

**The Impact of the IFLA Guidelines for Library Services to Persons with Dyslexia:
Revised and extended**

“The dyslexia friendly library”

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Abstract:

Guidelines for Library Services to Persons with Dyslexia – Revised and extended.

How the IFLA standard for Library Services to Persons with Dyslexia have impacted, both within and beyond the IFLA community with two examples from Denmark and Sweden.

We will go into how to keep the IFLA guidelines updated? Maintaining the digital version of the Good Practises and the Knowledge Base.

And two examples of their impact. A national project based on the guidelines was started in Denmark in 2017. 25% of Danish libraries participated. And how the Library in Lerum, Sweden, has used the guidelines to develop new services to people with dyslexia.

Keyword: IFLA Guidelines for Library Services to Persons with Dyslexia, dyslexia, Library Services to People with Special Needs Section LSN, study circle, checklist, library staff, marketing, advisory user council

How to keep the guidelines updated?

Maintaining the digital version of the Good Practices and the Knowledge Base.

Library Services to People with Special Needs (LSN) and Libraries Serving Persons with Print Disabilities (LPD) worked together to revise and enlarge the former guidelines. The aim was to create a document that could be consulted by professionals in the library world and a document that could be used by library staff to find ideas, examples and suggestions on how to recognize library users with dyslexia, how to approach them and how to improve library services accordingly. The guidelines also provide a checklist of tips and ideas, an overview of good practices and a knowledge base.

One of the challenges of the printed guidelines are to keep them updated – as soon as they are published some of the information will be outdated. Therefore, the Good Practices and Knowledge Base are updated regularly and made accessible on the LSN webpage (<https://www.ifla.org/publications/node/9457?og=50>). Once a year library staff and other professionals within the dyslexia area are encouraged to share new information. We welcome good practices from all over the world and incorporate ideas, links, projects and new knowledge in the next update of the guidelines. Social medias are one of the means to achieve this as well as personal contacts, and the IFLA-List.

In the same process all links are checked, and outdated information deleted.

We will now give two examples of how the guidelines were used in Denmark and Sweden

National impact - Denmark

In 2017 a grant was given by the Danish ministry of culture and castles, to better the Library services to people with dyslexia. The project runs in 2017 and 2018. 25% of Danish libraries is participating in the project.

The project centers around the 3 main points of the guidelines, Space & presentation, Library staff & partnerships and Marketing.

The participating libraries gets a kit containing of instructions for making the space more accessible to people with dyslexia, a graphic kit containing posters, content for infoboards, postcards and graphic files to use on websites and social media. The whole staff in each library participates in a workshop, about the difficulties that people with dyslexia and how to make it easier for people with dyslexia to use the library.

In addition to the guidelines, each library has conducted interviews with local library user with dyslexia, to find out what areas in their library is especially difficult. In addition, the staff of each library has participated in a survey about what tools and information they feel they need to give better service.

Local impact – Lerum Sweden

Based on the guidelines the library in Lerum has begun its development to a “dyslexia friendly library”.

Library staff & Partnership.

There will be no dyslexia friendly library without all the staff being involved and well educated. Both about what dyslexia is and also what the library can offer. Some of the staff makes a special team to support users with dyslexia.

A special service “Your personal librarian” makes it easier for the customers to use the library. They have a well-known person contact.

Good partnership is necessary to maintain. Partners can be dyslexia associations, special education teachers, employment agency, the users themselves just to mention some.

Space & Presentation

In Lerum library there is a special section ” To Read in Different Ways” where all adapted media such as Easy-to -read, books with large print, talking books, Braille and material about dyslexia are collected. This section is for adults. Customers don`t have to search in the hole library to find their material. In that section dyslexia lectures and Dyslexia Drop in! are arranged.

The information desk is close to the section “To Read in Different Way”. The library webpage presents what to do and what to find in the library for persons with disabilities.

Marketing

The library is often perceived as a scary place with all the books, words and problems finding the desired book. That might be one of the reasons why persons with dyslexia not are the most common visitors. Therefore it` s important to go outside the library to talk about the service and make invitations to the library. In all contexts there are persons with dyslexia.

I will provide many examples of arrangement in the library. Together with the adult educational association study circles are organized for parents about helping and supporting their children with dyslexia. Reading – dog is a popular event for children with dyslexia. It it easy and relaxing to read to a dog. Regularly Technique Drop-in and Dyslexia Drop-in arranged without pre-registration. During the European Dyslexia Week the library have a great program. Lecturer are invited to talk in different subjects around dyslexia.

It is always important to know what opinion persons with dyslexia have about the library. An advisory user council have been organised for discussions, planning, experience and “give and take” meetings. The council also plan the European Dyslexia Week along with the library.

Leaflets, posters and all other printed information must be designed in a readable way.

The Guidelines

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Library Services to People with Special Needs (LSN) and Libraries Serving Persons with Print Disabilities (LPD) worked together to revise and enlarge the former guidelines. The aim was

to create a document that could be consulted by professionals in the library world and a document that could be used by library staff to find ideas, examples and suggestions on how to recognize library users with dyslexia, how to approach them and how to improve library services accordingly.

