**MINUTES - LPD/SC winter meeting Oslo**

**February 8 – 9, 2016**

**Venue: The Norwegian Library of Talking Books and Braille**

**(Norsk lyd-  og blindeskriftbibliotek)**

**Address: Observatoriegt. 1B, Oslo**

1. **Opening and Welcome (Karen Keninger)**

The Chair of the LPD Section, Karen Keninger welcomes all standing committee members to the meeting.

1. **Apologies**
Vanessa Van Atten (Ministère Culture et de la Communication, France)

Elena Zakharova (Russian State Library for the Blind)

Menno Stein (Stichting Aangepast Lezen, Netherlands)

       Christiane Felsmann (German Central Library for the Blind)

1. **Introductions and Attendance list**

In attendance:

Mike  Marlin (Braille & Talking Book Library California State Library, Association of Specialized & Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA) – USA)

Geert Ruebens (Flemish Library for Braille & Audio Books - Belgium)

Kirsi Ylanne (Celia, Finland)

Karen Keninger (NLS , USA)

 Luc Maumet (Association Valentin Haüy (AVH) , France)

Kari Kummeneje (Norwegian Library of Talking Books and Braille)

Nedeljka Lozajic (National Library of Serbia )

Jelena Lesaja (Croatian Library for the Blind)

Yasmine Youssef (Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Egypt)

Observers:

Chris Friend (World Blind Union)

Francois  Hendrikz (South African Library for the Blind)

Ingvild Aanensen (Norwegian Library of Talking Books and Braille)

               Øyvind Engh (Norwegian Library of Talking Books and Braille)

Arne Kyrkjebø (Norwegian Library of Talking Books and Braille)

Monica Halil (Accessible Books Consortium, Switzerland)

1. **Accepting the agenda / adding last minute items**

The meeting accepted the agenda with no additions.

1. **A presentation about NLB by Øyvind Engh, NLB director**
* The Norwegian library of talking books and Braille, is a government agency under the ministry of culture. In 2009 they celebrated 100 years of library services for the blind. They library’s budget is from the ministry of culture, and this year’s budget estimates around  5.5 million Euros.  The number of staff members is 55.
* Who’s eligible to join the library: people with visual impairment, dyslexic, other forms of print disabilities, institutions.  Currently the libraries patrons have reached 25,000 patrons. In 2013, they launched “Right to read” campaign. They started by targeting Public libraries during 2014, they had children and young people as their main focus. In 215, they are able to reach more students and had activities targeting the visually impaired.
* The  library withholds around 18,000 talking books. They offer text books on demand. Patrons can either listen or download books from the NLB website or through  Lydhor app, available on tablets and Smart phones, or request a CD. But still the CD is the most popular and preferred way of getting talking books. Braille books are printed and delivered to patrons through mail.
* The library produces from 600 to 700 titles in their own studio and purchases 400 titles from RNIB. The NLB uses DTbook as their standard for XML files. And they have switched to EPUB 3 in 2015 as they are collaborating with DAISY and IDPF in the new standard EPUB 3.
* Initiatives of NLB:
* Makeover of the website of the NLB.
* Launching more than 40 new newspapers.
* Collaborating with publishers to get access to Epub files and persuade them to make accesbile books.
* Building eight new studios.
1. **Updates from World Blind Union and Marrakesh treaty:**

Christopher Friend gave a brief to the committee on the status of the ratification of the treaty:

