



IFLA Section
Library Services to
People with Special Needs

Library Services to People with Special Needs Section Newsletter November 2023

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1. Editorial

This issue of our newsletter takes us on a journey to the Netherlands, Croatia, Sudan, and Ethiopia.

The Netherlands. The LSN Section was quite active at the 88th IFLA Conference in Rotterdam. Our business meeting at the start of the conference focused on the intended name change of LSN to “Accessible and Inclusive Library Services”. LSN Chair Maela Rakočević Uvodić provides a report. Subsequently, we held the session “How can we make libraries accessible and welcoming for everyone?” Diego Anthoons, moderator of the session, gives us a brief summary of it. Lisa Krolak then tells us of a visit to De Schie prison in Rotterdam, which she organized herself, and of a poster presentation on the recently published “IFLA Guidelines for Library Services to Prisoners”. At the poster session, we also met Jelena Lešaja and Karolina Zlatar Radigović from the Libraries Serving Persons with Print Disabilities Section (LPD), whose poster “Voices behind Words!” won the Best Visual Impact Award.

Croatia. In September, the Croatian Library Association’s Commission for Library Services to Persons with Disabilities and Persons with Special Needs organized a round table that focused on services for people with reading difficulties who have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Maela Rakočević Uvodić reports.

Sudan. Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) of the American Library Association has announced Janet Lee, past Secretary of IFLA LSN, and Tegest Hailu, M.D., founder of the International Society for Better Health Access, are the recipients of one of two 2023 ETS Best Emerging Technology Application Awards for the Kindle Early Language Learning project, which serves children in the Hasheba Refugee Camp in Sudan. Janet Lee tells us about this project.

Ethiopia. To make their library more accessible, especially for students with impairments, the team of Haramaya University Library used a design thinking approach. In the course of re-imagining the library services, they introduced a “human library” service. Students with disabilities can now borrow “Professor Books”. Tilahun Shiferaw enlightens us about this new service.

We wish you good reading. Feel free to share our newsletter!

By Information Coordinator Corinna Haas

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2. WLIC 2023 Highlights

2.1 LSN Business Meeting

The IFLA World Library and Information Congress (WLIC) is a great opportunity to meet our colleagues in person, to network and discuss matters. Conference Business meetings are one of those opportunities but also an opportunity to have observers present in person at Section's and SIG's Business meetings that Library Services to People with Special Needs organized. Observers were called to attend the LSN Business meeting either in person or via Zoom through the IFLA-I mailing list. There was a need to hear our colleagues' thoughts about a Business meeting item, as well as providing a report on several Guidelines LSN is in process of writing.

At the meeting were present outgoing and incoming members of LSN in person and via Zoom followed by 21 observers from all over the world, and outgoing Division D Chair, Patrick Danowski. New LSN officers for the 2023-2025 were presented: Maela Rakočević Uvodić re-elected Chair, Corinna Haas, incoming information coordinator and Samira Zahra, incoming secretary. All four incoming LSN members were present in person and they had an opportunity to present themselves.

Progress in several Guidelines that LSN is working on were presented as follows:

- Guidelines for Library Services to Prisoners were published in February this year and are already translated into Arabic, Chinese, Spanish, and German with Italian, French and Portuguese in progress. Translation into other languages is welcomed and reports have indicated that the Guidelines are being put into practice in many areas.

- Guidelines for Accessible Libraries and Services for Everyone were presented at the LSN Session the same day that the Business meeting was held. The Guidelines were submitted to the IFLA review committee in mid-June and after receiving a decision or further comments, LSN hopes they will be published at the end of the year.
- Guidelines for Library Services to Displaced Persons are being re-edited after IFLA review committee's comments and advice. They will be sent off to a few impartial sections to ensure that the guidelines are clear and easily understandable.
- Guidelines for Library Services for People who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Deafblind due to unforeseen circumstances have been delayed.
- Guidelines for Library Services to People with Autism Spectrum Disorder were added to the LSN Action Plan 2021-2023. Miguel Rivera is leading this committee and has a working group of twelve people, five of whom are on the LSN committee. There are representatives from 5 continents, including researchers, librarians, users, people with autism spectrum, and parents.

