



**International Federation of Library Associations  
and Institutions**

**Library Services to People with Special Needs  
Section**

**NEWSLETTER**

**Number 68, June 2009**

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**Editorial**

In this issue of the Newsletter we look forward to the 75<sup>th</sup> World Library and Information Congress and IFLA General Conference and Council in Milan, Italy. Library Services to People with Special Needs Section is holding a session entitled, "Reading and literacy promotion in prison: model library programmes". See page 2 for more information about our Section's contribution to the main Conference and also information about a satellite event being held in Belgium and the Netherlands.

This issue of the Newsletter includes three articles on how libraries are supporting people with special needs

in Scotland and Denmark. The first (on pp.3-5) concerns an outreach project in Dundee, Scotland, where the public library service works in partnership with local agencies and community groups to provide specialised services to enable people with moderate to profound physical and learning disabilities to benefit from reading and story-telling activities.

Helle Mortensen's article (on pp.5-6) focuses on the employment of disabled people in the library and describes a very good example of this at Lyngby-Taarbaek Public Library in Denmark.

On pages 6-10, Liz Moffat, Community Access Librarian at Stirling Libraries describes a successful Reader in Residence Project in three Scottish prisons.

Margaret E S Forrest, Editor

**Next copy date is 15 Nov. 2009**

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## IFLA Conference Preview



World Library and Information  
Congress: 75<sup>th</sup> IFLA General  
Conference and Council

*"Libraries create futures:  
Building on cultural heritage"*

August 23<sup>rd</sup> -27<sup>th</sup> 2009,  
Milan, Italy

This year the LSN Section is holding a session entitled, "Reading and literacy promotion in prison: model library programmes", which will take place on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> August.

The full text of a number of the presentations is available from the IFLA Conference website at <http://www.ifla.org/annual-conference/ifla75/programme2009-en.php>

The following is an outline of the LSN session programme.

• [Les bibliothèques des établissements pénitentiaires en France: l'exemple de la région Rhône-Alpes](#)

ODILE CRAMARD (Agence Rhône-Alpes pour le livre et la documentation (ARALD), Lyon, France)

• [Les bibliothèques communales en prison à Rome](#)

FABIO DE GROSSI (Biblioteche di Roma, Rome, Italy)

• **Modelos y programas de promoción de la lectura y alfabetización en los penitenciarios de España**

MARGARITA PÉREZ PULIDO (University of Extremadura, Faculty of Library & Information Science, Badajoz, Spain)

• **Breaking barriers with books: connecting incarcerated fathers with their children**

VIBEKE LEHMANN (Library and Education Technology Consultant, Madison, USA)

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### IFLA Satellite Conference

"Better Library Services for Print Disabled Persons through Partnerships with Publishers and Public Libraries", IFLA Libraries Serving Persons with Print Disabilities Section

17-19 August in Mechelen, Belgium and 20 August in Maastricht, Netherlands.

Information and Registration details are available at:

<http://www.debibliotheeken.nl/P3IFLA2009>

For more information, please email:  
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## Articles

### Engaging with Groups

Wendy Reid, Tanya Duthie and Maureen Hood, Dundee Library and Information Services

In the past few years the priorities of libraries have expanded, with greater emphasis being placed on the delivery of library resources to special needs groups within the community who require specialised services and to offer them the support needed to realise their full potential.

Following a successful bid to the Scottish Government Public Libraries Improvement Fund, consultation took place with local agencies in Dundee who work with vulnerable, unemployed, special needs or socially excluded people. This highlighted the potential role of libraries in supporting individuals to feel part of the community through flexible, informal reading sessions tailored to the needs of each group. Partnership working with a number of agencies was established.

Library staff who had the skills and enthusiasm needed to conduct these sessions were identified to participate in this innovative development of library service provision. After initial training, groups of residents from local care homes and day centres were invited to come to the library. The idea of reading sessions with special needs groups is to connect to the group members, and rather than just reading a story to them. To have

them become involved in the stories themselves and be part of the storytelling process. This can be achieved by something as simple as having them choose a story that they would like to hear, or deciding on options within a story to dictate how it unfolds. Group size can vary from four to twenty members, who have a wide diversity of learning and physical disabilities ranging from moderate to profound.

Staff have also made their own books for the groups, which include the names of group members and situations that they can identify with.

These planned sessions include stories to encourage skills ranging from visual tracking, making choices, selecting items and storylines, to discussing the story and answering questions about it. Each story is accompanied by relevant artefacts, such as puppets, shells, fruit, flowers, soaps and seaweed. These aromatic and tactile props are particularly important to members of the groups who have visual impairments and have to rely on their other senses.

