearing at a later age. I, myself together with my parents, struggled in the hopes that one day I will regain my hearing. It was a long struggle followed by lost hope after many years without much success.

But until then, I believed I could hear something in a conducive environment. I struggled to hear, looking directly into the face/lips of the speaker and trying to come nearer to the speaker. It was challenging, and it created suspicions among some individuals especially out of my family members and close friends. Personally I believed I was the only one

By Nalwoga Hanifah

facing this impairment in my age group, as it was believed to be an impairment for aging people. I did not have the confidence to express and identify myself with the hearing impairment, I always kept quiet and hoped that one day one time I will hear well again.

Years went by and nothing much changed apart from keeping my expectation in that I would be able to hear well again. I grew as an adult and graduated from university, ready to start my career. I visited a National Association of the Deaf and it was where that I took my Sign Language course for two and half months. There I meet many youths and even children with the hearing impairment, and I felt some sense of belonging, a new family away from home. I built confidence and it was when I started to identify myself as a Deaf (by disability), so I felt at home for some time. However, differences were to come up later in the Deaf community.

Born and growing up hearing to all hearing parents and family members, my way of life was perceived different. I had attended schools for hearing children as the only Deaf student, and I therefore got negative comments and doubts from the Deaf community about my impairment. Even though I had learnt the Sign Language, I could speak and lip read properly, and also in favorable environment I could use my cell phone to call for shorter conversations and communicate with the Sign Language

interpreter through the spoken language. All of this was unacceptable in the Deaf community. I developed some discomfort every time I was part of the Deaf community, in that I was not hearing or that I was not Deaf. Where on this earth would I belong, be accepted, feel some comfort and have a sense of identity? - I wondered!

I had learned about the fact that being Hard of Hearing is a recognized category of disability with individuals registered under one group. I learnt about their objectives and committed myself to be part of the Uganda Federation of Hard Hearing (UFHOH).

Whether as a group or an individual, now I identify myself as a hard of hearing person with confidence and comfort. And I cannot hesitate to say that, "It's Hard of Hearing Disability that is my true identity", whether in associations, groups or as an individual, I now know that I am a Hard of Hearing by disability. ■

## Born and growing up hearing to all hearing parents and family members, my way of life was perceived different.



## The eastern night - Bollywood

By Sheila Cristobal,  
Beatriz Guasch



In Spain, Ruiz, a Social Education student, held her end - of - career work project named "Sam v a, the dance in your hands" about a cultural activity in Asia (based in an Eastern dance) and the inclusion of hard of hearing people. Ruiz invited 14 people (both hard of hearing and hearing) to participate in this project to promote the inclusion of hard of hearing people.



The classes were held in a youth studio which belonged to the Esplugues town hall. One of the people involved, Patricia, has a great knowledge of sign language and does voluntary work. Esplugues de Llobregat is a village near to Barselona.

All of us understood the teacher's instructions but if there was something that we didn't understand, Patricia helped us with the sign language. We attended 14 lessons which lasted one hour and a half. Gemma Tri viño was the teacher, and she is also a Spanish lawyer that also teach Bollywood daily classes (every day in a different place). Gemma loves doing this activity in her free time.

We had the opportunity to participate in this dance and to discover how wonderful it is. At the beginning we didn't know anything about Bollywood dance, and on the first day, we were already congratulated by the teacher as well as by Patricia. Both the teacher and Patricia were surprised to see how we were able to follow the rhythm and that we could dance in the same way as hearing people. Gemma danced in front of us and we followed her movements.

Now we will try to explain a bit about the Eastern dance. Bollywood is an Eastern

dance that originated in India. It is a dance full of harmony, happiness and style. In the last sessions we introduced some words in sign language in order to make the dance more inclusive to the audience. The day of the performance was very important for all of us as neighbours and family went to see us. The performance was outdoors and we were dressed with long skirts, with each person wearing a different colour and enjoying the dance session.

We would like to share these news with you as we would like to demonstrate that if we wish we are able to do everything we desire, therefore: Disability is the ability to be extraordinarily able. ■

Courtesy of Sheila Cristobal and Beatriz Guasch



## Questions about from editors of IFHOHYP



*First of all, we thank you for your attendance and time for this interview. We have limited pages in the newsletter, so we kindly ask you to write your answers in a few of those sentences under question.*

*Place your answers under questions because it would later be published as an interview.*

*Some questions can be answered on your website, so future readers will learn about uSound, and those questions are designed to bring them up to date.*

Hello, everybody! Patricia Sanchez, one of the team that has developed uSound, has kindly agreed to answer our questions.