The main item of the Meeting was the Section name change that is also a part of LSN Action plan 2021-2023. A short history of the LSN section was discussed as it reflects the necessity of the name change. The Section is one of the oldest sections dating back to 1931, first including people in hospitals but expanding to include nursing homes, other care facilities, people in prisons, people who are experiencing homelessness, people with physical disabilities, people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf blind, people with dyslexia, people with cognitive and mental disabilities. As new programs were acquired the Section name changed to reflect the populations it represented, and the terminology used at that time. The last name change occurred in 2008 to its current name. In 2021, as committee membership changed, it was noted that the term "special needs" had a negative connotation, and the consensus was that it was the right time to search for a new section name that reflected the true nature of the section, and the times in which we work. For the past year, the committee has tasked itself with recommending a name that reflects the committee's current reality and societal norms, both as a name and as an

acronym. LSN section focuses on activities to ensure libraries are inclusive and accessible to all people, regardless of their situation. Detailed reasons for the name change were presented in the [Newsletter: Library Services to People with Special Needs Section, February 2023](#). The name that was introduced to all present at the meeting was - Accessible and Inclusive Library Section. Discussion ensued about library vs. library services since not all institutions have libraries, but those institutions could provide library services. Ultimately it was recommended that the committee review the suggestion and perhaps reverse the order of the key words and replace 'library' with 'library services'. So, after the Standing Committee meeting in October and voting, it is assumed the new name LSN will submit to IFLA will be: Accessible and Inclusive Library Services. The main advantage of presenting and discussing the new name at the meeting was the presence of colleagues from different fields who were interested in LSN's work and who viewed the new name positively.

By Chair Maela Rakočević Uvodić (Senior Librarian, The City Library of Zagreb, Zagreb City Libraries, Croatia)

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Description picture: LSN Business Meeting in Ahoy conference room with Standing Committee Members and several observers

2.2 LSN Session: How Can We Make Libraries Accessible and Welcoming for Everyone?

How can we make libraries accessible and welcoming for everyone? That was the central question in our LSN session during WLIC in Rotterdam. Nancy Bolt, Misako Nomura, Karin Larsson, and Maela Rakočević Uvodić talked about a great variety of topics related to inclusive and accessible libraries, on a conceptual and practical level. Diego Anthoons was the moderator. More than 150 people attended our session and we received many positive reactions afterwards.

Below we present the speakers and a link to their full papers. This will be great so those who missed our session can catch up!

Nancy Bolt: “It Starts at the Top: The Role of Leadership and Management in an Accessible and Inclusive Library”

Nancy Bolt was the State Librarian in Colorado, USA for 18 years. In 2005 she left the State Library to become an international library consultant until her retirement in 2020. She has been active in IFLA for over 20 years, most recently as Chair of the Library Services for People with Special Needs Section. Nancy was unable to be at WLIC due to a previous engagement and offered a recorded session in which she talked about the roles of leaders and managers in making a library accessible and inclusive.

- [Read paper](#)
- Contact: nancybolt@earthlink.net

Misako Nomura: “Revised Guidelines for Accessible Libraries and Services for Everyone: A Brief Overview of Tips for Ensuring Access to Information for Persons with Disabilities”

Misako Nomura is a Board Member, Chief Secretariat, and Library Project Coordinator of Japan's Assistive Technology Development Organization (ATDO). She was Chair of the IFLA Library Services to Persons with Special Needs Section from 2015-2019. She is currently a Member of the IFLA Regional Division Committee for Asia and Oceania. Misako Nomura promotes inclusive and accessible library services in this region and beyond based on the vital concept of the Sustainable Development Goal "No one left behind."

She is a working member of the team drafting the IFLA Revised Guidelines for Accessible Libraries and Services for Everyone, which she presented in Rotterdam.