* Peru is the 14th country to ratify the treaty and it's expected that by the August, 20 countires will have ratified and the treaty will be in force
* Jamaican senate signed off the ratification but it has not arrived Geneva yet
* So far, 7 countries from American, one country from Africa and 2 Asian countries and 4 countries from southeast have ratified.
* When we reach 20 ratifications, the treaty will start to be effective 3 months later.
* Your exchange partner must be a member of the treaty
* Members of the committee and their libraries should advocate for the treaty, and reach out to their governments to ratify
* British Council will help in campaigning for the Marrakesh treaty
* WBU Union guidelines coming out in March
* The LPD has written a statement of support of the treaty. Karen asked for volunteers to draft a statement of support, Geert, Mike and Chris Friend will  work on it. Action item 6.1
* The US is preparing the package for ratification to go to congress, but no ratification will go forward before the elections of the US president
* EU has not reached an agreement on the ratification of the treaty, as some members are against
* South Africa situation: they’re still rewriting the copyright legislation, and struggling through the license agreement. They are building some principles from the treaty in the legislation. So South Africa will not ratify anytime soon.
* Croatia: are lobbying for including other disabilities in the legislation.
* Serbia: there’s not enough information about them, their copyright law has part of the treaty but they have copyright issues.
* Spain: the parliament approved the treaty, but is not allowed to ratify by the EU.
* Portugal: trying to put some pressure on them, since they are responsible for the Portuguese language group.
1. **LPD on the ABC board:**
* Francois Hendriks was the LPD representative in the ABC board, now that he's no longer in the Standing committee, the LPD must choose another representative
* Francois Also suggested that we reintroduce the LPD work in the ABC next board meeting
* Geert proposes introducing the LPD in the ABC conference in Stockholm
1. **UN sustainable development goals/ Lyon declaration:**

Karen suggests doing a statement of support for the STGs. And Chris suggests that in the LPD winter meeting 2017, the committee could hold  a session that explains and discusses the published strategies of the following countries and their position in regards to the STGs :the US, Canada, the EU and the Scandinavian countries and come up with pointers.

1. **Cataloguing Guidelines:**

This has been one of the issues suggested for discussion, especially in light of the Marrakesh treaty which is expected to be in operation soon. What are the issues we need to look at to make exchange of titles effective and smooth. What are the issues facing librarians when cataloging accessible material and whether we have enough information. Also new cataloging standards are emerging (RDA), we need guidelines for cataloging accessible features.

It has been suggested to discuss the topic in the coming LPD session, and also communicate with the cataloging section for future collaboration on the subject. Jelena will contact someone from the cataloging section to give a presentation on the topic. Action item 9.1

1. **Translations of the Dyslexia guidelines:**

Updates on the translations of the guidelines: the Norwegian translation will be ready by March, the Swedish is finished and has been published on the website, Arabic will be ready by August, Croatian is currently being translated and Finish is not ready yet.

1. **Updates of libraries:**

Each member of the meeting gave a short update of activities at their institution.

See annexure 2.

1. **Presentation In Columbus: Collaborating Across Borders—Making Accessible Resources Available**

The chair confirms the title of the LPD session: “Collaborating across borders-making accessible books available” .The final program should be submitted by the 15th of March to IFLA. Kirsi and Yasmine will be the session coordinators. Action item: 12.1 The meeting discussed potential topics and speakers for the session and identified the following Action 12.2:

1. Cross boarder collaboration : why it is important
2. How to with TIGAR (practical presentation)
3. Avoiding duplication in collection development
4. A federated search concept that can be developed
5. learning from each other: Ulverscroft
6. Cataloging accessible resources
7. Exporting to individual users: how that works

A few speakers were suggested during the discussion:

1. Someone from the WBU (Chris friend will consult with his team and get back to us)
2. The experience of Dedicon and Luisterpunt Bibliotheek to collaborate not to duplicate (Geert will discuss it with Dedicon and send a confirmation soon)
3. Learning from each other: the ulverscroft experience (Jelena and Yasmine will give a presentation together)
4. Cataloging accessible material: (Jelena has a contact)
5. Language groups: (Karen has a contact from Brasil)
6. A presentation about TIGAR ( we will Contact ABC  and also  Jelena has a  contact in Nota who can give a presentation)
7. **Presentation on Accessible Book Consortium By Monica Halil**

Monica gave a presentation about the consortium, what it does and its three main projects:

