WP2 A1
Drivers and challenges assessment
Final Assessment Report

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ALL-IN: Advancing Language Learning for Inclusive Narratives
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Introduction

When we talk about inclusive communication, we are talking about communication that is based on the principles of respect, accessibility and representation, that reflects the diversity of society as a whole, that does not discriminate on the basis of physical or cognitive limitations, and in which each and every person is treated with due respect (Arias, 2023).

To foster inclusive communication, it is necessary to recognise deficiencies in various forms of communication and language and create awareness and competences among young people, who have the potential to shape future behaviours, as language is a powerful tool for ensuring everyone feels heard and valued.

This Final Assessment report is the result of research and assessment activities carried out by the ALL-IN partners, at country and EU level, with the aim to provide a comprehensive insight into inclusive communication practices and related challenges. The first section of the document discusses the supportive system for inclusive communication across Europe, including insights on France, Italy, Poland and Spain. Readers will find a presentation of the legislative framework, current drivers, existing opportunities, initiatives, and useful resources to be exploited by the youth sector.

The second section analyses the inhibitors to inclusive communication linked to structural and endogenous barriers as well as target-specific challenges corresponding to the "people with fewer opportunities" as identified by the Erasmus Programme Guide (2023): people with disabilities, migrant background, living in rural and remote areas, facing gender inequalities, socio-economic difficulties or any other potential source of discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

Based on the results of the analysis, partners identified 10 training areas and a set of topics (see "Training needs" section for more details) that will inform the ALL-IN training resources (WP3).

1. Inclusive communication and diversity awareness
2. Create a culture of belonging within and outside youth organisations
3. Accessibility in digital communication and inclusive digital content
4. Disability and neurodiversity awareness for inclusive communication
5. Intercultural communication
6. Gender equality through gender-sensitive/gender-neutral language
7. Socio-economic inclusivity through communication
8. Age-inclusive communication
9. How to reach people with low-literacy skills
10. Communication for people living in rural and isolated areas

To conclude, readers will find a set of strategies and recommendations tailored to youth workers to enhance inclusive communication practices, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and diverse environment within youth organisations and overall youth sector.

Drivers and opportunities

> *"Language has the power to reinforce or deconstruct systems of power that maintain poverty, inequality and suffering"* - Oxfam, 2023

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Inclusive communication in the EU is indirectly supported by several legal frameworks ensuring equality, non-discrimination, and accessibility for all, such as articles 21 and 22 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, prohibiting discrimination based on various grounds, the Race Equality Directive, the Employment Equality Directive etc. The 'Audio-visual Media Services Directive (2010/13/EU)' prohibits incitement to hatred based on race, sex, religion, and nationality in the media, and calls on EU Member States to ensure that media services do not include such content. Additionally, the European Commission's Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men has recommended that journalism students and media professionals receive training in using gender-sensitive language to help break gender stereotypes in the media (EIGE, 2024).

In the last years, European institutions adopted their own regulated communication strategies to achieve a more inclusive approach, proving an increasing attention towards this dimension. For instance, the resolution of 15 January 2019, Article 49, recommends that Parliament's Directorate-General for Communication include a stronger and more active gender perspective in its reporting of Parliament's policy-making and communication campaigns (EP, 2019).

On the other side, accessibility, which is closely related to inclusive language, is extensively regulated by the EU. Key legislations include the Web Accessibility Directive and the European Accessibility Act ensuring public sector websites and mobile applications are accessible to all. Furthermore, collaborations with standards organisations have led to official European Standards such as EN 301 549 for ICT accessibility and EN 17161 for "Design for all" standards.

