

The Art of Diversity in Culture Education

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Spis treści



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About the need for accessible culture education



Accessibility and the right to participate in cultural or social events are words that we all want to hear in the public space. They open up our imagination and condition our actions so that we are more receptive to encountering another person and taking their needs into account. And although in terms of values they are at the core of our work, we realise that in terms of activity we are often terrified, stymied, and overwhelmed by the enormity of these needs, by the lack of knowledge on how to implement the demands of accessibility, and by questions on the universality of our activities.

When building our partnership in the project *Youth Learning Through Arts* (hereinafter YLTA), we aimed to determine whether our knowledge on the availability of developing a cultural offer would translate into the possibility of planning and conducting universal educational workshops using art.

It turned out that it is not easy to run a workshop in a universal way. A group with diverse needs is a big challenge for the cultural organiser and educator. We must not only prepare properly and learn how to share materials or communication channels. We also need to change the way we do things. Such a workshop focuses the educator's attention not only on the script, but it forces them to become more involved in the individual relationship and progress of each participant. A great deal of attention must also be paid to the tools that the educator uses in individual work.

We have learned an important lesson from our experience. Universal design (see:) is only possible when we are able to gain experience, to overcome the initial fear of working with people with various needs, and when we succeed in developing knowledge about tools which need not always be expensive or very complicated. Therefore, in this publication we would like to present a set of tips on what attitudes, activities, and tools to use to start working in an accessible way. We believe that with the experience gained, you will be able to imagine your own workshop as open to the diverse needs of the participants of your meetings.

We therefore propose **that we strive for the fullest possible accessibility, remaining open to various needs, but that we take small steps.**

Glossary

People with various needs

By using the term “people with various needs” in the context of accessibility and replacing the terms “people with special needs” or “people with disabilities” with it, we emphasise our openness to everyone. And even though our (Polish) law uses the term “people with special needs”, going beyond the common understanding of the need as a disability, in this publication we will often talk about people with various needs, because participation in culture or presence in public space is not a “special” need. There are various needs and different ways of meeting them.

In this text, however, we will also talk about “people with disabilities”. It is natural that they will be the first people and groups whose needs we will identify in our environment and invite them to cooperate with us.

Accessibility

is best defined in Article 9 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as the ability “to live independently and to participate fully in all spheres of life (...) on an equal basis with others”. Therefore, any action that makes access for a person with disabilities dependent on additional effort or additional activity, which others do not have to do, is an inaccessible action. In such situations, we can only entertain the idea of “alternative accessibility”.

Alternative accessibility

is an activity that facilitates the participation of people with disabilities in our meetings or workshops, but it does not ensure independence and is of a one-off nature. Polish legislation refers to three forms of alternative accessibility: hiring an assistant, offering additional technical measures (e.g., a folding ramp – a permanent ramp would be an element of accessibility), and making an organisational change such as temporarily moving the front office to the ground floor.

Universal design

means “the design of products, the environment, programmes, and services to be usable to all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design”, although this does not preclude the application of the necessary technical solutions, which are important for individual groups of persons, if necessary (see: Convention, Article 2).

Universal design is above all the creation of new solutions and activities. It is not limited to architectural accessibility. A workshop, conference, and other services with universal accessibility in mind.

Audio description

is a verbal description of visual content for the needs of people with visual impairments. This is sometimes used in relation to painting, sculpture, theatre performances, and films. In the case of theatrical and film works, the audio description must be subordinated to dialogues, so as not to drown them out.

Typhlography

is a convex drawing, a graphic adaptation of a visual work, e.g., an image, graphics, or photography intended for the needs of people with visual impairments. It uses differentiation of the convexity levels and, for example, differences in textures. It can be made using various techniques, e.g., convex (tactile) printing, engraving or building up a glued surface using various materials. It is crucial to maintain the proportions and relationships between the presented elements of the work. Often, in the interest of the readability of the message, a given typhlographic sign has simplified elements.

Induction loop

is an electromagnetic device that allows people who are hearing impaired and who use hearing aids or cochlear implants to activate the “T” function to increase the volume of the conversation. In this case, a sound system is necessary, i.e., the speaker must speak into a microphone. The loop will also be audible above the sounds of a recording, e.g., a film. Information about the loop should be available on the website and in front of the workshop room.

Closed captions for the D/deaf

are subtitles for a film or performance that take into account the needs of D/deaf and hard of hearing people. In addition to dialogues, they also contain information about the important sounds and music used, as well as non-verbal utterances (shouts, sighs). Where it is necessary to identify the speaker, an indication of the speaker is used. Sometimes colours are used to distinguish key speakers.

Polish Sign Language

is a natural visual and spatial language used by the D/deaf in Poland. In other countries, D/deaf people use their national sign languages in communication. Polish Sign Language (known by its Polish acronym, PJM) is distinguished from the so-called Language and Sign System (Polish abbreviation, SJM), which is an artificial language based on the Polish phonological language.

