PASS

**Promoting Accessible Shows
combining music and performing arts
for people with sensory and cognitive disabilities**

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Guidelines for Highly Accessible and Inclusive Performances

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CONTENT OVERVIEW

1. Introduction

Project Overview

"Let's PASS" is a project funded by the European Commission, with the scope of promoting accessible shows combining music and performing arts for people with sensory and cognitive disabilities. The project is implemented through the collaboration of four European countries' partner organizations:

- Fondazione Arturo Toscanini (Italy),
- ACCAC (Finland),
- Studio Citadela (Czech Republic),
- En Dynamei (Greece).

Through innovative strategies, artistic collaborations, and community involvement, "Let's PASS" seeks to create a more inclusive and vibrant cultural landscape. By dismantling barriers and amplifying voices, it aims to transform the performing arts into an arena where everyone can participate and thrive.

Including a performance titled "The Joy of Life" and these Guidelines, the project aims at creating a reference model for a multidisciplinary accessible performance with an inclusive multimedia program for highly accessible performances.

Guidelines' Objectives

The "Guidelines for Highly Accessible and Inclusive Performances" are intended for anyone looking to organise accessible and inclusive cultural and performative events. They provide insights into both the mindset and toolset required to address accessibility challenges effectively.

The first part of these guidelines covers key concepts such as equity, diversity, and inclusion, which form the foundation of accessibility.

In the second part, all aspects of accessibility are addressed. From space to services to communication, the main concepts, good practices and examples are defined. Here, also guiding checklists are provided for the implementation of accessibility.

Finally, in the last part, we apply the theoretical framework for accessibility to practical challenges, drawing on experiences and real-life examples from the creative process of the "Let's PASS" project, drawn with the contribution of all partners.

Embracing the Basics

BASIC NOTIONS

Diversity refers to the presence of differences within a specific environment, which can include race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, and cultural background, among other characteristics. It recognizes that each individual is unique and that a variety of perspectives enriches collective experiences.

Understanding and embracing diversity means creating environments that welcome, respect, and value these differences. This leads to enhanced creativity and innovation, better decision-making, increased empathy and cultural awareness, improved social and organizational performance, and stronger community engagement.

While **equality** means that everyone has the same rights and opportunities, uniforming treatment and ensuring that no one is discriminated against based on their characteristics, equity means providing people with the resources and opportunities they need to thrive, recognizing different needs and circumstances. Unlike equality, which focuses on treating everyone the same, equity aims to achieve fairness and justice, seeking to address individual differences and create a just and balanced environment.

Example: In a theater, equity means providing accessible seating options for people with disabilities, such as wheelchair-accessible seats or seats with more space. This ensures accommodations to participate fully, even if it means providing additional support.

Inclusion means creating an environment where everyone feels welcome, valued, and heard. It's about ensuring full participation for all, regardless of background or ability.

Radical inclusion takes this further by actively removing barriers, reshaping social norms, and embracing flexibility. It challenges us to rethink our perceptions of disability and marginalized groups, recognizing the unique value and potential of every person.

For example, a community center practicing radical inclusion would offer diverse activities and accessible facilities to ensure everyone can participate fully and equally.

Accessibility is a fundamental concept that aims to ensure equal access and participation for all individuals, regardless of their abilities or characteristics, promoting equality by equity.

Good accessibility is about meeting the needs of different audiences and making the destination's offer (performance, product or service) easily accessible, providing opportunities for participation and experiences regardless of the different characteristics of individuals.

This is possible by implementing:

- Physical and Cognitive Accessibility
- Inclusive Design and Equal Opportunities
- Digital Accessibility
- Creative Accessibility

2. Accessible Performances Guidelines

What is Accessibility

ACCESSIBILITY OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT & COGNITIVE ACCESSIBILITY

An accessible and functional environment supports the well-being of individuals and the overall functioning of society. It ensures equal opportunities for everyone to participate and contribute, regardless of their abilities. This includes parents with strollers, people with visual or hearing impairments, people with intellectual and cognitive challenges, and those using wheelchairs or scooters.

To ensure such an environment and make services accessible to all, it is important to involve designing spaces that accommodate various abilities to move, hear, see, and understand, ensuring the built environment is functional for everyone.
According to the principle of accessibility chain, everyone should be able to reach, access, use and understand.