- [Read paper](#)
- Contact: nomura@atdo.jp

Karin Larsson: “Aiming for Universal Design”

Karin Larsson works for the Malmö Public Libraries in Sweden as a librarian and an accessibility strategist. She is a member of the Standing Committee of the IFLA Section Library Services to People with Special Needs.

In Malmö, she is responsible for making twelve libraries accessible to all visitors. She is an advocate of Universal Design, which indicates that design and composition are understood, accessed, and used by everyone, and not only by people with disabilities.

At WLIC, she presented a guide written to help Malmö municipal librarians, consider Universal Design in their work.

- [Read paper](#)
- Contact: karin.larsson2@malmo.se

Maela Rakočević Uvodić: “Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deafblind users: from Adopting the Social Model of Disability, to Accessibility, Equality and Inclusion”

Maela Rakočević Uvodić has been working in Zagreb City Libraries since 1998, first as a library assistant and later as a librarian at the Audio Visual and Multimedia department of the City Library of Zagreb, Children and Young Adults Library. In June 2023 she was promoted to Senior Librarian. She has been a member of the Croatian Library Association’s Library Services to Persons with Disabilities and Persons with Special Needs Commission since 2014. Since 2017 she has been a member of IFLA Library Services to People with Special Needs Section. In 2021 she became a Chair of the same Section.

She is one of the authors of the IFLA Guidelines for Accessible Libraries and Services for Everyone and one of the authors and key person for the IFLA Guidelines for Deaf, Hard of hearing and Deafblind persons that will be published in 2024.

At WLIC, Maela talked about the importance of understanding the diversity of the deaf, hard of hearing or deafblind community, and the need to use correct terminologies when describing these groups. She also spoke of the role of libraries as key actors in promoting inclusion and human rights.

- [Read paper](#)
- Contact : maela.rakocevic.uvodic@gmail.com



Description picture: Karin Larsson presenting at WLIC Rotterdam.

By Diego Anthoons (Head of Communications, Luisterpuntbibliotheek - Flemish library serving persons with print disabilities, Belgium)
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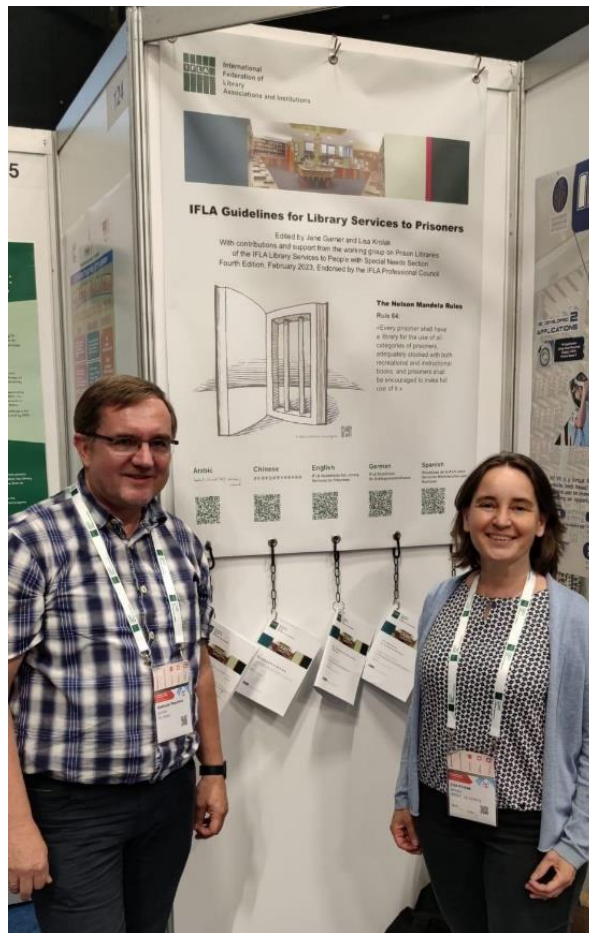
2.3 Prison Libraries at IFLA WLIC in Rotterdam

During various occasions, there was the opportunity to highlight the new [IFLA Guidelines for library services to prisoners](#) (published in February 2023) and the importance of prison libraries in general. These occasions were also very good for connecting people interested in the area.