Be empathetic – be imaginative



Every day we learn that the inclusiveness of our actions depends on our sensitivity to the needs of others. This is not easy, especially in relation to people with disabilities, about whom we often feel anxiety. This is not a fear of a person, but it results from the fear of a lack of knowledge, whether we should feel free to ask about a specific need or about how to accommodate this need. Therefore, the first step to open action is to have the COURAGE to overcome your own resistance and fears. How can this be achieved?

Don't criticise yourself or others for not being empathetic

Our feelings are based on attitudes that we learn through immersion in society. You may want to consider how you or your milieu treat people with disabilities. A common attitude in a situation of contact with a person with disabilities is to treat them with a sense of compassion (*charity model*). Remember, however, that people with various needs do not expect compassion or pity. They want to be treated equally with others. This also applies to the motives of our conduct –

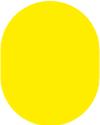
treat each person not as a “need” (*social model*), but as a human being who wants to take advantage of your offer in a different way (*subjective model*), thus you should avoid looking at another person through the prism of their disability in your approach. Over time, you will see that people with disabilities are not only participants in the workshop, but also co-create it with you (*creative model*).

charity model = helping those affected by fate

social model = focus on the fact that the need is the result of a barrier that we need to remove

subjective model = everyone has the right to equal access to public space, and should not be an object of sharing

creative model = everyone is a participant and creator/co-creator of the activity



Meet people with various needs

Various needs should be broken down into specific needs. The expressions “people with various needs” or “people with disabilities” are too broad to implement our tactics of strengthening empathy and developing our knowledge “step by step”. Remember that when working in a specific place, town, or local community, we work with people with specific needs. Of course, our sensitivity and openness are meant to be ready for various challenges. However, the foundation of this is to meet people in your own environments with whom you have the best chance of cooperating.

Therefore, get to know your organisation’s environs. It is easiest to do this by establishing a relationship with NGOs working on behalf of people with disabilities. If there aren’t any in your area, see which public organisations are involved in helping people with disabilities. It can be a branch of your local government, a municipality, a social welfare unit, a school, or even a clinic. However, remember that this type of institution often uses a compassionate model (charity model) in its relations with people with disabilities. The challenge will then be to reach the level of subjective treatment of people with disabilities.

Establishing a relationship with an organisation or entity will make it easier for you to enter the world of people with disabilities. NGOs often offer meetings, workshops or trainings that discuss the needs of a given group of people, for example, about the needs of people with visual or hearing disabilities or about the culture of people who are D/deaf (people who are D/deaf do not perceive themselves as people with disabilities!).

Remember: if you don't know what to ask or how to behave – just SAY so. Openness to the needs of others also means **openness to talking about oneself.**

Supporting development of your team's empathy

It is much easier to work in an institution where the team shares values and ideas, where there is agreement on the vision and purpose of action. This is especially true in an institution of culture, where people work with and on the emotions of participants and creators of events or artistic and cultural workshops. It is also increasingly said that the vision of culture is of great importance for the effectiveness of action. A vision in which culture is a space of joint participation, research, and forming relationships between people and communities.

As an organiser and cultural educator, invite other people from your team to the relationships you have managed to establish with people with disabilities. Organise a meeting/workshop, led by people with disabilities, in which they talk about themselves, about their different needs in access to culture, in the use of public space. This can open up personal experience more effectively than second-hand stories.

If you are successful in this, encourage those managing the organisation, those responsible for purchasing or planning budgets and activities to participate in such a workshop. Their broad participation will facilitate your work and your negotiations regarding the investment in the necessity of adapting the institution to the needs of people with disabilities so that your workshop takes place not only in a friendly atmosphere, but also in an accessible space. If you are planning accessibility workshops and materials, think about informing your organisation's budget managers at the time that you usually establish your annual plan. In this way, you will increase the chance of securing funds for the implementation of your accessibility ideas.

Be a spokesperson for accessibility in public space

You may find yourself in a situation where it is your responsibility to convince your team to open up to people with various needs. We encourage you to deepen your reflection and broaden your knowledge about working with accessibility and diversity.

In discussions, it is worth referring to our own needs, ones which entice us to obtain access to the service or offer in an individualised way. Even a simple need such as wearing reading glasses makes it necessary for the texts of exhibitions or instructions to be printed in a larger font. A parent with a child or a person who has broken a leg and temporarily moves on crutches are also people with various needs.

In general terms, a disability is associated with some shortcoming or socially recognised illness, e.g., people in wheelchairs, blind people moving with a white cane, people with Down's syndrome, etc. But we can also talk about disability and curtailed opportunities to participate or engage in social life when a person experiences a chronic disease or disorder affecting their functioning in various spheres of life, be they physical, intellectual, mental, or social. These so-called hidden disabilities, often invisible at first glance or socially unrecognisable, include asthma, kidney disease, heart disease, diabetes, epilepsy, haemophilia, cancer, multiple sclerosis, and many others.