Particular interests are also catered for. These could include topics of local significance, such as the football teams, places of interest, or historic events. The books which prove most popular are well illustrated picture books, rhyming and poetry books and amusing stories.

These are well planned sessions, in a safe, secure environment where the groups feel welcomed, relaxed

and comfortable. They provide a thoroughly enjoyable experience to participants who may otherwise have found it difficult to access library services.

Some members of the groups have already gained the confidence to borrow, as individuals, CDs and books from the library. In addition, the care homes and centres are also now borrowing library material on a regular basis.

Since its inception in autumn 2007 this service has been expanded to include a group of early onset dementia sufferers supported by Alzheimers Scotland and young adults with challenging behaviour from a local residential centre. Outreach visits are made to local care homes for elderly residents who may be frail or suffer from dementia and are unable to travel to the library. With the latter, reminiscence materials such as old newspaper cuttings, adverts and local photographs are used to stimulate memory and discussion.

Staff, carers and relatives, as well as the members of the groups themselves, have noticed a marked improvement in concentration spans of individuals. One example of this is a young man in one of our groups, who suffered a severe brain injury in his early life. On his initial visits to the library he was unwilling to sit and listen or engage with the story for more than two or three minutes. His carers would have to leave with him as he became agitated and disruptive. He now sits for the full hour of the session, looking at

books, listening to the story and interacting with staff and other group members in ways which his support workers would never have believed possible a year ago. His father can now use books at home, as a tool to engage with his son in a calm and relaxing way, providing quality time for both and a well-earned rest for Dad!

This is just one of the many examples of how this initiative has positively impacted on the lives of the group members, their carers and their families. Many of our group members can now maintain attention for the duration of the story and experience a greater anticipation of storylines. Other developments include significant advances in eye and finger pointing, responding positively to stimuli, choosing between a number of objects and manipulating them.



Group work has now become an integral and rewarding part of Dundee Library Services. Staff report that their working lives have been enhanced by this new initiative. Both staff and group members are continually learning and gaining new knowledge and skills and improving communication. A short report is kept on each group session, as it is important to record which strategies or materials have worked well, and

those which have not been so successful. This information is shared at regular team meetings.

In-house training courses have recently been developed and delivered in order to expand our services in this area. All staff members have the opportunity to become involved ensuring the continued success and expansion of our service and the personal development of staff. Work shadowing is to begin shortly. We have also been contacted and visited by staff members from other authorities who are interested in rolling out this type of initiative in their own area.

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### **"Great Potentials": Disabled Employees at Lyngby-Taarbaek Public Library**

Helle Mortensen, Secretary LSN

Lyngby-Taarbaek Public Library has greatly benefited from employing people with intellectual disabilities. Tom Hinsch is autistic and has worked in the library for twenty years. Tom lives in a home together with other persons with autism. He loves books, bookbinding, shelving books, and not the least reading them. Tom works in the library two days a week.

Tom says, "I have always been a good reader, and from my very childhood I have loved books especially books about history,

World War Two and the middle ages."



Tom Hinsch and Helle Mortensen.  
Photo: Ole Lund Andersen

With the help from an employment officer from SOVI\*, Tom became a shelver in the library where he has had plenty of opportunity to cultivate his passion for books. SOVI is an association offering sheltered work places for 50 persons with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASP). SOVI also offers work in external work places. The work is organized by employment officers.

Tom comments, "I like to contribute to something even if I am autistic, and my colleagues are so nice." Tom is not planning his retirement yet: "It must wait till I am 65 years old", he smiles. In his spare time Tom is painting watercolours and doing IT-courses. Holidays are spent at summer schools.

It is good to see an increase in the importance of disabled people in work places, and the library is a good example of a workplace, where there are opportunities instead of limitations. I hope the good experiences will contribute to implementation of the new UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled people.

Recently Gentofte Public Libraries North of Copenhagen started cooperation with a new school for young autistic people. Some of the young pupils have internships at the library. Once a week 2-3 people work in the library shelving books, cleaning CDs or DVDs in a machine in the library or scanning delivered library materials. The young autistic people enjoy having colleagues. They also fulfil an important role in supporting the library service. It is a novelty for the young trainees to have a job, colleagues and to be in fulfilling employment. The training period helps increase their self-esteem and confidence. So far the experiences have been very positive and the internships provide a lot of benefits and enjoyment for all. The library receives support in important core activities and the trainees gain good experiences of work – experiences that can enhance their lives.