Poster presentation

Together with Gerhard Peschers from the Förderverein Gefangenenbüchereien e.V., I took part in the poster presentations, where

about 200 participants presented a project, an idea, a service, etc. We presented a poster on the new IFLA Guidelines and spent two hours of two days accompanying the poster in the poster hall. Several people took the opportunity to discuss and network with us, and throughout the conference I had plenty of opportunities to exchange ideas and network with people working in and for prison libraries in several countries, including Belgium, Italy, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, the USA, the UK, Sweden, Denmark, and Brazil.



Description picture: Gerhard Peschers and Lisa Krolak in front of their poster
© Gerhard Peschers

Prison library visit

For the participants interested in prison libraries, I organized a visit to a prison library in De Schie prison in Rotterdam. We were an international group of eleven librarians and researchers. At the prison library we had the privilege of meeting the two prison librarians working there. We also received a presentation by Ms. Femke Voogt, Head of Detention and Reintegration, on her department's provision of education, including library services and a

reintegration-center where inmates can work on the computer (for reintegration purposes). We also met one of the case managers, who help the inmates to work towards their return to society after their time is served. The prison has the capacity for 286 inmates, including a terrorist unit and an extra care facility. Prisoners can use the library once a week for one hour and receive four hours education and reintegration training. Since 2022, the library has housed a special collection of materials for people with reading difficulties.



Description picture: group picture in front of De Schie prison.

© Gerhard Peschers

Session

I gave a presentation on the development of the new *IFLA Guidelines for library services to prisoners*, which I have co-edited together with Jane Garner (Australia). The session was called „International Standards in the Digital Information Landscape: the Development and Consultation Process “. During the session, the process of developing various new IFLA guidelines was discussed. Listening to other presentations, it became clear that one of the success factors of updating our IFLA Guidelines was that we were able to mobilize and work with professionals from all over the world.

By Lisa Krolak (Chief Librarian, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, Germany)

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2.4 The Best Visual Impact Award for the poster "Voices behind words"

Jelena Lešaja and Karolina Zlatar Radigović, outgoing and new IFLA LPD section members from the Croatian Library for the Blind, presented the library's podcast at the poster session in Rotterdam. To their surprise their poster, named "Voices behind words" won The Best Visual Impact Award at the IFLA WLIC 2023 closing session.

The Croatian Library for the Blind has had its own podcast since 2018. Guests are authors whose books the library prepares in accessible formats; many of them have narrated Daisy audio versions of their own works. Podcast episodes are about opening oneself to another person, connecting authors with their readers and giving a different level of access to the written word. The main topics are the creative process, the invention of characters and situations, reading other authors as an inspiration, observing the world around you, and exploring yourself. Some of the guests were colleagues who had worked in the field of production and distribution of accessible literature for many years. The necessity of equal access to knowledge, culture, and fun for persons with print disabilities has always been in the background of these conversations. The Croatian Library for the Blind Podcast is also one of the gateways where authors can become aware of the readers to whom literature is not easily available. The percentage of titles in accessible formats is still very small compared to mainstream production formats. The podcast episodes are available on the library's YouTube channel and internet page and are regularly distributed to users together with audio magazines.

The poster was created in a simple and clear manner using blue, black, white, and red colors. A stylized microphone surrounded by speech bubbles with the facts about podcast sits at the center of the poster. Beside the information spread on the poster, there are two QR codes - one has [a poster summary in PDF](#) and the other is a link to [the library's YouTube channel](#).



Description picture 1: Jelena Lešaja, Karolina Zlatar Radigović and other LPD members with the Best Visual Impact Award.

Description picture 2: winning poster 'Voices behind words'.



By Jelena Lešaja and Karolina Zlatar Radigović (Croatian Library for the Blind)
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3. News from LSN Members: Get Inspired!

