

"BE ABLE TO MEET"

GUIDEBOOK FOR THE PROJECT AGAINST EXCLUSION

ERASMUS+ Programme

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INTRODUCTION

Asking ourselves what a contemporary and modern cultural institution should be, we should associate it with the concept of culture a little more broadly than artistic creation and its reception. Culture understood today includes primarily the ways of living and coexistence of people, value systems, morality, law, science, religion, work, cultural heritage, ethics, etc.

"It is a set of values that makes a man more human" –

I.Wojnar.

The cultural reality understood in this way was reflected in the culture of Western European countries in defining human rights as broadly understood accessibility (to culture, work, studies, decent life).

That applies to the equalization of rights in access to culture of all the recipients, regardless of disability, worldview, social or financial status.

In the XX century, a wave of social movements took place in Western Europe, which consequently led to the arrangement of law in field of activity of citizens with disabilities. In post-communist countries, this process is slower and there are different signs of this activity.

The question then arises: WHAT ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN TO ENABLE CULTURE TO THE FULL BENEFIT OF PEOPLE "EXCLUDED" FROM IT? Our response to it is a proposal to create a model cultural institution that will contain programme, organizational and technical solutions that will allow "excluded" people to fully participate in culture. That is, creating conditions so we could "be able to meet".

1. WHAT ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN TO ENABLE CULTURE TO THE FULL BENEFIT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities defines persons with disabilities.

“Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”

Disability is defined by language, infrastructure, activity of entities, applicable social and linguistic patterns.

We distinguish different types of disability: visual, auditory and linguistic, intellectual, physical. Disability cannot be clearly defined. Each person reacts differently. Many have a combination of various medical conditions. A disability is individually determined. The needs are also changing. Technologies to help people with disabilities should be personalized and user-friendly.

The principle of BE ABLE TO MEET – accessibility and social inclusion.

All activities are guided primarily by the idea of "opening the door", making cultural goods available to people who want to actively participate in it, creating, but also presenting their works, regardless of their disability, social or financial status. Standards should be developed: adaptation of facilities and programmes for people with disabilities. Such a challenge was taken up by the partners of the "Be able to meet" project under the Erasmus+ Programme.

2. PROJECT AND WORKSHOPS "BE ABLE TO MEET"

The main goal of the project is to learn new skills and expand competences to work with people with disabilities in culture. The new skills will make it possible to prepare a cultural offer at every level, as well as add to it audio description and subtitles for the deaf. The aim of the project is to promote accessibility by training and supporting the staff of cultural institutions, which will apply the acquired skills and solutions to eliminate obstacles for people with disabilities.

"Be able to meet" project focuses on concrete tasks: - getting to know the specifics of individual disabilities, as well as the possibility of adapting art to the needs of a different sensorial reception - introducing educational programmes enabling the implementation of the idea of wide access to culture and art by eliminating architectural, programme, mental and financial barriers, enabling active participation in the reception of art and its creation for people with disabilities. The direct target of the activities are people employed in: cultural centres, theatres, museums, cinemas – professional cultural animators. The project enabled training and innovative support in identifying the need of cultural institutions to serve recipients with disabilities affected by various dysfunctions: vision, hearing, movement or intellectual disability.

New skills, comprehensive adaptation of the cultural offer to people with disabilities will be permanently included in the repertoire of the institution participating in the project: Centrum Kultury Wrocław-Zachod (Poland), Replika Cultural Association (Romania) and Idea Gestion Cultural Association (Spain), but also others, because the task of the project is also to transfer the knowledge to others. The project is understood as the first step towards the creation of a "model cultural institution" based largely on professionally prepared employees to work with a person with disabilities (both the viewer and the artist). Hence, three intensive trainings to prepare the staff, both from the technical and substantive point of view. The project developed appropriate attitudes towards people with disabilities in their daily work. Workshops organized by each of the partners of the "Be able to meet" project allowed to acquire new skills and competences:

in Poland - a workshop entitled "Model Cultural Institution"

in Romania- "The use of art therapy and other methods to include people with physical and intellectual disability".

in Spain (Catalonia)- "Audio description, subtitles, Didu - methods to involve the blind and the deaf in cultural activities"

- Project partners and their project activities

The partners selected for the project are institutions with experience in work with people with disabilities, consisting in the integration of excluded people, but also those whose activities are guided by a similar idea of breaking the stereotype of perceiving a person with disabilities defined as closed, passive and non-creative community.

- **Poland- Centrum Kultury Wrocław-Zachod**

The mission of Centrum Kultury Wrocław-Zachod is to focus on life of a given community, to create an original place, taking care of cultural traditions and patterns, as well as social integration through socio-cultural animation, cultural education and promotion of artistic phenomena.