\*SOVI stands for: Social Economic Association. The association offers sheltered jobs in both private and public work places. SOVI was founded in 1972 by a group of parents with help from private funds.

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### **Reader in Residence Project in Cornton Vale Women's Prison, Polmont YOI and Perth Prison**

Liz Moffat, Community Access Librarian, Stirling Libraries

The Reader in Residence project was launched in Cornton Vale Womens Prison in July 2007. It was the first such project in Scotland and came about in response to a need for a consistent approach to delivering a reader development programme in Cornton Vale.

Stirling Libraries had been providing the library service to Cornton Vale long before I started working for the service. It was a very good library, much like a small branch of around 2000 books. When I started delivering the service in 2001, I felt the selection of books were not fully appreciated, and started up some reader development projects. I ran poetry workshops, took in visiting authors and started a monthly reading group, but a big percentage of the girls in Cornton Vale are "short termers" and by the time I went back in, they had often been released. As Community Access Librarian, delivery of service to Cornton Vale was a very small part of a much wider remit to disadvantaged groups, so time was limited.

Learning from my experience, I knew the participants were willing to be involved. Readers and Writers in Residence had worked very successfully in prisons south of the border. A Reader in Residence would lend continuity to the reading experience and service offered to

prisoners. Like every other such scheme, however, I knew this would be dependent on extra funding, not always easy to attract. However in October 2006 I attended the CILIP Prison Library Conference and discovered the Paul Hamlyn Foundation backed projects in prisons. They still had funding available in their "Free for Words" strand of funding. The application was submitted in collaboration with the Prison Literacies Officer, who had a wider remit for all Scottish Prisons. We decided to ask for funding for another two of those prisons - HMP Perth and HMP Polmont YOI (Young Offenders' Institution). Paul Hamlyn agreed to fund the other two prisons once we had proved that the Cornton Vale Prison project was successful. Stirling Libraries received the biggest amount of funding Paul Hamlyn had ever given out under the "Free for Words" strand.

We based our Reader in Residence in Education within the prison and three days in the week are spent there delivering the service. The other two days are spent in Stirling Library Headquarters where there is time to prepare for the groups and reflect on the work. The Reader can also call on the experience of the librarians there; what material to buy, who to receive funding from for author visits and which authors work well. A Steering Group supports the Readers and meet quarterly to monitor progress of the project and make sure the aims are being met.

A Reader in Residence differs from a Writer in Residence in that they

promote creative reading through different activities, rather than concentrating on producing written work. The work in Cornton Vale is inspired by a three-year plan, which was set up at inception, and although this has been followed in a way, it has flexibility to allow the influence of the Reader in Residence's own experiences, vision and ideas. It is by no means a finished document and part of the Reader's remit is to develop the project according to their individual skills. The project also adapts to the demands and wishes of the learners.

#### *Aims*

To promote creative reading within the prison and to develop reading amongst the women and their families. It is also to promote use of the library and create links between the women and community libraries outside.

Outcomes are that the literacy skills, confidence and self-esteem are improved through creative reading activities. By taking part in group activity isolation is reduced and personal horizons and aspirations can be expanded.

#### *Activities*

The project aims to engage with two-thirds of the women in Cornton Vale who are not currently taking part in formal education

Activities are offered in a non-formal manner in an environment that is un-intimidating whilst promoting a social atmosphere of equality. Anybody can join the different activities, regardless of whether they are confident or reluctant readers.

### *Library Drop-in*

The drop-in encourages those who are not very confident to visit the library and get some support choosing a book. This has evolved into the Reader Champions Group, which involves working within the library to promote it through writing book reviews and creating promotional material.

### *Story-sacks project*

Students make a sack for a child within their family using a theme. The objectives are to enhance the basic literacy skills of parent and child and to maintain vital contact between them. Working in partnership with the adult learning team at first, this group is now continuing with Peer Tutors. It takes between 8 to 12 weeks to make a sack which includes both a fiction and non-fiction reading book relating to a chosen theme. Stories, acrostic poems, quizzes and games are also made up by the women to go into the sack. It links in well with the Story Book Mums as the sack may also contain a CD recording of the fictional book or the mum's own unique story. Inclusion of a further reading list encourages the children at home to join their local library. The acrostic poem uses the familiarity of a child's name to come up with a personalised poem, so parents can write about thoughts and feelings associated with the child. Women rise to the challenge and are extremely motivated to do something for their children. Most importantly, many of the women feel they are contributing positively to their children's reading and personal development.

### *Friday's Book Group*

The book group encourages more prisoners to read books and enhances the enjoyment prisoners get from books, while expanding the type of books they read.