3.1 Library Services to Persons with ADHD

The Croatian Library Association's Commission for Library Services to Persons with Disabilities and Persons with Special Needs organized a round table at the end of September for the 19th year in a row. Each round table focuses on a different target group, and this year the theme was Library services to people with reading difficulties who have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

ADHD is one of the most common neurodevelopmental disorders in children and adolescents. It is a cognitive and behavioral disorder characterized by hyperactivity, impulsivity, and inattention. It is estimated that its prevalence

ranges from 2 to 7% in school-aged children. It occurs four to five times more often in boys than girls. Recently we have also seen an increase in diagnoses in adulthood.

The library, as a center of the local community and a socially sensitive cultural institution, has a mission to lead the process of acceptance, accessibility, and inclusion of all groups of users. It can do this by sensitizing the public to the characteristics and needs of vulnerable groups. Therefore, the aim was for the round table to involve interested parties who work with or meet persons with ADHD: psychologists, educators, librarians, experts from educational institutions, representatives from various associations and partners, in the organization of the round table. The goals of the meeting were:

- to inform, educate and advocate for the rights of people with ADHD.
- to connect experts from different fields
- to create new opportunities for equality of opportunity in the community
- to support parents who care for children with ADHD, and
- to continuously work on removing prejudice against people with ADHD.

Keynote speakers were: Daniela Cvitković, Associate Professor at University of Zagreb, Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences who specified characteristics of persons with ADHD; Marina Đuranović, Associate Professor at the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Teacher Education who depicted challenges of raising and educating children with ADHD; Marko Ferek internationally renowned lecturer on ADHD and author of the bestselling book *Hyperactive Dreamers - Better, Worse, Different*; Ana Budimir, kindergarten psychologist who discussed recognizing ADHD in preschool children; Matea Vuković, educational rehabilitation specialist from the DYXY Association who explained the role of Educational Rehabilitator in supporting pupils with ADHD in primary education; Oyeronke Adebayo, librarian from the Center for Learning Resources, Covenant University Ota, Nigeria with a video presentation describing experiences of Nigerian librarians in working with children and adults with ADHD and described some of the positive practices applied in Nigerian libraries.



Description picture: Participants listening attentively to one of the speakers of the roundtable.
© Snjezana Ercegovac

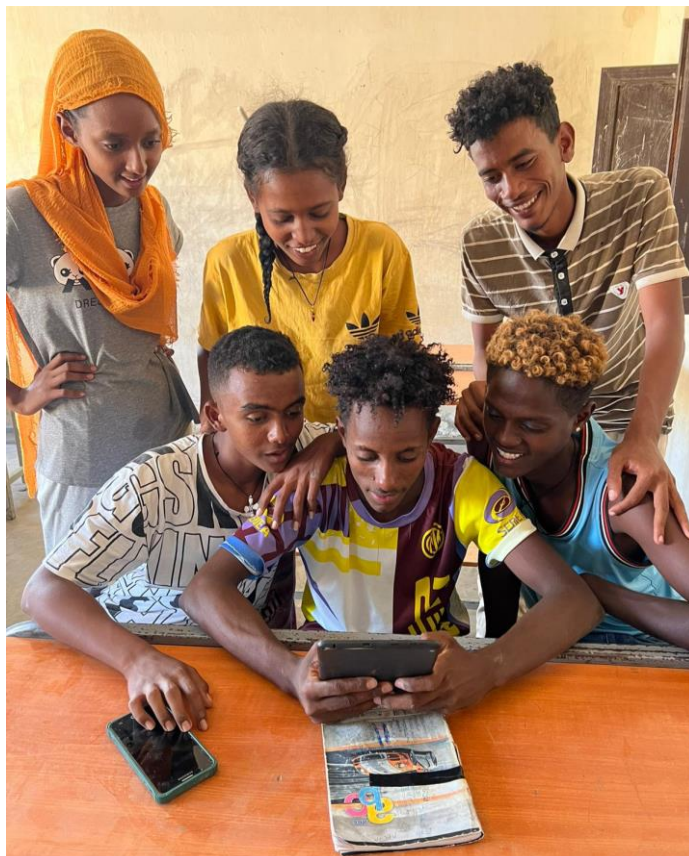
At the second part of the round table examples of good practice were introduced by librarians from Croatia: examples of stimulating attention and mental balance as part of an integrated approach for students with ADHD using the example of a financial literacy workshop. The Reading Practice Program was also presented. This program is implemented in the Pula library and is designed to help children with ADHD. The elementary school in Krapina presented programs to encourage reading for students with ADHD through inclusive education in the school library. Dubrava Education Center's educator and librarians from the Zagreb City Libraries presented the Library for All program, which includes activities intended for residents of the Dubrava Education Center.

