

GENESIS¹¹

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Schenker, Rony (2016): <i>Genesis</i> . Birmingham (England): Conductive Education Press. ISBN 978-1-36-679717-9

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The foreword is written by Norman Perrin a dedicated parent who became Honorary Conductor in 2013. The designation of Honorary Conductors Award is to appreciate the work of non-conductors in the field who deserve a wider and more formal recognition. Contribution to the development of Conductive Education is considered by the IPA Nominating Committee as one of the criteria while the final decision is decided by the authorized Senate of Andras Petó Institute of Conductive Education and College for Conductor Training. The celebration of Honorary Conductors happens every 3 years when the World Congress on Conductive Education takes place.

The editor of the book is *Rony Schenker* who also had received this honourable title in 2007. She is originally a qualified occupational therapist, but she was one of the first health professionals who recognised early that something great was happening in Hungary during the time when the country was behind the Iron Curtain. She participated in the first international course organised by the Petó Institute. When Tsad Kadima the Israel Model of

¹¹ The editorial board does not take any responsibility for the English of the papers. Indeed, we made some slight changes but wanted to keep the style of the authors.

Conductive Education came into exist she served as a Professional Director of the Association. Recently, she has been serving as the Academic Director of the Association and the head of the Centre for the Israeli Centre of Conductive Education and Cerebral Palsy Studies.

The topic of the book is how Conductive Education was brought to Israel. Qualitative research was used to collect data for this book. Twelve persons were interviewed including family members and professionals. Professor Asher Shkedi from Hebrew University's School of Education was a key figure in the research process because during his course final year conductor students became familiar with the paradigm of qualitative research methodology. The material of the interviews were analysed with the help of the conductor students as their final project in 2015.

The topic is relevant because recently a very limited number of publication is available on Conductive Education in English. What makes this book even more special is that it gives a proper documentation on how CE was adopted successfully outside Hungary in a very enjoyable narrative style. Tsad Kadima like a seed it was planted and grew year by year and became a "beautiful tree" which has its own value, but could also preserve the basic essence of Conductive Education practised in Hungary.

The book is divided into three major parts. The first part contains the introduction, Tsad Kadima and the Conductive Education approach, and the interviews with the founding generation. The second part is divided into twelve subchapters including the first steps, impressions about Hungary and The Pető Institute, early frameworks of activity in Israel in the spirit of Conductive Education, then differences between Conductive Education at Tsad Kadima and at the Pető Institute and finally facing forward to the future. The final part contains only two subchapter: Telling our story and Envoi.

After the structure was drafted let me talk about the major topics discussed in the book. Similarly to other foreign countries the story of Tsad Kadima began with the film titled *Standing up for Joe* too. Thanks to this film the Hungarian Conductive Education approach was the full glare of publicity therefore more and more people came to The Pető Institute where it was practised in order to get to know more about it. Tsad Kadima the Israeli Association for Conductive Education was established in 1987. Today, the conductor specialism can be acquired at the Centre for Conductive Education and Cerebral Palsy Studies that is run in conjunction with the Levinsky College of Education in Tel-Aviv and the András Pető College in Budapest. Since the founding of the Association more than eighty Israeli conductors have been trained which is the second largest number after Hungary. Israeli conductors work in a trans-disciplinary model with other health professionals such as occupational therapists. Cerebral Palsy is a severe condition which affecting people through life therefore Tsad Kadima offers various services from infancy to adulthood. At the beginning it was just a small organisation but up to the present day it has become a dominant force of the educational- rehabilitative system of Israel. The other important role of the Association is to give a platform for professional discourse: organising international conferences, seminars, researches.

In chapter 4 titled *Beginning the journey* parents talked about the shock when the doctor diagnosed their child with CP and also the different attitudes they experienced within the family. For example a grandmother always said to his grandson *Matan* until she passed away: "We should only see him walking on his own two feet." (Schenker, 2016.21.p.) Because she could not come to terms with the situation. Yes, this is true a disabled person changes everything even the relationships of family members with each other. *Udi Lion* a father mentioned the tendency for fathers to run away and high percentage of divorce. In my opinion for a man it is more difficult to accept the situation because it hurts his ego, then usually a mother has a more intimate relationship with her child. A mother rather focus on what she

should do to solve the problem, or to reach some improvements. The situation was the same in my own family. My mother is still looking for alternatives up to the present day in order to reach some further advancements. She never gives up the hope that I can be even better than I was on the previous day. She always says to me: "Every day is a new hope, since you were born and you are my treasure."

In chapter 6 titled *Initial impressions of the Pető Institute and Hungary* Interviewees shared their first impressions about Hungary. The challenges they had to face up to for instance, travelling from Israel to Budapest cultural and language differences. At that time there were no diplomatic relations and no direct flights so first they went to Vienna then took a train to Hungary. The Institute's staff could not speak English only Hungarian and they found the rules very strict for example carriages were not allowed to use there. They left behind everything, family, jobs, they just took the chance in the hope this could make their children more independent, more mobile. On the contrary, they found so much joy on daily basis while they were observing the progress in their children's mobility, not to mention in their motivation. As *Rony Schenker* viewed the sharpest contrast was: "... in Israel they were not given the opportunity to tap all their capabilities. Our belief in the child's ability to change was more limited. Also on the level of anticipation. I think that conductive revolution was first of all the perception or the faith that we have in the children's potential for change."(Schenker, 2016.45.p.) I completely agree with her words because first the child must get an extrinsic motivation from conductors or parents, then it slowly transforms into an intrinsic motivation as soon as she starts to believe in herself. In the Institute nobody judges you but rather emphasizes what you can do instead of repeating all the time your weaknesses and missing abilities. This acceptance gave me strength during my school years where I met teachers who could not understand the importance of motivation and positive encouragement. "You can do it!" from my conductor I can still hear the words of cheer and she always could give me huge wings and helped me to survive the rest of the week in school.

The idea of changing was well received among people from Israel but there were regulations they disliked and wanted to modify. One of them was aside from conductors, no other professionals were engaged in the rehabilitation of the child. The other was the approach for not adopting the environment to the child but adopting the child to the environment. Because of this concept the minimal use of assistive devices were allowed. They wanted more flexibility and greater role for parents because at that time most of the Hungarian children lived in a dormitory therefore parents were not taking part in the children's therapy. The third was how they thought about inclusion which was described in chapter 13 titled *Inclusion into the regular educational system*. This was one of the fundamental principles by Tsad Kadima: inclusion as a process and not as placement.

In the 15 chapter titled *Facing forward* the reader gets a picture about their vision of the future. I truly liked the question by the conductor *Naomi Rotem*. "What about young adults with CP, what about the older ones?" This is my question too. We need further treatment because with ageing our conditions decreasing day after day but it seems nobody hears our calling for help. In the future professionals who work in Conductive Education Centres really should come up with some solutions, if they consider Conductive Education as a lifestyle from infancy to adulthood.

I would like to recommend this book for parents and therapists. I hope the book review will arise your interest.