The Book Group was initially started as the Scottish Women's Writing group and the focus was on reading books by Scottish Women authors, but has now moved on to look at male authors, non-fiction, different genres and international writers. Participants read a book over three weeks but they meet every week to read together and discuss the genre of book, style of writing, plot and characters. Author visits add extra interest to this group, bringing the stories to life. These have included Margaret Thomson Davis, Laura Marney, Jess Smith, Lesley Pearce and Alex Gray. These events also reach out to other learners who are not taking any formal education courses.

The book can be a lifeline, a companion and that well-known escape into another world. One example of the power that a book can have was the woman who found a book within her cell, never having read a book before. She kept re-reading the second last chapter because she didn't want the book to end. There are so many benefits relating to the women's personal development by joining reading activities, as well as the obvious one of stretching their individual reading horizons. Other benefits include the ability to discuss and vocalise personal opinions.



### *Diary Corner*

A new group was created from a discussion at the book group about 'The Diary of a Young Girl' by Anne Frank. The learners come together to put down their thoughts in their own diary over a cup of coffee. Within a trusting environment, there is the opportunity to read some of the personal writing out loud and there is also a communal diary that the women can comment in each week. In this group they also take part in activities looking at life goals, creative writing and positive thinking. The diary session promotes personal development by providing the opportunity to put down individual thoughts and feelings within a safe environment. It also promotes skills in reflection and goal setting.

### *Movie Discussion Group*

This is an evening activity where learners explore different genre of films such as horror, romantic comedies, westerns and animation. One film is shown over two sessions with plenty of chance to discuss plot, characters and film technique. There is also ample opportunity to discuss range of issues and themes covered by different films. Again this is Co-tutored by Reader-in-Residence and a Carnegie Lecturer, so partnership working is vital. Emphasis is put on those films that have been adapted from a book or short story like It's A Wonderful Life, Mildred Pierce, Open Range and Bride And Prejudice.

### *Exploring Poetry*

Many of the girls write poetry but have never read it or heard it spoken aloud. As a group, many different writers and genres are looked at.

The objectives of this group are to read works of published poets to help with writing poems. The girls form opinions and share them in the group.

### *Quick Reads Book Group*

There are many in the prison who are intimidated by or do not have the patience or concentration to read larger books. Some of the girls have now finished their first ever book. This group is not only restricted to reading books, but newspapers and plays as well. Ability to read is not necessary although it was found that the girls were reading in everyday life and never realised that they could read. A Graphic Novel Group is planned to encourage more Young Offenders.

### *Conclusion*

Initial evaluation carried out by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation has been positive and the project has been quoted as 'the best example of the Free from Words projects'. Good partnership working was cited as the main reason for this success. The project is now also running in Polmont Young Offenders and Perth Prison and there are plans to produce a booklet, which will be made up of all the different projects in the three establishments. This would be useful for Community Libraries as well as prison establishments. All Readers are working on pre-release information to be given out to prisoners so that they can join their own community libraries on release.

Challenges are that the three prisons are all completely different and what

works in one place may not work somewhere else.

Our hope for the future is that it can be seen as beneficial to the learning process, so much so that it will be embedded into the contracts of the education providers when the new prison education contracts are drawn up.

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### New LSN SC Member



Welcome to Elke Greifeneder!

Elke has recently joined the Standing Committee of Library services to People with Special Needs Section. She is currently a lecturer at the Berlin School at Humboldt-Universität, Berlin. Elke is currently working on a PhD degree on the subject of on online user research. She studied both Library and Information Science and French studies in Berlin and Documentation and Linguistics in Paris.

Elke's main interest is information design including accessibility and she has published a book on online help systems in OPACs. Although her main research deals with the online world, she also participated in a project called Mukowiki (<http://mukowiki.de/>) which established a hospital library in Potsdam. Elke's teaching covers all of these topics.

She has served as assistant editor of *Library Hi Tech* since 2006 and was part of the organizing team of the 2008 Dublin Core Conference in Berlin. She is a member of the two German librarian associations - BIB and VDB - and is member of the 2010 program committee for the iSchool conference. She looks forward to participating in the IFLA section 9.

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### News

#### AccessApps

AccessApps is an initiative supported by the UK JISC Regional Support Centres (RSC) and JISC TechDis. It consists of over 60 open source and freeware Windows applications, running from a USB stick. AccessApps provides a range of solutions to support writing, reading and planning as well as sensory, cognitive and physical difficulties. For further information, see: <http://www.rsc-norfolk.ac.uk/eduapps/accessapps.php>

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