* The ABC acts as a complement to the [Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons who are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled (Marrakesh VIP Treaty)](http://www.wipo.int/treaties/en/ip/marrakesh/). The ABC's mail goal is to increase the number of accessible books worldwide and facilitate ease of exchange of titles. The ABC is [multi-stakeholder partnership](http://www.accessiblebooksconsortium.org/about/en/), comprising WIPO; organizations that serve people with print disabilities; and organizations representing publishers and authors.
* The three main projects of the ABC:
	1. Capacity building:
* Providing training and technical assistance in developing countries .SO far, four projects were carried out in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Their main focus is to train NGOs on accessible book production. And provide funding when needed, for the production of educational material.
* Some of the challenges they usually face are copyright exemptions in national legislations, technical know-how and reading devices.  For example, there was no TTS in Sinhalese, and the University of Colombo developed one. To overcome the lack of reading devices, they provided the NGOs with reading devices, which tye would loan them and priority was given to students.
* Milestones:

Six training seminars were given on book production

1,508 educational books in accessible formats

23,500 will benefit from these books

Two formal applications from Soto and ….?

They have a project in Salvador

* 1. Inclusive Publishing:
* Their aim is to promote accessible publishing among commercial publishers. So far, 12 publishers have signed the charter. SAGE, Elsevier and Bloomsberry are some of the publishers who signed.
* They also give international excellence award for accessible publishing
* ABC Books for All Starter Kit provides information on how to increase the number of books in accessible formats at the national level. It is designed for key stakeholders such as NGOs representing or serving people who are print disabled, departments of education, and publishers in developing and least-developed countries
* ABC and the International Authors Forum have produced Accessible eBook Guidelines for Self-Publishing Authors, Accessibility guidelines for self-publishing authors. These guidelines describe how people with print disabilities use technology to read eBooks, as well as the steps authors can take to ensure their books are compatible with that technology
	1. TIGAR Service:
* It currently contains 300,000 searchable titles, with 15 participating libraries and 58,000 user received books through the TIGAR service.
* Top users include: CNIB , AVH, New Zealand, Switzerland, NLS, MTM, Nota and NLB.
* During the meeting, LPDSC members gave Monica feedback on the service; MTM has some technical problems, they have issues downloading books. Celia library has other alternatives, and users don’t know about TIGAR, so Kirsi suggests that the service be available directly to users. Monica has revealed that the ABC is working on developing a consumer application so patrons get direct access to the database of titles, do their own search and request titles directly.  Mike asked whether it’s been translated but Krisi thinks there's no point in translation.
1. **Presentation about DAISY Consortium by Arne Kyrkjebø:**

Arne gave a presentation about the activities of the consortium , their new projects and the representation of the NLB in the DAISY board. The board consists of 18 members, only  full members are allowed to be represented in the board.

As the need for a better standard for more complex content arise

Currently they are collaborating with the IDPF on developing the EPUB standard and creating production tools. No more resources will  be put in the developing the DAISY standard and they will  be focusing more on EPUB.

Some of the projects they are working on:

1. TIES: Transition to Inclusive EPUB 3 Ecosystem

The project’s aim is to facilitate the migration of DAISY members to EPUB 3 production systems while developing inclusive publishing systems.

Accordingly, the project will be executed in 3 parallel dimensions: Production processes & systems, Publisher relationships and reading systems.

1. Baseline project:

This projects works on developing tools for publishers so that they can create digital books that can be accesbile by anyone, regardless of their disability. The project is designed on four dimensions: developing EPUB accessibility specification and certification, Developing accessibility checking tool (validation tools to check the accessibility of the content produced by publishers), evaluating reading systems for accessibility, and developing an inclusive publishing information hub.

Some libraries will start in 2016 producing in EPUB 3 like NLB, and other institutions are already distributing like Bookshare and learning Alley.

The NLB in cooperation with other Nordic countries, are working on an open source e-braille tool, the braille content is based on EPUB 3 and should be finished this year.

1. **Performance measures:**

Menno stein is no longer member of the section. Karen will get back to Menno on the status of the project. Also the question was raised whether this project should be resumed or not, and she proposed tabling the project for now and picking it up later.

1. **Share the vision Fund:**

Its still available, about 15000 pounds in it. Some money goes for transferring documents. So if something comes up, we will use this fund as it’s still available.

1. **Ulverscroft update:**

The foundation is willing to sponsor up to 3 people from developing countries to attend the satellite conference this year. Karen encourages members of the committee to circulate that information. The deadline is May 15th and to the date Karen has not received any applications.

