Of all the themes we have had to date, "Building Bridges Beyond Borders" is the one that best describes the roles of the International Initiative for Mental Health Leadership (IIMHL) and the International Initiative for Disability Leadership (IIDL). The unique format of our main event, the Leadership Exchange, gives leaders the opportunity to reflect on their work, meet colleagues with similar interests and build partnerships focusing on effective innovation and creative ideas for developing well-being in our countries, regions and local communities.

We are absolutely delighted that as many as 94% of attendees reported after the leadership exchange that they had an idea of an area to prioritise and also knew what they needed to do to build a bridge for collaboration with an international colleague so that innovation could quickly be shared across borders.

The more than 30 thematic exchanges, undertaken by host organisations from Iceland to Holland and from Ireland to Finland, with most taking place in Sweden, covered many of the functions in society that we encounter throughout the course of our lives. All were designed to build bridges between many different types of leaders. Over 500 leaders took part, all motivated by having an opportunity to learn from others. During the second half of the week, over 400 leaders took part in the Network Meeting in Stockholm, which employed new technology, art and spatial design to provide the best possible environment for learning and collaboration. This resulted in many interesting discussions and plans being made to pursue collaboration long after all had left Stockholm.

It is worth noting that our week-long Leadership Exchange welcomed a lot of new attendees (84%), extending the involvement of people with lived experience and new, younger leaders.

For many leaders, the richness of learning and relationships from the 2018 Leadership Exchange was the most productive aspect of their work that year. Our thanks go to the Swedish Government, all 'match' hosts and everyone involved in organising the Leadership Exchange for what was a wonderful week.

Frans Silvestri  
President & CEO, IIMHL and IIDL

Fredrik Lindencrona  
Chair of SCLG IIMHL, 2017-2019  
Project Lead IIMHL & IIDL, 2018

Eddie Bartnik  
Chair of SCLG IIMHL

Ola Balke  
Project Lead IIDL 2018
IIMHL Matches
28–29 May

The first element of the IIMHL Leadership Exchanges is the ‘thematic exchanges’. These take place over two days and involve between 10 and 30 people from the participating countries. The Leadership Exchange in Sweden featured 27 thematic exchanges (shown right and below) and over 500 attendees. For the first time, most of the exchanges were arranged through a partnership between a local host organisation and an international co-hosting organisation. Both the choice of exchanges and delivery formats reflected the theme for the year – “Building Bridges Beyond Borders” – for example through extensive participation by people in different leadership roles and active meetings aiming to build sustainable collaborative relationships after the exchange was over.

### Building

- **Mental health and benchmarking**
  Penumbra (Scotland), Mission Mental Health/SKL (Sweden), NHS England Benchmarking and the Mental Health Foundation (UK)

- **Research funders and support for implementation**
  Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life and Welfare (FORTE) and McMaster University (Canada)

- **Inter-sectoral funding and financial modelling**
  Mission Mental Health/SKL (Sweden) and the London School of Economics (UK)

- **Arts festivals for mental health**
  Darling Desperados (Stockholm), the Big Anxiety Festival (Sydney) and the Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival

### Bridges

- **Cross-sector strategies in cities and urban regions**
  Region Stockholm and the Mental Health Foundation (UK)

- **Cross-sector suicide prevention strategies**
  The Public Health Agency of Sweden and the US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) (USA)

- **Mental health work in schools**
  Region of West Sweden and SMHILE (School Mental Health International Leadership Exchange)

- **Barriers to and promotion of good mental health in the workplace**
  Mission Mental Health, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKL)

- **Work and an inclusive working life – a human right**
  Mission Mental Health/SKL (Sweden) and Mental Health Europe

- **Collaboration between players in acute crisis situations**
  Distress Brief Intervention (DBI) Central Team on behalf of the Scottish Government and Distress Brief Intervention Programme Board (Police Scotland, Scottish Ambulance Service, NHS24, Health Scotland, University of Glasgow, Scottish Government, Health and Social Care Partnerships and NGOs)

- **Substance abuse and psychiatry**
  Region Skåne (Sweden)

- **Human rights**
  Region Västra Götaland (Sweden) and Mental Health Europe

### Beyond borders

- **Migrants and newly-arrived refugees**
  Finnish National Institute of Health and Welfare and Dutch Association of Mental Health & Addiction Care

