



Co-funded by the
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Guide on Best Practices and Policies for Inclusive Theatres

shared and discussed in the frame of the project

INCLUSIVE THEATER(S)

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Index

WHAT'S INCLUSIVE THEATER(S)	3
THE PROJECT.....	4
Background.....	4
The partners	5
The activities.....	7
WHAT'S THIS HANDBOOK.....	17
What is a good practice to us?	19
BEST PRACTICES	21
CREATIVE CASE FOR DIVERSITY	23
RAMPS ON THE MOON.....	25
CREATIVE CAPTIONS.....	27
ACCESS CULTURE	29
VIBRATING BACKPACKS	31
MAGNETIC LOOP	33
SOCIAL MODEL OF DISABILITY	35
WE ALL COME FROM SOMEWHERE	37
TEATRO NO LIMITS	39
CASTLE PROJECT	41
TRIPYTCH – THREE PERSONAL STORIES.....	43
ODE TO DIVERSITY	45

WHAT'S INCLUSIVE THEATER(S)

THE PROJECT

Background

INCLUSIVE THEATER(S) was a Large Scale Cooperation project co-financed by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union, involving 6 organisations from 6 European Countries, originally for 30 months, which became 40 due to the prolonged pandemic crisis in 2020.

Its main aim was to develop a new audience in theatres by mainstreaming inclusive practices for blind, D/deaf, visual and hearing impaired persons during theatre performances at European level.

Our specific objectives were:

- to share good practices for inclusive theatre between experts through formal and non-formal training activities;
- to mainstream and scale-up accessible theatres in countries where support services for visually and hearing impaired persons are provided;
- to test and validate pilot actions for inclusive services in theatres of six countries;
- to develop and deploy a Europe-wide awareness raising campaign about the needs of visually and/or hearing impaired persons in theatres, stimulating inclusive policies and community engagement, and to disseminate the project's findings and the EU support to its implementation, ensuring long-term sustainability of its results.

The project has been a great opportunity to involve many different people from all walks of life. Audio describers, audio translators, subtitlers, theatre managers, cultural operators, artists and all different kind of professionals worked together to achieve our common objectives. D/deaf and hearing-impaired people, as well as blind and visually impaired people, have been the targeted audience of this project, while policy-makers, media and journalists, and the general public have been involved as key stakeholders.

This project has been incredibly helpful for our cause, a fantastic example of the power of culture to bring people together and make a real difference in the world!

The partners



[ATER Fondazione](#) **MODENA, Italy**

Lead partner of the INCLUSIVE THEATER(S) project, ATER Foundation is the central instrument for the entertainment system of the Emilia-Romagna region, one of the most significant areas in Italy for the production, consumption and diffusion of live entertainment. In its fifty-year history (it was officially founded in 1964, but was informally active for some years) ATER has adapted its original mission, to foster the development and dissemination of live entertainment, the change of scenery and the great growth of the regional territory from which originates, of the entire country and of cultural life and entertainment. The main areas in which ATER has competence at Regional Level are: Dance, Theatre and Music, and it currently manages 12 theatres dislocated in all Emilia Romagna.



[Arena Theatre – University of Wolverhampton](#) **WOLVERHAMPTON, United Kingdom**

University of Wolverhampton's External Engagement includes the Arena Theatre. With support from Arts Council England (ACE), the theatre hosts more than 200 public performances per year. Annually the theatre provides between 5 and 20 audiodescribed performances, that are specifically adapted for visually impaired and partially sighted patrons, and between 5 and 20 performances that have specific provision for Deaf and hard of hearing patrons with the use of British Sign Language or captions, as well as playing host to several relaxed and Profound and Multiple Learning Disability performances. In addition, the Arena is known as a nationally leading venue for its support of disabled artists. ACE commended its work with disabled companies in the renewal of its National Portfolio Organization status.



[Plavo Theatre](#) **BELGRAD, Serbia**

PLAVO theatre is a theatrical laboratory founded in 1995 in Belgrade. It is a theatre that explores deeper levels of human communication, which has the idea of moving boundaries of human perception and presents a critical attitude.

Activities of PLAVO theatre include creation of performances, training and organisation of international meetings and festivals, and the implementation of many side projects focused on the field of social inclusion. Since 2017, PLAVO cooperates with Belgrade City Organization of Deaf People, which resulted in a project involving many workshops and performances targeted to deaf people.

**SÃO
LUIZ**
TEATRO MUNICIPAL



**Sao Luiz Municipal Theatre –
EGEAC**

LISBON, Portugal

EGEAC, a public Portuguese company, is responsible for managing some of Lisbon's key cultural spaces, various museums, art galleries, and monuments and for organizing Festas de Lisboa and other street festivals.

Teatro São Luiz, part of EGEAC, develops a wide range of initiatives, challenging artists through commissions and co-productions. There is a strong commitment to building relationships where the theatre can take a central role, earning the recognition of its national and international peers as a platform engaged with the various phases of the creative process – residencies, creation, production/co-production, dissemination – in addition to the key component of audience relationships.



Audiosigno

MERIDA, Spain

The Audiovisual Social Company "Producciones Audiosigno, S.R.L" was funded in 2005 by FEDAPAS (Federation of Hearing Impaired in Extremadura). It is a pioneer in Extremadura due to its characteristics as a Special Employment Center with Social Label, which offers Spanish Sign Language Interpreter services. (LSE), subtitling, deaf gazette, and audio description for blind people in order to make audiovisual media content accessible to people with sensory disabilities. This company employs people with physical, mental and sensory disabilities.



THEAMA – Inclusive theatre

ATHENS, Greece

THE.AM.A is one of the few professional theatre groups composed by persons with disabilities operating in Greece since 2010. Focused on people with physical and learning/mental disabilities it aspires to establish the first Greek Higher School of Drama for people with all kinds of disabilities. It has been a major contributor in a most constructive way to challenge and finally abolish in 2017 the discriminatory legislation passed by the Greek Ministry of Culture (Law 370/1983) that requires all students of the Greek Higher Schools of Drama to be able-bodied and with no physical or mental disability.