Designing activities in a universal way allows us to take into account the needs of various people, including those whose struggles we are unable to see or whose physical capabilities we are unable to predict. Solutions that include people with various needs are an opportunity for equal participation without the need to disclose, for example, the health status of those participating.

You can also use legal arguments to justify the need to expand your offer. The prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of disability in access to the exercise of one's own rights and freedoms is one of the most important principles mentioned in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (see: *Journal of Laws* EU 2016/C 202/02, Article 21). The European Union also recognises the right of persons with disabilities to benefit from measures to ensure their independence, social and occupational integration, and participation in the life of the community (see: Article 26).

A key reference document is also the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (hereinafter referred to as the Convention) . In this document, you can find an attempt to define accessibility. Article 9 lists the responsibilities of the governments that have signed this document. Their common denominator is “to ensure that persons with disabilities can live independently and participate fully in all spheres of life (...) on an equal basis with others”.

Accessibility therefore means creating an environment in a cultural institution that will allow people with special needs to independently (for example, without assistance) access the offer on a level playing field with everyone else. This equality means that participants can make use of the offer with specific tools. This is the same choice that every other person has: whether, when, and how to take advantage of the offer.

Each country in the European Union should draw up its own legislation on non-discrimination or equal access to services and public services. Since 2019, the Act on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs has been in force in Poland (– *Journal of Laws* 2019, item 1696), which obliges all public entities as well as private entities and social organisations benefiting from public funding to create equal opportunities to access or use the services provided.

Planning



Usually, we start planning educational activities by outlining the goal and choosing a topic. Of course, workshops can achieve several goals at the same time, but usually there is a main, overriding one. This may be, for example, developing spatial imagination or learning new dance techniques.

The goal will determine the choice of topic. If you plan for the workshop to be an opportunity for hearing-normative and D/deaf people to meet and exchange viewpoints, it will be less important to acquire new knowledge; in this case, search for topics which have personal experience at their core. If the main idea is to improve voice technique, it will probably not be a workshop for the hearing impaired and D/deaf, for whom it may be very difficult to communicate in the spoken language. Take a critical approach to how you plan a workshop – avoid stereotypes too, such as those that say that blind people have excellent hearing.

Not everything will be of interest to all recipients and not all topics will work for all groups equally. It is worth searching out and checking or even better asking about the interests and expectations of direct recipients, if possible. Such a study of needs may lead you to less obvious paths, for instance dance workshops for people with mobility limitations.

Especially if these are your first steps towards inclusive education, think about what topic might be interesting for a group with various needs. If you already run a workshop and want to expand its audience, start with general and basic topics. There will come a time for specialised content once you have gained experience.

Workshop scenario

It is worth designing classes in a variety of ways, so that they take into account various types of activities. In this way, you can increase the chance that everyone will find something for themselves. Some workshops can activate the body in one part, and in the second part there may be time for constructive activities. You can start with individual exercises, then in pairs, and finally proceed to group activities. Or vice versa – first everyone does the same thing, and then there is the time for individual explorations.

The most inclusive activities are those that are open and that are not limited by a single method of implementation. In this way, we can avoid situations in which the degree of a person's capacity will affect the ability to execute the command (follow the instruction). Instead of precision and even pace, it is worth focusing on creativity and fun.

When planning a workshop scenario, it is worth thinking about engaging various senses right from the beginning. Plan visual aids and objects of various textures that will stimulate the imagination. If we show some objects and there are blind people in the classroom, we can, for example, suggest that they touch such objects to examine their shape.

Also take into account the fact that people with disabilities are different and, like all other people, have different preferences, interests, and ways of being. Like any group, some need a lot of movement, others need peace and order, not everyone likes to draw. Avoid stereotypes. Observe and assess.

Support for educators

You don't have to do everything yourself. If you want to take into account the needs of different recipients, think about your needs, your own safety, about support for yourself. The more diverse the group, the more help you'll need.

It is good practice to conduct workshops in pairs of two people who can complement each other. When one of them is involved in the translation of a command, the other may be more focused on the group and respond to current needs.

Ask someone on the team for help, and find volunteers. If you are writing an application for an action grant, enter the cost of fees for additional tutors, for assistants who will, for example, help participants get to the venue, move around the room or audio-describe live, for experts who will help you prepare the activities in terms of their substance. An expert may be an experienced teacher who works with people with disabilities, e.g., as a teacher at a school for the D/deaf or a typhlopedagogue, a specialist working in a non-governmental organisation, a person with a disability who can analyse the proposed course of the workshop in terms of taking into account their needs, and if necessary, propose some tools or work techniques.

