

Zagreb, Croatia, 12/15/2013

Subject: Study visit to Ljubljana-University Rehabilitation Institute, Republic of Slovenia

University Rehabilitation Institute of Republic of Slovenia [http://www.ir-rs.si/sl/-](http://www.ir-rs.si/sl/-URI)URI Soča was a host for twelve representatives of all four partner institutions involved in the project ICT-AAC (29th November 2013). Three speech and language pathologists (Nena Vovk, Maja Ogrin i Barbara Korošec) who work within the Children's Unit or within the Unit for rehabilitation of patients who suffered brain damage presented their use of Augmentative and Alternative Communication. The presentation had three main points important for the use of AAC: a) well organized interdisciplinary team, b) concept of individuality and multimodality, c) well established collaboration with (pre)school institutions. Within the Institute 60% of patients are the patients with cerebral palsy. Some of the patients come on therapy session, others are hospitalized for some time in the Institute together with parents (the accommodation is secured for 200 patients). The speech and language pathologists have emphasized that persons with complex communication needs are a heterogeneous group. Therefore, it is important to observe a person in order to define his/hers communication needs and then choose a communication aid. They often create individual solutions for a particular person like activation of switches by moving head left or right; activation of acoustic toy with eye gaze; design of smaller symbols for left hand which is "better", and little for the right hand which is less motorically able. They often combine low-tech and high-tech devices. The collaboration with other institutions includes contacts with the team from (pre)school which comes to URI in order to meet a child or a pupil. On the other hand, representatives of URI often visit schools in order to follow the child's improvement or counsel about further steps. It is interesting that the state financially covers the purchase of (high-tech) devices which URI professionals listed as necessary for a person's communication tool.

On behalf of the ICT-AAC team we would like to thank to all the staff in URI Soča for hospitality, video clips they have prepared for us as well as for getting insight on their rich clinical experience in the use of the AAC.

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/ERF team leader/



Examples of acoustic toys which are activated through switches



Demonstration of various AAC tools



Group photograph in front of the URI Soča