THE.AM.A produces plays where the majority of the actors are people with disabilities, who are professional actors and compete in the field of performing arts as equals and within an inclusive framework.

The activities

During the course of our project, troubled in 2020, as happened all the World, by the lockdowns and the shutdown of all cultural activities, we:

1) We improved competences and skills of audio-describers, audio translators, subtitlers and translators in signs language thanks to the implementation of two Training Courses.

LET'S RAISE THE CURTAIN ON INCLUSION

At the beginning of 2020, as everybody, we had plans: in May, we were going to implement an in-presence training course in Emilia Romagna Region, and were already organising the logistics and the training materials in march 2020, when COVID-19 pandemic hit.

Moreover, in the arc of a few weeks, we found ourselves with all theatres shutdown (together with all other cultural activities), most national and international travels forbidden.

With the support of **EACEA**, after the initial shock we re-structured the project to be resilient also to a world pandemic crisis.

It took a while, but we managed our way around the situation, **organising our training courses online**, to continue at a distance what we started in-presence.

In **November 2020**, we did **Part 1 of the LET's RAISE THE CURTAIN ON INCLUSION** training course, organised online by **ATER Fondazione** and conducted by **DR. VALERIA ILLUMINATI**, from **Centro Diego Fabbri**.



LET'S RAISE THE CURTAIN ON INCLUSION
Making live events accessible
to the visually impaired audience
ONLINE TRAINING COURSE
20 NOVEMBER 2020
15:00 C.E.T (ROME)

20-11-2020
Accessibility and
cultural accessibility, the
legislative framework in Europe

27-11-2020
Accessibility of live
events: who, what, when and
how?

04-12-2020
Making an event accessible:
different perspectives user,
audiodescriber, theatre manager

11-12-2020
How innovation and
technology can help improve
AD services

FONDAZIONE
Circolo regionale
multidisciplinare
Emilia-Romagna

ATER

DIEGO FABBRI

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Maybe it was due to the fact that everybody was home way more than usual, maybe we were able to reach, thanks to our communication, a wide number of interested persons. Maybe it was a combination of the two factors.

However, we received an unexpected number of application for the training course, especially from Italy.

Not everyone was an audiodescriber... in fact, few of them were. Most applicants were actors, theatre managers and operators eager to understand and learn more about what audio-descriptions and other service were, and how they could be useful to include blind spectators.

So we deployed a “twin” Training Course, in Italian Language, targeted at the Italian participants we couldn’t involve in the Transnational training course.

The total maximum number of participants was raised from the original 30 to 45(!!!) for each Training Course (90 in total: 45 International, 45 Italians).

Valeria Illuminati guided the participants in exploring the following themes:

Webinar 1 *Accessibility and cultural accessibility, the legislative framework in Europe*

Webinar 2 – *Accessibility of live events: who, what, when and how?*

Webinar 3 – *Making a live event accessible: different perspectives (user, audio describer, theatre manager)*

Webinar 4 – *How innovation and technology can help improve AD services*

All four Webinars were conducted **twice** (once for the Transnational training course, once for the Italian training course). Most importantly, while distant from one another, we were able to feel close and learn from each other, **imagining how our world of theatre would look like in the future**, as at the time it was frozen, just a memory from 2019.

At the end of the course, very satisfied with the results, **ATER Fondazione** passed the torch to **THEAMA Inclusive Theater**, in charge of organising the second part of the training.

In **April 2021**, one year after the outbreak, the pandemic situation was getting better, but not that much better. Most theatres all over Europe were still closed, performing arts were allowed only in open spaces, and we, as project partners, didn’t have a chance to meet in-person since the first meeting in Wolverhampton, in December 2019.

Part 2 of the **LET’S RAISE THE CURTAIN ON INCLUSION** training course, organised online by **THEAMA Inclusive Theater**, conducted by **VASSILIS OIKONOMOU** and **DR. EMMANOUELA PATINIOTAKI** contributed to keep us (and most participants to Part 1) close together, to continue learning together about inclusion and accessibility.

LET’S RAISE THE CURTAIN ON INCLUSION

ONLINE TRAINING COURSE

PART II

**Making live events accessible
to D/deaf and hard of hearing**

Methodology

Webinars: (lectures, discussions,
assigned tasks): 8 hours

Platform

Zoom

Individual study

5 hours

Total duration

13 hours



Overall, we had almost 80 participants from all over Europe, another incredible result.

The two experts guided participants in exploring the following themes:

Webinar 1 - *Sign Language – seamless integration into an on-stage performance, the Director's perspective* (Vassilis Oikonomou)

Webinar 2 - *Accessibility Tools – a Director's perspective* (Vassilis Oikonomou)

Webinar 3 - *Theatre captioning for D/deaf and hard of hearing viewers: PART I: Generation and professionals* (Dr Emmanouela Patiniotaki)

Webinar 4 - *"Theatre captioning for D/deaf and hard of hearing viewers: PART II: Performances and output"* (Dr Emmanouela Patiniotaki)

Evaluation results of the overall training course reported a very high level of satisfaction both for the experts' job and for the contents shared.

Most participants reported to have acquired new competences in the field of accessibility and inclusion in theatre, and all the partnership were very satisfied with the results.

2) We improved the competences of our staff and of our stakeholders' in management of inclusive practices for D/deaf, hearing impaired, blind and visual impaired audiences, with a series of five [Study Visits](#).

First study visit

When and
where:

10-12 DECEMBER 2019

Wolverhampton, UNITED KINGDOM

Hosting partner:



**UNIVERSITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON**



What happened?



We kicked off the project, met each other, started planning activities.

We visited and assisted to a performance in Arena Theatre.

