

ACCESS 4 ALL

1st Newsletter - March 2021

WHO ARE WE?

ACCESS4All is a project dedicated to people with disabilities, who experience inequalities and limited employment opportunities as well. Our ambition is to provide sustainable solutions in order to ensure the accessibility of people with disabilities in cultural and social life, so they can actively participate in all aspects of society as equal members.

The lack of awareness and knowledge of decision makers on disability issues and on creation of accessible and disabled-friendly urban environments lead to increasing inequalities. Consequently, it is our duty as members of society to apply our know-how in order to prevent all forms of discrimination, caused by misinformation



IO1: THE AWARENESS AND CAPACITY BUILDING ACCESS4ALL COURSES

This output is addressed to all of those who have been trained on inclusivity and disability issues about how to make a real change in the policy contexts at local level (at least). Participants empowered to act as disability mediators enabling the participation of disabled people in the multiple society sectors. After the completion of the project participants will receive an automatic 'certification' regarding to their field of expertise, a digital validation and assessment of their knowledge and skills.

IO2: ASSESSMENT AND VALIDATION TOOL FOR ACCESS4ALL AWARENESS AND CAPACITY

Tool targeting all of those who have been trained on inclusive societies and disability and how to define a real change in the policy contexts at local level (at least); they will also have been empowered to act between people with disabilities and the multiple society sectors. These people trained with the completion of the project will be awarded with an automatic 'certification' of their expertise and specialization, a digital validation and assessment of their knowledge and skills.

IO3: THE BEST PRACTICES AND POLICY BOOK

This is the final output of the project and includes all the products and deliverables created during earlier phases of the project, and, at the same time, all the further policy making context lines. This IO will definitely contribute to project success, as it combines practice and theory, academic knowledge and policy drafting, towards their mutual interaction.

ABOUT US

For the development of this project we have a large consortium made up of experts in the field:

- **Xenios Polis. Culture, Science and Action** (LEADER) - Greece
- **Asociación Valencia Inno Hub** - Spain
- **BildungsLAB - Hands&Minds Learning Center** – Austria
- **Cooperativa Sociale San saturnino onlus** – Italy
- **CSI CENTER FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION LTD** - Cyprus
- **CULTUREPOLIS** – Greece
- **RESEARCH AND EDUCATION OF SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT AND TRANSFORMATION- RESET LTD** - Cyprus
- **TANDEM PLUS** – France



OBJECTIVES

- To empower participants through capacity building and awareness actions on how to implement disability concern/focus policies in their area and to facilitate the inclusion of disabled members in community; accordingly, to provide them with skills and knowledge on campaigns/initiatives on positive, respectful and inclusive societies towards disabilities.
- To establish a validation procedure of skills and knowledge for the individuals/trainees engaged in the ACCESS4All capacity building actions.
- To raise awareness in local communities on the rights of persons with disabilities and to improve gradually their quality of life.

ACCESS4All is based on the following **major key-fields**:

People with disabilities are one of the most marginalized groups in Western societies and studies demonstrate a persistent link between disability status and socioeconomic and individual disparities. People with disabilities are more likely to live in poverty, with lower levels of workforce participation and educational attainment; they may also face violence and discrimination related to their disability and have difficulties accessing appropriate health care, daily social situations, cultural structures, or being equally treated in their community. These inequalities are manifested through disadvantages in the psychosocial, cultural, and economic domain.

On the other hand, some also statistical number reveal this project necessity. **World Report on Disability (2019)** issued by the World Health has estimated that more than one billion people, namely 15% of the world population, are affected by some form of disability while at EU level, Eurostat, reports that 37% of the EU-28 population aged 15 and over presents at least a form of disability, having (moderate or severe) physical or sensory limitations; These people experience barriers to their integration, specific need for assistance, hard health status, functional and activity limitations, limited access to education and training, limited labor market choices, unsuccessful employment patterns, poverty and income inequalities, difficult financial and housing conditions.

In addition, there is a lack of proper information and awareness raising in society and its reflection towards disability and the integration of these people through targeted actions and initiatives bringing closer the society key-factors to the disabled people integration and life quality. Accordingly, what the researches (**Argmonet.all 2016, EPRS 2019**), have shown is that beyond the positive reflections and the 'elimination' of exclusive practices or discrimination these people face or experience, what is of high value for them is their access to the right of being equal members of the society and actively participate by having as much as possible employment opportunities or access to cultural and social life.

Most of the times, these limitations are set by the limited knowledge of decision makers about how for example municipalities can act in order to create a disable-friendly and accessible urban environment. Taking into account **Yates (2019) article in the Guardian** for the Dutch more accessible city, it is the community level and the policy makers contribution to an inclusive and reflective society at local/regional and national level, and as a follow up at EU level, constituting our target groups: as individuals, staff, or agents of policy making (individuals, groups of persons, institutions/ members of boards of local councils, administrative staff, public servants, NGOs representatives, and any other interested stakeholders need to be included for better results), policy makers are those who can act as a funnel and create relative policies serving the positive changes in the local/regional policy schemes regarding the accessibility of disabled citizens into education, training, daily life, health sector, cultural life, etc.

Boosting the capacity building and awareness for them can in turn 'create' opportunities for the participation of disabled people in the social procedures and their actively exerting rights and roles in parallel with the accessibility standards that should be taken (at least) at the municipality level. **Because people aren't disabled, their cities are.**

MEETINGS

On **January 15th** we had the pleasure of holding the "ACCESS4ALL" project Kick-Off virtual Meeting. On this meeting we introduced ourselves and started establishing the guidelines for our collaboration.

On **March 22nd** we had a meeting where we discussed about the results of our national researches done in the scope of the development of IO1. As all of our meetings, it was very constructive and helped to recreate the essence of face-to-face collaboration in Erasmus+ Projects.

We have shown that even in this adverse situation, when is not possible to travel and get to meet our partners, we can still manage to work both professional and efficiently.

We can't wait for this to end and meet face to face. But for the moment... Lets keep the work (virtually) going!



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