1. **Update on Satellite conference in Louisville:**

The conference will take place on 11th and 12th of August, and after the conference they are organizing a tour of the American printing house.

So far around 4 papers were submitted but by the end of March, more papers will be submitted. No keynote speaker has been chosen yet. Action 20.1: Karen and Geert are working on it and Saskia has connected with world dyslexic association. APH has put a page for the conference that has all information; program, registration, and papers presented in conference: <http://www.aph.org/tailoring-the-reading-experience/>. Concerning vendors, so far three are committed and two are nearly committed.

1. **Project—Stories Illustrating the Life-Changing Impact of LPD Service on Individuals with Disabilities**

Karen suggested a new project to the committee members. The idea is to collect stories, or pictures illustrating the impact of LPD services on persons with disabilities, since it does not resonate when you give statistics on users you serve and books you produce. Committee members will consider the suggestion and give Karen feedback.

1. **Communications:**
2. Website and newsletter: kari will continue working on updating the website, and Kristina will be responsible for the newsletter. It has been suggested to publish the newsletter once a year in October.
3. Listervs: Kari will add Chris to the general listserv and will check with the IFLA the possibility of adding observers to Standing committee list. Action 20.1
4. Social Media: it has been discussed whether we should delete the Facebook group or the Facebook page, but it has been decided to leave both for the time being.

The twitter account will be used for live updates of both satellite conference and the LPD session in the WLIC. Kirsi and Yasmine will work on it.

**Annexure 1:**

**Action items (Oslo Meeting):**

Action 6.1: Geert, mike and Chris Friend will draft a Statement supporting ratification efforts for Marrakesh treaty

Action 9.1: Jelena will contact someone from the cataloging section.

Action item12.1: kirsi and Yasmine will be the LPD session coordinators.

Action 12.2: the following speakers have been selected to give out presentation in the LPD session:Geert Ruebens, Jelena Lesaja and Chris friend. Kirsi and Yasmine will follow up with potential speakers will the session.

Action 12.3: Karen will recommend a hotel in Columbus for the committee members.

Action 18.1: Karen and Geert are working on finding keynote speaker for the satellite conference.

Action 20.1: kari will contact IFLA to check the possibility of adding observers to the SC list.

**Action items standing over: Cape town meeting:**

**Action (Item 10):** K. Krikhaar will contact K. Keninger to update her about the requirements of the pre-conference. **Oslo status: Done**

**Action (Item 12.1):** Kari will talk to Menno about the implementation of the revised performance measurement tool.  **Oslo Status: pending**

**Action (Item 12.2):** Yasmine offered to translate the Guidelines into Arabic and Luc will assist with the French translation. **Oo status:** Arabic translation will be done by August, and French translation is still ongoing.

**Action (Item 12.3)** Hiroshi Kawamura will circulate the WIPO ABC document on accessibility standards for e-publishing. **Olso status:pending**

**Action (Item 14.1):**The blog should be removed from the LPD website (Kari and Kristina). **Oslo status: Done**

**Action (Item 14**.**2):** LPD Twitter account to be established by Yasmine and Kristina**Action items: Oslo status: Done**