We learned how audiodescriptions and other inclusive services are implemented in Arena Theatre.

We learned about "Ramps to the moon", "Creative captions", "Creative case for inclusion".

We said: "goodbye, see you in Italy in May"...

Second study visit

When and where:

23-25 JULY 2021

Hosting partner:



SAO LUIZ
THEATRE

Lisbon, PORTUGAL



What happened?



We met and hugged each other for the first time after more than one year and a half.

We participated in a super interesting Conference titled "*Access schemes and policy. Making Theatre more inclusive*", organised by our hosting partner, during which many local stakeholders shared their points of view and good practices to improve theatre accessibility and inclusion.

We visited and assisted to a performance in Sao Luiz Theatre.

We learned how audiodescriptions, tactile tours and captions are implemented in Sao Luiz Theatre.

We said: "*goodbye, see you in Italy in May... next year... let's hope*".

Third study visit

When and where:

13-15 MAY 2022

Hosting partner:



ATER
FONDAZIONE

Modena, ITALY



What happened?



We finally met in Italy. In May. For real.

We visited a special place in Reggio Emilia and learned about local good practices for inclusion.

We assisted to a very "*tasty*" performance with audiodescriptions.

We kicked-off the W.A.N.T. campaign.

We participated as speakers in an International Conference with regional and national stakeholders, organised by our hosting partner, titled "*Inclusive theatres in Emilia Romagna and in Europe*".

We were in Storchi Theatre in Modena to assist to an inclusive theatrical performance.

We said "*goodbye, see you in a while in Athens*", and we finally were 100% sure we would.

Fourth study visit

When and
where:

21-23 JULY 2022

Hosting partner:



THEAMA
THEATER
OF DISABLED
PEOPLE

THEAMA
INCLUSIVE
THEATRE

Athens, GREECE



What happened?



We shared how the project was proceeding at local level.

We assisted to a fully accessible performance by THEAMA, with a diverse and inclusive cast, in the frame of the International Petra Festival 2022.

We participated in an International Conference with national stakeholders to discuss best practices on inclusion and accessibility in theatre, both on and off the stage.

We presented our W.A.N.T. campaign at the presence of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture.

Fifth study visit

When and
where:

27-29 OCTOBER

Hosting partner:



**PLAVO
THEATRE**

Belgrade, SERBIA



What happened?



We started to evaluate the results we achieved thanks to the project, as the end was approaching.

We participated in an International Conference titled *"Accessibility and Inclusion in Theatre"* organised by our hosting partner with the support of the EU delegation to Serbia, together with national stakeholders, to discuss accessibility and inclusion.

We assisted to an inclusive performance created in cooperation by PLAVO Theatre and Cultural Artistic Association of the Deaf of Belgrade *"Radivoj Popovic"*.

We learned how much accessibility is needed not only at the theatre, but in other cultural places, such as museums.

We started making plans for a new project.

We said *"goodbye, let's meet in Bologna for the final Conference"*.

3) Developed new audience in our theatres, by mainstreaming of inclusive services (**pilot actions**).

In the six Countries involved, we developed a various set of activities to experiment, augment or mainstream inclusive practices in theatre, targeted at blind and visually impaired, as well as to D/deaf and hard of hearing persons.

In particular:

In Italy



We audiodescribed, captioned and translated in Italian Language Sign theatrical many performances hosted by ATER Theatres, and also in an “unusual” location during the peculiar show “**Attorno a un tavolo**”, by the Company **Teatro delle Ariette**, a very challenging piece to make accessible to our target audiences, as actors in the cast cook and serve dinner to spectators while acting and often improvising.

In the U.K.



We audio-described, BSL (British Sign Language) interpreted and captioned a number of performances at the Arena Theatre. This has increased our audience with additional needs, and offers our other audiences an insight into accessible theatre. We have seen a steady increase in our visually impaired audiences, and will continue to push the boundaries of accessible theatre.

In Serbia



We organised theatrical workshops targeted at translators in Language Sign, to help them acquire new skills and become involved in the theatrical sector as protagonists.

We translated in Sign Language several performances hosted in PLAVO Theatre. We also audiodescribed, for the first time in Belgrade since many years, two theatrical performances hosted in PLAVO Theatre, thanks to what we learned from the other partners inside the project.

In Portugal



We audiodescribed, captioned and translated in Language Sign theatrical many performances hosted by Sao Luiz Theatre, sensibly increasing both the quality of the services offered and the quantity of shows in the Season we were able to make accessible. As a result, **we obtained a sensible increase of the blind audience attending our shows!**

In Spain



We audiodescribed, captioned and translated in Language Sign theatrical many performances in various Festivals in the Extremadura region.

Also, **we experimented the audiodescription of a dance show!**

In Greece



We audiodescribed, captioned and translated in Language Sign theatrical our own performances hosted in various locations in Greece, increasing both the quality of the services offered and the quantity of our shows we were able to make accessible.

During the pandemic (December 3rd 2020), we also produced an online performance, on the occasion of World Disability Day: METAXIA, by Costas Lakis.

You can enjoy it [here](#).

4) Raised awareness among the regular theatre audience and policy-makers about policies and practices of social inclusion through culture with our W.A.N.T. (We All Need Theatre) Campaign.

We strongly believe that **people needs to express themselves** regardless of their social or geographic background, age, race, gender, religion, physical ability.

We also believe that **self-expression and representation have been treated, and still are, as privileges more than as the rights** they are.

We want to change that.

We all need entertainment

Do you enjoy going to the theatre? If you're on this website, we bet you do. Why shouldn't you? Theatre is art, theatre is life, theatre represents and stages the cultural heritage of our Communities.

However, we shouldn't forget that theatre is also entertaining. **That's right:**

entertaining. Different types of spectators go to see a performance with different expectations: a fan of a particular actor or actress may go to cheer him/her; an admirer of a particular director or playwright may go to enjoy that specific way of storytelling; a theatre critic may go to take notes about everything he/she thinks it's wrong, and then complain about it on a newspaper or a website. However, we don't think any of these theatre *aficionados* is coming out wishing to be bored for a couple of hours.