Key Aspects of Accessibility:
- Physical Access: Wide doorways, gentle ramps, safe stairs, and elevators accommodate mobility needs, supporting the use of wheelchairs, scooters, and strollers.
- Sensory Access: Clear signage, appropriate lighting, and a pleasant sound environment enhance visual and auditory accessibility.
- Cognitive Access: Information should be easy to understand, using clear communication, simple language, and intuitive layouts.

DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY

The web has become an important resource for all audiences, that's why it is essential that the information in it is equally accessible for all.

In Europe, within the PASS Project operates, the law requirements in vigor at the moment are found in the WCAG 2.0 (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines), a technical standard which includes 12 (twelve) guidelines organized under the "Four Principles of Accessibility"; this says that all user interface components and navigation must be:

- Perceivable (they can't be invisible to all of their senses)
- Operable (there's a way they can operate it)
- Understandable (the information is clear and not ambiguous)
- Robust (there's reliability by a wide variety of user agents, including assistive technologies).

Resources:

Please visit the W3C website if you want to read and know more about the WCAG and/or the Accessibility Principles.

CREATIVE ACCESSIBILITY

Acting as an artistic strategy from the beginning of the process, Creative Accessibility ensures that accessibility services and practices are not merely practical additions to an already finished work, but are strongly integrated into the cultural production.

This practice allows artists to broaden their perspectives and horizons, explore new artistic choices, and stretch the possibilities of performing arts.

For example, Creative accessibility in a work can consist of using subtitling by playing an active role in the performance, both by bringing out what is being said on stage in text, but also by commenting on and directing the action on stage, participating in it. Subtitling can be an important part of the visual design of the performance and can be implemented as part of the overall visualization of the performance; lighting, video and staging.

During the entire process, accessibility is integrated into the artistic whole of a performance and how this affects set design, sound and lighting design, costume planning, directing, and acting.

Various creative accessibility solutions should be explored and co-created together with the entire team for deaf/sign language audiences, visually impaired audiences, and audiences with cognitive or linguistic challenges.

As a good reminder, working with people with disabilities requires different ways to structure the creative process and the rehearsal time. In practice, this includes taking things one step at a time and having multiple breaks.

ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

The term "accessibility services" refers to a range of tools, features, and accommodations designed to make environments, products, and services usable for people with diverse abilities. These services ensure that individuals with disabilities, such as mobility, sensory, cognitive, or communication impairments, can access information, navigate spaces, and participate fully in activities.

The goal of accessibility services is to remove barriers and promote inclusion, ensuring equal opportunities for everyone to engage with and benefit from various aspects of society.

Table 1. Support for visual information

CHANNEL	WHEN	ACCESS SERVICE	PROVIDER
Visual	Before	Information leaflet in large letters	External or internal printing provider
Auditory	Before	Audio Introduction (AI)	Audio Describer
	During	Audio Description (AD)	
		Audio Subtitles or Surtitles (AST)	
Tactile	Before	Information Leaflet in Braille	Braille Translator
		Touch Tour (with auditory support)	In house trained staff, and Audio describer

Table 2. Support for auditory information

CHANNEL	WHEN	ACCESS SERVICE	PROVIDER
Visual	Before	Sign Language interpreting (SLI) for introduction	SLI Interpreter
	During	Sign Language interpreting (SLI)	
		Surtitles	Specialized Subtitler in audio-visual translation
		Subtitles for Deaf (SDH)	
Auditory	During	Hearing Loop	Devices provided by specialized companies
Tactile		Vibrating Chairs	

Additional support

Not all disabilities are visible, and to ensure inclusion also for people with cognitive, intellectual and psychiatric impairments (like autism spectrum disorder, dementia, depression and other psychiatric conditions) adding, replacing and adapting additional support to the abovementioned accessibility services might benefit an active participation.

Few examples are:

- Easy-to-read material before the performance: not all people can easily process a multitude of information at once. Easy-to-read material consists of short sentences, helps the text with the use of images, simplified language in large clear fonts, and avoids distracting elements from the main information.

- Relaxed performances: these include a "chill out" room to allow relaxing and a moment of quiet, dim lighting in the auditorium to avoid full darkness, mindful use of sound that might unease the audience.