At national levels, inclusive communication is covered by a legal framework composed of different laws, recommendations and governmental plans that advocate equality, diversity, inclusion and accessibility. In the case of Spain, it is necessary to mention the following laws:

- Recommendation CM/REC 2019 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on preventing and combating sexism. Link.
- IV Open Government Plan, Axis of awareness and training, commitment 8 of inclusive communication on open government. Link.
- Royal Decree 1112/2018 of 7 September on accessibility of public sector websites and applications for mobile devices. Link.
- III Plan for Gender Equality in the General State Administration and in the Public Bodies linked to or dependent on it, approved by the Agreement of the Council of Ministers of 9 December 2020, published in the Official State Gazette by Resolution of 29 December 2020, of the General Secretariat of Public Function. Link.

- Law 13/2022 of 7 July, General Law on Audio-visual Communication. Link.
- Law 6/2022, of 31 March, amending the Consolidated Text of the General Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and their Social Inclusion, approved by Royal Legislative Decree 1/2013, of 29 November, to establish and regulate cognitive accessibility and its conditions of requirement and application. Link.

In France, circulars from 1986 and 2017 endorsed the work of the Terminology Commission, affirming the importance of feminising the names of professions, functions and titles for more inclusive communication. Other important regulations are the Law for a Digital Republic (2016) focusing on digital accessibility for people with disabilities and the Diversity Charter promoting equal opportunities and diversity in companies. In addition, the 2005 law on equal rights and opportunities for people with disabilities and the 2018 law on digital accessibility have strengthened this legal framework. The French academy - Académie française - has also approved the feminisation of job names in 2019, in recognition of changes in society.

As for Italy, there is no single rule or set of rules for inclusive communication yet. However, there are some laws and regulations that promote inclusiveness and accessibility in general, which can also be applied to inclusive language:

- Equal Opportunities Code (Legislative Decree 198/2006) promotes equal treatment and opportunities between men and women in all sectors, including communication and audio-visuals with provisions to counter gender discrimination in the media and advertising.
- Law no. 67/2006, entitled "Provisions for the judicial protection of persons with disabilities, victims of discrimination" includes measures for the recognition of Italian sign language (LIS) and the inclusion of persons with hearing disabilities (Art. 34-ter).
- National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021-2026, which is inspired by the European Union's Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 and identifies five main directions of proposal including communication, words and images to generate change.

To conclude, in Poland, two main laws form a legal foundation for inclusive communication practices: the Anti-Discrimination Law, which prohibits discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, and disability, and the Inclusive Education Act, which promotes the integration of students with disabilities into mainstream educational settings.

EDUCATION SYSTEM
Across Europe, various programmes and initiatives aim to enhance the capacity and skills of individuals and professionals in using inclusive language. These efforts are driven by both governmental and non-governmental organizations, focusing on raising awareness, providing training, and developing resources to foster inclusive communication.

Formal education opportunities - University of Warsaw offering courses on 'Inclusive Education' and 'Diversity Management', focusing on incorporating students with disabilities and marginalized groups into mainstream educational settings; school curricula including more

modules on citizenship and anti-discrimination like in the case of French schools; guidelines and resources for inclusive education and communication practices developed by the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR). As for Spain, it is worth mentioning the following programmes:

- Technician in Care for People in a Situation of Dependence. More info here.
- Higher Technician in Social Integration. More info here.
- Higher Technician in Communicative Mediation. More info here.
- Higher Technician in Gender Equality Promotion. More info here.
- Degree in Spanish Sign Language and Deaf Community. More info here.

Non formal education opportunities mainly include specific professional training courses, supported by public of private funds, offered to raise awareness of inclusive practices among employees and company managers. There are also community programmes and online platforms offering accessible training modules on inclusive communication, funded by national NGOs or by EU institutions through funding programmes like Erasmus+ (e.g., KA210-YOU Inclusive Communication: Diversity as a Lever of Performance; KA204 Adult Education Promoting Easy-to-Read Language for Social Inclusion

Informal education is provided through numerous workshops and training sessions for youth workers and professionals on inclusive communication practices, often facilitated by non-governmental organizations and international bodies.