### 1. In short, can you tell about your application "uSound"? What exactly is it and how does it work?

uSound is a Smartphone software developed to enable social integration for people with hearing loss. It captures sound and divides it into frequency bands, analyzes each band and then compensates the frequencies according to the hearing capacity of both ears. As a result the user gets a comfortable and customized audio. This app gives hard of hearing (HOH) an opportunity to improve their quality of life in essential aspects like communication and education. It also helps preventing future hearing impairment by dynamically adjusting audio frequency intensity of the user's optimal hearing level.

### 2. How did you come to this idea of application? Can you tell us more about your team? What is your role in it? Was any HOH involved in this team?

Well, the idea came out when four Argentinian students had a university task in which they were asked to give a solution for a social problem. The first thing they thought about was one of their classmates, Ariel, who had some trouble understanding the teachers because of his hearing disability. The four founders of uSound are Ezequiel Escobar (executive officer), Gustavo Ramos (operations officer), Alejandro Mendez (developer) and Adrián Vidaurre (web officer). Then the team started to grow and Enzo Cano, Rafael Rodríguez, Magalí Prieto, Ivana Tilca, Bárbara Borcas, and I (Patricia Sanchez) joined the group. I'm the social communicator and graphic designer and I am responsible for the Communication Area involving diffusion and designing of every image you see about uSound.

In the team we are also pleased to have Bárbara, she is HOH with a severe hearing loss and is responsible for the audiovisual content of uSound. Bárbara is an excellent photographer and we love her videos. Her educational experience wasn't so good but finally she had her degree. By seeing her work we are proud to show everybody that anything's possible and with uSound we are encouraged to help a lot of people.



### 3. What kind of processes did you proceed to create this app?

The process began with investigations about the problem addressed and also about every way to develop the app. We made contact with otolaryngologists, audiologists and other medical specialists to learn even more about deafness and hearing impairments. Then when we had uSound prototype, we started testing it to improve its performance.

### 4. Is uSound created only for HOH and normal hearing people? Can deaf people use it? Can CI users benefit from this app?

Today uSound offer a solution for HOH (light to mild loss) and avoids future problems to normal hearing people, but we are also working to make it function for people with higher losses and CI users because during testing we found out that is a strong possibility to do it.

### 5. Are there any extra accessories needed to use this app?

Not necessarily, but we recommend to wear Bluetooth headphones to get a better hearing experience.



### 6. Can HOH choose language in application to use?

Yes, uSound is now available in English and Spanish. Later on we will be adding more languages such as Portuguese and Chinese.



### 7. You mentioned that the smartphone work in a similar way to a digital hearing aid or a FM system. How was the app for smartphones with uSound Technology tested?

We have an area specially dedicated to testing and we have constant interaction with special institutions for hearing impaired where we test our application. Testing the app is a very important part of the improvement process.

Once the headphones are correctly placed, testers need to perform the hearing test that provides uSound. Next we compare the test results with the audiometry provided by the professional to check the test is working correctly. Then "Hearing Aid Mode" function is activated and after that we talk a bit, ask questions and make the HOH tester repeat some words such as: mom, dad, cat, house, dog, etc.

We also ask testers about the audio quality and write down every opinion they have. Later "Media Player" is activated and broadcast their favorite music (everyone really enjoy this part), then we also ask for their opinion. We evaluate and register every single part of the testing process.



### 8. Does your application require special knowledge and skills? Is it possible to manage it ourselves? What about cases when two ears hear differently?

There's no need to have any special knowledge or skills, but to know how to use a smartphone. Then if someone has some trouble we offer free video and pdf's tutorials, plus we can answer any questions via Facebook or e-mail. Is completely possible to manage it yourselves, which is a great benefit for a lot of people not to fully depend on their doctors.

Regarding cases when two ears hear differently, there's no problem or complication about it since uSound works with each ear separately. This means that the test considers right and left ear independently and then compensates the loss each one has. That is why is very important to place headphones correctly.



### 9. Are there any limits in its usage?

As this uSound's first version it has much room of improvement. But that's why we are working for.



### 10. Do you have any campaigns or support for people who cannot afford to buy this app?



Yes we do, actually for each acquired license we donate others and the user gets to choose whoever will receive it at any place of the world, we call that "uSound 1x1": someone buys one and someone gets one for free. Then we also have the "Direct Donation" and anyone who wants to help can buy licenses just to donate whoever or wherever they want to, and we also give for free the same amount of licenses.

### 11. Do you have any future plans for this app?

Yes, we will keep on improving uSound and using every technology advance to make better versions and to help even more people around the world.



### 12. Is there something that we missed? Do you wish to tell something to our readers?

In the world there are 640, 000, 000 people with hearing loss and only 1 in 40 people can afford hearing aids. This team is working to make uSound the best app and to solve this huge problem. I'd like HOH and Deaf community to know that they're not alone, we are people who really want to help to improve their quality of life and because we believe anything is possible, we know that we are going to make it. The only thing we need from you is to spread the word and make more people to join our cause!

I also want to thank you Irina and Ece for getting interested and supporting uSound! ■



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