The guidelines also provide a checklist of tips and ideas, an overview of good practices and a knowledge base.

The checklist is an infographic list of useful topics. For translation to other languages ask LSN for an open file. It is possible to add local information to the checklist.

The Good Practices contain a list of several public and specialized libraries from several countries. The aim of the examples is not to be complete but to inspire.

The Knowledge Base is a small list of reliable and objective sources containing background information.

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In the same process all links are checked, and outdated information deleted.

The annual updating is also a valuable opportunity to draw attention to the Dyslexia Guidelines and the Checklist as well as the Good Practices and the Knowledge Base.

The guidelines have been translated into English, Spanish, Danish, Dutch, Norwegian and Swedish and the

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You can download the publications here:

<https://www.ifla.org/publications/node/9457?og=50>

Please share your great ideas with us. We welcome best practices from all over the world. Stay in touch with us and we will incorporate ideas, links, projects and new knowledge in the next update of the Knowledge Base and Good Practices.

You will find all the information you need here:

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National Impact

Marie Engberg Eiriksson

Standing Committee member IFLA section for Library Services to People with Special Needs

Make it easier – Making Libraries Accessible for People with Dyslexia – a national project

This project is based on the 2014 updated IFLA guidelines Library Services to People with Dyslexia. After having spent 2 years trying to promote the Guidelines to libraries in Denmark, but finding that very few librarians had read the guidelines and those that had, had implemented very little of the recommendations. Gladsaxe Public Libraries and the Regional Library of Vejle applied in 2017 for a grant, to make 10 libraries in 10 municipalities more dyslexia friendly.

The project cooperates with 10 public libraries, the Danish Dyslexia Association, The Danish Library Association, providers of Easy to read materials, lobby organisations, The Danish Easy to read News media and several local organisations.

In cooperation with the Danish Dyslexia Association and the National Library for People with Dyslexia a kit was created to be tested in 5 libraries in fall of 2017. The kit is based on the IFLA Guidelines for library services for people with dyslexia. True to the guidelines, we wanted to get input from people with dyslexia, about their preferences and reasons for using or not using the library or library services.

The staff in the 10 libraries interviewed local people with dyslexia walking through the library. The users gave input on wayfinding and signing, selection of materials, the reference interview and several other things. We got valuable input from each library.

The users gave valuable input on placement and selection of materials and also on way to make signage and posters dyslexia friendly.

Above all was interaction with the staff

For almost every user interviewed in the project, one thing was clear: the most important part of the library experience was the interaction with the staff.

Several users stressed, that people with dyslexia are different and might have different preferences in talking about dyslexia and also very different reasons for using the library. For them it was crucial that the staff be sensitive to the subject and to each users' preference.

One user described how she would wait for someone to be at the front desk who "looked patient" og "seemed like they would have time to guide her".

One user told that he would just walk up to the staff and say: I have dyslexia, can you help me with..." and that library staff would sometimes get flustered or confused with his directness.

One user described "not wanting the buffet just a burger", adding that library staff sometimes would scare her away with their enthusiasm.

In addition to the interviews, we did a survey of the needs of the library staff. What areas they felt like they lacked knowledge in and what kinds of tools would be useful for them in a reference situation.

The kit contained:

- Materials for promoting library services to people with dyslexia
- Content for social media and web
- Tools for the staff and instructions for making the library more dyslexia friendly
- A training session for all staff members with role playing and awareness training
- A webinar on different services, apps and programs

In the spring of 2018 the kit was evaluated and adapted and tested in the remaining 5 municipalities.

Results

All 10 libraries have implemented the kit. Evaluation shows users and staff in the 10 municipalities have been very pleased with the results of the project. The survey of the staff showed an increase in the percentage of staff thinking that they had suitable knowledge and tools to help people with dyslexia after the training.

The materials given to the libraries were hacked and used in different ways and settings. Most notably the 10 libraries have all started including people with dyslexia in the general discussion and development of new services or when making changes like for example new signage, marketing materials, programming etc. Not as projects specifically aimed at people with dyslexia, but as a part of many different library services. In this perspective the project has far exceeded the expectations of the impact.

Several new partners have showed up and wants to participate in the project. Other institutions, persons, projects and organisations.

We now also work with the Danish library e-book providers eReolen, the library e-learning developers e-kurser.nu, the developer of Danish reading and writing software MV Nordic.

The project has been broadened to include 25% of the Danish municipalities in the fall of 2018, and following that to be written in to the contract of the regional libraries as a part of their duties to the ministry of culture, making it possible to expand the project to every library in Denmark.

So far 35% of the Danish municipalities has signed up for participating in the programme, and we are working on a solution to be able to include all interested libraries.

Local Impact

Heidi Carlsson-Asplund Standing committee member of LSN.