If you have the opportunity, gain accessibility knowledge, make use of the training offered (live or online), or look for other inclusive workshops run by someone experienced to test what works on your own.

And remember, you don't have to be an expert in everything. It is worth asking the participants if they have any comments. Do not be afraid to admit that this is your first time conducting such classes, or that you do not have experience working with a person with such a disability. Ask what worked, what could be improved, and what could have been done better.

Preparation of the invitation

Each workshop requires an invitation. The information should be on the website, on social media, in a leaflet, in the invitation (e.g., sent to a specific school, group). If you care about having a diverse group of recipients, it is worth diversifying your communication channels. Information published only on social media will not have a chance to reach people who use the Internet only sporadically. If you select only prints or posters, these will not be accessible to the blind.

The content and form of the invitation should also be accessible to the widest audience possible. Remember to speak in a clear and communicative language. Please indicate all the planned amenities.

An important point is the inclusion of contact details which enable different forms of interaction and communication. People with visual impairments will call more often. In turn, D/deaf people prefer to send a text message (SMS). Of course, it is always worth using e-mails. Direct contact is important to make

an appointment with a person for possible assistance, such as getting from the bus stop to the building or moving around the building itself.

For people on the autism spectrum, information about the course of the event is important. If you invite specific people, you can prepare a short description of the place where the sessions take place, who runs them, how long they will last, and what to prepare for during the workshop.

In the invitation to the workshop, it is worth pointing out some elements, such as loud sounds or very bright light, which may appear during classes. Or, for example, that the paint will be used and there is a risk of getting dirty. In this way, everyone can consciously decide whether this is the right event for them and prepare appropriately for it.

When preparing forms – descriptions, instructions, or leaflets – remember the rules presented below, in the section on the preparation of materials (online version). When publishing information online, make sure to provide an alternative text for all visual elements including photos or graphics you add. Describe in a few words what the photo shows.

If you want to invite D/deaf people and are planning a translation, plan a short invitation recording in sign language which you can publish online. It should contain basic information (what kind of event it is; date, time, admission fees, etc.) and explain why it is worth

attending the event. Such a recording can even be made with a mobile phone, recording an interpreter or a friend of the D/deaf, who can also be an ambassador of the event (or institution), preferably a person recognisable in the milieu of the D/deaf. Such an invitation will be a clear message that you are aware of the needs of this group of recipients.

Let the people you're inviting know what the place looks like, where the meeting is taking place, and how to get there. If arriving requires an alternative approach, e.g., another entrance for wheelchair users, it is better for attendees to know this in advance. This way they can also plan their arrival time. Equally important is information about the duration of the meeting and access to the toilet. If the toilet in a given place is not adapted to the needs of people in wheelchairs, this does not exclude the presence of such a person, but they need to know about it in advance.

Booking forms

Give people who come to the workshop an opportunity to communicate their needs. If you are conducting enrollment for sessions, you can prepare a simple online application form in which attendees can indicate the need to use a PJM interpreter, assistant, etc. A good solution, for example, is to create an open form in Google or Microsoft documents, because they are accessible in versions for the blind. Remember to leave a blank box to add additional notes – not all

needs can fit in a simple form. You can also ask about individual needs in an email or during a phone call. If you are inviting a group of people, such as a class, ask the tutor/teacher/group leader for all the details. This is usually the person who knows the group best.

Sample entry in the form:

Your individual needs *	yes	no
assistant during workshops	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
assistant when coming to and from workshops	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
live audio description	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
noise-cancelling headphones	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
induction loop	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
translation from/into sign language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other needs

Short response _____

With this solution, you can plan in advance what needs will have to be met. This way, for example, you can determine how many assistants must be on standby or whether you need to hire a sign language interpreter. However, arrange with the interpreter in advance the deadline for cancelling arrangements for participation. If you book an interpreter, they won't be able to take another assignment during that time, so if you cancel the event at the last minute (or no one in need of such assistance comes to the workshop), the interpreter should still be compensated for their readiness to work.

Choice of workshop space

When choosing the space where the workshops will take place, check whether a person with reduced mobility will have a way to reach it. If there is no access via a ramp or elevator, you may be able to find a room on the ground floor of the building.

If possible, choose the places that are most accessible, ones with easy access, close to an accessible toilet. But also, ones which are sensory-friendly, meaning that the room has good acoustics, in which sounds from the outside do not disturb the proceedings, and where it is possible to adjust the light so as not to distract the participants.

The ideal would be a room with an induction loop and one which features tactile guiding lines for the blind.

Take care to ensure comfortable movement for people with visual impairments. Make sure that there are no obstacles on the floor that could make it difficult to pass through. But also pay attention to possible obstacles at head height – these are especially dangerous for blind people – e.g., low ceilings, arches, or suspended decorations that the blind person will not be able to sense with, for example, their cane.