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES IN SPAIN

• Course on inclusive communication, offered by the Complutense University of Madrid
• Course on Gender-Sensitive Language for Inclusive Communication, offered by the Institute of Social and Socio-Sanitary Studies
• Virtual Workshop: "Introduction to Inclusive Communication: a view from diversity", offered by AECID
• Free courses on Inclusive Communication, offered by Modii
• University Extension Training Course on Transversal Competences in Inclusive Communication to address complex communication needs, offered by the University of Malaga
• ALL-IN Toolbox

OPPORTUNITIES IN ITALY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE/YOUTH WORKERS

• Inclusive language and representation of diversity in the world of culture: series of workshops organised by AVI MEDIATECHE in Pordenone aimed at young people to promote awareness about diversity and inclusion through creative activities and discussion.
• Sono inclusivo – Ambassadors: course offered by CBM Italia ETS in Milan for youth leaders, designed to develop inclusive communication skills among participants
• Inclusive Language Workshops for Young Writers: A series of creative writing workshops organised by a local public library in Turin, designed to teach young writers how to use inclusive language in their stories and literary works.
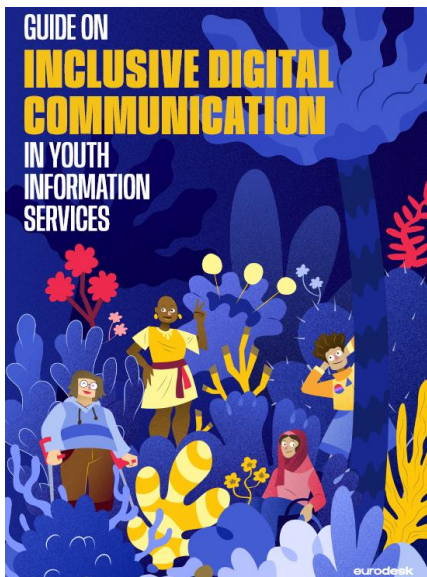
For youth organisations, the Eurodesk Guide on Inclusive Digital Communication (2023) stands out as a best practice example, specifically tailored to their needs, making it a comprehensive and precious resource in the field of youth. According to Eurodesk, the key component to carry out inclusive communication is "creating a culture of belonging" within each organisation; in this way, youth workers might overcome the need to label specific excluded groups and recognise specific barriers for each, as this approach delate these very same barriers.

Across Europe, many universities and public/private institutions provide operational guidelines for inclusive communication not specifically addressed to youth workers but easily adaptable to their needs.

USEFUL TOOLS

• LetMeTalk - an augmentative and alternative communication app
• Facil'iti - digital accessibility solutions tailored to the needs of people with disabilities
Inclusive Talk – AI-based tool giving suggestions to make a text as inclusive as possible
• Gender Decoder highlighting potential gender-coded language that may discourage individuals of a specific gender from applying to a job/volunteer position or a particular activity/event/training
• The Gender Gap Grader assessing gender balance within a text and providing inclusive alternatives
• Textio an AI writing tool providing feedback on language inclusivity and bias
• WAVE tool allowing for regular checks on a website's accessibility

EVALUATION TOOLS

• Inclusive Communication Assessment Tool by the Centre for International Private Enterprise (CIPE)
• DIALEO evaluation tool measuring the inclusiveness of communication discourse and practices.

GUIDELINES/RESOURCES (FEW EXAMPLES)

English language
• European Parliament Inclusive Communication Guidelines
• Commission Style Guide
• Guidelines for the use of language as a driver of inclusivity
• Disability-Inclusive Communication Guidelines by UN

Spanish
• Guide to inclusive and non-sexist communication, by the Ministry of Transport
• Guide for the use of more inclusive and equitable language, by the Ministry of Justice
• Guide to inclusive communication for building a more equal world, by Barcelona City Council
• How to create inclusive content on Internet, by ONCE Foundation
• Guide to Inclusive Communication and Disability, by Adecco Foundation
• Guide to inclusive communication and treatment by the Complutense University of Madrid