**Annexure 2 – Updates of activities by various libraries:**

1. Croatian Library for the Blind (Croatia): Jelena Lesaja,
2. The Croatian library for the blind is under the ministry of culture. 19 persons work at the library. They produce braille books, talking books and XML books.They produce 150 titles per year. They have three recording studios, and in two of them blind narrators work in them, and they are experts in Croatian language, they take care of standard Croatian pronunciation of classical literature. This is produced for schools. They also have narrators who record from home, so they have to edit their recordings. And editing of books is costly, so they have to make changes in their department. The lending department is planning to change their system of lending and returning titles.  And they are planning to change that this year and introduce the non-return service. Last year the library celebrated 50 years since its inauguration. They organize two events per month; they hold braille reading and short story contests.
3. National Library of Serbia (Serbia): Nedeljka Lozajic,
4. In the NLS, they have a department for the blind and partially sighted. The department has two employers. In the reading room they have five computers equipped with screen readers and braille displays, in addition to a few other devices for listening to audio books.  They have embossers and scanners; they scan materials for their patrons, and sometimes emboss part of books or texts requested by their patrons. They have braille books, talking books and talking books. A few years ago, they began to make the audio books available at their department, while before that they were available in the public reading area with other audio material.  They department for the blind was inaugurated in NLS in 2011. They organize events, one of which is a reading braille competition held once a year and also they organize accessible exhibitions with braille text. Last year they organized an exhibition with audio description and braille, it was an exhibition of sculptures of famous artists of Serbia. The library users are mainly students, researchers which come to the library because it has different materials of scientific titles, and also is a depository library of all titles published in Serbia. Since 2011, they started receiving e books of legal deposits, and all patrons can receive titles published in Serbia.
5. National Library Service (USA): K. Keninger,

The NLS is a federally funded organization and is part of the library of congress. They provide braille and audio formats to a network of 106 libraries across the country who provide all the patrons service.

They contact with special contactors to have books narrated and brailed, and this has been their model for the last 85 years.

Now they are working with commercial audio publishers, and they have managed to convince 5 audio publishers to give them access to all of their audio material produced at no cost. So they can choose the ones they want in the NLS collection and then convert them to talking books format, so far they have done about a 1000 of those titles. They have also added to their collection this last year, about 2000 custom narrated titles, so that’s a total of 3000 titles, which is more than 1000 title than what they’ve been traditionally doing.

They have another cooperative project they have that goes across state borders. Around 30 libraries with recording and braille programs provide them with their material for the NLS download service. This has added about 2000 titles to their collection in the last year and a half.

The NLS and the network libraries, have a set of standards developed by the ALA/ ASCLA. Those standards are what they measure their libraries against. And consult them to see areas of improvements. It’s revised every 5 to 6 years, and it’s going to be republished this year.

The NLS Traditionally provides hard copy braille. They want to move to electronic braille in the future. There’s going to be a low cost refreshable braille display announced at CSun. The goal was to get a 300 dollar braille display.

Theyre working with another federal agency, to distribute a currency reader to identify the currency and this project has helped publicize the library and its services.

The NLS has around 400,000 patrons in addition to institutions. 10% of them actively use the application.

1. South African Library for the Blind  (South Africa):  Francois Hendrikz,

They are the only library for the blind in South Africa, and also the continent apart from the Library of Alexandria. They are a borrowing and lending library. They have around 5,000 registered members. They have around 5000 titles; audio and braille they produce 300 new audio and braille titles per year which is a small percentage of what is published yearly in South Africa. As well as collaborating with other organization to produce titles. They purchase a number of titles from USA, RNIB and Vision Australia. They started producing magazines and newspapers. The process is still slow but it’s building so they are looking for making online services. They are planning to collaborate with the magazines and newspapers themselves in the production of titles and make them also available online.   Although online is not a solution for South Africa at this stage because of limited connectivity in rural areas and also expensive.  So downloading titles is not an option, so sending the books through postal services is still the best option for the time being. But still they have issues with postal services. So they are looking for alternatives to overcome these issues.

45 people work at the library. They do their own their narration, narrators work from home, and they do editing and proof reading of books.  They have four studios.

The library is going to use a new library system.

The library initiated the Mini-library project in order to extend their services to public libraries. They provide training to library staff and members of the local community as well as putting system equipment.  It has been going for three years now, and it’s funded by the government but also they have to look for additional funding. They also monitor all activities and exchange of books.

In South Africa, they have 11 official languages. English and Afrikaans are the main languages. So it’s challenging narrating books in other indigenous languages of the country. So they have approached the correctional services. They went to one of the biggest prisons in South Africa to put upp narrating studios, and train all inmates who speak these languages on the narration of books. They were enthusiastic. And they are currently running a pilot project, and they have produced the first Zulu book in prison. Now they are looking at logistics and quality then they will start producing with the other languages.