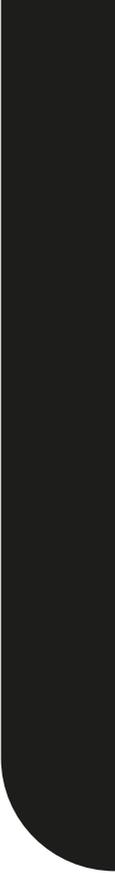
While the workshop is in progress, make sure that the space does not change, so that a blind person has fixed points that will allow them to orient themselves in the room.

Think about seating so you don't leave anybody out. Standing up all the time can be difficult for some. It is not convenient for everyone to sit on the floor, even on a pillow. It is worth thinking about a variety of seats to give participants a choice. For example, we sit in a circle on a carpet, but if someone prefers to sit in a chair, we put a chair in the circle. Don't point out specific places for people with disabilities. If there is a person in the group in a wheelchair, let them choose a place which is a good vantage point to see and hear what is happening.



For people on the autism spectrum, it may be necessary to prepare a space of silence – a place close to the event, where they can sit when necessary, if they begin to feel overstimulated during the workshop. It does not have to be a separate room, but it is worth considering a quiet space, with soft light, where such a person can rest for a while.

If you rent spaces for your activities, such as a project, ask for the fullest possible maximum accessibility. Look for venues that think holistically about the inclusion of different groups. Together, we raise standards and demonstrate that this is the right direction.



Selection of materials for workshops



Audio-visual material

Avoid showing many slides or photos. It is better to focus on a few key points for the topic. If you want to show visuals in a group that includes people with visual impairments, be sure to describe them in a few words.

You can prepare short descriptions in advance or ask for help from someone who can describe them in the classroom. It is worth focusing on the key elements, i.e., those that provide information and which are not given in the text. Describe the object from general to detailed. Use simple syntax so that no one gets lost in complex descriptions. Don't be afraid to compare and describe colours – for a blind person, colours are related to the cultural context.

If you want to show a film or a fragment of video, take into account that blind people should also hear what you see in the frame – even if only in a few words that point to key elements.

However, if the visual message is crucial, for instance because the workshops concern a film or because a pre-recorded theatre performance is planned to be screened, try to find someone who will professionally prepare an audio-description. This can be recorded by a reader as a film soundtrack or read live during the event.

In addition to the description or audio description, it is also worth using touch adaptations of the image or graphics. If you have the ability to order or prepare typhlography, it will be very helpful for the blind or visually impaired. Sometimes it can be a very simple arrangement of convex elements that help to understand the composition of the image. You can use various textures, scraps of fabrics, items to express key elements of the work.

If there are dialogues in the video and D/deaf people may attend the workshop, remember about the subtitles recorded onto the video or the dialogue track transcribed onto paper.

Printed materials

When preparing prints or leaflets, pay attention to small aspects that will make them more accessible. This is not a recipe for a universal print-out, but the notes below will make it easier for a broad group of people to read it.

For people with visual impairment so-called enlarged printing is recommended, i.e., a font size between 16 and 18 points. For seniors, the use of a font with a minimum size of 12 points and an increased line spacing (by 25% in the text and 50% between the paragraphs) is enough. It should also be a one-element and sans-serif typeface – preferably fonts such as Arial, Calibri, Verdana, Tahoma, or Helvetica.

Some people find it easier to focus on a text when we apply text alignment to the left. Of course, it is not always possible to do so, but this is welcome when the graphic layout or the composition of the text allows it.

Colour contrast is also important. The ratio of text brightness to background should be at least 4.5 to 1, or even 7 to 1. It's best to talk about such issues with a graphic designer, but if you don't have any such consultant around, there are websites that make it easier to determine the optimum contrast (e.g. [WCAG 2.1](#)). Most importantly, remember that the background under the text should be uniform, it cannot be a multi-coloured graphic or photo.

You can also prepare a Braille print for those who can read this. You do not need to have many copies; it is worth cooperating locally with non-governmental organisations, a branch of the Polish Blind Association or simply with people with visual impairments who can prepare such a text. They can also proofread a text prepared by someone else. Today, fewer and fewer people use the Braille alphabet, an alternative for many is an online version of the leaflet (DOC, ePUB or an appropriately formatted PDF), which can be opened on a phone and read using speech synthesis tools.

If you need participants to sign some documents in connection with the workshop (e.g. permission to take photos, and attendance list), make sure they know what they are signing. Read the document to a blind person or send it to this person in advance by email. A person who communicates in sign language and for whom the language of the form is not the first language will need time to read the form and they may also need the help of a sign language interpreter.

Course of the workshop



A good start

If there is a visually impaired person in the classroom, introduce yourself when you approach them, even if you have already met. Always ask before you begin to lead someone, for example, to their place. Make every person feel safe and secure. Ask if you need help.