Italian
• Guidelines for Respectful Language Use by the University of Trento
• Guidelines 2024 for inclusive communication by Bocconi University

Inhibitors and challenges

> *"It's now official: a part of inclusive writing is outlawed in schools. In France, the circular sent by Jean-Michel Blanquer to academy rectors and national education staff bans writing based on the interpunct"* - Baldacchino, 2021

This part of the report analyses the main challenges and inhibitors of inclusive language as identified by the ALL-IN partners through mapping and research activities carried out at country and European level. A main barrier that might hugely affect youth workers' capacity to boost inclusive communication is the **difficulty to find training resources that are completely open**, available without registration and without cost. A Google search for courses on inclusive communication yields, indeed, that the vast majority of available courses on the topic are fee-based.

Country reports from partners also prove that a more structural factor is highly inhibiting inclusive communication across Europe: the **people perception of the shift towards inclusive communication as a threat to their identity or as an external imposition**. This situation is the result of different factors, such as:

- **Political instrumentalization of inclusive language**
  In recent years, inclusive language has been instrumentalised by different political parties, which has led to a struggle that places inclusive language more as something ideological than as a tool to favour inclusive communication. This has led to misunderstandings, the spread of misconceptions, or a misinterpretation of what inclusive communication practices are.
  Deep-rooted resistance to changing established linguistic and communicative structures
  The Royal Spanish Academy, in its 2020 report, showed an inflexible position regarding inclusive language on behalf of the institutions, which hinder and slow down the adoption of inclusive communication practices in other contexts, such as education, bureaucratic procedures, etc. In France and Italy, many people are accustomed to traditional linguistic norms and are hesitant to embrace inclusive language, viewing it as unnecessary or even as a threat to the integrity of the languages. For instance, the decision of the France's government to ban the use of inclusive language in schools is grounded in the idea that "inventing words" is an aberration that has nothing to do with the fight against sexism but it just impedes the understanding and learning to write a language. In Italy, according to the results of the 'Opinions and attitudes towards a more inclusive language' project (Osservatorio D, 2024), 70% of respondents think that the integrity of language must be defended against today's mispronunciations and political correctness that has 'tired' 3 out of 5 people. Moreover, 17% of respondents – and in particular for one in four young people – consider language has something that is given a little too much importance and a limitation that creates **misunderstandings and does not allow them to express themselves at their best.**

- **Fear of saying the wrong thing** - this fear represents another significant inhibitor in inclusive communication since it reduces people's capacity and will to engage in conversations. Critics to the term "microaggressions" claim that the linguistic association between aggression and violence brings senders of microaggressions to be automatically perceived as intentional "persecutors" rather than people who, in some cases, might not understand the impact of their language; this leads to an increasing tension between the sender and the receiver and to a reticence to engage in conversation (IMD, 2024). Moreover, an international survey with 5.000 citizens across India, US, Brazil, Germany, and UK (Dialogue Project, 2020) revealed a scarcity of respectful dialogue on contentious topics like politics, race, sexual orientation, immigration, and religion. This situation hampers learning from diverse perspectives and fosters echo chambers where people only interact with like-minded individuals.

Reticence to change communication practices and engage in conversations to better understand the impact of the linguistic choices on the others and adjust practices accordingly is connected to the **lack/shortage of the following competences** (Belabas, 2023):

- "Empathy" as the ability to empathise with feelings, thoughts, and behaviours of members from different cultural groups
- "Open-mindedness" as the unprejudiced attitude required to understand and learn a new culture and opinions
- "Flexibility" necessary to overcome cultural barriers and misunderstandings and adapt to different people and situations

Other arguments state that inclusive language is exclusionary for people with dyslexia or attention disorders, and would render writing itself unreadable for these categories. In addition, using gender-neutral forms in written texts may pose accessibility barriers to people with visual impairment, as screen readers struggle with special characters like *. Hence, how can we ensure a fully inclusive communication for those women/non binary people experiencing a visual disability? Linguists identified alternative solutions like the symbol /ə/, called Schwa in the Italian language. The pronunciation corresponds to a neutral, indistinct vowel sound, already present in many central and southern Italian dialects. It has been adopted in the place of using the asterisk, the snail, the x etc. - all of which can be written, but not pronounced. However, there is still no consensus, and these forms remain a continuous subject of debate among linguists and communication practitioners.