“The Dyslexia Friendly Library”

The purpose of this presentation is to demonstrate the practical application of the IFLA Guidelines for Library Services to Persons with Dyslexia relevant to a public library in Sweden. It give examples and show their usefulness and value.

IFLA´s different sections produce valuable guidelines in several subjects. Many of them are unknown to Swedish librarians in general. It is a shame because the guidelines are useful tools in library development work.

The purpose of this presentation is to demonstrate the practical application of the IFLA Guidelines for Library Services to Persons with Dyslexia relevant to a public library in Sweden.

I will give examples from the IFLA Guidelines for Library Services to Persons with Dyslexia and show that they are useful and valuable. They provide help along the way to make your own library easier to use for persons with dyslexia. I use the checklist, the knowledge base, good practices from several libraries and ideas from the guidelines. The checklist are easy to use and follow. I will concentrate on these headlines: Space & Presentation, Library Staff & Partnerships and Marketing all headlines from the checklist.

Libraries is an arena for democracy, equality, freedom of information, freedom of expression, everyone's access to information, knowledge, education and fictional reading. The library are for everyone, but it is difficult for persons with dyslexia to understand the system of the library and how to use it. There is every reason to work actively for participation, "not to let anyone behind"

The Swedish Library Law prioritizes people with disabilities. Paragraph four in the Library Description (2013: 801) says "The libraries of the public library system shall pay particular attention to persons with disabilities, inter alia by offering literature and technical means to share information, based on their different needs and conditions."

The law and § 4 provide a great deal of support in developing the library in a dyslexia friendly way.

Between 5-8% of the population have dyslexia and 25% of the population in Sweden over the age of 16 can't understand the content of a newspaper. The reasons for this are many, including socioeconomic reasons not related to dyslexia.

The population in the municipality of Lerum is 40,000. Around 2,800 of them has dyslexia, according to the statistic. A significant amount.

Initially when developing the library you have to seek information on the subject dyslexia. What is written about it? What have others done before? What opinion do people with dyslexia have about how the library will be organized to suit them? As a start, many answers can be found in the guidelines.

These are the questions I began with many years ago in my work as a consultant advisor for library development in the region of Västra Götaland.

When searching on Google suddenly the IFLA Guidelines for Library Services to Persons with Dyslexia appeared. As a consultant advisor I had never before heard of the guidelines. I had not heard of IFLA's Library Services to People with Special Needs Section, LSN. A new world opened.

I want to mention that I lectured for librarians and consulting advisors in Sweden about the guidelines. To make awareness about the existence of the guidelines in several different topics, about IFLA and LSN.

What can your library do to support persons with dyslexia? Below in my presentation I give examples of how we work in Lerum following the guidelines.

Library staff & Partnership.

There will not be a dyslexia friendly library without all the staff being involved and well educated. Both about what dyslexia is and also what the library can offer. Some of the staff makes a special team for education, discussions and support to users with dyslexia. All the staff have had an education about dyslexia. And it will continue.

A special service "Your Personal Librarian" makes it easier for the customers to use the library. They know who to contact.

Good partnership is necessary to maintain. Partners can be dyslexia associations, special education teachers, employment agency, health care and the users themselves just to mention some.

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- During the European Dyslexia Week the library have a great program. Lecturer are invited to talk in different subjects around dyslexia.

It is always important to know what opinion persons with dyslexia have about the library.

- An advisory user council have been organised for discussions, planning, experience and "give and take" meetings. The council also plan the European Dyslexia Week along with the library.
- Leaflets, posters and all other printed information must be designed in a readable way. Many instructions can be found in the guidelines.

The library in Lerum has begun its development to a "dyslexia-friendly library". Lot is still to be done, but we are in progress.

Conclusion

The impact of the guidelines proves that there is much to gain with a more conscious political priority of efforts formulated in a national/local policy or strategy for the library.

Reading and literacy is central for the development of the community. A lot of international research shows that being able to read is paramount for the child's chances in life, and good literacy skills are necessary in a society based on written and multimodal physical and digital text. Language and literacy are developed throughout life and in interaction with other people. The libraries have an important role to play as both supplier of qualitative and varied media and materials but also increasingly as a place for activities and learning opportunities;

but libraries cannot stand alone with this effort. It is necessary to establish compulsory collaborations with local and professional partners. Poor language and reading development are associated with major losses for both the individual and for society. In the digital world where the spare time is digital for many people there is a need for a national strategy of reading to promote reading abilities and the joy of reading especially among children and young adults.

These are some of the thoughts Rolf Hapel, Head of Administration, Citizen Service and Libraries in Aarhus, Denmark has given about the future of public libraries in an article about reading and literacy (Danmarks Biblioteker 2018 (2), 17-26)

The Sustainable Development Goals of United Nations goal 4 (Quality Education): “Ensure inclusive and quality education and promote lifelong learning”, emphasizes and supports the importance of working on a national strategy of reading.

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

References

IFLA Guidelines for Library Services to Persons with Dyslexia - Revised and extended
https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/lsn/publications/guidelines-for-library-services-to-persons-with-dyslexia_2014.pdf