The Centre implements original cultural projects, enabling everyone, regardless of age, social status and disability, to become culturally active and develop artistic abilities. The institution contains programme, organizational and technical solutions that allow people "excluded" to fully participate in culture. As one of the first institutions in Poland allowed the blind and visually impaired people to experience film art by introducing audio description for film screenings. Since the beginning of the existence, i.e. 2002, it has been conducting activities for the benefit of people with disabilities, socially and financially excluded, which are aimed at integrating healthy people and a community of people with disabilities. All activities of the Centre are guided by the idea of "opening the door", making cultural goods available to people who want to actively participate and create it, also presenting their works. It is an institution that has been creatively activating excluded people for many years. People with disabilities are invited to: theatre performances, concerts, film screenings and artistic workshops. It also has an extensive experience in the implementation of projects addressed to people with disabilities:

- the project "Open Doors - Integration" (since 2003) is an artistic workshop for healthy participants and participants with disabilities, enabling their creative development, teaching acceptance for otherness, respect, developing imagination and talents,
- TON- International Review of Creativity of People with Disabilities (from 2017-2022) presentations of vocalists with disabilities, visual artists, theatres from Poland and European countries,
- "Iceland and Poland against exclusion from culture" (2013-2016) - an international artistic exchange based on the idea of audio description, promotion of the cultural heritage of both countries and deepening the understanding between Poles and Icelanders,
- "New employability skills and business creation in the audio description and subtitling sector (CASTLE)",
- "Young people in the lens" - a film project involving young people who are difficult to educate (disadvantaged),
- "Let's open cinemas" - addressed to the blind and visually impaired people, during which participants were creating their own animated films,
- "Excluded from culture" – popularizing the method of audio description and subtitles for the deaf in various activities: concerts, performances, films, workshops,

Centrum Kultury Wrocław-Zachod organized training workshops on "Adaptation of cultural institutions in terms of: architectural, organizational and technical, programme and financial adjustments".

WORKSHOP MODEL CULTURAL INSTITUTION:

Lecturers:

- Foundation without Barriers (Maciej Augustyniak) presented a model of a well-prepared cultural institution in architectural and technical terms
- Open Culture and Art Foundation (Marta Zaczekiewicz) introduced the methods facilitating the reception of culture for people with disabilities: audio description and subtitles for the deaf
- Dabrowka Petrow and Beata Gryc Skotniczna – programme employees of Centrum Kultury Wrocław-Zachod, presented international, national and local projects for people with disabilities and adaptation of different institutions.

- facility and technical security

The institution must be fully adapted architecturally and in terms of equipment to compensate for the difficulties encountered by people with disabilities. Technology – its development will contribute to the removal of barriers and improve access for people with disabilities. The use of modern solutions (modern design) will ensure equal, independent participation in social life for people with disabilities.

Challenges for cultural institutions – standards should be developed: adaptation of facilities and programmes for people with disabilities.

architectural accessibility:

- staircases, passages, pedestrian routes in the building should be free of barriers and provide the possibility of moving around for people on a wheelchair,
- appropriate marking
- wide doors
- driveways
- toilets adapted for people with physical disabilities: spacious, with special handles and signals
- elevators (preferably with sound information, large convex button markings)
- Braille descriptions
- touchable exhibits
- subtitles/pictograms
- induction loop that helps people with hearing aids by controlling sounds appropriately

For people with intellectual disabilities, autism or sensory disorders, it is necessary to provide:

- different, darker lighting
- understandable subtitles, clear, simple and short description
- visual content, simplified (form of teletext)
- color contrast

digital accessibility:

- access to Internet, Social Medias
- website
- Internet (people with disabilities improve their competences using online platforms).
- digital websites and mobile applications of public entities

information and communication accessibility:

- providing information on the layout of the spaces in the building, at least visually: plan, diagram, directional markings
- by touch:
 - typhlomap - markings with a variable texture on the ground for blind people or typhlomap that could be read with the sense of touch or to a limited extent for visually impaired people
 - 3D models - textured leading paths
- or voice (information in an infokiosk device, infomat, audio recording on a website), which will allow, for example, a blind person to independently orient himself to reach a given space
- sound signals, applications for the blind and visually impaired

In addition, it is necessary to secure the object with equipment for:

- audio description - a method facilitating the reception of cultural goods by people with visual disabilities, the elderly
- subtitles for the deaf

Any institution that is fully or partially adapted for people with disabilities should differ with a special accessibility mark.