Imagine going to the theatre and finding out that the chair you've been assigned is not facing the stage, but the exit: would you be able to enjoy the performance? We suppose you wouldn't.

That's what happens to spectators when theatres don't keep into account their needs.

We all need audio-descriptions

If you're not blind or don't have visual impairments, chances are that you never needed audio-descriptions to enjoy a show.

However, while sitting in your chair waiting for curtains to open, **you may have noticed around you some people with headphones, sometimes even playing with sort of a smartphone.** Maybe they even brought their dog with them. How rude!

Well, let's not be too judgmental here. This is **exactly what an audio-description service is:** on the other side of those tools there's an operator (sometimes a registered commentary) helping the person imagine what he/she is not able to see. *How does the actress look like? What is she wearing? What's on stage? Is she grabbing a prop?*

Without those headphones, that sort of smartphone and, most of all, **without the operator audio-describing the performance, your fellow spectator would enjoy way less of the show.** That's discrimination.

We strongly believe that all theatres should be able to provide audio-descriptions. The reality is that we're not there yet.

We all need Sign Language translation

Who's that guy near the stage making signs with his hands? What is doing that for? This is distracting. I'm here to watch actors do stuff, not some dude standing still and waiwing his hands.

Be honest, you may have thought this sometime. If not, you probably never came across a **Sign Language Translator**, a professional translating actors' lines in real-time for D/deaf and hard of hearing spectators. However, please be aware that what you may find distracting, **is crucial for other people in the audience to keep up with the plot of the performance.** The alternative option is **surtitling**, that is showing captions in real-time of the lines an actor is delivering.

Your fellow D/deaf or hard of hearing spectator really needs this: without one of these services, he/she **would only be able to enjoy the scenography and the body language of the actors of stage...** do you think that's worth the ticket price?

We believe that language sign translation, captioning and surtitling should be part of every theatre performance. Again: we're not there yet.

We. All. Need. Theatre.

The bottom line of our campaign is: **we all need theatre**. Quite simple, right?

While we may have different points of view, different likes and dislikes, different approaches, different needs for enjoying a performance... we must agree that **loving theatre is what characterizes us**. Not our background, nor our physical or mental conditions.

So let's take it from here: **let's also agree that every theatre lover should be able to attend a show and enjoy it**.

Let's put those barriers down. Let's transform privileges into rights.

That's what we W.A.N.T.

Discover our website www.weallneedtheatre.eu

Explore.

You can travel all across Europe from inclusive theatre to inclusive theatre, thanks to our interactive map.

We collected and put on the map theatres offering one or more inclusive service. The list is constantly updated: if you run a theatre and you wish to be included, please write us clicking [here](#).

You can start navigating the map clicking [here](#).

Learn.

As part of the INCLUSIVE THEATER(S) Project, co-financed by Creative Europe, we collected best practices at European level in the field of inclusion of D/deaf, hard of hearing, blind and visually impaired persons in theatres, both as performers and as spectators. We learned a lot from and so can you: have a look clicking [here](#).

Read.

We have a "news from the world" section, where we publish posts and articles from the organisations that joined the W.A.N.T. campaign. You can find very interesting training opportunities, learning materials, invitations to conferences and live events (online and offline).

You can have a look clicking [here](#).

Participate.

For the campaign, we also organise events. For example, **THEAMA** organized on Wednesday 12/01/2022 a virtual event to promote the campaign, in the framework of the **Conference on the Future of Europe**. Find out more [here](#).

The findings of the event along with the campaign's Manifesto for Access Services were be submitted to the Conference for the European Commission, Council and Parliament to consider legislative action and issue directives to member nations to include access services as a regular practice for disabled audiences.

Dr. Emmanouela Patiniotaki also gave a two-hour introductory seminar on the concept, the use and the operation of the "**Tactile Tours**" as applied at the theatre as an access service for the blind or visually impaired people. The seminar was held on Sunday 10 2022 at ISON Theater (Athens). You can find the materials [here](#).

Download our Manifesto and spread it all over the internet

Here's our manifesto. It's a matter of rights.



You can download it [here](#).



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WHAT'S THIS HANDBOOK



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What is a good practice to us?

In the following pages, you'll find the descriptions of twelve "best" practices we want to share with you.

There are several reasons why we, as project partners, decided to collect them in this Handbook. One is that we believe they can help creating more inclusive theatre productions and events that are accessible to a wider range of people.

Another reason is that they can help to raise awareness of the issues that D/deaf, hard of hearing, blind and visually impaired people face in accessing and enjoying theatre, to other organisations like ours.

Being a partnership formed by different organisations with different scale, different levels of expertise in accessibility and inclusion services, and different Country situations, each of us has been able to improve by learning from the others, in very different ways. The most important thing, for all of us, has been this exchange of knowledge and experience, that enriched all of us and **allowed us to achieve more than we would have by ourselves.**

Most experienced organisations have been able to mainstream their services, increasing the number of blind or D/deaf spectators, but also to move forward towards **an inclusive programming of Theatrical seasons**, selecting Companies and performances that represent the point of view of persons with disabilities, and/or include in the cast disabled actors and directors.

Some of us have been able, thanks to the project, to **experiment services they never did before, like including the D/deaf audience in a dance or music show.**

Others learned, and then tried for the very first time, to **audiodescribe a performance...** and it went great!

All of us feel thankful and have learned a lot from the **stakeholders involved at local level**, that shared with us their points of view and allowed us to understand a lot more about **how the very concept of disability is perceived and addressed in different Countries**, and **how much work all of us still have to do to build inclusive societies.**

So we invite you to **take (literally) a page from our book, have a look at what we learned during this project and try to apply it, if it fits, to your organisation.**

So what is a "good practice" to us? You may still wonder.

