

# The Ida Institute

## is shrinking the globe



The Ida Institute team (l-r) Communication Specialist Sharmi Albrechtsen, Director Lise Lotte Bundesen, Anthropologist Kirsten Lauritsen, Coordinator Anne Hedvig Westenholz and Anthropologist Hans Henrik Philipsen.

**Founded in 2008, the Ida Institute is seeking better understanding of the human dynamics associated with hearing loss. In just twelve months Director Lise Lotte Bundesen has taken a concept funded by the Oticon Foundation and established an independent institute with staff, an advisory board, faculty members, an interactive website and has held their first seminars.**

Lise Lotte Bundesen is brimming with enthusiasm and optimism and who wouldn't be when you have achieved what she has in the last year. In September 2007, she was hired to establish an educational institute, with the aim of assisting hearing care professionals. However, this is about more than technology, as Lise Lotte says, "Everybody agrees that technology has made enormous advances over the years, which means a lot more people are taking advantage of these advances. Technology is great so there must be other things stopping people from getting the help that they need". The Ida Institute's mission is to 'foster better understanding of the human dynamics associated with hearing loss'. Through their

work, the institute will be exploring other factors that will help people with hearing loss, "These aspects might be psychological, sociological, cultural or anthropological", Lise Lotte explained.

### ■ ■ Independent Thinking

To look at hearing loss, its impact and solutions, Lise Lotte has hired a staff of six with a wide variety of experience. She said, "If you want to look at things differently then you have to try to get other types of people, people with different backgrounds that you don't normally speak to". Therefore, the team at the institute includes two anthropologists and a communications specialist. As Director of the Institute, Lise

**“We have made a completely different structure for the seminars.”**



Lise Lotte Bundesen, Director of the Ida Institute.

Lotte's background is primarily in business and she applies her critical management skills to ensuring the Institute's overall organization performance.

Although the Oticon Foundation provided the initial funding, as of July 2008, the Ida Institute became an independent non-profit organisation. With DKK40 million in the bank, the institute should not have to worry too soon about seeking further funding.

### Independent Advisors

To assist the institute in achieving their mission, an advisory board has been formed. A group of renowned professors and researchers have, "Taken a leap of faith to support the new venture", for which Lise Lotte is truly grateful. She continued, "It was important for us to create credibility and I think we have started that with our advisory board members". Dr. Louise Hickson is Board Chairman and Dr. Lucille Beck is



The Ida Institute head office.

Board Co-chairman. Six others from the USA, UK, Denmark, Holland and Australia join them. As well as advising on faculty members and topics, content and structure for the seminars, the board will also offer support in the dissemination of information and tools that are developed by the Institute. Alongside the advisory board are faculty members, who will help develop and participate in the seminars in which their expertise can provide the most value. New faculty members are recruited to provide needed expertise as seminar topics change. The faculty is one of the ways that the Ida institute strives to achieve a collaborative approach to its work. Once again, the people chosen are from diverse fields.

### A multi-cultural, multi-faceted approach

One of the primary activities of the institute is seminars. Every year the Ida Institute, in collaboration with the advisory board, will select two topics. There will then be three seminars on each topic. This is where the faculty steps in to help develop and conduct the seminars. The seminars take place over three days at the institute head quarters in Denmark. The first topic chosen was 'Defining Hearing'. Lise Lotte said, "Since we will be working with the process of the patient journey, we thought we had better start with that at the beginning, by



defining hearing". The initial seminar on Defining Hearing took place in September 2008 with subsequent days in January and February of 2009. "We have made a completely different structure for the seminars," Lise Lotte explained. "People do



Limiting numbers of participants at each seminar, ensures people feel comfortable to share thoughts and ideas.

**"The Ida Institute strives to recruit respected experts in diverse disciplines."**

### ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

The Ida Institute advisory board consists of leading researchers, educators and practitioners in audiology and anthropology. They will serve a two-year term, during which they advise the institute on seminar topics and help with recruiting faculty members and experts to participate in events. Here is the full list of current advisory board members

- Lucille B. Beck, Ph.D. Director of Audiology and Speech Pathology Service Department of Veterans Affairs
- Adrian Davis, OBE, Director, MRC Hearing and Communications Group University of Manchester
- Claus Elberling, Ph.D. Senior Consultant Oticon Foundation