- **Young people’s participation**
  Tilia, the Mental Health Foundation (UK) and Frayme (Canada)

- **Older people**
  The Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare

- **Children and young people**
  Malmö University Hospital (Sweden) and Werry Workforce Whāraurau

- **Sámi and other indigenous peoples**
  Sámi Norwegian National Advisory Unit on Mental Health and Substance Abuse (Norway) and the Wharerata Leadership Group

- **Anti-stigma**
  Hjärnkoll (anti-stigma campaign Sweden), Time to Change (anti-stigma campaign England) and See Me (Scotland)

- **Families and relatives**
  The Swedish Partnership for Mental Health (NSPH) and the Swedish Family Care Competence Centre (NKA/SFCCC)
IIDL matches in May 2018

Ten thematic exchanges – ‘matches’ – took place during the leadership week in May, five of them in Sweden and five in other European countries. All matches fitted loosely into predefined main thematic headings, and concrete case studies were then discussed in workshops.

Swedish matches

1. How do banking and payment services work for people with learning disabilities and what measures can be put in place to improve access?
   Begripsam (accessibility organisation) and the Swedish Post and Telecom Authority (PTS)

2. How accessible is the democratic process, for example in terms of elections?
   The Swedish Agency for Participation and Lika Unika (disability umbrella organisation).

3. How can legislation be used as a tool for social change to increase self-determination and self-respect for people with disabilities?
   Independent Living and the European Network on Independent Living (ENIL)

4. How are human rights issues taken into consideration in mental health care?
   Region Västra Götaland and SKL (Sweden) and Mental Health Europe

5. The right to work – from stigma and segregation to human rights and integration
   Uppdrag Psykisk hälsa (mental health coordination body) and SKL (Sweden) and Mental Health Europe

European matches

6. Using family leadership and personal budgets to create a meaningful life
   LEAP Ireland, Aoife O’Toole, Dara Community Living and Possibilities Plus (Dublin)

7. How can we make access issues a natural part of politics and administration in the Nordic region?
   The Council for Nordic Cooperation on Disability and the Nordic Council of Ministers (Copenhagen)

8. How do we create a conscious agenda around cross-sectoral leadership?
   Local Area Coordination Network CIC and Inclusive Neighbourhoods Ltd (London)

9. From institutionalised services to community-based services and personalised support
   Kehitysvammaisten Palvelusäätiö (KVPS - Service Foundation for People with an Intellectual Disability) (Helsinki)

10. What is required to achieve success in the area of leadership and disability?
    Centre for Disability Studies, School of Social Sciences, University of Iceland (Reykjavik)
Plenary sessions

The network meeting formed the second half of the Leadership Exchange and began with a shared morning session for the IIMHL and the IIDL networks. This enabled participants to delve further into the Leadership Exchange’s “Building Bridges Beyond Borders” theme and to pursue joint work based on the intensive discussions that had taken place during the thematic exchanges earlier in the week. Plenary sessions and interactive workshops enabled the more than 400 attendees to work, learn and reflect together as a network.

Plenary session – Part 1: The Future: Challenges & Opportunities

The two introductory presentations were given by Anders Ekholm from the Institute for Futures Studies (Sweden) and Professor Paul Burstow, who has led a Mental Health Policy Commission at the University of Birmingham and was previously Minister of State at the Department of Health in the UK. The whole session focused on what the future might look like, and what strategies might enable us to benefit most from the positive aspects of future developments and can best equip us to meet the challenges we will face.

Plenary session – Part 2: Agenda 2030 & the Sustainable Development Goals – Leading the way?

After the workshops, the plenary sessions concluded with a linked session with Daniel Chisholm from the World Health Organisation’s Regional Office for Europe and Annika Jyrwall Åkerberg from Civil Rights Defenders who discussed how Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals might provide momentum for development.
Digital technology can help us identify much better ways of solving problems of real complexity if we come together to develop solutions jointly.

Our aim today is to structure our work towards a society that promotes mental health and inclusion of people with disabilities, two "wicked problems" (i.e. problems that are difficult to define and to structure), on the basis that the problems are technically complex but nonetheless predictable. To exert control over these, we divide them into smaller constituent parts, but this does not work when the problem areas are truly complex and composite. Our strategies going forward need to be based on knowledge of how to deal with complex problems, such as those that are integrated, interrelated or systemic. The power and speed of digital developments will provide the tools we need to better manage these types of challenges IF we are able to take a much more holistic approach in the way we address them.