A new accessibility symbol was created, which was designed by the graphic design department of the United Nations - Department of Public Information in New York. The new ACCESSIBILITY LOGO is a drawing of a circle in which there is a symmetrical figure of a man, an universal figure with open arms. The logo raise social awareness and mark places, institutions friendly to people with disabilities.

-personnel/employees

In general, people with disabilities attend events of cultural institutions rather sporadically. Including a socially "excluded" recipient with disabilities in your work is a huge challenge as well. Each cultural institution in preparation for the inclusion of the "excluded" should take into account the staff and prepare it well. Under the conditions specified by the institution and the formula developed by the director and colleagues, the teamwork process should proceed differently. Adequate attitudes

towards people with disabilities in everyday work should be developed. There must be psychological and social acceptance in the process of integrating employees. Therefore, the mechanisms of employees' behavior are important, and they should coincide or result from the norms and goals of the institution. In all this, the intensity and frequency of, for example, relations between employees, i.e. friendship, after-work assistance, are important. Learning correct, desired attitudes contributes to building trust, good cooperation and motivation to act. In today's times of uncertainty and threats, the key values should be trust, friendship, respect and passion for creation. These values have an equivalent meaning to the financial (economic) category in each effective work, stimulate the way of thinking and influence the quality of work. The above-mentioned ethical and moral concepts should translate into actions of employees of cultural institutions, so that they can contribute to the creation of desired values. In other words, cultural institutions that work for the benefit of the "excluded" should employ people who are guided by high ethical values, including empathy, and provide moral support for the "excluded" and their families. This is what should characterize the employees of the Model Cultural Institution, who, in the complexity of their functions and responsibilities, participate in the process of including the "excluded" into society. These are not only employees of the programme department, but all employees. This is possible through appropriate recruitment, monitoring of appropriate behaviors, a clear explanation of significant values for the company and expressing all demands toward employees. Courses, workshops and trainings, integration trips contribute to the creation of staff that is responsible for the challenges in their work institution. Staff prepared in such a way can conduct, in relation with their activities for people with disabilities, trainings for employees of other cultural institutions, for example in smaller towns. All activities for the benefit of "excluded" should be followed by the placement (employment) of workers with disabilities in cultural institutions.

-programme

Knowing the needs of "excluded" people, contacting them and their families, talking and listening to them and meeting their expectations. We believe that there is a need to create programmes that integrate a healthy and "excluded" community in all aspects of activities. Programmes that will be in the daily repertoire, suggestions for everyone, will give the opportunity to use cultural goods not only in the implementation of occasional projects, but every day. Cultural institutions will offer workshops in each artistic field, participation in activities where they will be able to realize themselves and share their achievements with others.

Previous experience shows that people with disabilities participate in activities not only prepared for them, properly secured organizationally and technically, but also in all others, demanding the realization of their dreams. We should organize artistic classes and workshops for them, exhibitions, films, performances. There is a need for broader and forward-looking actions. The objectives of a model cultural institution result from the experience and observation as well as the vision of such an institution. They should be:

educational

- Dissemination of cultural goods to "excluded" people.
- Education of commonly accepted behaviors.
- Development of cultural interests of "excluded" people.
- Training for employees of other cultural institutions.

- Improving the qualifications and skills of staff leading cultural activities and organizing events.

activating

- Breaking down physical and mental barriers in access to a variety of cultural events.
- Social activation of the "excluded" regardless of age, gender and disability.
- Employment of "excluded" persons (employ "excluded" people on a contract of employment, in this way they will be able to simultaneously be ambassadors and reliable consultants for healthy and visitors with disabilities in a cultural institution).
- Enabling "excluded" to participate actively in cultural activities.

social and culture-forming

- Counteracting social "exclusion".
- Social integration in the joint action of different groups.

All programme activities of the Model Cultural Institution have a goal of counteracting ABLAISM, which defines a person with a disability as inferior. Discrimination and reluctance towards people with disabilities are encountered on daily basis, especially on the labour market. Artistic activities with the participation of people with disabilities and permanent education of healthy people are a remedy for changing behavior and social attitudes.

- finances

When creating a model institution working for the benefit of "excluded" from culture, it is important to formalize the strategy and the idea of individuality. Every value created in a cultural institution is associated with the amount of work, material resources, creativity and talent of their authors. The adoption of each cultural institution in a friendly place, suitable for everyone, regardless exclusion, securing it technically, personally, organizationally and programmatically, also requires incurring appropriate financial assistance. However, in the situation of functioning of a model institution friendly to people with disabilities, it is necessary to provide a systemic solution for financing such a unit for the next years. Financing should be guaranteed by local governments and ministries of culture.