- Interlingual translations: they are translations between languages, to exchange the meaning from one language to another and allow speakers of different languages to communicate. As an example, they can be between spoken English and spoken Italian; between spoken English and Greek Sign Language; or International Sign Language and Finnish Sign Language.

Reminders

Promotional material for the event should be provided in different formats and should clearly state the access facilities provided.

SLI in live performances is very different from day-to-day activities. They need to be integrated into the play already from the rehearsing phase.

When accessibility is the goal, the welcoming to the venue has to be inclusive and accessible. This means that the staff in the venue should be well trained about autism awareness, about physical and sensory disabilities and impairments, and have a caring and welcoming attitude when interacting with and guiding customers to the performance.

ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION AND SAFETY GUIDELINES

Safer Space Principles for a Multilingual and Multicultural PASS Project

A safe and inclusive environment is a space where everyone feels secure, respected, and valued, both physically and mentally. It is important because it allows individuals to participate freely without fear of being offended, bullied, or harmed in any way.

The PASS Project operates in a multicultural and multilingual context, and to ensure the sense of safety for all participants, we adhere to the Safer Space Principles.

With these Principles, the goal is to ensure that every person, regardless of background or identity, can engage fully and comfortably in our events or activities, knowing they are in a supportive and welcoming environment.

Shared Responsibility

Creating a safe environment is a collective effort. Every participant contributes to the safety or insecurity of the space, whether knowingly or unknowingly. Respect for others is the foundation of our community.

Sensitivity to Diversity

Respect others and strive to be sensitive to the diversity of the community and the differences between people. Avoid making assumptions about others and do not act on them.

Awareness and Care

Pay attention to the people around you. Care about what they say, how they feel, and how your words and actions affect them.

Positive Atmosphere

Contribute to a positive atmosphere through your actions. Let's be fair to others and not jump to conclusions.

Participation and Inclusion

We want everyone to feel they can participate as their true selves and feel safe. If you see or experience inappropriate behavior, you have the right to intervene. Ensure that everyone is heard and included. Accept that not everyone wants to have the same voice or presence and that there are many ways to participate.

Respecting Boundaries & Integrity

Be aware of and respect the different boundaries of others. Everyone's identity is their own to define, and one's gender, sexual orientation, political orientation, or nationality should not be judged by their appearance. Respect the physical and mental integrity of others. No means no; do not disturb someone verbally, by touching, or by staring.

Zero Tolerance for Harassment

We have zero tolerance for all forms of harassment, bullying, discrimination, and racism. If someone asks you to stop any harassing behavior, you must stop immediately.

Constructive Feedback

If you receive criticism about your behavior, please respond constructively. Misunderstandings and disagreements are possible, but we can still ensure a safe environment for everyone by using constructive conflict principles.

Communication guidelines

Following these guidelines is extremely important in a multilingual production with people from different cultures and backgrounds, since this approach will help ensure that all participants receive the necessary information in a timely and equal manner, and that the operations run as smoothly as possible, also in the respect of others.

As a general rule, always follow the "Four Principles of Dialogue" (Isaacs, W.), to ensure psychological safety:
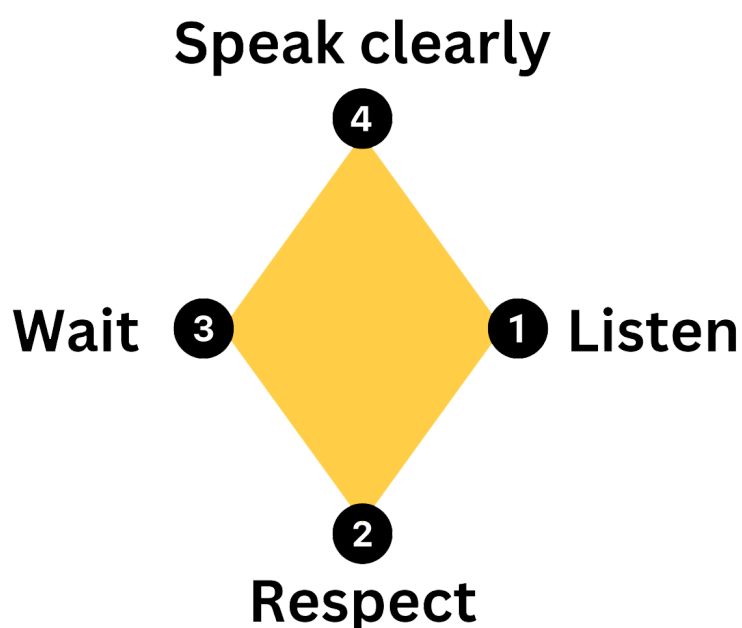
1. **LISTEN**. Agree on a clear speaking order. Do not interrupt when someone is talking and remind others to listen when it's not their turn to speak. Listen to understand, not only to answer.