Anders Ekholm, Institute for Futures Studies
Do no harm: In order to confront the issue of mental ill-health, we need to focus much more on prevention and promotion, and that requires a change of focus in funding.

Mental ill-health is a major challenge for our society that affects many people, early in their lives. Meanwhile, the system we have constructed, and are continuing to construct, to try to manage the issue is almost wholly focused on providing emergency responses to problems that arise. A more effective model focuses instead on factors that may cause problems, and so can prevent the need for care. This new, smarter model will have greater impact if the rules of the game are changed and everyone with needs can be involved as co-creators.
Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals are excellent guiding principles provided we ensure that we maintain a focus on human rights and that they are implemented systematically.

Agenda 2030 offers major opportunities to improve mental health both through inclusion of goal 3.4 and through the many other goals that are closely associated with the area. Future work should start by ensuring that everyone has the right to inclusion and to access to a quality of life that promotes health. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) details the human rights of everyone across all sections of society.

The fact that all the countries of the world are solidly behind these overriding agendas is an indication of both good intentions and considerable opportunities, but nothing will happen automatically and success is dependent on systematic implementation. The 400 plus attendees attending the network meeting gave their views on what they felt were the most significant barriers to achieving these aims. Top of the list were four different challenges: how we together create effective management and control across the various sectors; how we put an end to stigma and negative attitudes; how we attract political attention commensurate with the importance of the issues; and how we can make cleverer use of resources. In comparison to the four at the top of the list, the issue of increased resources was considered a lesser challenge.
Art, music and design

Viktor Alge & Elias Báåth
– Recovered

Joakim Kling – Radical rest

Photography: Marielle Andersson.

Left: Cecilia Margareta Tjärnberg
– Interior reminiscence therapy

Above: Simon Issát Marainen and Daniel Wejdin.

Left: Cecilia Margareta Tjärnberg
– Interior reminiscence therapy

“One thing that I liked in particular is how arts was used: Music, Poetry, Exhibitions. It is very unique, we loved it.”
– Fran Silvestri, CEO of IIMHL & IIDL
Left and below: Alice Stone
– Building rooms for social gathering

Sawsan Ahmed – Interacting benches

Project Futures,
Haringey Council, UK
World Café

During the network meeting, interactive workshops addressed three key questions as part of the overriding theme: “How do we develop a society that promotes mental health and social inclusion of people with disabilities?” Using the World Café method ensured that everyone – more than 70 tables of six people – had the opportunity to put forward their ideas and suggestions for subsequent discussion. The session was documented and a synthesis is shown in Figures 1-3.

**Figure 1: Beyond borders**

**How can we, as leaders, develop ethical principles to act as building blocks for a shared ethical foundation for the future?**

If key ethical principles are to be the foundation of the work going forward, we need to work together systematically. It became clear from the discussions that there are a range of established ethical principles, some of which are formally established, but establishment is merely a starting point – to have any impact, we need to ensure they are applied. The work needs to be driven both by formal and informal leaders and by everyone in society. This must be done co-creatively and inform all aspects of our activity and policy. It must therefore be given concrete expression by leaders (e.g. in visions, tasks, goals and funding), define what we perceive as knowledge and influence how managers and leaders are judged. Incentives to act accordingly must be clearly set out and the sharing of best practice between leaders in organisations and between organisations inside the country and internationally may help accelerate progress in the desired direction.

**Fundamental ethical principles**

**Human rights**
We acknowledge that everyone is of equal worth and respect our differences

**Autonomy and decision-making powers**
We listen most to those in greatest need

**Equal access**
We ensure that everyone has access to good-quality interventions

**Prevent and promote**
We take action on the causes of ill-health wherever we find them

**Social inclusion and non-discrimination**
We work to promote social inclusion and to counter discrimination

The Convention on Human Rights
The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
Agenda 2030
The Wharerata Declaration

“Human rights are more than ‘the bottom line’, they are the starting point”

**Who**
Everyone in all social contexts
Policymakers
People with formal leadership roles at all levels
People in various strategic supporting roles (e.g. communicators, statisticians, researchers)