- David Fabry, Ph.D. Chief of Audiology University of Miami
- Louise Hickson, Ph.D. Professor of Audiology Co-Director, Communication Disability Centre The University of Queensland
- Sophia E. Kramer Ph.D. Psychologist/Senior Researcher, Department of ENT/ Audiology, EMGO Institute VU University Medical Center, Amsterdam
- Robert Sweetow, Ph.D. Professor of Otolaryngology Director of Audiology University of California, San Francisco
- Tine Tjørnhøj-Thomsen, Ph.D. Associate Professor Department of Anthropology University of Copenhagen ■

## First Faculty Members

The Ida Institute strives to recruit respected experts in diverse disciplines and from a variety of organizations, who will work to develop educational material and conduct the international seminars. Each seminar series will have a group of faculty members – existing or newly recruited – who can provide the expertise needed to best address the seminar topic. The faculty members for the first seminars are:

- Harvey Abrams. Director of Research at the Army Audiology and Speech Center, Washington
- Tine Tjornhoj-Thomsen. Associate professor at the Department of Anthropology, University of Copenhagen
- Christine DePlacido. Senior lecturer and program leader for the Audiology Department at Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh
- Kristina English. Associate professor at the University of Akron

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“WHATEVER GOOD IDEAS PEOPLE COME UP WITH, WE WILL PRIORITISE.”

not come along, and we lecture them. We realised that if you want to affect change you have to get people to buy into and take responsibility”. The seminars, therefore, take on a collaborative approach to the topics. Yes, there are a few lectures, but the focus is very much on group work.

Lise Lotte said of the different nationalities that were represented at the first seminar, “I was a little worried about 13 different nationalities but it turned out to be the greatest thing that we did. People were very enthusiastic about getting to know people in the same profession from different countries. They were finding out that, of course, there are differences such as training, but that there are enormous similarities in the patient situation; the issues are the same everywhere”. A primary requirement to help with communication in such a small seminar group is that participants must be able to speak and understand English.

With 20 participants, and a maximum limit of 25 at future seminars, participants are in an environment where they are encouraged to take a dynamic role in events. One way people

## How can I sign up for a future seminar?

● Anybody can apply to attend an Ida Institute seminar; however, you do need to register as a member of My Ida on the website. You are not required to pay to attend these events as the Institute provides educational stipends for all accepted participants. Because of the limited numbers involved, you can apply to attend, but you will have to be invited by the Institute for a specific seminar. The next series of seminars take place in May, August and September and will be on the subject of motivation and awareness. ●



Thirteen nationalities were represented at the first seminar.

actively connect is through a theatre group. This group involved participants in role-play of the different situations they might encounter in a clinic. Lise Lotte said of this, “Role-play is an eye-opening thing. You are used to being the audiologist perhaps with a difficult client or next of kin, but if you are the one actually being that difficult client, you see other ways of looking at things”. Anthropologists at the Institute have also been out to clinics and have recorded what takes place. These videos are used as a tool at the seminars. Workshops, group discussion and individual reflection are all key elements over the three days.

Lise Lotte commented about the small numbers invited to the seminars, “We want people to feel free to share their worries or wonders. You should feel comfortable when you do this”. An additional benefit to this is that people feel like they have connected with fellow professionals and that they can offer each other peer support. Lise Lotte explained



Kristina English, faculty member leading a session at the first seminar.

that one of the things that came out of the first seminar was that audiology can sometimes be a lonely profession. One participant commented after the seminar, “You have actually shrunk the globe for us”. Slowly a network is building from the seminars as participants have exclusive access to a part on the new Ida Institute website where they can keep in touch after the events.

## ■ ■ Building a community

The website [www.idainstitute.dk](http://www.idainstitute.dk) will be used to disseminate information to those that attended the seminar, but also for those who were not able to be there lectures and videos will be available to download. Whatever comes out of the seminars, whatever results are achieved, everything will be on the website. There is a blog that participants from the first seminar are writing and they actively want to contribute to future seminars. Lise Lotte said, “This is what we are hoping to create – a community, a place where you can go with your ideas, share them and work on them with others”. Everybody is encouraged to become an active member by joining My Ida on the website.

## ■ ■ Controlling the possibilities

An exciting aspect of this new institute is the potential ideas and projects. Lise Lotte said, “We do not know what tools we will be developing yet, as these depend on what comes out of each seminar”. There will be product development as there are many possibilities. The seminars currently run over three days, and another possibility here is to consolidate to one day and travel around with it. There are language options to look into and teaching materials are likely. Lise Lotte continued, “We want to be flexible. Whatever good ideas people come up with, we will prioritise. We have many ideas but we are very conscious that that we have to choose very carefully what we do. It is a luxury situation to have so much to choose from”.

Victoria Adshead

Photos: The Ida Institute