Very simple put: it's something we didn't know, and now know. Thanks to this project. It's something we didn't know how to do... and now we do. Thanks to this project.

Most of all, **it's something we tried during the course of this project, and found out to be highly beneficial to our target groups:** spectators, actors, directors, with and without disabilities.

We hope they'll be useful to you too.



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BEST PRACTICES



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CREATIVE CASE FOR DIVERSITY

What is it?

The Creative Case for Diversity is a funding policy implemented by the British Arts Council that is having a positive impact on British arts and culture. The policy is based on the simple concept that more inclusion leads to more money, and vice-versa. As a result, organisations funded by the Arts Council are expected to show their contribution to the Creative Case for Diversity through the work they produce, present and distribute. The monitoring prompts for include a section on 'Evidence for rating contribution to the Creative Case for Diversity', assessed by the funding body throughout the grant duration. The implementation of the Creative Case for Diversity is having a positive impact on British arts and culture by promoting diversity and equality. This is releasing the true potential of British artistic and cultural talent – from every background. However, its implementation requires proper and effective monitoring, and competent reviews by the Arts Council assigned Relationship manager.

This innovative and inclusive theatre performance fully involves spectators with different needs, such as those who are visually impaired, deaf or hard of hearing, physically challenged, or mentally challenged. It is a good example of inclusive policy design and an innovative way of producing a theatre performance.

What makes it a good practice?

It is a good example of:

- inclusive policy design
- innovative way of producing a theatre performance

It fully involves spectators with different needs, such as:

- Blind and visually impaired spectators;
- D/deaf and hard of hearing spectators;
- Physically challenged spectators;
- Mentally challenged spectators.

More info:

Have a look at some case studies here:

<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/diversity/creative-case-diversity>

<https://www.absolutelycultured.co.uk/whats-on/past-projects/creative-case-for-diversity-an-introduction/>

This practice was presented by:



Arena Theatre
University of
Wolverhampton

<https://www.wlv.ac.uk/arena-theatre/>



In:

November 2019, during the Study visit in
Wolverhampton (United Kingdom)



RAMPS ON THE MOON

What is it?

[Ramps on the Moon](#) is a group of six British theatres and one theatre company ([Graeae](#)), which received [Arts Council England](#) investment to produce a show every year for six years (e.g. Theatre 1 produces the show in Year 1 and it tours to Theatres 2-6). The idea was to be as diverse and accessible as possible e.g. diverse casts, British Sign Language integrated from inception, and to produce a popular show on a big scale to show.

As part of the project, each organisation has committed to a programme of organisational change including:

Embedding D/deaf and disabled people throughout their organisations.

Putting access and inclusion on the agenda of all meetings.

Creating long term employment and training opportunities for D/deaf and disabled people

Committing core production expenditure to the project, alongside the specific additional project funding.

Acting as a hub within its own region to disseminate experience, information and good practices what can be achieved.

The performances have been fully integrated. Productions have been experimental and there have been some problems, but also many successes. The performances are then advertised as any mainstream performance, rather than promoting the integrated aspect. Examples included having a character who is a spy, reporting on the other characters' movements, which is both audiodescribed, and a part of the show.

What makes it a good practice?

It is a good example of:

- effective involvement of different target groups
- methodology for providing inclusive services
- innovative way of producing a theatre performance

It fully involves spectators with different needs, such as:

- Visually impaired spectators;
- D/deaf and hard of hearing spectators;
- Physically challenged spectators;
- Mentally challenged spectators.

More info:

Have a look here: <https://www.rampsonthemoon.co.uk/>

This practice was presented by:



**Arena Theatre
University of
Wolverhampton**

<https://www.wlv.ac.uk/arena-theatre/>



In:

**November 2019, during the Study visit in
Wolverhampton (United Kingdom)**



CREATIVE CAPTIONS

What is it?

[Red Earth Theatre Company](#) is a British theatre company producing accessible performances for D/deaf and hearing audiences nationally, using creative captioning. Red Earth Theatre already had a pioneering track record in making integrated and accessible theatre using sign language and projected captioning as part of the action. But they took one more step: in cooperation with [University of Nottingham](#), which developed a new projection mapping software, they experimented with captions in traditional theatre projection systems to make captioning part of the artistic design of the show using any part of the set, props and even actors themselves.

The first production to showcase this creative way to display the words and sounds of a show has been “[Soonchild](#)”, by Russell Hoban. The book has been adapted for the stage by Red Earth Theatre toured the United Kingdom with great success. As a result, a new and easy to use immersive captioning technology has been made freely available to all UK theatre companies to boost their provision for the D/deaf and hard of hearing audience. The package of training and software has been developed by experts in drama and performance at the University of Nottingham, in collaboration with Red Earth Theatre.

What makes it a good practice?

It is a good example of:

- effective involvement of target groups
- methodology for providing inclusive services
- innovative way of producing a theatre performance
- using digital transformation

It fully involves spectators with different needs, such as:

- D/deaf and hard of hearing spectators;

More info:

Have a look here: <https://immersivetheatrecaptions.wordpress.com/>

You can also watch some example of creative captions here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MjEo3UL_ZI4

This practice was presented by:



Arena Theatre
University of
Wolverhampton

<https://www.wlv.ac.uk/arena-theatre/>



In:

November 2019, during the Study visit in
Wolverhampton (United Kingdom)



ACCESS CULTURE

What is it?

[Access Culture](#) is a Portuguese NGO, which every year aims to **distinguish and promote** organizations (private, public, associations and other) and projects which make a difference in the development of exemplary policies and good practices for the improvement of access – physical, social and intellectual – to cultural spaces and the cultural offer in general, in Portugal. It also aims to foster a more demanding audience in what concerns improvements in access.