2. **RESPECT**. Be open minded and respectful of others' opinions. Do not use violent communication, mock, and/or judge someone for what they are saying or how they are saying it. Be aware that misunderstanding is possible and everyone has their own boundaries, strengths, weaknesses, and right to be respected whether one's agree or disagree with their opinions.

3. **WAIT**. Use visual cues (e.g. raising your hand) to ask for your turn to speak. Be patient and speak only during your turn, to let others express their concepts and opinions without making assumptions, judgements and definite opinions about what they are saying.

4. **SPEAK CLEARLY**. Be genuine and honest; use clear and simple language, and avoid complex sentence structures. Always try to size your volume to suit the rehearsal space, taking into account the echo, size of the space, number of participants and distance.

What it means in practice

- Equality and accessibility:
  - All participants should receive the same information at the same time in order to participate on an equal basis;
  - Clear and accessible instructions will ensure that those with sensory sensitivities or autism spectrum participants can participate without additional stress or confusion.

- Crossing language barriers:
  - When no one's first language is English, it is important to ensure that all instructions are translated accurately and understandably. For example: use visual and written instructions;
  - Distribute all instructions in written and visual materials so that they are easily understood by all;
  - Use clear and simple language, and avoid complex sentence structures.

- Communication clarity:
  - Clear communication protocols and roles will help to avoid frustration and ensure that sign language interpretation goes smoothly. This is particularly important for deaf participants to be able to follow the conversation and actively participate. As a practical example, use the rule no. 3 from the "Four Principles of Dialogue", agreeing on a speaking order and communication etiquette;
  - In order to ensure accessibility, check that a sign language interpreter is always present and has clear visibility to all presenters; also use additional

interpreters or assistive devices as needed to ensure that everyone can follow the rehearsal.

- A calm and orderly environment:
  - Clear instructions and schedules help to create a calm and orderly training environment, which is particularly important for people with sensory sensitivities or under autism spectrum disorder. This reduces stress and helps everyone to concentrate better.

- Smooth cooperation:
  - When everyone knows how and when to communicate, collaboration flows better and more efficiently. This helps to ensure that the project goes as planned and that everyone involved can make their best contribution;
  - Collect regular feedback from all participants and make any necessary changes to communication practices;
  - Maintain an open discussion channel where everyone can voice their concerns and suggestions.

Vocabulary and choice of words

Inclusion can be ensured through vocabulary and word choice by using language that is respectful, neutral, and free of bias. Words shape perceptions and can either reinforce stereotypes or promote understanding.

By choosing inclusive language, we acknowledge diverse experiences and identities, making everyone feel seen and respected. Avoiding offensive terms, using

gender-neutral language, and being mindful of cultural differences all contribute to an inclusive environment.

This conscious use of words fosters a culture of respect and empathy, encouraging participation and ensuring that everyone feels welcome and valued.

"People-first" language emphasizes the person over their disability, promoting respect and reducing stigma. It requires sensitivity to individual preferences, diverse experiences, and cultural differences while ensuring accessibility and inclusion. This evolving approach encourages respectful communication and a holistic view of individuals.

Here are some examples of people-first language:
- Instead of saying "disabled person," use "person with a disability."
- Rather than "autistic child," say "child with autism."
- Replace "wheelchair-bound" with "person who uses a wheelchair."
- Instead of "Down syndrome individual" use "individual with Down syndrome"

NOTICE!