In the light of these open issues, and before delving into the analysis of the barriers to inclusive communication towards specific groups, it is worth highlighting another horizontal challenge: **address the complexity of inclusive language**, which requires a deeper understanding of the intersectionality concept, as intersection of different social entities and related discriminations.

TARGET AUDIENCE-SPECIFIC BARRIERS

People facing economic/social difficulties

According to a study by the Polish Humanitarian Action, 45% of economically disadvantaged individuals report limited access to communication resources. Furthermore, the partners' mapping and research reveal that the needs of this particular group are less addressed in existing guidelines and operational frameworks compared to other disadvantaged groups. Insufficient understanding and empathy towards individuals experiencing socio-economic hardships often result in stigmatising language. This lack of awareness poses significant challenges for inclusive communication, as it can perpetuate harmful stereotypes and further marginalise those facing socio-economic discrimination. To foster a more inclusive society, it is crucial to develop communication strategies that are sensitive to the experiences of these individuals.

People with a migrant background, people facing discrimination based on race/ethnic origin

In Poland, cultural barriers persist as seen in a recent case where a migrant integration programme faced difficulties due to language barriers and lack of cultural competence among service providers. Also in France, non-access to translate language is common barriers for migrants. Overall, migrants are more likely to be the target of hate speech, xenophobia and intolerance. They are often side-lined and marginalised, making communication between different groups of people from different backgrounds totally ineffective. Lack of cultural competence and existence of prejudices still represent a significant barrier to inclusive language. Moreover, communication practitioners often overlook their audiences' experiences, leading to inaccurate and superficial cultural depictions. This is often due to ethnocentrism, where one's own culture is seen as superior to others, resulting in the inappropriate use of racial categories (Belabas, 2023).

People with disabilities – neurodiversity

According to the Spanish Confederation of Associations for the Care of People with Cerebral Palsy, ASPASE (2023), more than 650.000 people with disabilities face communication barriers in accessing justice in Spain, of which almost 120.000 have cerebral palsy and the rest are other disabilities that share these communication support needs, such as dysarthria or lack of oral communication. According to the dicaTIC report (Martínez Torán & Esteve Sendra, 2021), 6 out of 10 people with disabilities have difficulties in accessing or using the Internet, and 30% do not even have a smartphone.

Despite a wide regulatory framework and official standards in this field, the lack of accessibility remains a significant inhibitor of inclusive communication. Most contents including government websites and information materials are not designed with the needs of people with disabilities in mind. The lack of alternative formats, such as audio descriptions or simplified texts, excludes many people. Web accessibility levels are measured from A (least demanding), AA and AAA (the most demanding). According to the Accessibility Observatory's Simplified Global Website Monitoring Report 2023 (2024), 26.95% of the websites of public bodies reach level AA, and only 15.70% reach level A. However, 57.35% do not reach even the lowest level of accessibility, which is a barrier in the digital sphere of communication.

Hence, barriers to inclusive communication concerning disabilities and neurodiversity include:
- Lack of sensitivity and awareness about the communication needs of people with different types of disabilities or neurological/cognitive disorders.