Access Culture inherited continues the work undertaken by [GAM – Group for Access to Museums](#). Created in 2003, GAM worked until 2013 as an informal working group. It joined institutional and individual members, museums and museum professionals, and built a strong reputation as a serious and, in certain aspects, innovative group, whose work was valued and respected in the museum sector.

In May 2013, GAM – Group for Access to Museums, the informal working group, gave way to Access Culture, the Cultural Association.

Since 2014, Access Culture organises an [Annual Conference](#) on accessibility of cultural services, and implements two annual awards:

[Access Culture Awards](#)

[Access Culture – Plain Language Awards](#)

The general aim is to distinguish and promote best practices in the promotion of physical, social and intellectual access to cultural venues and cultural programming in Portugal.

What makes it a good practice?

It is a good example of:

- effective involvement of different target groups
- rewarding and encouraging inclusive practices.

It involves spectators with different needs, such as:

- Blind and visually impaired spectators;
- D/deaf and hard of hearing spectators;
- Physically challenged spectators;
- Mentally challenged spectators.

Read all about it here: <https://accessc>

More info:

Read all about it here: <https://accessculture-portugal.org/awards/access-culture-award/>

This practice was presented by:

**SÃO
LUIZ**
Teatro Municipal

**Sao Luiz Teatro Municipal
EGEAC Empresa de Gestão
de Equipamentos e
Animação Cultural**



<https://www.teatrosaoluiz.pt/>

In:

**July 2021, during the study visit in
Lisbon (Portugal)**



VIBRATING BACKPACKS

What is it?

Vibrating backpacks (mochilas vibradoras) are a wearable device that record sound frequencies and reproduce them in the form of vibrations and, thus, the person wearing the backpack feels the music through vibration.



The system is based on the patented “[SUBPAC](#)” technology, a tactile bass system that brings a new physical dimension and enhances the feel of any listening experience through a suite of advanced technologies such as haptics, bone conduction, RF audio transmission, and a unified system that meets with the standards of places that receive the public.

What happens is that the audible signal is captured from the room or from any source and is transmitted to the Vibrating Backpacks through radio frequency

transmission technology (UHF).

These backpacks can be very useful for D/deaf audience, especially for music and dance shows and festivals. This device can adapted to all audiences and offers total autonomy and freedom of movement, in addition it does not require a specific location in the stands, so users who request it can buy the type of ticket that most interests them. They are an experimental services by our project partner [Audiosigno](#), supported by the [Extremadura Federation of Hearing Disabled Parents and Friends of the Deaf \(FEDAPAS\)](#).

What makes it a good practice?

It is a good example of:

- use of technology for providing inclusive services.

It involves spectators with different needs, such as:

- D/deaf and hard of hearing spectators.

More info:

Read all about it here: <http://audiosigno.com>

This practice was presented by:



Audiosigno

<http://www.audiosigno.com/>



In:

April 2022, during the Study visit in
Modena (Italy)



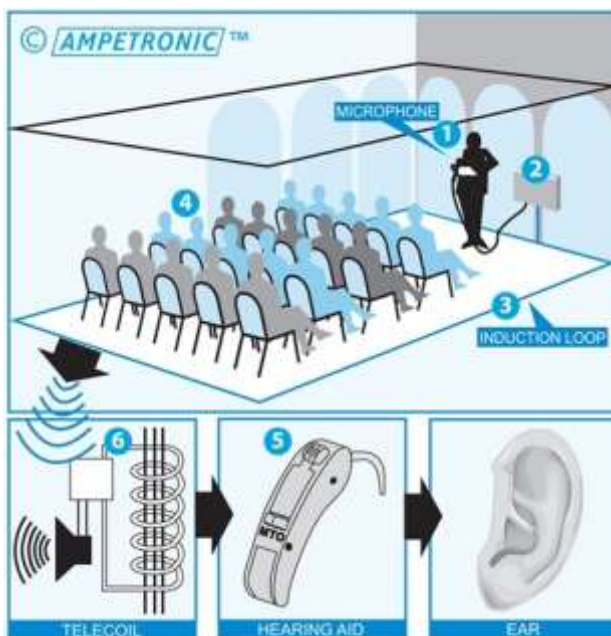
MAGNETIC LOOP

What is it?

A **magnetic loop** (in Spanish: *bucle magnetico*) is an induction loop system that transmits an audio signal directly to a hearing aid, reducing background noise, as well as reverberation and other acoustic distortions that reduce sound quality.

It can be beneficial in many environments as inclusion services for hard of hearing audiences, from large venues like theatres and conference facilities, to one-to-one communications such as ticket windows and meeting rooms.

Starting from any existing audio source, such as a microphone input, the signal goes to an induction loop amplifier. The amplifier produces a current to loop, or to a series of ties. While the current flowing through the cable creates a magnetic field in the area needed – careful design of the loop and amplifier ensures that the vertical component of the field is uniform and does not suffer from level drops and dead zones where the user might be positioned.



Inside most hearing aids, a small coil known as a Telecoil takes the signal from the magnetic field, which is amplified as a high-quality audio signal, and delivered directly to the hearing aid user's ear.

The magnetic loop is an experimental service offered by our project partner [Audiosigno](#), supported by the [Extremadura Federation of Hearing Disabled Parents and Friends of the Deaf \(FEDAPAS\)](#).

What makes it a good practice?

It is a good example of:

- use of technology for providing inclusive services.

It involves spectators with different needs, such as:

- hard of hearing spectators.

More info:

Read all about it here: <http://audisigno.com>

This practice was presented by:

Audiosigno
Accesibilidad TICs

Audiosigno

<http://www.audiosigno.com/>



In:

April 2022, during the Study visit in
Modena (Italy)



SOCIAL MODEL OF DISABILITY

What is it?

Developed in the 1970s, the “**social model of disability**” was “the big idea” of the British disability movement (Hasler, 1993). It demonstrates that **the problems disabled people face are the result of social oppression and exclusion**, not their individual deficits.