A person with visual impairments is not the same as being a person who's blind. In a similar way, a person with partial hearing loss is not a person who's deaf. It's important to respect personal preferences: while some individuals may prefer identity-first language (e.g., "blind person" or "Deaf person"), especially within their community, some others might not. When in doubt, it's best to ask how they prefer to be identified.

Creating Accessible Performances: Plans & Checklists

The accessibility plan coordinates the implementation of legislation, identifying and planning the actions required so that the area, the buildings, transportation, products, services and communication are accessible for all.

In reference to the "Let's PASS" Project, we need to take in consideration that the performance involves four (4) different partners, therefore four different production teams, performances and locations.

STEP 1: ACCESSIBILITY STATUS ASSESSMENT

The venue accessibility is in Europe regulated by legislation, however not all existing buildings in the scenic arts meet the accessibility requirements, that's why making an assessment gives both a general and specific view on what service is missing, and what adaptation can be done.

The accessibility status assessment can be done with different methods and it's advisable to do it with professionals' insights.

One of the most important steps is to conduct the fieldwork with professionals, and then also have a user test, which might provide useful feedback from the end users of the venue.

ACCAC's Accessibility Checklist is intended to help assess the accessibility of cultural environments and venues.

A. Promotion and Marketing

1. Marketing	YES	NO
Are the various media used in the information?	☐	☐
Is the website accessible to people with visual impairments?	☐	☐
Is the essential information clear and easy to read?	☐	☐
Is the information clear/easy to understand?	☐	☐
2. Information and Accessibility	**YES**	**NO**
Is accessibility information available on the Internet?	☐	☐
Does other information contain information on accessibility?	☐	☐
Is there an introductory brochure/guide leaflet for accessibility?	☐	☐
Is information about accessibility available in other ways?	☐	☐

B. Accessibility of the building and the environment

1. Arrival at the building	YES	NO
Does the car stop at the entrance?	☐	☐
Are there accessible parking areas?	☐	☐
Is there a sufficient number of disabled parking spaces in relation to the size of the building?	☐	☐
Do you have parking spots near the entrance?	☐	☐
Is the access path leading to the entrance free?	☐	☐
2. Entrance	**YES**	**NO**
Does the building have a step-by-step entrance?	☐	☐

	YES	NO
Is the potential ramp implemented in accordance with the regulations?	☐	☐
Is the potential lift/level hoist designed in accordance with the regulations?	☐	☐
Is there any free space required for a wheelchair's turning radius in front of the doors? (The minimum size of turning is about 1500 x 1500 mm).	☐	☐
Is a possible staircase embedded in the ground/floor?	☐	☐
Is the user of a wheelchair able to open the door and run it?	☐	☐
Is mobility safe?	☐	☐
Is the ease of navigation taken into account in planning?	☐	☐
Does the staff assist, for example, when moving or sitting in the doors, and providing the aids available?	☐	☐
3. Moving in the building	**YES**	**NO**
Are there any aids for moving, such as a wheelchair, roller or stroller?	☐	☐
Are all rooms with unobstructed access (not stairs / stairs)?	☐	☐
Is the potential ramp implemented in accordance with the regulations?	☐	☐
Is the potential lift/level hoist designed in accordance with the regulations?	☐	☐
Is there at least one wheelchair access door to each room? (min. width 90 cm.)	☐	☐
Do you have sufficient space, for example, in the space required for a wheelchair's turning radius? (The minimum size of turning is about 1500 x 1500 mm).	☐	☐
Is mobility safe?	☐	☐
Is the ease of navigation taken into account in planning?	☐	☐
4. Moving outside and between buildings	**YES**	**NO**
Are the fairways unobstructed?	☐	☐

Is it safe to move?	☐	☐
Is the ease of navigation and naturalness taken into account in the design of paths?	☐	☐
5. Staying in the building	**YES**	**NO**
Are each of the staff members aware of the basics of the aids and services available?	☐	☐
Is every member of staff able to assist clients with mobility or disability if needed?	☐	☐
Is the sound environment acceptable (not background noise or eagerness)?	☐	☐
Are there toilets suitable for people with mobility impairment?	☐	☐
Are there hangers with low hangers (e.g. children or wheelchairs) in the cloakroom?	☐	☐
Are there enough seats in the public spaces?	☐	☐
Is at least part of the service criterion of a suitable height for a wheelchair user or short people and is there an induction loop or other hearing aid at the service desk?	☐	☐
Is the lighting in the auditoriums adequate but glare-free?	☐	☐
Is air quality acceptable?	☐	☐
Are the interiors non-smoking?	☐	☐
6. Fire safety	**YES**	**NO**
Does the building also include visual fire alarms?	☐	☐
Are people with mobility impairments without the help of being able to get out of the emergency room or move to another fire department?	☐	☐

STEP 2: STRATEGIC GOALS AND ACTION PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Based on the conclusion from the accessibility status assessment, all the data needs to be analyzed and an action plan needs to be drawn.

