

How will we design the future – Users perspectives

Anna Caldén, Finland

SAMS – Samarbetsförbundet kring funktionshinder rf

1.6.2023, Harpa Concert Hall and Conference Centre

Dear participants of the conference, Ladies and Gentlemen

Thank you for inviting me to speak about how we who are in need of disability services in a daily basis would like to design the future. I am from Finland and working as a coordinator at SAMS. SAMS is an organisation for people with disabilities. SAMS is working especially for the Swedish-speaking minority of Finland. The Swedish-speaking population of Finland is a linguistic minority in Finland.

After listening to the first two speakers today who spoke about opportunities after the 4th Industrial Revolution and how to create our future society, I am sure that we need to be open to think outside of the box. The society is changing and the changes in human interaction and behaviour happen naturally over time. Societies adapt to the circumstances around them. New thinking can change the tide in the services for people with disabilities.

The main challenges of today

From a user perspective it is important that we put a lot of effort in participation. The most important for an inclusive future is to establish policy that insures real participation for persons with different disabilities. This means that policymakers need to listen to us through the whole process when making changes and laws. We need to be included in the earlier stages of different procedures.

We see a lot of good change concerning participation but, in some cases, it seems to be more of a fake democracy -as we like to call it. Meaning that policymakers listen to us only because it is an obligation, and in the end product our needs and concerns are only partly met or nowhere to be seen.

It is also important to analyze the consequences of legislative measures for people with disabilities and other minorities.

The future of welfare services for people with disabilities

From a user perspective the only way to insure real participation of the future welfare services is implementing of CRPD in the municipalities and welfare counties. We think that implementing equality, inclusion and participation of a person with disabilities in society should be the priority.

We believe that supporting the independent life of a person with disabilities and the realization of the right to self-determination as well as to ensure adequate and good quality services in accordance with the individual needs is important when designing the future. No one should be left behind and when barriers are removed disabled people can be independent and equal in society instead of being seen as a burden.

Nothing about us without us!

Thank you for your attention!