- new technologies:

New technologies are starting to create completely new opportunities and possibilities for people with disabilities. Every year the number of devices, applications and programmes are growing, helping people with disabilities to level their chances on the labour market, making it possible to fully use the cultural offer. New technologies are a chance for people with disabilities to live better, more efficiently and often independently in everyday life. A few examples of modern solutions, that could be compared to "space" technology:

- **Exoskeleton**, thanks to which the paralyzed can stand on their feet again.

- **Bio-Retina implanted** in the eye acts as a microscopic camera connected directly to our nervous system and restores vision.

- **Touchless smartphone** designed for motor impaired.
- **3D printer** that allows you to print digital models, very useful for the blind.
- **Talkitt** will allow people with the biggest speech disorders to speak.
- **Timocco** for the youngest struggling with various types of motor and cognitive impairments. By turning therapy into fun, it helps dealing with, for example, cerebral palsy, ADHD or autism
- **Kinec Translator** based on analyzing and recognizing gestures, then showing the words associated with them and vice versa. An application that allows the deaf to communicate with other people.
- **Sesame Phone** was created for people with mobility difficulties, it makes possible to precisely write on the screen without any contact. Sesame Phone on words "Open Sesame!" the device begins to catch the movements of the user's head. In this way, he can move the cursor around the screen and add voice commands.
- **Supporting technologies** that allow you to open doors, turn on the light, ring, start the Internet, etc.

Examples of activities for people with disabilities in Poland

- Theatres bringing together people with disabilities: Teatr 21, Warsztatowa Grupa Stowarzyszenie, families and friends of People with Down Syndrome, Teatr Edycja Limitowana
- Catalogue of scents collected in the library at the School and Educational Centre for Blind Children in Owińska.
- Typhlographic Museum in Owińska.

- Spatial Orientation Park in the area of the Special School and Educational For Blind Children in Owińska,
 - Nature trails with special markings, educational boards, e.g. in the Karkonosze Mountains, in the Rudawski Landscape Park, in Podgórze.
- **Romania-Replika Cultural Association**

Educational Theatre Centre REPLIKA located in the 4th district of Bucharest was conceived as an independent, interdisciplinary space, promoting collaboration between professional artists and members of endangered communities and bringing theatre closer to a young audience deeply involved in society.

REPLIKA Cultural Association, since 2011 has been cooperating with people at risk. Replika is convinced that accessibility in the current scope should be realized through education, through art as a form of strengthening ignored social groups, expressing their needs and expectations. It promotes free access to cultural education as a fundamental right, expanding free and equal access to culture for all audiences.

Replika believes in an artist activist, reflecting our society and transcending our reality, in educational utopias that became reality, in pedagogy as a common process of building the history of community, in theatre based on cooperation and respect for all.

Replika Cultural Association has relevant experience in theatre activities with young people and shows great interest in creating performances based on such topics as: children's civil rights, democratic participation in decision-making, civic participants of the young generation, documenting topics with a high impact on Romanian society. In 2015 The Association has created a unique space in Bucharest - Educational Theatre Centre Replika - dedicated to the cooperation of artists and marginal, excluded communities, thus transferring the voice to socially and politically ignored categories and creating a theatre for inclusion, self-presentation, democratic participation and solidarity.

WORKSHOP:

REPLIKA organized a training workshop in Bucharest on "The use of art therapy and other methods to include people with physical and intellectual disability".

- Artistic activities (practical) integrating participants mainly with people with disabilities with total or partial hearing loss.
- A one-man show/performance entitled "All the Silence of the World" – speaking about problems of people with disabilities and their assistants, obstacles and problems caused by the lack of accessibility and adaptation of places to the needs of the people with disabilities, lack of empathy of employees of various institutions, lack of finances.
- The role of educational theatre in building public awareness. Based on the scripts written and the performances played, the founders/employees of the theatre showed the participants solutions that can be introduced into everyday work with hearing impaired and deaf children related to work

in the theatre. Actions that seemed impossible to implement turned out to be simple when a common way of communication was found.