Usually, to tackle the flaws and bottlenecks found in the accessibility status assessment is good practice to follow the 5-step Accessibility Action Plan:

1. Draw a professional accessibility assessment that show the complex bottlenecks and provide measurements;

2. Evaluate bottlenecks to remove, resulting for example in a renovation plan in case of the venue;

3. Check time and budget available;

4. Make a flow-chart for the adaptations: a tool also for planning and communication;

5. Adaptations shouldn't jeopardize future actions. Choose the right sequence of actions when having different phases.

Strategic Goals & Actions

When planning the strategic goals in accessible performances, Accessibility should be included and prioritized. This includes accessibility promotion, improvement of conditions of the physical aspects, of facilities and of communication styles, services offered, and accessibility training.

Additionally, each performance has its own objectives and actions related to their own unique case.

Use this table as a reference to set strategic goals and actions to achieve them:

Goal	Action	Responsibilities and roles	Users	Evaluation indicators	Deadline and budget

Implementation Schedule

In order to implement the set actions, for each service then it's crucial to create a checklist. These might include:
- Scheduling
- Technical requirements
- Special organization and navigation
- Communication
- Training
    - 1. Assessing your training needs: define the outcomes that should be accomplished by the participants.
    - 2. Designing Training Plan: Integrate the outcomes in activities to design learning objectives.
    - 3. Developing Materials: List the resources you need to undertake the activities to achieve the objectives. (such as trainers, venues, technologies)
    - 4. Implementing: Actually have the team participating in the training
    - 5. Evaluating: Evaluation should occur to assess the extent of achievement of the overall goals of the program.

What to do:

Day before event	Day of event	When the performance is about to begin	After the event
Box office is ready to greet access facility providers	Full check of equipment as it is set up	Patrons have sufficient time to get access to their seats and switch to eventual portable devices	Get feedback from patrons and access facility provider
Final check in person with access facility providers	Final check that staff is aware of the accessible event	Check that patrons have a clear vision and view of the services provided (surtitles, captions, sign language interpreter, stage)	Provide a range of methods for giving feedback
Introduce access facility providers to technicians, creative team and front of the house staff	Box office and front of the house know where devices and facilities are and how to operate/navigate them	Check and ensure that portable devices are working and patrons know how to use them	Keep a record for the future issues (collected from feedback)
Opportunity for staff to observe access facilities in action	Bowl of water and a green area for assistance dogs	Agree on a gesture with which a patron would communicate the need of assistance with devices or other reasons during the performance	Ensure all portable devices are collected; all equipment packed and sorted/returned
Full check of functionality of all equipment			Ensure invoices are paid promptly and give feedback to providers/suppliers

STEP 3: MONITORING & EVALUATION

Managing accessibility in a cultural event requires planning, coordinating, communicating and gathering users and partners feedback. To do so, it's important to operate in two different levels – internal and external – and in the process of creative accessibility implemented since the start, all partners collaborate and are consulted for the action plan and its implementation.

Other checklists to fully manage an accessible event, for example:

1. Checklist for production selection
2. Checklist for external arrangements
3. Checklist for internal arrangements
4. Checklist for communication
5. Checklist for aftercare and feedback

1. Accessible Production Selection

CHECK:	WHEN	DONE/UNDONE
Make sure the accessibility of the venue where you plan the accessible event is aligned with the guidelines		☐
Check the dates for the events and the venue availabilities		☐
Choose an artistic production team that is willing to make a highly accessible event		☐
Provide for the production team trainings on accessibility		☐