There is no binary distinction between able and disabled. A person from one group may quickly become a member of the other through accident or illness. There is no absolute disability, there is only lack of access.

In the framework of this model, **impairment is distinguished from disability**

In fact, as **impairment is individual and private, disability is structural and public**.

While doctors and professions allied to medicine seek to remedy impairment (cure the person), the real priority is to accept impairment and to remove disability (cure society).

To sum up, the social model of disability argues that **people are disabled by society, not by their bodies**.

This approach is called “**rights-based**”: it implies that **all people are active subjects with legal claims, thus persons with disabilities need to participate in all spheres of society on an equal basis with their non-disabled peers**.

Based on this model, it is necessary, in the field of theatre, not only to provide “**services for accessibility**”, but to **rethink in itself the way we produce, stage and promote theatrical performances**

What makes it a good practice?

It is a good example of:

- bottom-up approach based both on research and on first-hand experience of problems faced by disabled artists and audience.

It fully involves all spectators with different needs.

More info:

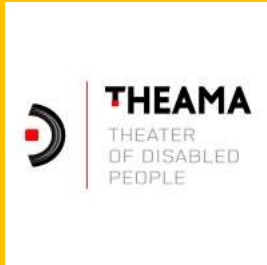
Theama – Inclusive Theater has given, in the framework of the project, a Training Course composed by a series of 4 Webinars: “**LET’S RAISE THE CURTAIN ON INCLUSION**”.

Two of the webinars were conducted by the Director Vassilis Oikonomou, and the other two by Emmanouela Patiniotaki, PhD.

The webinars were dedicated not only to this approach, but to accessibility and inclusion in theatre, with particular attention to surtitling and sign language translation.

You can find training materials here: <https://weallneedtheatre.eu/training-materials-lets-raise-the-curtain-part-two/>

This practice was presented by:



**THEAMA – Theater for the
disabled**
www.theamatheater.gr/



In:

**July 2022, during the Study visit in
Athens (Greece)**



WE ALL COME FROM SOMEWHERE

What is it?

[WE ALL COME FROM SOMEWHERE](https://weallcomefromsomewhere.com/) is a filmed performance, a **story** based on testimonies and interviews from refugees.

The film tells us how migration is an instinct in Nature for the survival of all species, including the humble human.

This partnership of theatre groups with disabled actors, Nazareno from Italy, KCAT from Ireland, Studio Citadella from the Czech Republic and THEAMA from Greece **remotely** worked together and coordinated the production of the film that premiered last Sunday (21/11/2021), after almost one year of preparation, rehearsals, and shooting sessions.

Enjoy it here <https://weallcomefromsomewhere.com/>

It is probably one of the few films produced that is **inclusive** in its entirety, and during the COVID 19 pandemic with no physical contact among the four partners. All **four languages** are used in the scenario but you can find **subtitles and closed captions** in English, Italian, Greek and Czech languages. Soon AD in English will be added for optimum accessibility.

The film is produced inside the POWER project, lead by Coop. NAZARENO from Italy, and with the involvement of 3 partner organizations: THE.AM.A based in Athens, Greece – Cittadella Studio based in Prague, Czech Republic and – KCAT (Kilkenny Collective for Arts Talent) based in Kilkenny, Ireland.

What makes it a good practice?

It is a good example of:

- effective involvement of different target groups
- methodology for providing inclusive services.

It involves spectators with different needs, such as:

- D/deaf and hard of hearing spectators.
- blind and visually impaired spectators.

More info:

Read all about it here: <https://power-creative.eu/>

This practice was presented by:



THEAMA
THEATER
OF DISABLED
PEOPLE

**THEAMA – Theater for the
disabled**

www.theamatheater.gr/



In:

**July 2022, during the Study visit in
Athens (Greece)**



TEATRO NO LIMITS

What is it?

Access to culture is everyone's right. "TEATRO NO LIMITS" is a program created to guarantee this right and increase the use of cultural heritage by spectators with sensory disabilities. Theater is a unique and wonderful art: since 2010 making it accessible to all is the commitment of the [Diego Fabbri Center](#).

Each year, a series of theatre performance in Emilia Romagna region is made more inclusive through:

1. A tactile tour Led by actors and technicians of the company, spectators have the opportunity to go to the stage and touch the sets, props and costumes.
2. An audio-introduction The introduction contains brief descriptions, choices of direction and historical-cultural and critical-literary information to prepare the listener for the "vision" of the show. The service is carried out by equipping the blind and partially sighted public with wireless headphones, connected to the control room.
3. An audio-description. The audio description text integrates with the theatrical script, without ever overlapping the dialogues and the soundtrack. This is possible thanks to the reading in real time, which creates a perfect synergy with the show. The long writing work that precedes the performance thus comes to life to restore the magic and emotion of the theater.

"Teatro No Limits" is a programma carried out by **Diego Fabbri Center in cooperation with [ATER Fondazione](#)**.

What makes it a good practice?

It is a good example of:

- effective involvement of different target groups
- methodology for providing inclusive services.

It involves spectators with different needs, such as:

- Visually impaired spectators.

More info:

Have a look here: <http://www.centrodiegofabbri.it/teatro-no-limits/appuntamenti-teatro-no-limits>

This practice was presented by:



ATER Fondazione
www.ater.emr.it



In:

**April 2022, during the Study visit in
Modena (Italy)**



CASTLE PROJECT

What is it?

CASTLE was a European project, financed by the ERASMUS+ Programme, linked to the implementation of audio description and surtitling actions of theatrical performances, with particular attention to technical operators.

Inside the project, **a training course aimed at creating a real profession / business in the reference field was developed and implemented with great results.**

In addition, a “user manual” and a dedicated website were delivered.

The profession of Audiodescriber / Subtitler is not yet widespread at EU level. In many countries, it is not even recognized as a profession. CASTLE therefore focused on this target group to increase their entrepreneurial skills to foster the creation of new and professional service providers, sustainable over time.