**Where do we need to include this (examples)?**

The organisation’s vision, tasks and aims
Financial and other systems for allocating resources
Indicators used to demonstrate progress
Knowledge and evidence used in our organisations
Code of conduct and principles for the quality assessment of managers and leaders

**How can we do this**

- Share power
- Support new forms of networking for self help and lobbying
- Acknowledge lived experience and create secure forums for dialogue about different types of knowledge, perspectives and experiences
- Ensure there is a co-creational process to translate principles into guidance on strategy and practice
- Develop co-creational initiatives and try out new methods for inclusion for everyone

**How do we make it happen everywhere?**

- Ensure that these fundamental values inform all aspects of our activity
- Recruit diverse leaders with their own lived experience
- Provide training for everyone in the organisation
- Establish effective models for organisational development
- Leaders and managers should act as role models and quality-assure each other’s work
- Establish motivating factors and precise sanctions
- Secure relevant resources
- Collect and disseminate international experiences of organisational development around these issues
- Develop an international code of conduct and international benchmarking
How can we, as leaders, build a society that promotes mental health and social inclusion for people with disabilities?

A society that promotes mental health and inclusion for people with disabilities requires input both in respect of the systems that support people and in the way society functions generally. Support systems need to enhance co-creation and cross-sector collaboration to enable more meaningful input to be provided. Strengths in people and their environment and lived experience, for example of trauma, must have more influence on the shaping of our society. The link between support systems and positive aspects of the way society functions generally needs to be strengthened so that we can develop the right conditions for good mental health for all. Working together on joint leadership for development will need to be a constant process to help move development forward, a process in which our different experiences and skills will come together to create forward momentum.
How do we, as leaders, choose the strategies that will be of most help in driving the transformation towards the systems and actions we want?

The development we want to see will need committed, shared leadership across roles, sectors and contexts. With this unified leadership in place, the direction forward can be co-created in terms of shared values and challenging visions. We can secure this joint power if each and every one of us takes responsibility according to our circumstances and develops powerful collaborative relationships. To be successful, we will need to ensure that significant functions such as funding and priorities are directed towards our unified forward direction and that we put in place effective learning and testing, so that we can develop solutions that really make a difference.

Create structures for effective testing and learning
- Ensure there is a culture of curiosity for critical reflection and the courage to try new things
- Effective monitoring systems that measure what is important and provide feedback to assist learning and improvement
- A clear, inclusive process of innovation from idea to testing and from testing to scaling up
- Time and resources to drive the process of innovation and to learn
- A discontinuation process for things that we need to stop doing

Develop powerful collaborative relationships
- Always drive development alongside those affected by it and focus on what they want
- Establish an active strategy for learning from other people beyond your normal circles
- Be curious about how other people work
- Establish collaborations for development
- Build strong partnerships with other sectors
- Be generous in sharing your failures and successes

Ensure you have committed, shared leadership

Be prepared to succeed in changing
- Develop successful methods for influencing funders
- Define a purpose that is sufficiently important to bring everyone together to justify change
- Build up your own motivation for implementing the change on the basis of the unified forward direction
- Ensure you have active support from top management and at all levels
- Produce a strategy with data that appeals to the brain and stories that appeal to the heart

Clarify your own position and that of your organisation
- Use the tools that are available to you specifically
- Identify what is suitable for your organisation specifically
- Create the conditions you need to drive the process
- Look out for situations you can make use of
- Highlight and remove barriers specific to your organisation
- Tailor a change strategy to a specific situation

Create a unified forward direction
- Start from the values shared between all parties involved
- Formulate clear, inspiring aims and visions
- Support with clear measures of positive success that can bring everyone together

Figure 3: Building
IIMHL Workshops

During the network meeting, attendees took part in workshops that enabled more in-depth consideration of the issues discussed during the thematic exchanges at the start of the week. These had been integrated into a number of broader thematic areas that were discussed in parallel workshops – in the Investigative Workshops session on the first day of the network meeting and in the Tools Workshops on the second day.