At the beginning of the class, make sure that everyone is aware of the space in which you will be working. For blind people, it is worth describing briefly where you are and what the room looks like. This can be done at the beginning of the session or individually when subsequent people enter the room. Say and show where the toilets are, and say when the breaks are, so everyone can plan accordingly. Arrange with the group if it is acceptable to drink in class, or when participants can leave the room. All small organisational matters, when discussed explicitly, will help everyone feel safe, not just people on the autism spectrum.

It is worth starting the workshop by presenting its purpose and planned course. This plan can be written out or prepared in advance on a board or sheet visible to everyone.



Direct communication

Always address the participants directly, not via the interpreter or assistant. Remember to keep eye contact.

If you work with D/deaf people, ensure good visibility of the sign language interpreter. Arrange for this person to be close to the host, in good lighting, and not obscured by anyone. Before starting the meeting, it is worth outlining the course with the interpreter to take into account the arrangement of chairs, and plan places for the D/deaf. Perhaps, if the workshops are long or very demanding, the presence of another interpreter will be necessary, and this will have to be included in the budget.

When you give a command, make sure everything is clear before proceeding. When D/deaf people start working, they may not notice that the interpreter is saying something.

Pay attention to the language you use. If you want to include people with various needs, design recommendations so that they are clear and understandable (avoid abstract formulations). Don't focus on the diversity of bodies and capabilities, but have consideration for them. Provide an opportunity to choose the pace and intensity, especially during physical activities.

You can formulate recommendations so that you do not thematise different needs but take them into account. Instead of “get up and feel your feet,” it might be better to say “straighten up and feel the weight of your body settling.”

Conducting workshops

Talk about what you’re showing. For example: “I’m holding a big box now, and I’m pulling coloured balls out of it.” Also describe important changes in the situation, such as “Now Tom came in, he’s come to help us with the costumes” or “That sound was a chair being knocked over, but nothing happened.”

Before starting a creative task, it is worth saying what tools or materials are available. For example: “We have strings, tapes, scissors. Here’s a device that works this way or that.” This will be especially important for people with visual impairments, as it lets them touch the materials and get to know them before they start work.

If you use projections or slideshows, make sure that everyone can see them well, that contrast and light do not impede visibility, and that nothing or no one is obscuring the screen.

If there is a person with visual impairment in the group, enter a simple description (as indicated above, regarding the basic elements of the audio description), for instance

“The picture shows a group of people playing football.”
Read the text from the board aloud. If you are showing a projection or a workshop about, for example, theatrical activities, an assistant or you can sit next to a blind person and tell them what is happening.

Look for the best techniques for your group. If there are people with varying degrees of blindness in the group, motion repetition exercises without words will not work. Specific instructions spoken out loud or, for example, cooperation in pairs in which one person arranges the body of their partner (with their consent, of course!) in specific shapes will be better. Such a game of “sculptor and clay” will also work in a group where we have limited means of communication, such as with D/deaf people or foreigners. Especially when the group is mixed and when we want to work in pairs/groups, searching for ways of cooperation that do not require words is a good solution.

Prepare for different courses in the implementation of the planned scenario. Flexibility is an important feature. Respond to the needs of participants. It may be worth adding additional physical exercises because the group is responding well to them. Or quickly looking for some tactile aids because the instruction is unclear. Do not be afraid to change the plan, even if the scenario has already been checked and, for example, consulted with an expert. Each group and each workshop will be different.



Evaluation

It is worth concluding the workshop by collecting feedback from participants. In this way, you can find out what worked for the group, which elements are strong and which need to be refined or changed.

Work with the sign language interpreter to question D/deaf people about their experiences during the meeting. You can also prepare a questionnaire. It is important to appropriately adapt the form for collecting feedback from people who are in the workshop; if there are blind people among the participants, you cannot choose a written survey. You can look for a form of evaluation that will include everyone. For example, suggest ways of working with a survey card in different ways depending on the answer to the question on the card, for instance bend the corner, tear the card, fold it in half, etc.

Another option is to conduct a survey in an accessible form (e.g. use tools provided by Google or Microsoft). It is important to formulate questions in a clear way. You can also offer a meeting-conversation (e.g., online) or one-on-one conversations (e.g., by phone) with individual participants.

Additionally, talk to the team you worked with on the workshop, the people who acted as assistants, who were your partners or even technical support. Think about whether all the stages were well addressed, whether the number of people in the team was sufficient, or whether you perhaps forgot something.

Accessibility planning in your organisation



Sometimes it is difficult to find one standard of accessibility. Such standards may vary from country to country, as they are often the result of national-level legislation. And sometimes an individual need cannot be generalised to adopt a standard solution for everyone. The suggestions presented on the following pages result from our experience and cooperation with people with disabilities in creating an accessible offer of cultural institutions.



