The role of Pre-ifla in both Persian and Arabic languages in Equal Access to Academic Resources Compared to Other Common Languages in the World

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Abstract

Since the mid-1990s, new developments have occurred in hardware and software libraries and in making academic resources available to the blind; from then many changes and developments have appeared based on the needs of new users, such as creating soft wares for different languages., Although passing two decades from these developments, unfortunately, Persian and Arabic language speaking countries (regarding their commonalities in most part of their alphabet) have not access to this useful tool and still are working based on the traditional technologies. However some experiences have been transmitted and some new tools have been introduced, there is a distance between the accessibility of these people as compared to the blind disabled of the other countries; not having access to the DAISY industry can be considered as one of the most important defeats.

The reason of this defeat can be traced in the geographical location of these countries. Considering such subjects in these countries is of no value because most of them are located in problematic social and political regions. Only some of these disabled people have achieved limited success by having access to such software as JAZZ. In this article the writer looks at the DAISY plans for Persian and Arabic texts in the first place and then he reports on the status of the library of the blind in Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan. At last, the role of pre-ifla in the development of accessibility to resources in these countries will be discussed.

Looking at the geography of the Persian and Arabic-speaking areas, it will be realized that many parts of Asia and Africa should be included in these programs and may be there was not a report about them in such a conference and unfortunately the long-term and short-term preifla decisions of preifla in these countries has not been implemented. This report is intended to make you honorable members aware of the status of blind people in these areas and implement legal and international solutions for matching the status of these undeveloped areas with the current status of the libraries which are a member of preifla.

It is notable that all the items listed below are the results of my personal views of the National Libraries and special Services Division of blindness in different countries and also related to the Ulverscroft /Ifla best practice award and visiting the experimental creating sector of Persian books in Swedish TPB library in 2007 and my personal experience of launching the blind section of National Library of Iran.

Reviewing the reasons for non-development of this industry in the region

Since the establishment of library services to blind people in Iran have rarely been given notice to the existing standards in the industry, in other words, unfortunately, there is no scientific foundation for blindness services, and this problem still exists.

Not considering the needs of disabled people in the library industry, so in many cases with the same features and existing applications, rarely scientific resources are prepared and provided on the basis of the needs of the disabled.

Nonscientific and non-consistent development of public sector and NGOs in servicing to the blind. Public library services have grown substantially in recent years in services to blind; the non-governmental organizations also are working in parallel, without planning and assessment. These uncoordinated activities which are without technical support and professional supervision are not covering the needs of blinds and they are wasting financial resources, too. And to solve this problem, adequate and efficient joint meetings or hearings are not holding between public and private sector and they are working as smaller scattered islands.

Lack of effective participation in regional meetings on library industry to exchange experiences and create a common information network.

An overview of the Persian and Arabic-speaking countries will show us that any of them have been somehow involved in economic, social and even civil wars in recent years, that not only lead to slow cultural development but it has been leading to the increasing number of the disabled including visual disables. Therefore, in these conditions cultural policymakers in these countries have not enough chance to address this situation to find a way for solving training problems of the blind.

Very weak activity of companies manufacturing hardware and software associated with visual disabilities in the region. As you are aware, because of the problems that exists in these countries many of software and hardware manufacturers for the disabled have not any representative in the countries of this region or because of these problems they have severely reduced their activity level. Thus, the Office of Disability Culture is announced its readiness to explore ways to cooperate with the companies in this region.

Articles and discussions at meetings of IFLA are rendered in Persian and Arabic for the people of the region, while this has not been the case for preiflas session so far. So, many the libraries in the region are unaware of the news and developments occurring in the library of blindness industry.

The proposed solutions

Establishing a special working group

Establishing a special working group as a bridge between the DAISY Consortium and regional libraries with the aim of giving information and knowledge about DAISY and training for installation and use of it. In order to accomplish this issues, the working group must be introduced by the consortium as a non-governmental and trans -border organization to the policymakers of the library industry, and a careful planning of the consortium considering short and long term goals in order to make the quality of library services for the blind the same to other countries must be determined. The function of working group also must be carefully evaluated and a report of its activities be presented at the next preifla conference.

Preifla role

Preifla has an atmosphere of support for amending these issues in the official and legal affairs activities and decisions, And IFLA, by considering its legal status and the necessity of administrating its approvals (applications), can play a great role in the promotion of library and information industry.

Planning a series of conferences and regional workshops

Planning a series of conferences and regional workshops and virtual presence with DAISY Consortium management and implementation of the above-mentioned working group in order to accelerate your development of software in the region, to gather the information of scientific institutions and the organizations that produce digital resources with a focus on digitalization and creation a common information network. The experience of the past four decades of LIS education, on the one hand and a significant increase in users with visual disabilities, on the other hand can be a strong point in the routing and mapping solutions to be considered in present and future.

Conclusion

Current advances in hardware and software and appropriate training to librarians and library centers are the only ways to match the libraries of Arab and Persian language countries. In a short-term and long-term management and identification of the features and capabilities available in each country will provide the context for amending this situation.

So the preifla Conference and DAISY Consortium can take long steps in order to coming out the libraries of the area from this deadlock. Office of Disability Culture which has begun very good activities in Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan is ready for any cooperation.

Many thanks for your patience and notice