1. Celia Library (Finland): Kirsi Ylanne,

Celia is operating under the Ministry of Education and Culture. Funding comes from the Culture sector. There are about 50 people working at Celia. Celia produces about 1000 digital talking books and 100-150 Braille title annually. Celia also produces textbooks for primary, secondary and university level. Celia has 20,000 customers.

Celia is changing as an organization from a library into a specialist centre on accessible publishing and literature. We’ll stop using ‘Library’ in our name and talk only about ‘Celia’ instead of ‘Celia Library’.

Project Library for All which aim was to provide Celia’s talking books via public libraries to print disabled persons ended at the end of 2015. Now the service model developed during the project is used in about 300 public libraries. (There are about 760 public libraries in Finland.) Developing the co-operation between Celia and public libraries goes on. New print disabled customers can start using Celia’s talking books by joining the service at public libraries.

Celia launched a new mobile app for reading Daisy books in September. The app is called Pratsam Reader and there are versions for iPad / iPhone and for Android. The app is free of charge but users need user accounts and passwords from Celia.

A new library information system and customer user interface is being developed and the plan is to start using it in the beginning of 2017. Celia has joined TIGAR but will not upload its titles into TIGAR until the data conversions needed for the new library information system are finished and the new system is in use.

Celia has been involved in composing an Accessibility Guidelines for Public Libraries with several organizations from the library sector in Finland as well as disability organisations. The Guidelines will be published in May 2016 in Finnish and Swedish.

A new Finnish Library Act in planned to come into force in the beginning of the year 2017. Celia has taken part in the workshops during the preparing the draft for the Act. There are hopes that accessibility will be mentioned in the new Act.

1. Association Valentin Haüy (France): Luc Maumet,

AVH is a private library, it was created in 1884. It’s the first braille library in the world. AVH has 500 employees, but only 30 persons are working for the library itself. They have 5000 active library users. They have made  180,000 loans: 48% download and 52% CDs.

Last year they have seen a big increase in the number downloaded audio books. It’s estimated that the number of downloads will increase in the coming year rather than books on CDs. They offer audio books on CD on demand. 12% of the loans were TTS titles, and it has been a success. Now they have more than 20000 audio books, 12,000 braille and 2,000 digital braille. They started exchanging titles with other countries like Switzerland and Belgium. They are now discussing how they will make collection development of titles, putting into consideration the exchange of titles.

Their main mission is to promote of Braille, 25% of their loans was digital braille. They started producing digital braille in 2013, but the braille devices are still expensive for the library to really push the use of digital braille. So if they become less expensive they would be able to do more in promoting the use of Braille among their patrons to be able to have a larger collection and increase the loans of braille titles.

At the end of 2016, there will be a new national law active that will enable the library to serve dyslexic patrons as well.

They are involved in the TIGAR service. They got more than 1000 French titles from TIGAR and will take around 5000 English titles this year.

For the past 4 years, they have been working on building a network of public library partners. Now they are 57 libraries. These public libraries offer the services of AVH to the end user. They are working with the ministry of culture on this project and they have proposed to increase the number of partner libraries to 300 by 2019 and the ministry of culture has approved their proposal.

They are building a second edition of their digital library, the online library will be available for the partner libraries to make subscriptions for their patrons and enable them to download titles.

1. Luisterpuntbibliotheek: Flemish Library for Audio Books and Braille Books (Belgium): Geert Ruebens,

Luisterpunt is a public library, which lends books in an adapted form to those who are blind or visually impaired and to other persons who are print-impaired, i.e. persons with dyslexia. More information on: [www.luisterpuntbibliotheek.be](http://www.luisterpuntbibliotheek.be).

For the moment the collection includes over 26.000 Daisy books (these are audio books) and 9.000 digital braille books. The complete collection of books can be consulted in the on line catalogue: <http://daisybraille.bibliotheek.be>. We have about 5.000 patrons.

Schools, homes for elderly people, public libraries and other institutions can also get a Daisy collection of about 100 audio books or more for free. For the moment 90% of all the Flemish public libraries in Flanders and Brussels has a Daisy collection and a Daisy player.

Luisterpunt is a specialized public library, which receives grants from the Flemish Government within the decree on local cultural policy (the main targets in this decree are local cultural policy, public libraries and cultural centres). Last year we lost 5% of our budget and need to reduce staff.