By creating an interdisciplinary group, the round table helped all participants and organizers learn how to encourage professional staff to educate and inform the public about supporting library visitors with ADHD. Numerous and important topics were explored leading to steps in advocating for the rights of people with ADHD in the context of librarianship.

By Chair Maela Rakočević Uvodić (Senior Librarian, The City Library of Zagreb, Zagreb City Libraries, Croatia)

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3.2 Kindle Early Language Learning in Sudan Recipient of a RUSA 2023 Best Emerging Technology Application Award



Description picture: A group of young students enjoying the Kindle reading experience.

© Tegest Hailu, International Society for Better Health Access

Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) of the American Library Association has announced Janet Lee, past Secretary of IFLA Library Services for People with Special Needs, and Tegest Hailu, M.D., founder of the International Society for Better Health Access, are the recipients of one of two 2023 ETS Best Emerging Technology Application Awards for the Kindle Early Language Learning project for serving children in the Hasheba Refugee Camp in Sudan. The \$3,000 Best Emerging Technology Application (BETA) Award is sponsored by Chatstaff and LibraryH3lp.

For applying existing technologies in novel ways that benefit the library and patrons. Kindle Early Language Learning is an innovative way of replicating the library and its resources for children living in difficult conditions in Sudan's Hasheba Refugee Camp, helping them learn reading, writing, and languages in engaging ways. – Award Committee Statement