The project started in November 2017 (meeting in Wolverhampton), and ended in December 2019.

European partners of the project (were):

Diego Fabbri Center (Italy)

University of Wolverhampton (Great Britain)

Sasa Inkubator (Velenje, Slovenia)

Centrum Kultury Wroclaw – Zachod (Wroclaw, Poland)

Audiosigno (Merida, Spain)

Two of them are partners also of the INCLUSIVE THEATER(S) project, and one, Centro Diego Fabbri, is a local partner of ATER Fondazione.

What makes it a good practice?

It is a good example of:

- effective involvement of different target groups
- methodology for providing inclusive services.

It involves spectators with different needs, such as:

- Blind and visually impaired spectators.

More info:

ATER Fondazione, in cooperation with **Centro Diego Fabbri**, an NGO specialised in providing inclusive services for blind and visually impaired spectators, has given, in the framework of the project, a Training Course composed by a series of 4 Webinars: **“LET’S RAISE THE CURTAIN ON INCLUSION”**. **The webinars were conducted by Valeria Illuminati, PhD.**

The webinars were dedicated to present and explore all the different techniques and approaches to include the blind and visually impaired audience in theatrical performances.

You can find training materials of the course here: <https://weallneedtheatre.eu/training-materials-lets-raise-the-curtain-part-1/>

This practice was presented by:



ATER Fondazione
www.ater.emr.it



In:

**April 2022, during the Study visit in
Modena (Italy)**



TRIPYTCH – THREE PERSONAL STORIES

What is it?

During 2018. **Plavo theatre – theatre laboratory** was doing continuous theatrical educational work with the members of Cultural-Artistic Association of the Deaf of Belgrade 'Radivoj Popovic', which resulted in a performance called '**Triptych – three personal stories**'. The performance was premiered on the Festival of Theatrical Pedagogy which took place in Belgrade, in October 2018, in the frame of Erasmus+ project "Theatre: Encounter – Inclusion – Action".

The work on the performance was an attempt to put Sign language in the function of contemporary theatre expression. The intention was that Sign language gets its adequate contemporary dimension which is different and it could be said in a way creative compared to its conventional expression. Through a certain creative process, Sign language could also come to its alternative form, compared to everyday common way of presenting, in the same way it happens in the process of creation and research in language of the hearing people.

The work was continued with a new goal – fight against social discrimination of the Deaf community in Serbia by translating of Shakespeare's Hamlet into Sign language, enabling it for the deaf actors for the first time in Serbia and integrating it into the work on a performance Triptych 2 – My Hamlet, which was premiered in October 2022, during study visit of this project.

Cultural-Artistic Association of the deaf of Belgrade 'Radivoj Popovic' also organized theatrical workshops and rehearsals with young deaf and hard of hearing young people. Starting from March 2021 they worked on a theatre performance in Sign language, and premiered it in September 2021. This performance "And There Was Sign Language" was also presented in October 2021 on the international Festival of Youth Theatre in Belgrade.

The workshops were financed by the Erasmus+ project [Initiative-Inclusion-Interaction/ Contemporary Theatre for Active Youth](#).

What makes it a good practice?

It is a good example of:

- innovative way of producing a theatre performance

It fully involves spectators with different needs, such as:

- D/deaf spectators.

More info:

Have a look here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iCBIng3YKRE>

This practice was presented by:



Plavo Theater
www.en.plavopozoriste.org/



In:

October 2022, during the Study visit in
Belgrade (Serbia)



ODE TO DIVERSITY

What is it?

PLAVO theatre, in autumn of 2021 and first half of 2022 conducted educational and creative theatrical process for youth with and without disabilities, which resulted in a performance-presentation ***To Flourish through Life***, which was presented in PLAVO theatre as well as in several cities in Serbia through spring and summer of 2022.

The project happened as a natural continuation of the cooperation with Association of Students with Disabilities, which started in 2019 with projects ***Contemporary Theatre – Playing to Inclusion*** and ***Ritual of Inclusion***, the latter finished in a short documentary about the project.

The goals of these projects were to contribute to the inclusion and improvement of the quality of life of young people with disabilities, to their active participation, artistic engagement and greater visibility in the cultural and public life of the community, as well as sensitization of the general public for the life of these young people.

The performance-presentation ***To Flourish through Life*** is dealing with the question of inclusion, and the actors are young persons with and without disabilities, who were introduced to basic principles of work in contemporary anthropological theatre in theoretical and practical sense, during several months of educational work conducted by PLAVO theatre. At the beginning of the work on the performance, each participant chose a famous person with disability that gave important contribution in the history of humanity and whose life and work served as an inspiration for the creative process.

We found the poetic paradigm of the need for the feeling of appreciation and inclusion in the sentence of the famous Afro American activist, Maya Angelou: "My mission is not only to crawl, but to flourish through life". The aim to *flourish through life*, as a leitmotif, which is continuously being repeated by one of the participants of the performance, calls for the essence, while other participants, using quotations of their chosen famous persons and contemporary theatrical language, speak of their own personal experiences of diversity and discrimination.

The project was held within the program *Implementation of anti discriminatory politics in the Republic of Serbia in 2021*, supported by Serbian Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and for Social Dialogue, Ministry of Culture and Information and Belgrade City Council.

What makes it a good practice?

It is a good example of:

- innovative way of education of young people with and without disabilities and producing a theatre performance

It fully involves spectators with different needs, such as:

- Blind and visually impaired spectators and actors,
- Actors and spectators with mental and motoric disabilities.

More info:

As a part of the project, a short documentary film about the workshop was made.

Have a look here: <https://youtu.be/gUGU7WOFD18>.

This practice was presented by:



Plavo Theater
www.en.plavopozoriste.org/



In:

October 2022, during the Study visit in
Belgrade (Serbia)

