

A Checklist for a Successful Accessible Conference

Prepared by the Library Services to People with Special Needs Section

Goal: Remove mobility and inclusiveness barriers that prevent attendees from participating fully and comfortably in all aspects of a conference.

As groups plan conferences, LSN suggests that the following questions be asked:

- If I have mobility issues, what would help me participate in and gain more from the conference?
- If I have hearing issues, what would help me participate in and gain more from the conference?
- If I have visual issues, what would help me participate in and gain more from in the conference?
- If I have trouble with languages other than my own, what would help me participate in and gain more from the conference?

The Accessible Design Foundation of Japan in their *Meetings for Everyone*, says: "If the needs of people who experience difficulty participating in meetings can be accommodated, they can be more active in discussions and new ideas will become possible. It is important to consider all measures that are necessary to make meetings more accessible for a wider range of people."

Before the Conference

Recommendation	Discussed or completed	Comments
Make sure the website with registration information is accessible for everyone. To accomplish this, test the conference web site content and pages using assistive technologies including screen reader and magnification software, text recognition software, and dictation software.		
Ask in advance on the conference registration form if people have mobility hearing or visual issues.		

Ensure that <u>ALL</u> programs are held in rooms accessible to people with mobility issues. Avoid rooms with stairs unless there is an easily accessible flat area with reserved seating.		
Include in the conference program a page on accommodations for people with mobility, hearing, or visual issues.		
Indicate what public transportation is available for people with disabilities such as trains, trams, etc.		
Ask speakers to provide their power point slides in advance and post on the IFLA library website (require in subsequent years).		
Train volunteers to look for people with accessibility issues and offer to help them. Explain accommodations (special seating in plenary sessions, rest areas in the exhibit area, where to get help, etc.)		
Ask hotels close to the convention center to set aside a certain number of rooms for people with mobility issues and indicate these in the registration information.		
Ask planners of satellite and off site meetings to choose accessible sites and inquire from attendees if what accommodation they might need.		
Investigate if scooters for the convention center can be arranged. Notify people in advance that they are available and allow them to reserve them.		

Share this checklist with the host site and determine the degree to which they can meet these needs.		
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During the Conference

Recommendation	Discussed or completed	Comments
Place a sign at the registration desk or information desk that says: "Accessibility questions." This does not need to incur any additional costs. The conference staff should be prepared to answer all kinds of questions from attendees and solve problems.		
Ensure there is sufficient space for wheel chairs, scooters, and people with walkers and that there are no obstacles to access and movement throughout the facility and particularly in the exhibit area.		
Elevators and accessible toilet facilities should be clearly marked and numerous. All toilets should have some designated fully accessible stalls to accommodate electric wheelchairs or there should be signs to accessible toilets.		
There should be automatic doors or accessibility buttons to open doors at all entrances or at least all major entrances.		
Stairs and downward slopes should be clearly marked and have hand rails (increasingly important for older people with or without mobility issues.) Large glass surfaces should be marked.		
Ensure the speaker's platform is accessible to people with mobility issues or have a moveable ramp available.		

Provide a captioning system for plenary sessions. LSN program will focus on <i>Guidelines for Library Services to People Who Are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or Deaf/Blind.</i>		
Add audio explanations to video presentations.		
Set aside seats in the major auditorium for people with disabilities and arrange early admission for people who need extra time.		
Place warning signs on entrances to rooms where flashing lights are used.		
Plan accessible transportation to any offsite conference activities such as the cultural evening. Plan a way for attendees to ask for transportation and allocate funds to repay them any costs.		
Ensure there are alternative food options, clearly labeled, at all conference planned events that include food (Email: "As a vegetarian, I kept trying to find out if the food contained meat. The waiters didn't seem to know.")		
Design a method to track requests for assistance to inform planning for future conferences.		

After the Conference

Recommendations	Discussed or completed	Comments
Include questions about the degree to which the conference met the needs of people with mobility, hearing, visual, or		

other challenges to full participation in the IFLA conference.		
At the conclusion of each conference, evaluate accessibility using this checklist.		