

Abstract No. 1.7 Tuesday 5th September 2017 at 12:00-12:45

Title: Dreaming about an accessible life

Presenter: Eric van Heuvelen, Bartimeus Institute for the visually impaired,
 The Netherlands
Co-presenters: Ilse Oosterhuis

Main focus: Both research and practice, Both congenital and acquired deafblindness

Abstract: For Deafblind people it is very difficult to find the right aids: aids for blind or visually impaired people are often not applicable to them. Also many aids specific developed for deaf and hard-of-hearing people are difficult to use by them. Especially if combining of these aids is necessary then these aids turns out to be difficult to connect or aren't able to work together. Furthermore, the specific combined disability "deaf blindness" needs specific tools which can realize and ensure accessibility. Increasingly, these problems and questions about accessibility were heard more and more at the Bartiméus Institute and this has led to an unique approach:

Within small groups of deaf-blind people brainstorming sessions are held. To them was asked to indicate which (practical) problems they run into and specially, for which of those problems (as far as known by them) are no solutions available. For this there were no limits: everything could be brought up for discussion!

In these sessions, many problems were mentioned and this was the starting point of finding solutions, often by thinking "out of the box".

Thereby the Deafblind people were actively involved and were also part of development pathways and test panels. The desire to be able to use a database in which aids for DeafBlind are reflected also has been realized. In the setting up of this database and also in its management, deafblind people are actively involved.

In the workshop we want to tell you about the way we started up the brainstorming sessions. We want to discuss about the problem which were mentioned during those sessions and the way we worked (and still are working) on solutions. Also we want to exchange the experience of participating Deafblind people in this process.

Finally we will give attention to the realization of the developed database and in which way the Deafblind people have participated.

All the mentioned developments should eventually lead to an accessible life: a dream come true!