

Letter from the new President

Dear Colleagues, members of HOPE,

At the General Assembly recently held in Brussels the members present voted for me to be the President of HOPE for the next two-year period.

It is a great honour for me. I'm fully aware of the responsibility you have entrusted me with.

Soon we will enter a New Year. Perhaps it is a good time to see who and where we are as members of HOPE. In Europe there are countries to which we need to strengthen our links. Already now we have new contacts in Poland and Hungary. We welcome the members that have found their way to HOPE via our web-site ([www.connect-to-hope.org](http://www.connect-to-hope.org)) Likewise teachers from Turkey have contacted us. In some other old member countries we have never been able to establish a firm link.

On the other hand we must keep up the spirit of HOPE in countries where we see a diminished number of members. (See the interesting map of the geographical spread of our membership under the work of atelier 16 on the web).

We have from early on links to more distant countries. Especially we must mention Armenia and Chile. In Australia and New Zealand teachers are interested to receive continuous information from us.

From some countries teachers ask HOPE to support them in their work to establish the rights of the sick child and youth to education

For the next two-year period we must work harder to become a solidarity organisation, sharpen the use of already existing instruments like our own Charter in order to have these rights implemented.

During the past two years the Bureau of HOPE has worked on issues that have to do with the future of our organisation.

There has been a discussion with members as to what should be the contents of the network of ateliers. Should we shift focus towards the needs of the teacher as has been suggested?

It does not mean moving away completely from the already established network of ateliers "Learning in Hospital." There was a great interest for at.9 "After Hospital" in Rome. Why did so many members participate? We never came to narrowing down the specific interests we have for taking up common work in this atelier. A lot of work is being done that could well form many ateliers. The follow-up of our pupils has indeed to do with our future work.

During the seminar in Brussels Michael Klemm showed us an overhead where he had listed diseases where a closer co-operation Hospital School – ordinary school is necessary. He had also filled in the special problems these pupils have to face. I'm sure the list can be made longer and also individualised for every hospital. This is an example of good practice, which we have promised to share.

Let us also go back to the article written by Tanja Becan in the Newsletter 1, 2004. In the article she enumerates a number of special teaching models for children and youth with different illnesses, which require different pedagogical methods. She mentions a teaching model for children on the dialysis department, on the rehabilitation department, oncology department and the different diagnosis within psychiatry and so on. What does it mean? Can we all help to fill in with practical examples? Again interesting work for an atelier. By and by we shall have handbooks filled with practical ideas that we have found useful; examples of good practice to share amongst us and offer to new teachers for sick children and youth. What are the skills we have developed? It is good for us to spend some time reflecting on this and expressing these skills in words. No one can do this better than us.

Elisabeth Cauchon is the co-ordinator of our network of ateliers. Please turn to her with ideas for our work together in ateliers.

Our organisation has economical problems. We have our web-site to develop and support. We have been offered a new web-site to be used for the in-service training of teachers of sick children and youth, The DU, the Digital University (see atelier 14 on our own web). When writing this we still don't know where to host it nor find money for its maintenance. The originators of the site are making efforts by individual members, by members of the Bureau. Co-ordinator of the atelier is Hans Courlander. If you have ideas, solutions please turn to him. This is one big point on the agenda of the Bureau of HOPE when we meet in January 2005.

Money makes the world go round. Unfortunately this is true for our organisation as well. Finding money for a new project to finance our meetings, seminars and congresses is another task for the Board.

In Brussels old members of the bureau left, new members came in. It is sad to say goodbye and a pleasure to say hello. Working together also develops friendship. Olga, Riitta and Michael this is not a complete goodbye. We shall go on seeing each other outside of Bureau work. It means however thank you for all your hard work. An organisation must move on and find new members to take over. Welcome to the new members of the Board Paula Hicks, Ireland, Paul Cartier, Germany, Michele Capurso, and Italy. Among them they share a vast experience of teaching sick children and youth, training of teachers and IT-expertise. They will all contribute to the development of HOPE.

Members, Committee Members and Bureau Members we all left Brussels we a deepened understanding of what it means to be a responsible member of an organisation. When we meet again in London 2006 there will be more members to step down from the Bureau. Thus we must already now be on the alert for new candidates. The former Bureau asked several times the Committee and members to find candidates. It is the task of the Committee to find and suggest new candidates. There were no suggestions.

According to our internal regulations at least 2/3 of the members of the Board of Directors must be teachers working with sick children. So please look around, acknowledge the organisational competence of your colleagues, encourage the ones you know will do a good job to accept to be candidates for the Board! Those of you who are asked; don't say; I'm not good enough for the job HOPE as an organisation can't afford such an answer.

Listening is the code word for our work together. If we shall grow as an organisation there must be open channels and mutual respect between the Members, the Committee and the Bureau.

We must also thank Christian and the Belgian association for a successful seminar. Not only did we listen to interesting lectures. We were also generously treated.

To Christian I wish to say to thank you for your years as President of HOPE. We have learnt to know you as a good organiser and financier but also and not to forget as a man with a good heart. You will still go on working within the Bureau of HOPE. This gives continuity to our work. Coming after you will not be easy. I will do my best. This is what I promise for myself. At the same time it feels OK to say so as I know that I am part of a good team. Once again thank you for your confidence.

Finally have a relaxing vacation and all the best wishes for the New Year!

Gerd (Mrs) Falk-Schalk

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