Exploration workshops

The aim of the workshops in this session was to jointly investigate and formulate a future we would like to see based on the discussions during the thematic exchanges earlier in the week. This included clarifying factors that make possible or obstruct this future and the critical, game-changing ideas that were put forward. The workshops during this session were linked in various ways to Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals. Two of them dealt with specific target groups: children and families, and young people and young adults. The other five focused on one global goal each:

- Health and well-being (Goal 3),
- Education (Goal 4),
- Work and working life (Goal 8),
- Infrastructure for Innovation (Goal 9)
- Sustainable cities and communities (Goal 11).

Tools workshops

The aim of the workshops in this session was to discuss and create awareness of successful tools for change in order to move towards the future we want through systematic, methodical work on sustainable change and improvement. Eight different change strategies were presented by senior colleagues who are themselves actively using them to work towards improvement. The eight strategies were:

- Arts-based transformation,
- Effective advocacy for decision-makers and inhabitants,
- Policy dialogues,
- Funding to ensure focused outcomes across all stakeholders,
- Collective Impact Framework,
- Implementation and dissemination,
- Systems and service design.

IIDL’s separate programme at the network meeting

The May 2018 leadership week culminated in a two-day network meeting at the Globe City Annexet. Some parts of the meeting were held jointly with the parallel IIMHL network while others were managed separately.

The American leadership figure, Michael Kendrick, set the tone for IIDL’s two half-days with their approximately 100 attendees, speaking about how IIDL can help to develop international leadership.

One of IIDL’s aims is to enhance collaboration between the Nordic countries. Sweden is currently the only network member in our part of the world but Finland in particular has shown interest in future involvement. The programme included a Nordic panel session to highlight the situation in the various Nordic countries. The panel included Ase Kari Haugeto from Norway, Malin Ekman Aldén from Sweden, Kalle Könkkölä from Finland, Rannveig Traustadottir from Iceland and Jenny Nilsson from Denmark. The panel moderator was Ola Balke.

Four national status reports were also presented. Maryanne Diamond from Australia and Lucy Croft from New Zealand spoke about System Changes and Magnus Lagercrantz from Sweden and Krista Wilcox from Canada spoke about Social Inclusion.

The format of the programme allowed plenty of time for networking and for sharing experiences of leadership and disability. A Market Place was set up adjoining the meeting space, where organisations could display information and share their expertise.
Closing session

**IIMHL Action planning**

Throughout the various parts of the Leadership Exchange, an issue high on the agenda was the development of ideas for new forms of collaboration that can address attendees’ development-related challenges. The thematic exchanges closed with questions about how attendees could work together, issues that were also highlighted in the network meeting. The network meeting was designed to facilitate continued discussions on collaboration for joint development. During the meeting, there were over 3,000 contributions to the event app and attendees posted over 60 concrete ideas for collaborative initiatives. More than 90% of attendees felt that they had gained ideas for a new collaborative relationship around a priority area for their organisation and knowledge about how to go about initiating the collaboration.

**Plenary session – Part 3: Innovation in our fast-changing society**

The closing presentation was by Niklas Huss, Head of Innovation at Länsförsäkringar and a leading innovation and digitisation motivator, who spoke on the subject of how to create sustainable change for the future. With the considerable challenges facing us in respect of the future development of the welfare system, achieving successful change is hugely important. Niklas’s long experience of driving large-scale change in public and private organisations and currently at Länsförsäkringar (a member-owned insurance company founded by local communities) has led him to the conclusion that success has six main ingredients: 1) A clear and challenging vision; 2) Identify your DNA and build your culture; 3) Develop/strengthen the joint platform for collaboration; 4) A process of innovation that uses existing resources but is outside existing structures; 5) Test; and 6) Use the power of digitisation.

**Welcome to the United States**

The planning committee for IIMHL and IIDL 2019 in the United States and Canada welcomed all attendees to the next Leadership Exchange, 9-13 September 2019. The theme is of the leadership exchange is “Leading the way forward: Access, Accountability and Action”. During the Exchange there will be thematic exchanges around the United States and Canada on 9 and 10 September.
“Attending the Swedish IIMHL exchange gave me immediate access to information about what other countries are doing to expand access to mental health expertise for people using primary care. It was also a great opportunity to talk about what we have been doing and seek feedback and advice. This shared learning has shaped our approach to enhancing primary mental health services in New Zealand, and hopefully our experience has similarly proven useful to participants from Sweden and other countries.”

– Sue Hallwright
Leader in primary care, New Zealand