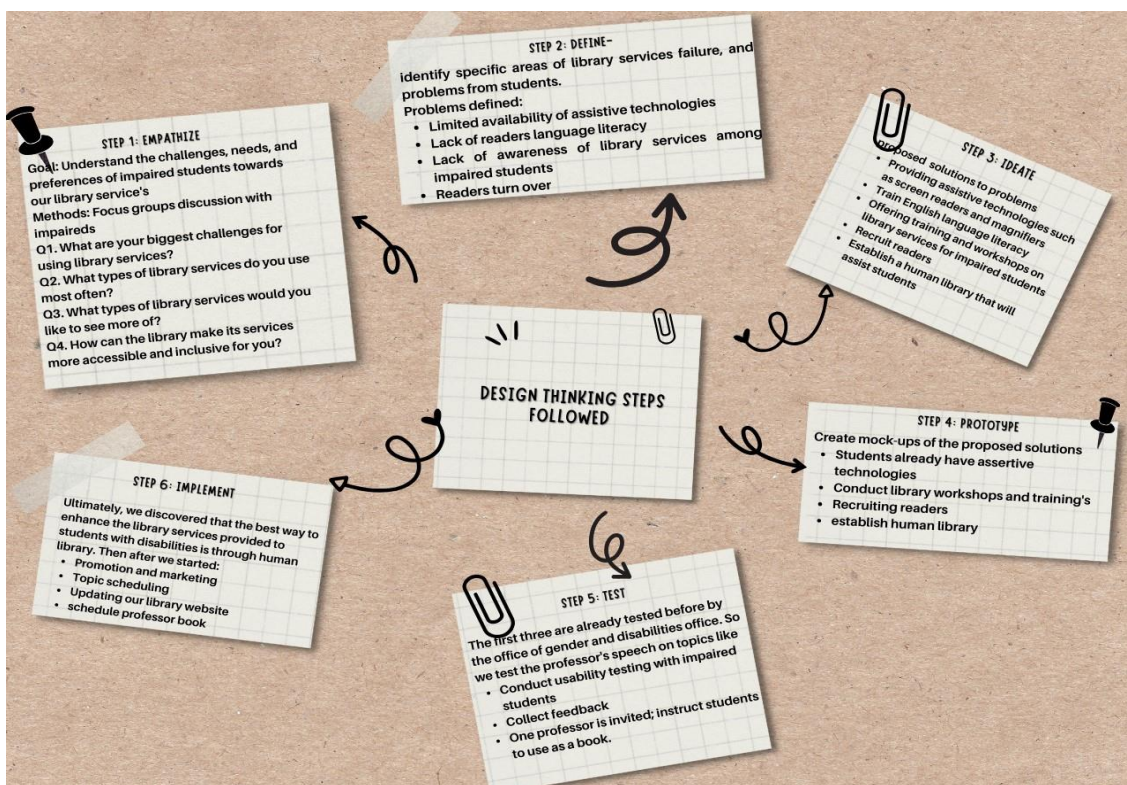
The Kindle Early Language Learning Project in Hasheba Refugee Camp in Sudan introduces first language resources to refugee school children in a joint library/classroom using Kindle technology. The children, many of whom are orphans, fled from the Tigray region of Ethiopia, when conflict broke out in November 2020 forcing them into exile in Sudan. As basic housing and health services were implemented in the camps, housing over 60,000 refugees, it became apparent that the children needed educational resources and the sense of normalcy that a school would provide. The refugees, NGOs, and the Sudanese government agreed to share classroom space with existing Sudanese students. Among the refugees were Ethiopian-certified teachers, taking up the charge of instructing the students. Since resources such as books and supplies are scarce, printing costs prohibitive, and shipping expensive, the project introduced the use of specially configured Kindle devices that were loaded with storybooks and first language reading aids in the languages of Tigrinya, Amharic, and Arabic. The Kindle device is ideal because it can hold hundreds of book titles in a variety of formats, is easy to hold, emulates a print book, and can accommodate the scripts of Tigrinya, Amharic, and Arabic. Since the storybooks are downloaded, access to the books is available offline. In a remote area of the world such as in the refugee camps in Sudan, with little access to Internet and few print resources, the Kindle Early Language Learning Project provides needed resources in an attractive and affordable way.

Janet Lee and other RUSA awardees presented at the 2023 RUSA ETS Technology Showcase at the American Library Association Monday, June 26, 2023.

By Janet Lee (LSN Information Coordinator 2019-21, LSN Secretary 2021-23, Dean Emerita, Regis University, Denver, CO USA)
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3.3 Design Thinking Approach for Re-imagining University library Services

Haramaya University's libraries have long been regarded as centers of scholarship and knowledge. There are 11 branch libraries, one of these libraries is dedicated to people with special needs. The library is well-equipped and provides several services geared to improve users' capacity to use it independently. However, our library usage data suggest that the resources and services are rarely used. As a result, we discovered our libraries are not accessible and inclusive, particularly to students with impairments. Having learnt this, the librarian proposed the design thinking approach to the attention of higher management to re-image the library services. After a lengthy conversation, the librarian influenced higher management to work on re-imagining of the library services. Then we proposed a design thinking approach to learn the problems of library usage with its solutions. Finally, after carefully applying the design thinking methodology, we suggested a “human library” as the ideal solution. The idea is to establish spaces where professors from schools for people with special needs can come together to share their knowledge and experiences in their respective subjects.



Description picture: flowchart detailing the steps of design thinking: Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, Test and Implement.

Due to the academic focus of our library, we altered the term "human" to "professors". To bring these professors on board we organized a one-day workshop on the topic of "The role of professors' book library services to promote equity, accessibility and inclusiveness". The professors were pleased and willing to participate.