Accessibility audit

There may already be someone in your organisation who handles the issue of accessibility, such as the accessibility coordinator. Often, there is an obligation or good practice in public bodies to appoint at least one employee to coordinate the issue. If so, please consider the following aspects with this person:

When dealing with culture education or engagement in culture, you may not be aware of the accessibility of the space available to your organisation. For example, you can check if your organisation has

an accessibility plan. In some countries such a plan is mandatory, e.g. in Poland every public administration institution must have such a plan. If there is no such plan, and it is an organisation where you frequently run workshops, try to perform an accessibility audit, that is a diagnosis of what elements of accessibility you already have and what elements still need to be taken care of.

It is best to perform an accessibility audit separately for the architectural space, separately for websites and applications, and separately for means of communication and promotion. Evaluation of these areas usually requires different knowledge and competences, so it can be performed by another expert, yet within the same organisation. It is recommended that your assessors include people with disabilities, who can visit your institution in practice, attend your workshop, purchase a ticket, or use other services that your organisation provides.

The problem of accessibility audits is their considerable cost, often exceeding the financial resources of the institution. In such a case, cooperation with the local community of people with disabilities is crucial. They can, even without being experts, evaluate your actions and organisation from the point of view of users. Just remember that such work also requires remuneration and that information about how accessible your institution is should be published on your website along with information about how such an assessment was made and by whom.

Preparing a description of the organisation on an accessible website

Your accessible website (see below), should include at least the following information:

- description of the accessibility of the route to your institution with an emphasis on obstacles, which may even comprise a simple cobblestone or a threshold just 3 cm high. It is worth mentioning distances from the nearest public transport stops in order to be able to assess the effort necessary to cross this distance;
- description of the entrance to the building (if the person encounters stairs, thresholds, unusual height of a doorknob or opening handle, the side of the door opening) and the layout of the main hall, with particular attention to how to get to the main office, the concierge desk, or directly to your workshop room;
- information on where the toilets are located in the building and whether they are accessible, meaning whether they can be used by a person in a wheelchair (adequate space and handles, height of the washbasin, mirrors or containers with soap and towels) or a person with visual impairment (e.g. contrast and tactile markings – convex, in Braille). D/deaf people generally do not need special toilet equipment, although you should pay attention to whether there are fire alarms with built-in emergency strobe lights in the toilets. A toilet is a place

where a D/deaf person is alone and needs a visual signal to warn them of danger;

- it is important to include on this subpage contact details of a person who can answer accessibility questions; if possible, it may also be a person who will be able to assist people with various needs from the public transport stop to and/or around the building;
- contact details, i.e. email address and mobile phone accepting text messages, this form is often used by D/deaf people, who prefer shorter written forms;

Remember that a person with a disability may experience an enhanced sense of security when visiting your organisation because of the website. Therefore, such a person expects complete and honest information, which also includes information about what is not accessible in your organisation, and information about possible barriers that may be encountered.

The website must be planned and implemented in accordance with the current WCAG standard (in Poland, this is currently the WCAG 2.1 AA standard). It's best to talk to an IT specialist about it, but it's worth inviting a blind or visually impaired person who will be able to browse your website for accessibility and thus help you design the way you share.

Markings in the accessible workshop room

In order to be accessible, your workshop room should also have a clearly marked entrance. It is a good idea for the door to stand out from the background colour of the hallway. If you can, on the floor in the room you can mark the movement lines to the toilet or other points with a line in a contrasting colour. Convex lines are also often used, they are noticeable for a sight-impaired person who uses a cane. You can also use descriptions in large, contrasting fonts, placed on the wall at eye level.

Stairs and steps should be marked with contrast. This does not have to be a bright yellow colour, but the contrast should be significant, in other words a minimum of 4.5:1.

It is best to have even and gentle lighting. The light intensity can be agreed with workshop participants.

Therefore, remember to verify the accessibility of the room in which you are conducting sessions, but also the accessibility of the building and its surroundings. Communicate such necessary information to your audience in a clear and honest manner. Verify that the information is already prepared by your organisation. Such a useful description, made once, may serve many people, but it should be updated to avoid surprises caused by planned or unplanned renovation or changes on the traffic routes.

Basic principles of universal design



In the context of designing architectural objects and solutions, there is a concept of universal design, thanks to which our operation becomes accessible. In accordance with Article 2 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, universal design concerns solutions that are useful to the greatest extent possible for all, without the need for adaptation or specialised changes.

Below you will find the seven principles of universal design. For each of them, we try to refer to the design of workshops, treating this as an inspiration for a holistic view of universal culture education:

- 1. Equal access** – based on the assumption that every person should have equal access to all elements of the environment, i.e. space, buildings, objects, means of transport, we can look at our educational activities in a similar way.

The workshops proposed by us should be open to all recipients, who have the right to participate in them due to their interests, passions, and needs. A common practice is to plan specific workshops, such as for a group of people with visual impairments. In terms of equal access, we assume the creation of the opportunity to participate in every event as soon as the person interested in it appears.