The Daisy Online Project was launched by Luisterpunt at the end of 2014. All the Daisy audiobooks can be read online either through streaming or by downloading. Patrons with a print disability can access these on different devices: a stand-alone Daisy player with internet connection, a Daisy web player on the technological platform ([www.anderslezen.be](http://www.anderslezen.be)) and all kind of Daisy-app (iOs and Android) installed on tablets and mobile devices. For the moment we still have some problems with the app’s. Next step will be that all patrons of public libraries with a print disability can reach the Daisy Online Project of Luisterpunt.

Saskia Boets for LPD and Helle Mortensen for LSN coordinated the revision of the IFLA Guidelines for Library services for people with dyslexia.  Now there is a Dutch translation, so Luisterpunt will organise in 2016 meetings and trainings for public libraries in Flanders.

Together with Bibliotheekservice Passend Lezen and Dedicon from the Netherlands Luisterpunt realised in 2014 the unification of the digital braille-collection. All titles from Luisterpunt are available for patrons in the Netherlands and vice versa. In 2016 the Daisy-audio collection will form focus of a similar unification project.

1. MTM (Sweden): Kristina Passad,

Swedish Agency for Accessible Media, MTM, is under the administration of the Ministry of Culture.  Their collection has around 110, 000 titles; they produce around 4000 to 5000 titles per year. There are about 125 persons working at the agency. The team has been working together for over a year now.  And they still have discussions over target groups that are not reading or Visually impaired but also the people who do not speak Swedish as a native language. They still can’t lend the books that are in the catalogue but are still a target group for the agency. They have around 85,000 patrons using the App but actually half of them are active. When they started the app, there were so many people under 18 that became patrons, and they were always giving them lots of suggestions. They also work through the public libraries and university libraries which also send them suggestions for titles. And they are actually drowning with suggestions, which is really good, good for patrons but also they need to think of a new system to say no, not because they want to say no but because they are restricted with a budget. They also have a project with the Nordic countries, in producing 25 titles in Arabic, 5 of them are children books. They will be having a meeting in March to discuss the project. They Also have another project for producing Epub 3  books in the future.

On their website, the agency offers some reading recommendations for their patrons, and it has been visited often by their users. They started book clubs for young patrons and another one for braille readers.

1. American Library Association (ALA): Mike Marlin,

There’s a division of ALA which is entitled ASCLA, which includes accessible libraries, consultants, interlibrary loans and other consortia’s and state libraries. There are many different subsets of this group including producing the standards for the national library services for the blind and physically handicapped. They also run an Accessibility assembly, which is a group of people that have met at every library conference, and there are two each year. There’s an annual conference in the summer which features all kinds of interesting programs, author talks and presentations. There’s also a midwinter conference which primarily is comprised of meetings of different groups. There have been concerns about accessibility issues of conferences over the years, like lack of captioning which has been resolved to a certain extent. But problems with room placement, carpeted hallways which  for people with wheelchairs is problematic or stairs and node lifts, there’s a whole slew of issues and the whole conundrum of how do blind people navigate an exhibit’s floor. ALA has around 1000 vendors and it’s a huge room and the question is how to get around that. There’s the problem of the conference apps, or just being able to put up a schedule if you’re blind and to be able to have an accessible conference scheduler.

The most recent conference came up with a resolution of a task for conference accessibility.   They have outsourced apps to a vendor, which did not make it accessible, which happened also with the IFLA app which was not fully accessible.

Most of the complaints were anecdotal, and there was no real data to provide a report on. They created an accessibility help desk for the first time this year, working in the conference to address problems immediately. And also one of the tasks is to set up conference accessibility guidelines for contracting future conferences, as far as building layout, online applications conforming to the WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines), and research best practices for accessibility training, as all  of the members of the ALA are volunteers,  in the various divisions like cataloguing, library technology, school librarians  and children librarians, many of them do not consider accessibility when putting together a program. The idea is to be able to come up with the best practice to provide an annual training to these various volunteer leaders to try to make conferences accessible. And the number of people with disabilities is growing every year. So the ALA is addressing this and taking it seriously but there’s a lot to do in this matter.