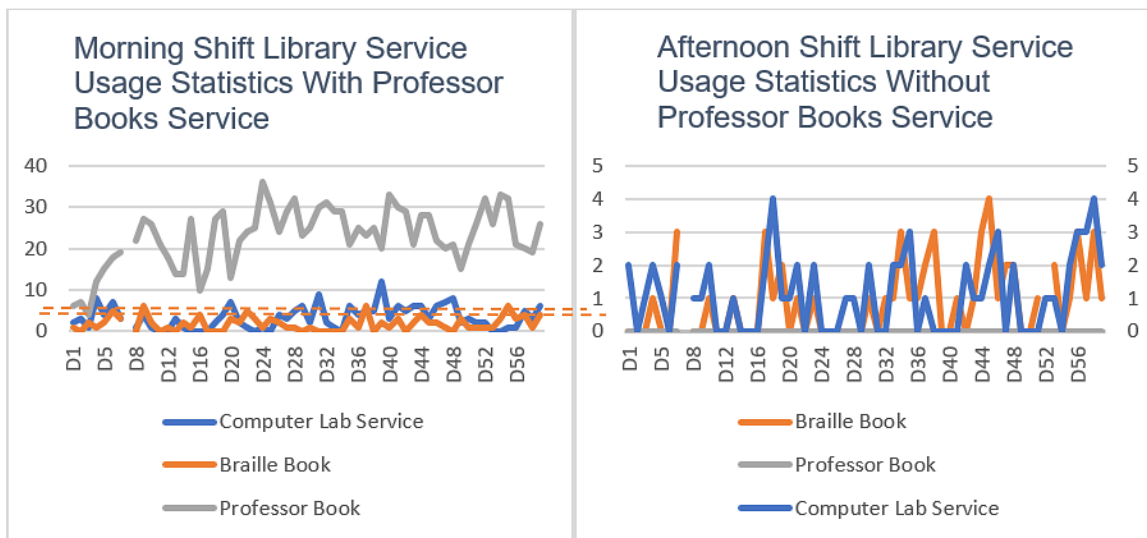


Description picture: Awareness creation workshop on professor book library services
© Library and Information Services, 2023

In mid-2023, we established the Human Library, where students can "borrow" professors for knowledge sharing and learning. Topics are approved by department heads and uploaded to the library website on every Friday afternoons. Three "professor books" are available each day, and students can reserve them in advance. A professor's library is an event where people can borrow "professors' book" for a short period of time to have a conversation with them. The "professors' books" are academic professors who have a teaching experience in the subject or have a particular expertise.

After the center was established, various advantages were seen. Owing to a lack of incentives and a scarcity of professors, the professors' book library is only open during the Morning time from 8:30 am to 12:30 am. The events helped remove barriers to students with disabilities in accessing library services. Students feel positive about using the library services when they have the chance to learn from a "professor book", and the library can proudly declare that it is working to promote equity, inclusiveness, and accessibility of services.

We did a survey at how often students visit the library and use its resources both with and without the professor books. The usage data for the professor book is seen in the figure below as extremely increasing. The graph also demonstrates how less the computer lab and braille book services at the library are used. Unexpectedly, the student's access to the library increased from 10% to 85%.



Description pictures: Library visit and service visit with and without professors book services

Overall, rethinking university library services for students with disabilities through the lens of design thinking approach is a better solution. For library, the Professor Book Services is a great resource for providing inclusive and accessible services that meet the needs of students with disabilities.

By Tilahun Shiferaw Shibeshi (MS.c., Assistant Professor of Information Sciences, Haramaya University, Ethiopia)

4. Presentation of the New Section Members

Anne Chastrusse, Manager of the accessibility service, Bibliothèques des Champs Libres, Rennes, France.

Kavita Ilangovan, Manager, National Library Board Singapore.

Karin Larsson, Librarian, Disability Strategist, Biblioteken I Malmö, Sweden.

Yasmine Youssef, Training and Outreach Expert, Assistive Technology Development Organization, Alexandria, Egypt.

5. Colophon and Contact

LSN Newsletter November 2023

Editorial board: Diego Anthoons, Corinna Haas, Jane Garner, Maela Rakočević Uvodić, Yasmine Youssef, Samira Zahra

More information about our section: www.ifla.org/units/lsn/

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