- Lack of understanding of what neurodivergent means, how communication might be more difficult for autistic people and how to talk to them.
- Lack of communication with people with disability/neurodiversity. As for other categories, it is important to inquire about the terms people use to identify themselves; it is necessary to listen and engage, ask questions, get feedback, refrain from making assumptions, understand how individuals prefer to receive information.
- Infrastructural barriers or lack of alternative communication methods such as sign language interpretation or augmentative and alternative communication systems. Inclusive communication is not limited to receiving information, but also needs to consider the ability to interact, which is hindered by this type of barriers.
- Shortage of skills of professionals in accessible communication techniques.
- Perception of (physical or intellectual) diversity as a deficit instead of a mere difference (IMD, 2024).
- Prejudices and stigma that influence the representation and acceptance of people with neurological or cognitive disorders.
- Use of the stories of disabled people to "inspire" non-disabled individuals. This action-renamed "inspiration porn"- even if well-intended tends to objectify disabled people according to activists. The real challenge to avoiding inspiration porn is to let disabled people speak for themselves (Pulrang, 2019).

People facing gender inequalities and discrimination based on sex or sexual orientation

Linguistic androcentrism, which is common in many European languages, may represent a barrier to inclusive communication, as a perspective in which the generic masculine is used to refer to all people, regardless of their sex or gender identity (The Lemon Tree Education, 2022). Grammar rules often follow masculinist codes and the overall population and institutions are reticent to change those rules and accept alternative forms.

Another important inhibitor is the fact that bias and stereotypes always affect, even involuntary, communication practices and craft a non- inclusive communication. It is worth noting that research prove that gender stereotypes are also perpetuated by digital technologies like machine translators; for instance, for translations from English into Italian, the English word "student" will most likely become male "lo studente", as will doctor, while nurses become female "le infermiere" (Piergentili et al., 2023).

Regarding the LGBTQ+ community, a main challenge for communication practitioners and general population is ensuring the use of correct gender pronouns, recognizing this as a crucial aspect of acknowledging, supporting, and respecting individuals. Additionally, it is essential to recognise and address the diverse needs and challenges within the LGBTQ+ community, which does not represent a homogeneous category. For example, confusion often arises regarding intersexuality, with many mistakenly equating it with sexual orientation or gender identity. Furthermore, there is a common risk of perpetuating trans-exclusionary language or voices just for the sake of presenting "both sides of the story" (ILGA, 2022).

People with low literacy skills

Insufficient production of easy-to read material hinders inclusive communication towards this category, along with many other barriers: use of sophisticated vocabulary and technical jargon; the reliance on written communication without providing alternatives like audio, video, or visual aids; insufficient awareness among communicators about the needs and limitations of low-literacy audiences; feelings of embarrassment or stigma associated with low literacy, which can prevent individuals from seeking information or assistance; poorly designed communication materials that do not consider readability, such as small font sizes, dense text, and lack of clear structure; cultural differences and language barriers that are not adequately addressed in communication strategies.

People facing discrimination based on age

Ageism is most often associated with prejudice against older adults ignoring that it affects all age groups. In a workplace, younger people may face stereotypes about being dependent on technology, lacking a work ethic, or having fewer ideas to contribute to decision-making. Recognising that each person's experience is unique, a key challenge in combating ageism is to acknowledge individuals based on their life phase rather than their biological age (IMD, 2024).

People from rural/remote areas

The concept of spatial stigma underscores the importance of inclusive communication and language towards rural communities. By addressing the unique challenges and stigmas faced by rural populations, it is possible to promote more equitable and respectful representations, preventing the perpetuation of harmful stereotypes and ensuring that rural voices are heard. Rural young people in particular still face barriers like geographical isolation, limited resources, limited access to education and information. Digital divide can hinder residents' ability to access online information, participate in virtual communication channels, and engage in digital literacy activities. Therefore, youth workers shall identify the most suitable access formats keeping into account the accessibility challenges faced by rural areas, expanding their outreach and offer access to resources, information on rural development, education, employment, entrepreneurship and social integration.

Training areas and needs

Based on the identified drivers and inhibitors, 10 macro training areas and several topics have been spotted that could meet the needs of youth workers and young people in terms of inclusive communication and related skills development.

1. INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION AND DIVERSITY AWARENESS

- **Introduction to inclusive communication**, basic concepts, practices and tools to foster verbal and non-verbal inclusive communication.
- **Assess and understand how terminology and reproduction of stereotypes impacts other individuals**. It is important to develop skills in empathy and active listening to better understand the perspectives and experiences of others, particularly those from marginalized/underrepresented groups. Listening is indeed an undervalued, but a very powerful skill, an inexhaustible source of personal and professional enrichment.
- **Understand the overlap of various social identities** and their impact on communication (need for embracing intersectionality in communication).

2. CREATE A CULTURE OF BELONGING WITHIN AND OUTSIDE YOUTH ORGANISATIONS

Internally

- **Recognize and overcome personal biases**: people unconsciously hold biases that affect their perceptions and interactions, and might limit inclusive communication. It is crucial for youth workers and young people to identify and understand their biases and their impact on communication. Through activities, discussions, and self-reflection exercises, they can become aware of their prejudices, learn their origins, and develop strategies to mitigate them (Competences: open-mindedness and flexibility).
- **Diverse representation in leadership, shared power, and management of diverse team** to foster an inclusive environment.
- **Conflict resolution and non-violent communication**: identifying and analysing conflicts, practicing non-violent communication, and resolving conflicts peacefully.

Externally

- **Inclusive communication strategy**: plan, monitor and assess
- **Engaging targets in a bottom-up approach**: involving the community in developing and implementing communication initiatives through participatory decision-making, community consultations, and feedback mechanisms.
- Understanding **human rights basics and communication-related rights violations**.

3. ACCESSIBILITY IN DIGITAL COMMUNICATION AND INCLUSIVE DIGITAL CONTENT

- **Principles of web accessibility**, captioning, and self-description of multimedia content.
- **Assistive tools and adaptive technologies**, inclusive web design.

- **Inclusive representation in media**: analysis of current media representation, promoting diversity, and creating inclusive content.
- **Creating inclusive content on media**: skills for creating and sharing accessible content on social media. For example, writing alt text for different images, creation of a short video with subtitles (YouTube), using hashtags in CamelCase etc.
- **How images and visual materials should be inclusive**: creation of a simple and clear guide and communication materials, use of visual and practical methods to facilitate learning, as in the guidelines and documents there is much about words and strategies for written texts but little about images and audio-visual elements.
- **Critical use of digital tools**: recognise and mitigate biases reproduced by digital tools, using them critically (e.g., translation tools, AI-based apps)

4. DISABILITY AND NEURODIVERSITY AWARENESS FOR INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION

- **Communication needs of people with disabilities:** presentation of the main communication barriers and challenges associated to different types of disabilities
- **Assistive technologies:** introduction to assistive technologies and how to incorporate them (screen readers, subtitles, audio description, include descriptions of non-verbal sounds (e.g., [door slams], [laughter]) etc.).
- **Understanding neurodiversity**: how to create sensory-friendly environments and clear communication techniques tailored to neurodivergent individuals.

5. INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

- **Inclusive language** for people with a migrant background and those facing discrimination based on race, ethnic origin, religion, or belief.
- **Language support**: promote training in the host country's language and access to linguistic translation as this factor represents the main barrier for migrants' equal access to information and communication.
- **Recognition and respect for cultural differences** and effective intercultural communication
- **Promoting techniques for active listening and respectful dialogue** to foster cultural competence and sensitivity.

6. GENDER EQUALITY THROUGH GENDER-SENSITIVE/GENDER-NEUTRAL LANGUAGE

- Difference between **gender-sensitive and gender-neutral language**.
- Addressing **gender biases and stereotypes**.
- **Ensuring visibility** of all genders and sexual orientations in communication.
- Correct use of **pronouns**

7. SOCIO-ECONOMIC INCLUSIVITY THROUGH COMMUNICATION

This training area should be addressed and deepened as country and EU reports show a general lack of references/guidelines addressing the communication needs of people experiencing socio-economic difficulties. Moreover, as proved by quantitative data collected in this report, this category face major barriers to information.