2a. External arrangements with: AUDIO DESCRIBER

CHECK:	WHEN	DONE/UNDONE
Contact one or more interpreters and agree on an offer		☐
Communicate about rehearsal possibilities and performance dates		☐
Deliver preparation content/material, ex. Text brochure, program booklet, video recording		☐
Make arrangements on the recording a customized introduction		☐

2b. External arrangements with: SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER

CHECK:	WHEN	DONE/UNDONE
Contact one or more interpreters and agree on an offer		☐
Communicate about rehearsal possibilities and performance dates		☐
Deliver preparation content/material, ex. Text brochure, script, video recording		☐
Make arrangements on the interpreting of a general introduction		☐

3a. Internal arrangements with: BOX OFFICE

CHECK:	WHEN	DONE/UNDONE
There are efficient seating allocation on the venue		☐
Ticketing service		☐
There's at least one person who can provide accessible information about tickets and performance		☐
Availability of accessible materials about the performance		☐

3b. Internal arrangements with: FRONT OF THE HOUSE MANAGER

CHECK:	WHEN	DONE/UNDONE
About the procedures to assist wheelchair users		☐
About the customized introductions and related seating allocations		☐
Discuss about the need of extra staff for assistance from entrance to performance room		☐
Arrange plausible shelter for assistance dogs		☐
Arrange distribution and collection of accessibility devices		☐

3c. Internal arrangements with: EDUCATION DEPARTMENT/PUBLIC OUTREACH

CHECK:	WHEN	DONE/UNDONE
About creating and giving a general introduction		☐
About the time scheduling of the general and customized introductions		☐
Reporting to external professionals		☐

3d. Internal arrangements with: PRODUCTION MANAGER

CHECK:	WHEN	DONE/UNDONE
Voice recognition arrangements		☐
Touch tour arrangements		☐

3e. Internal arrangements with: STAGE MANAGER

CHECK:	WHEN	DONE/UNDONE
About locations for different introductions		☐
About provisions of chairs for the introductions		☐
Timing of the voice recognition and touch tour		☐
Provide audio description installation and making it operational		☐
Provide hearing loop		☐
Provide the subtitling installation		☐

4. Communication with: AUDIENCE

CHECK:	WHEN	DONE/UNDONE
The communication aligns with organizations working with the target audience		☐
How to access the venue and what the performance includes is information available on the website and event media		☐
The event is promoted via diverse media		☐
The website of the event follows the digital accessibility guidelines		☐
The website includes an audio reader for text		☐
Make sure to have flyers in Braille and leaflets in large letters on the day of the event		☐

5a. Collecting feedback from: AUDIENCE

CHECK:	WHEN	DONE/UNDONE
Choose a method to collect feedback that is accessible for different target audiences (options includes questionnaires, surveys, interviews, feelings scores, focus group)		☐

5b. Collecting feedback from: PARTNERS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

CHECK:	WHEN	DONE/UNDONE
Provide an internal system for evaluation		☐
Reach out for service providers (SLI, audio describer, etc.)		☐

3. Accessibility in Practice

The Case Study from PASS Project

We have talked in chapter 1 about Creative Accessibility, which was a crucial component of the PASS Project's creative process in producing the final performance in collaboration with the four different partners:

This chapter will now showcase how accessibility was implemented in the creative process from the very beginning and what challenges have been highlighted on stage of the process from the artistic teams and partners.

The creative process was divided in four (4) different phases:
1. Preparation work
2. Artistic residency
3. Rehearsals
4. Performance

While the main strengths lie in the diversity, cultural richness, collaboration, and collective innovation; the challenges often stem from friction between visions, unequal participation, time/resource constraints, and performance-related stress.

PREPARATION WORK

In this phase of the creative process, accessibility was implemented by understanding diverse needs as part of planning, ensuring inclusion and deeper collaboration among partners and creative teams. Scheduling was designed with care, reflecting attention to balancing different requirements, especially being more flexible when working with people with diverse needs. Additionally, different languages, cultural practices, artists with and without disabilities were not only acknowledged but framed as enriching the process.

Strengths highlighted by the partners were:

- Wide range of inputs and inspirations, enriching the creative foundation.
- Trust-building and mutual respect established early, enabling smoother collaboration.
- Clear vision, goals, and timelines reduced confusion and set expectations.
- Structured scheduling supported inclusion and progress.
- Diversity of cultural practices, perspectives, and needs enriched the process.