- Further practices "Connect, adapt, learn – UNATC practices for people with special needs", which were presented by the collaborator of Replika Association UNATC-Caragiale National University of Theatre and Film in Bucharest, Romania. During the classes, the participants learned about several integration games, on the basis of which in the next part the specifications of working with people with disabilities were discussed. Ended with a tour of the building and facilities of the University.
- Art therapy techniques for the elderly: Varsta4 project, how theatre connects different generations.
- Museum therapy for children and adults with various disabilities. Participants learned what solutions museums use to be as accessible as possible to every recipient, e.g. interactive sensory boards and images made in 3D.
- A meeting with Maria-Lavinia Chițu, an activist, artist, ambassador and sign language instructor from a deaf family, who talked about her activities for deaf children, youth and adults. Participants learned what the life of a hearing person, raised by deaf-mute parents, looks like. She presented a number of achievements, including a performance in the Romanian edition of "Romania Got Talent" as a sign interpreter with deaf-mute dancers.
- Practical classes conducted by Ana Maria Ursu - president of the Solidart Association and co-founder of the Basca Theatre in Timișoara on how to work with people with disabilities.
- Presentation by Yolanda Cretescu Manolescu - clinical psychologist and psychotherapist, about emotional education therapy among various types of disability. On the basis of the prepared presentation, she talked about occupational therapy, which she uses in everyday work with ill people, the elderly and people with various types of dysfunctions. With the help of touch and massage, it stimulates their bodies, causing relaxation and the production of happiness hormones, treatment with "touch". Thanks to the workshops, the participants learned how important the closeness, physical and mental support of another person is in therapy.

- **Spain- Idea Gestion Cultural Association**

The Idea Gestion Cultural Association is a non-profit organization founded in 2000 by Poles and Spaniards residing in Barcelona, Catalonia. Since its foundation, the mission of the organization has been to promote cultural, social and economic exchange between Poland and Catalonia and to work for a good image of Poland and Poles in Catalonia and the whole Spain. The Association, developing its statutory activities, expands the existing scope of activities with issues related to science and business in order to fully respond to the needs of modern Europe. According to the Association, the combination of culture, science and business and their mutual promotion are one of the most important aspects of building cooperation between European regions. The organization implements the activities through cultural and scientific exchange, activities consisting in the promotion of Polish and Catalan science, artistic trainings and workshops, varied in terms of programme, tailored to different age groups and skill levels, courses and trainings for the youngest, sensitization to various fields of art through games and fun, exhibitions with the participation of Polish and Catalan artists, meetings with artists, lectures, Polish Cinema Club. The idea of Associació Cultural is an association promoted by professionals from the sector, whose mission is to promote the creativity and talent of people through the synergy of cooperation and interaction with other creators.

WORKSHOP:

Idea organized a workshop on "Audio description, subtitles, Didu - methods to involve the blind and the deaf in cultural activities"

- A mind map of how society should cope among people with disabilities, led by Josep Bécares (Fina), a musician, artist and activist for people with disabilities. He presented threats for people on wheelchairs and talked about other solutions in the case of various types of physical and mental disability.
- The next day of the workshop began at the Auditorium-Palau de Congressos in Girona - a place that at first glance seemed adapted to the needs of people with disabilities: it had ramps and tarmac paths outdoors for wheelchairs and toilets for people with disabilities. Visiting the building from the outside and analyzing it from the inside, the participants could notice many inaccuracies and dangers waiting for people with disabilities. Routes for wheelchairs on the sides were ending with a significant drop, threatening to overturn in the dark, no additional support in the toilets for people with disabilities, no possibility of safe use of the conference room and thoughtless driveways under the building. In the auditorium, were presented possibilities of architectural accessibility, i.e. pull-out armchairs for people in wheelchairs and any dangers, i.e. the steps right next to those places that can cause the wheelchair to slide down.
- Meeting with the blind Isaac Padros Suárez, president of the Multicapacitats Association for the blind, and his dog Guilty, who talked about life with a guide dog and the activities of his association.
- At the Centre Civic Ter, the host Esteve Farres Berenguer presented new technologies that can be used to communicate with people with disabilities.
- The performer Marcell Antunez showed how audiovisual art can be presented using technology. The artist, using the movements of his hands and legs, was able to influence what was happening on his presentation. Thanks to the metal skeleton and installation on the floor, he was controlling the sound, image and even the dynamics of a given scene. This shows what possibilities are offered by technologies and what people with disabilities could do with them..

SUMMARY

People with disabilities are less educated. The lifestyle of a person with disabilities applies not only to them but also to their families. And they often have worse financial situation as well. This is associated in many cases with additional diseases and the need to take permanent medicines, have rehabilitation, purchase any necessary equipment, etc.

Currently, DISABILITY is perceived as a feature that does not offer any place in social or professional life. The problem is also the lack of offers on the labour market.

The use of modern solutions supports equal and independent participation in social life for people with disabilities. Improving their situation in every aspect will open the doors in culture and other fields. The accessibility and the social inclusion will help us and we will **BE ABLE TO MEET**.



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