

“EUROPE FOR ALL – STAKEHOLDER CONFERENCE ON ACCESSIBLE

Speech

Session 4 *Accessible Infrastructure in Destinations*

Panellist: *Liisa HUNDERTMARK*

ACCESSIBLE INFRASTRUCTURE IN DESTINATIONS

General view

I will talk about the topic about “accessible infrastructure in destinations” from the experiences at Fyrishov in Uppsala, Sweden.

After a short description over the business and visitors I will try to put the attention to 3 specific areas of interest;

The first two from a more general point of view:

- Definitions and guidelines,
- Extended accessibility

and finally the third from a more practical experience:

- Security standards

BACKGROUND

Arena Fyrishov

Fyrishov AB is a local public enterprise in Sweden, Uppsala fully owned by the City of Uppsala.

Business activities

- Indoor Waterpark
- Swimming Pools
- Sports & Events
- Restaurants & Cafés
- Accommodation
- Open every day.
- 150 employees.

Visitors

- 1 300 000 visitors per year:
- In different ages, individually or in groups.
- Different activities and purposes of visit.
- Individual abilities and capacities.
- Different cultural backgrounds.
- All days around the year.
- Different times of the day.

First specific area of interest from a general point of view – Definitions and Guidelines

In our work towards to be a more accessible arena we meet several different challenges.

One of them is the lack of a clear and distinct definition and what we mean with “accessibility for all”?

Do we have a general definition of what we mean with accessibility?

And what do we mean with “for all”?

When shall we, or shall we not, give an extra specific support and if so, on which grounds?

Who is the receiver?

We can for instance group receivers in:

- Mentally or physically disabled persons.
- Visible or non visible handicapped.
- Temporary or permanent in time.

I want to give you an example by following:

– A disabled person would want to visit the pool area at Fyrishov.

To her / his help, to be able to do so the person need an assistant as a kind of “human tool” to overcome some practical impediments on the way.

Shall the assistant pay a full entrance fee to the pool area (or cinema, theatre, bus, train, airline, hotel ecc) or not?

If not, who shall decide about the subsidiary given and on which grounds?

If yes, then we have created an economical barrier instead of a physical.

We have noted that this kind of questions and the need of more clear and distinct definitions are increasing all the time.

Our experience - is that there is increasing need to clear out the definitions and maybe also to introduce some kind of certification if additional support and / or subsidy are needed / requested.

Second specific area of interest from a general point of view – Extended accessibility

Accessibility in an extended perspective is not only an issue of physical barriers as buildings or place of work ecc.

Accessibility can also be regarded in a multicultural perspective as to be “open all days”.

That means to us, at Fyrishov, that we do not close because of traditions or Christian holidays. We are open and operating every day meaning that anybody can come whenever they like.

Our experience – is that people with other traditions or beliefs use this service more heavily during this traditionally “closed service periods”. But if the person, should have some kind of need, of complementing assistance or social service, these are often heavily reduced or totally closed.

So, even if Fyrishov is accessible the surrounding social service systems are not.

The reason to this is often the different traditions, but also, to the higher cost of labour during “red holidays”.

Finally the third area of interest, which is a more practical experience - Security standards

Security is an important topic to the whole tourism industry. And we really do have, quite many clear and distinct definitions and control systems around the security area in general.

But, what about the standards of security regarded in an accessibility point of view? How can we efficiently evacuate a disabled person from the second floor if the elevators are standing?

Our experience – is that evacuation plans in an accessible point of view are not well adapted. There is a notable lack of braille signing in most evacuation notice boards. There is also a notable lack of functional methods of evacuation, as tools in form of adapted palanquins ecc.

But also the education and development of easy adapted standards as how to place the fire-extinguishers so that they are possible to reach from a wheelchair position ecc.

This area could be of more specific interest both in the area of research and development, and also in education and practical training of evacuation situations.

Ladies and gentlemen,
thank you for your kind attention

Liisa HUNDERTMARK
Email: liisa.hundertmark@fyrishov.se

www.fyrishov.se

www.kfs.net

www.ceep.org