The secret behind the success: Libraries in Finland.
IFLA Presidential Theme.

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President-elect 2011-2013, IFLA
Deutscher Bibliothekartag 2012, Hamburg
Firstly: Copenhagen-Berlin Cycling for Libraries (CFL) 2011 organizers in Finland send greetings and thanks to the German colleagues

- Fotos: Jonas Tana
Finland – some facts

Population 5.3 million inhabitants

Area 338 424 km²
10% water, 188 000 lakes,
70% forest

Independence 1917
EU membership 1995
Currency euro 1999

Languages: Finnish 92%,
Swedish 5.5%,
Sami (Lapp) 1700 people

IFLA WLIC 2012 in Helsinki

Helsinki The World Design Capital 2012
Libraries in Finland: an introduction

- Finnish library system provides information freely for everyone, irrespective of social status, age or place of residence.

- All Finnish public, research and university libraries, and even the Library of Finnish Parliament, are open to everyone.

- Culturally, the Finns hold reading and literacy in high esteem. Faith in the power of information and knowledge is strong.
A short history of public libraries

- **Pre 19th century**
  - First book in Finnish Missale Aboense 1488, printed in Lübeck
  - First library open to public in 1794

- **Nationalistic movement on the 19th century**
  - Finnish language got official status along with Swedish in 1863
  - Popular education movement -> public libraries

- **Independence and growth of the modern library network on the 20th century**
  - Idea of American type of public libraries adopted
  - Most cities and municipalities opened their own public libraries, 1700 libraries in 1928 when the first Library Act came into force
Legislation and Strategies

- Since the first (Public) Library Act 1928, the use and lending of library collections have been free of charge.

- The Library Act 1961 categorized high quality public libraries as one of the main services to be provided by the growing welfare state. The Act was amended in 1986 and 1998

- National policies and strategies for public and university libraries ensure adequate library funding and purposeful development of libraries
- Finnish Public Library Policy 2015
- Teaching and research environment 2020
Public Library Strategies

- **Library Strategy 2010.** Policy for Access to Knowledge and Culture (2003) was one of the first European public library strategies – libraries have an extensive role to play in learning, teaching and active citizenship.

- **Library Development Program 2006-2010 (2006)** emphasized the importance of libraries in rural and provincial areas.

- **Finnish Public Library Policy 2015 (2009)** libraries must focus on expertise and emphasize quality in services.
Finnish Public Libraries

- A public library in every municipality (308), branch libraries (486), bookmobiles (152) and one library boat
- Public libraries are maintained by the municipalities, state subsidies cover 40% of total expenditure
- The state finances partly library buildings and mobile libraries
- The use in 2011: 18 loans and 10 visits/inhabitant/year
- Public libraries serve also schools
- The patron at the center, always!
- Libraries meet the needs of their patrons
Finnish Research and Special Libraries

- First university library 1640 in Turku
- University library network started to evolve in the 19th century
- National Library, university and polytechnic libraries
- Cooperation and joint libraries between different higher education institutions
- Over 200 special libraries
Finnish School Libraries

No legislation for school libraries, varying resources and quality

About 60 schools have improved school libraries through the national project Reading Finland

Good cooperation between public libraries and schools

Public libraries and mobile libraries serve also schools

National school library days every second year
Finnish Libraries and PISA (OECD)

- Finnish students of 15 years old have been successful in PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) studies by OECD

- The recipe for success:
  - The educational system
  - Highly competent teachers
  - Freedom given to schools
  - A high-quality and efficient public library network, open to all, free of charge
Challenges

- **for all libraries**: digitalization of information; how can libraries compete with other information providers both in quantity and in quality

- **for research libraries**: digitalization of the working environment of researchers, teachers and students: 70% of budgets are used to e-books and e-journals – still there are users that prefer printed materials

- **for public libraries**: the increase in the number of e-books: how and on what terms public libraries can provide and ”loan” e-books to their users?

- **for the welfare state model**: An aging population and the fluctuations of an export driven globalized economy -> on-going renovation of the public sector and related legislation, reduction in number of municipalities, restructuring higher education -> libraries cope with cooperation and networking
On the IFLA Presidential Theme
IFLA in a Nutshell

- IFLA is an independent, international, non-governmental, non-for-profit organisation
- A trusted global voice for libraries
- 1500 members in 150 countries
- Founded 1927
- Flagships: Strategy, Five Key Initiatives, Annual conferences, Core activities etc.
- www.ifla.org
On the IFLA Presidential Theme

- A tool for the IFLA President for her/his work
- Is based on and promotes the IFLA Strategy and the Five Key Initiatives
- Each President has a profile of her/his own and the theme characterizes it
- Themes are build on the previous themes to enable continuation
Latest IFLA Presidents & Themes

- Claudia Lux, 2007-2009
  - Libraries on the Agenda (advocacy)

- Ellen Tise, 2009-2011
  - Libraries Driving Access to Knowledge (open access)

- Ingrid Parent, 2011-2013
  - Libraries – a Force for Change!

- Sinikka Sipilä, 2013-2015
  - Strong Libraries = Strong Societies
My Presidential theme

Strong Libraries = Strong Societies: democratizing access to knowledge through libraries

**Access** – freedom of access to information and knowledge

**Inclusion** – library services for all

**Profession** – development of the profession and associations
President-elect’s Planning Session
Thursday 16 August 8.30-10.30 IFLA WLIC Helsinki

Welcome!
Thank you for your attention!
References and credits

- Mäkinen, Ilkka, 2011: A family of nations, a family of libraries: Libraries in the Nordic countries through the ages.
- Information on public libraries [link to public libraries information]
- Photos courtesy of:
  - Jonas Tana, (Cyclists and Berlin)
  - [link to Helsinki City photo]
  - [link to Marimekko photo]
  - [link to Ylöjärvi Municipal Library]
  - [link to Heinola City Library]
  - [link to Helsinki Main Library]
  - [link to Meilahti Campus Library]
  - [link to National Library]
  - [link to PISA Publication]
  - Espoo City Library (A reading boy)
  - [link to IFLA Presidents]
  - Marjatta Lahti (An African boy)
  - Hannele Frantsi (Ymmersta School library, Espoo)
  - [link to Helsinki Convention Centre]