Challenges highlighted by the partners were:

- Over-planning sometimes restricted spontaneity and improvisation.
- Divergent ideas and work styles led to friction.
- Unequal contributions, with stronger personalities dominating decision-making.
- Scheduling and coordination across diverse needs and cultural practices were complex.

Examples for a good practice

Improving accessibility in this phase could have involved:

- Encourage flexibility: leave "open slots" in schedules for unplanned exploration and align ideas.

- Ensure balanced participation: apply structured methods (e.g., round-table discussions, rotating facilitators).

- Improve scheduling tools: adopt digital platforms that consider diverse availability and needs.

ARTISTIC RESIDENCY

During this phase, Safe space principles were emphasized, aiming to create an environment where all participants could contribute, keeping in mind multilingual communication challenges. Hospitality support (accommodation, meals, logistics) contributed to accessible participation, reducing stressors outside the creative work.

Strengths highlighted by the partners were:

- Dedicated, uninterrupted time for experimentation and creative risk-taking.
- Real-time collaboration allowed synergy and discovery.
- A safe, immersive environment encouraged growth, skill development, and cultural exchange.
- Hospitality and logistical support (housing, meals) fostered comfort and focus.
- Multilingual and intercultural interaction enriched perspectives.

Challenges highlighted by the partners were:

- Friction and uncertainty from clashing ideas and cultural working styles.
- Lack of clear structures to address concerns (e.g., no designated "safe space" mediator).
- Time and resource limitations prevented deeper exploration of ideas.
- The need for unified leadership in choreography, direction, and design was realized late.

Examples for a good practice

- Communication and conflict mediation require structure and common understanding among all. As a good practice, it's important to designate a trusted facilitator or mediator for safe-space issues and ensure that participants are listened to.

- Resource planning is another good practice ensuring accessibility. Make sure to secure extended time or phased residencies when possible, so that there are possibilities of more breaks and adjustments. Everyone needs support and recognition.

REHEARSALS

Rehearsals were the times where all creative teams from the four different countries could come together to practice for the performance and unify the different parts of the creative process. This phase was not free from accessibility challenges, as it added new layers to be aware of, such as language barriers, cultural differences and diverse stressors. Therefore, in this phase, the focus was placed on intercultural and interdisciplinary accessibility, with explicit mention of learning new skills around working with difference and inclusion. Efforts were made to ensure voices were heard, even if unevenly at times.

Strengths highlighted by the partners were:

- Development of intercultural and interdisciplinary skills.
- Strengthened team bonds and collective ownership of the work.
- Awareness of accessibility and inclusion increased among collaborators.

Challenges highlighted by the partners were:

- Stress and fatigue from time pressure and intensive rehearsals.
- Creative differences occasionally led to conflict.
- Not all voices were heard equally; stronger personalities sometimes dominated.
- Performance anxiety increased tension as the debut approached.

Examples for good practice

Considering the high concentrations of stress factors in this phase, a stronger focus should be given to ensuring well-being:

- Introduce structured breaks, relaxation techniques, or mental health check-ins.

- When coming together in a diverse and international context, conflict resolution tools help to facilitate dialogues in a constructive and respectful manner.

- Inclusive rehearsal methods might include rotating leadership, or apply smaller group rehearsals to amplify quieter voices. Additionally, it would be good to agree on signage and safe words for participants to communicate in a unified and safe manner.

PERFORMANCE DAY

On each performance day, accessibility extended beyond the creative team to audiences (with sensory tours, inclusive workshops, and opportunities for children with disabilities to experience rehearsals). In particular, sensory tours and workshops in Prague were highly accessible: they engaged children with special education needs and different disabilities in a participatory and co-creative way. This shows strong attention to accessibility for audiences as well as performers.

The collaborative format itself (mixing artists with and without disabilities) embodied accessibility by design.

Strengths highlighted by the partners were:

- The culmination of collective effort created pride and visible collaboration.
- Strong live audience responses energized and validated the artists.
- Public recognition confirmed the success of the co-creative process.

Weaknesses highlighted by the partners were:

- Stress and nervousness about meeting expectations created pressure, especially on more sensitive members.

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