

## **The development of Conductive Education in Germany**

Phoenix GmbH, Bundesverband der Konduktoren e.V.

### **The early view of disability in Germany**

After World War II, disabled people either lived at home with their families or – especial multi-disabled people - in care facilities. Only few centres for therapy and special educational needs existed.

In West Germany, engaged parents founded local associations to help each other and offer free time activities to afford a bit participation for their children. 1959 the *Federal Association for People with Motor and Multi Disorders (bvkm)* was founded.

Up to the 1970s began to spear the view, that also multi disabled children can take part in educational and therapeutic settings. Special schools for multi disabled children were opened. New professions of the special pedagogic were established for different target groups.

Training as well as therapy was carried out by different experts in separate, additive training units. A complex education for all needs of the personality from a single source was not available.

### **First German contact with Conductive Education**

#### **“The historical development since the 1960s until the 1990s**

The German contact with the Petö Institute in Budapest also started in the early 1960s. Following visits to the Institute from professionals of the health and education sector, several descriptions about the practical work in Budapest were published in mostly medical specialist periodicals (Klein, 1962; Hartwig, 1962; Eckhard, 1964; Lehnhardt 1965; Ungvari and Schmidt, 1967). Altogether, the authors showed very positive reactions about their observations. Concerning the upbringing of people with motor disorders in Germany, this new system was viewed as an inspiration for improving the own therapeutic practice (Ungvari and Schmidt, 1967). A copy of the Hungarian Institute in Germany was recommended as desirable, but impracticable (Eckhardt, 1964). The conductor profession and particularly its orientation towards practice (Lehnhardt, 1965) evoked positive reactions throughout and it was seen as an economical solution avoiding difficulties of the co-ordination of various professions (Eckhardt, 1964). These early reports aroused only little academic interest (Kressin, 1971) and Conductive Education stayed rather unnoticed until the 1980s by the people concerned.

Since the mid-1980s, when Conductive Education became more known by parents of children with motor disorders, particularly through the media, and a huge interest in the Petö Institute began to build up. It was the start of a therapy tourism to the Institute and in the following years, the Germans represented the majority of its international clientele (Balogh and Horváth, 1998). Despite the geographical distance, many parents chose Conductive Education as an alternative, but an urgent demand arose for the availability of Conductive Education nearby, in Germany. Taking a parent's perspective, Ákos and Ákos (1989, p.194) stated, “one cannot wait for a trained conductor” and pleaded for a copy of the Hungarian Institute in Germany. However, the problem of financing and the availability of sufficient

amount of conductors seemed to be “insurmountable”. A parental experience about the situation of Conductive Education in Germany in the late 1980s was characterised by rejections by health and education organisations due to fear of the new competitive system from Hungary (Ákos and Ákos, 1989).” (p.7-8)

First publications from the 1960s informed about the holistic development of Conductive Education according to András Petö. It was a completely new side of view to develop, teach and support children and adults for active participation in daily living.

The interest of parents of motor disabled children grew and many families looked at the Petö Institut in Budapest for help.

1985 visited Karin Weber, professor of University of Siegen, the Petö Institute and then carried out a study about CE. It was first clinical pilot study from 1990 until 1992, with Prof. K. Weber as a scientific collaborator and Dr. M. Rochel in the Taunusklinik Falkenstein/Königstein.

### The development of Conductive Education in Germany since the 1990s

In the 1990s, Conductive Education spread in Germany through word of mouth and the printed media and parallel to this, the scientific and professional discussion of Conductive Education increased. The further development of Conductive Education in Germany from the 1990s until today may be characterised by two lines – the parent initiatives and the professional initiatives.

Organized by Beate Höß-Zenker Professor Weber offered also 1990 the first workshop on Conductive Education for specialists at Pfennigparade in Munich and offered a further training in Conductive Education for specialists.

Up to the 1990 were founded parents’ association like Schritt-für-Schritt e.V. in Hamburg and FortSchritt Associations in Starnberg by Munich and in other cities. This associations provided summer camps since 1992 and employed .conductors and cooperated with the Petö Institut for projects and camps. Conductive Education with the Quadt family as Dr. Ann Katrin Kühnemann's guest on Bavarian television causes a sensation and 1994 opened the first conductive daily care group in Starnberg. 1998 founded the *FortSchritt* Associations which was spread in all Germany the *Federal FortSchritt Association* for better network and supporting each other.

Also the conductors in Germany wished a better networking, quality insurance and recognition for the Conductive Education and for the profession of conductors. In October 1998 met up to 50 conductors in Nuremberg and founded the *Federal Association of Conductors working in Germany* (Bundesverband der in Deutschland tätigen Konduktoren e.V.). It was the first professional association for conductors in Europa after the Hungarian professional association (Magyar Konduktorok Szövetsége) which was founded in 1992.

The German association is member of the Hungarian professional association and works in network with them.