- Understanding of the **communication needs of low-income groups**.
- Strategies for **inclusive communication that address economic/social barriers**.
- Information on available **support programmes**.

8. AGE-INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION

- Identification of **age-related barriers**.
- Techniques for effective **communication to combat ageism**.
- Promoting **intergenerational communication**.

9. HOW TO REACH PEOPLE WITH LOW-LITERACY SKILLS

- **Support to low-literacy individuals in accessing and engaging** with communication materials
- **Development of easy-to-read materials** and **literacy support techniques**.
- **Tools** for literacy development.

10. COMMUNICATION FOR PEOPLE LIVING IN RURAL AND ISOLATED AREAS

- Specific **communication needs of rural and isolated populations**.
- **Stereotypes reproducing spatial/social stigma** linked to rural areas and how to avoid them.
- Choice of **suitable channels to overcome infrastructural barriers** and limited access to the Internet.

Strategies and recommendations

"It is not enough to just mention; understanding, sharing, creating a context, and contagion are necessary" - Vasallo, 2023

By implementing the following strategies, youth organizations and workers can foster an environment of inclusive language and communication, ensuring equal access, participation and representation for all young people and overall population:

- Use media platforms and community **events to promote the importance of inclusive communication**. Use interactive activities such as role-playing, games, and discussions to engage youth in learning about and practicing inclusive language. Foster dialogue and understanding among diverse groups.
- **Allow individuals from underrepresented groups to share their experiences** through events, initiatives, or social media campaigns. This approach amplifies marginalized voices and fosters a deeper understanding within the community.
- **Actively involve underrepresented groups in planning, developing, and implementing communication strategies**. Move away from a top-down approach and institutionalize a *co-creational perspective* (Belabas, 2023). Create channels for receiving feedback and establish processes for analysing and implementing it. This approach ensures that communication is authentic and respectful, and that it accurately reflects the realities of the individuals and communities involved.
- **Always listen to activists and communities' representatives** since it might not be appropriate to speak on behalf of others or about experiences that have not been personally encountered.
- **Encourage collaboration and partnerships between various sectors**, including government agencies, NGOs, educational institutions, and private organizations. Share resources, best practices, and support the implementation of inclusive communication initiatives through these partnerships.
- Participate in or implement **training programmes that cover all aspects of inclusive communication**, including verbal, non-verbal, written, and digital communication. These programmes should encompass **cultural competency training, role-playing scenarios, and cultural exchange activities to build empathy and understanding** across diverse groups.
- Develop and promote digital tools and platforms that offer **accessible content** for everyone. Integrate **assistive technologies** such as screen readers and sign language interpreters into digital communication channels. Offer **language translation services** via digital platforms to ensure equitable access to information and public services for non-native speakers. Additionally, organize workshops to raise awareness and provide training on these tools, ensuring they are widely used and understood.
- Develop and/or adopt practical guides on inclusive and non-discriminatory language. **Utilise resources recognised at the European level**, such as the Eurodesk "Guide on Inclusive Digital Communication" and the EIGE "Toolkit on gender-sensitive language".

- Establish systems to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of inclusive communication practices. Use evaluation tools and frameworks to assess inclusiveness and gather feedback from participants to adapt and improve strategies continuously.
- Promote the adoption of printed communication materials to **ensure information reaches those without internet access** and create downloadable content that can be accessed offline, ensuring accessibility for people in rural and remote areas with low bandwidth.
- Organize awareness-raising sessions on gender equality and workshops on non-sexist language. Promote inclusive writing that combats masculinist language codes and respects all gender identities.
- Promote intercultural and inter-religious dialogue through community events and cultural exchanges. Provide training on defending one's rights and responding to discrimination, fostering a more inclusive community.

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