



## IFLA Section Equitable and Accessible Library Services

### **IFLA Section for Equitable and Accessible Library Services (EALS) / Library Services to People with Special Needs (LSN) updated Terms of reference**

Our Section has done its best to use language that is respectful and informed. In doing so, we found ourselves taking another look at the term “special needs.”

While there are groups that continue to use this term, most persons with disabilities question the idea that their needs are “special.” Instead, they consider their needs normal and reject the notion that needing relevant information and resources in an accessible format and welcoming and supportive environment is “special.” To put it simply: It is not “special services” to serve people with disabilities.

We believe the library has a responsibility to remove all barriers that can prevent any people from using the library. We also believe that it is critical to listen to the language people use about themselves – they know best how they want to be addressed, referred to, or described. Respect begins and ends with listening and should be step one in your efforts to truly serve your entire community.

Updated Terms of reference due to the change of terminology are:

- promotion of accessible and inclusive library services to those members of the community who are unable to use library services available to others, e.g., housebound persons; hospital patients; people in nursing homes or other care facilities, and people in prisons or other penal institutions;
- promotion of accessible and inclusive library services to people with disabilities including but not limited to children and students with disabilities; persons with physical disabilities (mobility); deaf, hard of hearing or deafblind persons; persons with learning disabilities (dyslexia, attention deficit disorder etc.) in cooperation with IFLA Library Services to people with Print Disabilities Section; persons with Alzheimer’s disease and dementia; persons living with mental illness; persons with cognitive disability or autism
- providing a forum for discussion about reading formats accessible to people with disabilities
- promotion of the importance of easy-to-read publications which make information more accessible to people with and without disabilities: for instance, pre-lingually deaf people need easy-to-read materials, people suffering from

aphasia, dyslexia, concentration difficulties due to illness, medication, tiredness or old age, displaced persons, etc

- promotion of the use of assistive technologies