The universal accessibility interest group offers librarians, support staff, students, and other advocates networking and collaboration opportunities, information sharing and programming to promote accessibility in academic libraries, including web accessibility, assistive technology, reference and instruction for users with disabilities and captioning processes. You don’t have to be a member of the ALA to be on their mailing list.  The website is [www.uniacessig.org](http://www.uniacessig.org)

There are some substantive discussions on accessibility issues, for example there’s a project on Libguides for students with disabilities.

Another project is VPAT: Voluntary Product Accessibility Template. Many academic and some public libraries are putting together templates for vendors, such as database vendors, to make their products more accessible and compliant with WCAG.

Also ASCLA puts together  training , they do several webinars throughout the year, usually they are more generic introduction to people with disabilities for public libraries, different types of  assistive technology, services for the deaf, and captioning  videos. And they are very well attended as the need for providing accessible services in libraries in the US is growing every year.

The ALA was part of the Marrakesh negotiations as well. They are advocating for accessible e-readers, as the companies wanted to get exempted from making e-readers accessible. But the ALA has been trying to get them to comply.

1. Norwegian Library of Talking Books and Braille (Norway): kari Kumeneje,

The lending department in the NLB has 16 employees. They are using the same library system as that used in public libraries in Norway. Currently, they are not working together with public libraries, but there are plans to cooperate with the National Library of Norway, and reach out to all public libraries spread out across the country.

In the last four years the number of patrons has increased by 12,000 users.

They offer special services for children, adults and students.

Although they are financed by the ministry of culture, they still have to produce books for students, and it is cut from their budget not from that of the ministry of education. So they are trying to get funds from the ministry of education.

They are having budget cuts, so they will have to cut down on lending services. And make patrons depend more on online services and serve themselves. Last year they lend out 700,000 copies and 60% of them were sent out on CDs. Although students prefer to download books and use the application instead of CDs.

They produce to 600 to 700 titles per year and also purchase commercial books. All leisure books are narrated and use TTS with text books.

They are involved in TIGAR; they have downloaded 50 titles on TIGAR. They uploaded 10 titles in Norwegian.

1. Taha Hussein Library for the Blind and Visually Impaired- Bibliotheca Alexandrina (Egypt): Yasmine Youssef,

Taha Hussein (TH) Library is one of the special libraries at Bibliotheca Alexandrina dedicated
   to offer services, programs and activities for the blind and visually impaired patrons.

  The library was officially opened on October 16th, 2002, during the Bibliotheca Alexandrina
  inauguration ceremonies. Then, it has been renovated in 2008.

The Taha Hussein Library for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TH) holds; a big, diverse collection of braille, audio and large print books, and has recently introduced digital talking books. In 2010, we established a production unit for digital talking books, concentrating on only Arabic titles for the time being. Currently, the TH library has produced more than 170 DAISY Arabic titles, and we are in the process of building an online library for the library patrons.

Some of the Activities provided at the library include: Computer Courses, How to Use & Navigate DTBs, Orientation and Mobility “O & M”  Courses using the White Cane;  It teaches people with visual impairments how to move safely and effectively using a long  cane independently. Our main target is training girls and kids. We focus on blind girls, as   here in Egypt, they lack cane travel skills due to cultural issues. This course increases their independence and confidence. Moreover, the focus on kids arose in order to cope with the

international stream of familiarizing them with  the cane at an early age, Educational Rehabilitation Program for Pre-school Kids: It is an educational program for the preschool blind children consisting of  teaching them how to move and walk  using the white cane, Braille basics, and  how to deal with the computer through a specific screen reader software for the blind, “Discover & Express”: It is an art educational program aiming at familiarizing the visually impaired children with their environment through different kinds of manual arts, and tactil. “Understanding Braille graphics”: this program used to be held at El Nour school for the blind girls. “Equal Access” competitions: It is a series of cultural competitions that gathered sighted and blind elementary students aiming at integrating blind children with their sighted peers, and creating a sort of equal access among them.