- 2. Flexibility of use** – universal design assumes different possibilities of using objects or space, taking into account possibilities and needs of users.

In this context, for example, we can think of the workshop room as a space that will change depending on the preferences of users; it has different variants of seats (on the floor, on a chair with a backrest, on a soft stool) or a board or other place for recording, which takes into account different heights (of a child, an adult, a person in a wheelchair). Similarly, we can think about the implementation of the task and choose instructions or materials for work so that individual people can implement them in the way that will be most convenient (or simply the only possible way) for them.

- 3. Simple and intuitive operation** – according to this principle, the functions of space and objects should be easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or level of concentration.

In relation to workshops, it is crucial to think about the clarity of the message, both informational texts about the workshops themselves as well as instructions, tasks, descriptions, and worksheets. Try to focus on uncomplicated syntax, avoid layered, complex sentences. This does not mean that we should avoid, for example, professional terms, but if they appear, they must have a clear, legible definition. Similarly, those tools or techniques of manual actions that do not require specialised service tend to be more inclusive.

- 4. Conspicuous information** – it is important that the most important information is accessible to users regardless of ambient conditions or their sensory capabilities.

We are looking for ways of acting in which, for example, switching off one of the senses does not cause disruptions in communication. If during classes there is a significant visual message (e.g. an image or inscription), there should also be its verbal equivalent (such as an audio description or reading out words). Or vice versa – if we include sounds in the classroom (command, instruction, voice recording, music, etc.), there should be its visual equivalent (a sign language translation, transcription of the recording, subtitles for the D/deaf, etc.).

5. Error tolerance – the project is intended to minimise the risks and negative effects associated with accidental or erroneous or unintended use.

In the case of educational activities, try to look for such spaces, tools or materials that will be safe for the person who uses them, and at the same time those that reduce the risk of their permanent damage or destruction. For example, there are no sharp edges or there is little risk of falling off a narrow surface.

6. Low physical effort – universal design assumes a way of thinking about space or objects to ensure that using them is effective, convenient, and requires minimal effort of the user.

According to this principle, neither arrival at nor participation in the workshops should involve a great deal of physical effort. From this point of view, we should choose the place where we plan activities (avoiding stairs, difficult to open doors), but also assume that individual people during the workshops will be able to decide on the amount of effort involved and time of participation in exercise or rest, if the task turns out to be too demanding.

7. Accessible and usable dimensions and space –

this principle assumes that we take into account the appropriate size and space provided for the approach, operation and use of the item, regardless of the size, attitude or mobility of the user.

First of all, it is worth keeping in mind distances within the space which make it easy for all users to move around, for example, sufficient to operate a wheelchair. For example, the planned walking route should avoid inaccessible curbs or stairs. The space in which the meeting takes place should not have additional obstacles, e.g., uneven pavement, and should not require climbing, e.g. onto a platform, etc.

These examples are only intended to be an inspiration to look at the activities we have designed so that they take into account as many diverse needs as possible. They redirect attention from thinking about **who I can invite** to my workshops to thinking about **who I will exclude** if I organise them in a given way, in this space.

Conclusion

Now you can see that accessibility is the empathetic, conscious, and imaginative planning and use of the resources of an organisation or institution. It is not only about responding to the needs of another person, but also about analysing the possibilities within the institution in terms of those needs.

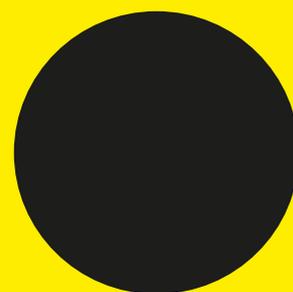
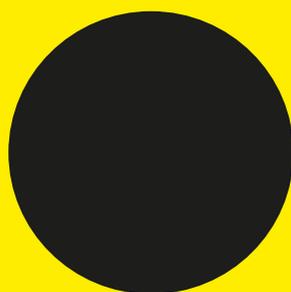
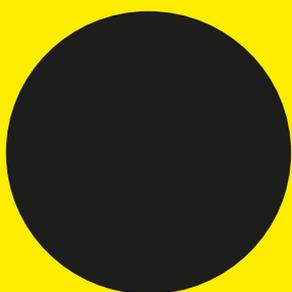
Art and culture education workshops are a unique area of accessibility because they aim to build a mutually supporting community. Accessible culture education classes are a great opportunity to make the public aware of the presence of people with disabilities in everyday public space. At the same time, such activities support development of public awareness among people with disabilities and prevent self-exclusion.

Therefore, start acting, take the first step.

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The project aims to develop new methods of education through art and to promote these solutions and their application in various contemporary social and artistic contexts such as the climate and environmental crisis, performing arts or accessibility for people with special needs.



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