Founding of the *Committee of Experts for CE in the Federal Association for multi- and motor disabled People* (Bundesverband für körper- und mehrfachbehinderte Menschen e.V., bvkm) in 2007

2010: New foundation of the *Federal Association FortSchritt to a Federal Association for Conductive Education according to Petö* (bkf). (Bundesverband Konduktive Förderung nach Petö e.V.) as a federal umbrella organization for CE in Germany.

### Integration of Conductive Education in the school and rehabilitation system

In 1995 launched Conductive Education in the *Foundation Pfennigparade* in Munich with children and 3 staff members, and also in Nuremberg and other cities in cooperation with the Petö Institut. One year later opened the 1st conductive school classes in the Pfennigparade in Munich and long term and follow-up projects were realized between 1996 and 1999.

The conductive school classes had success and the Bavarian Ministry of Culture provided and supported a pilot project at five conductive schools in Munich (Pfennigparade and Landesschule) , Nuremberg, Würzburg and Kempten for physically impaired children from 1997-2000, (Staatsinstitut für Schulpädagogik und Bildungsforschung, <http://www.isb.bayern.de>)

Scientific steering of CE in an integrative partner-school-class of the School for Special Education Aschau in the primary school at Rohrdorf, Prof. R. Lelgemann, University of Würzburg, (2005-2009)

Pfennigparade opens 2004 in a new building with special conductive design and architecture the 1st Conductive Education centre, Phoenix GmbH. The centre has its own conductive primary school and secondary school and conductive residential school in Munich. Since 2007 the Phoenix Conductive Centre is awarded the Quality Price by the German Federal Association of Private Offerers of Social Services (bpa) and is certified according to the EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management); it now comprises 120 children and 90 staff members

### Training

In 2000 Pfennigparade launched the 1st further training programme for qualification as a conductor specialised in remedial education and therapy in collaboration with the Bavarian ministries of Education and Social Affairs. The curriculum is based on the Petö Instituts Curriculum as well as on the results of Comenius Project 2000 – 2003. The further training is led by Dr. A. Baumann, M. Stelczerne-Oberszt and B. Höß-Zenker, international speakers are invited. This training for teachers, educators and therapists made possible to establish conductive education and their elements in public schools, kindergartens, therapy centres and facilities.

Since 2010 an university training is planned but could not be realised yet. In collaboration with Petö College, Vienna University and Nuremberg College in 2012 first steps for a BA with conductive contents are made.

German conductor training references: [www.phoenix-kf.de](http://www.phoenix-kf.de)

## European Networking

The European COMENIUS Project (2000 –2003) for developing a European curriculum for conductor training with Norway, England, Austria and Germany

Founding of the European Conductive Association (ECA) in 2004 in Budapest, initiated by Austria, Germany, Hungary, England and Sweden, as an European umbrella organisation of the national professional associations.

## Financing and recognition

Until 2005 there was hope to get financing for CE through the Germany health insurance system, but also through recognition by the Ministry of Culture and the integration of CE in the school system.

2005, after the publication of a study by the Munich Child's Centre and the VdAK in Munich, the Federal Commission of Doctors and Health Insurance Companies (Gemeinsamer Bundesausschuss der Ärzte und Krankenkassen, GBA) decided that CE will not be paid by the health insurance system.

CE can be financed by the social care system in daily care groups and at the request of individual.

## Present

There are today 60 institutions, clinics, schools and associations working with Conductive Education and developing children, teenagers and adults in Germany. In Germany works more the 100 conductors, 70 pedagogic-therapeutic-conductors and also BA Conductors trained in England and Academic-Multitherapeutic-Conductors trained in Austria. Conductors work in homogeny conductor teams, in multi- and interdisciplinary teams but also as freelance provider.

There is an active network for service provider and the professional association to change experiences in the field of practice, financing and low supporting by the *Federal Association for Conductive Education according Petö (bkf)*.

Since 2000 every two years takes place a CE congress provided by the professional association of Conductors and a service provider for CE.

Pfennigparade will offer the first conductive workshop group for adults in 2012.

In 2013 the World Congress on Conductive Education will takes place in Munich in Germany.

Thanks to the continuous rise in interest on the part of parents, educators and therapists, thanks to the fact that further education in conductive education is now available and that facilities are gradually being established, teams were able to form, which in the meantime have come to form small conductive units in their respective facilities.

These units have achieved very diverse integration of conductive contents in their concepts of therapy and remedial education. Meanwhile conductors are working also in inclusive settings in kindergarten and schools.

To establish CE and the profession of conductors in Germany there are discussions with Universities for a German conductor training in cooperation with the Petö Institut in Budapest.

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## Associations in Germany

*Federal Association for multi- and motor disabled People*

[www.bvkm.de](http://www.bvkm.de)

*Federal Association of Conductors working in Germany*

[www.konduktorenverband.de](http://www.konduktorenverband.de)

*Federal Association for Conductive Education according Petö*

[www.bkf-petoe.de](http://www.bkf-petoe.de)

*European Conductive Association*

[www.conductiveeducation.eu](http://www.conductiveeducation.eu)