



NO BARRIERS NO BORDERS

A practical booklet for setting up international mixed-ability youth projects (including persons with and without a disability)

Download this and other SALTO Inclusion booklets for free at:

www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/

SALTO-YOUTH
INCLUSION
RESOURCE CENTRE



NO BARRIERS NO BORDERS

SALTO-YOUTH STANDS FOR...

...‘Support and Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities within the Youth in Action programme’. The European Commission has created a network of eight SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres to enhance the implementation of the European Youth in Action programme which provides young people with valuable non-formal learning experiences.

SALTO’s aim is to **support European Youth in Action projects** in priority areas such as European Citizenship, Cultural Diversity, Participation and Inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities, in regions such as EuroMed, South-East Europe or Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, with Training and Cooperation activities and with Information tools for National Agencies.

In these European priority areas, SALTO-YOUTH provides **resources, information and training** for National Agencies and European youth workers. Several resources in the above areas are available at **www.SALTO-YOUTH.net**. Find online the European Training Calendar, the Toolbox for Training and Youth Work, Trainers Online for Youth, links to online resources and much more...

SALTO-YOUTH actively **co-operates** with other actors in European youth work such as the National Agencies of the Youth in Action programme, the Council of Europe, the European Youth Forum, European youth workers and trainers and training organisers.

THE SALTO-YOUTH INCLUSION RESOURCE CENTRE **WWW.SALTO-YOUTH.NET/INCLUSION/**

The SALTO Inclusion Resource Centre (in Belgium-Flanders) works together with the European Commission to **include young people with fewer opportunities** in the Youth in Action programme. SALTO-Inclusion also supports the National Agencies and youth workers in their inclusion work by providing the following resources:

- training courses on inclusion topics and for specific target groups at risk of social exclusion
- training and youth work methods and tools to support inclusion projects
- practical and inspiring publications for international inclusion projects
- up-to-date information on inclusion issues and opportunities via the Inclusion Newsletter
- handy annotated links to inclusion resources online
- an overview of trainers and resource persons in the field of inclusion and youth
- bringing together stakeholders to make the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities more effective and easier

For more information and resources, have a look at the Inclusion pages at

 **www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

About No Barriers, No Borders	4
You(th) and different abilities	6
Working with disability? You are able to!	7
Inclusion? In what?	9
See the person, not the disability	12
Disability ≠ Disability	14
Portraying and labelling of disability	20
Is your organisation inclusive?	26
Why (not) international mixed-ability projects?	28
Benefits and potential	29
Climbing mountains – challenges when going abroad	33
Preparing for international mixed-ability projects	36
Starting from the young people's needs	37
Building trust & confidence	41
Peers dealing with peers with a disability	45
Keeping up the spirits for mixed-ability work	51
Risk assessment	53
The international connection	60
Setting up international partnerships	61
Funding for international youth projects	69
Travelling abroad in mixed-ability groups	74
Creating activities for mixed-ability groups	78
Adapting methods	85
Accessible venues	87
Tips & tricks	
- wheelchair and mobility impairment	88
- blind and partially-sighted	93
- deaf and hearing impairment	96
- cognitive, learning and intellectual disabilities	99
Specific types of disabilities	101
There's more after the project	104
Author and Resource Persons	106
References, Resources and Further Reading	108

The European Commission created a **mobility programme** that offers young people a European learning experience outside the context of higher education or vocational training. This European Youth in Action (YiA) programme can be an international opportunity for young people to try out something different in their leisure time and to **learn new skills** such as international communication, social and intercultural competences, organisational skills, etc. It can be a source of new inspiration and motivation to start new projects or take the next steps in their lives.

ABOUT NO BARRIERS, NO BORDERS



However, experience with the Youth in Action programme, and the previous YOUTH programme teaches us that it is not easy for certain young people to enjoy the enriching opportunities offered by this European mobility programme. Many young people are kept back from participating because of a **variety of obstacles**: some face poor socio-economic conditions, others belong to minorities which experience discrimination, some come from disadvantaged or peripheral areas and others have a disability.

👉 Read more about the variety of inclusion groups in the Inclusion Strategy of the Youth in Action programme: www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/InclusionStrategy/

One out of seven people has some form of disability, but this percentage is not reached amongst young people benefiting from the Youth in Action programme. Therefore the SALTO-YOUTH Inclusion Resource Centre organised two TC Enable training courses in 2003 to stimulate and offer support to youth workers setting up **international mixed-ability projects**, including both young people with and without a disability. This booklet is based on the programme of these two courses as well as expert contributions (living or working with disabilities).

We specifically choose not to work towards ‘disability projects’ where the young people with a disability are secluded again, but we would like to promote ‘mixed-ability projects’ where peers with and without a disability have a **meaningful and positive experience** together and get to accept each other in the process, regardless of their abilities or disabilities.

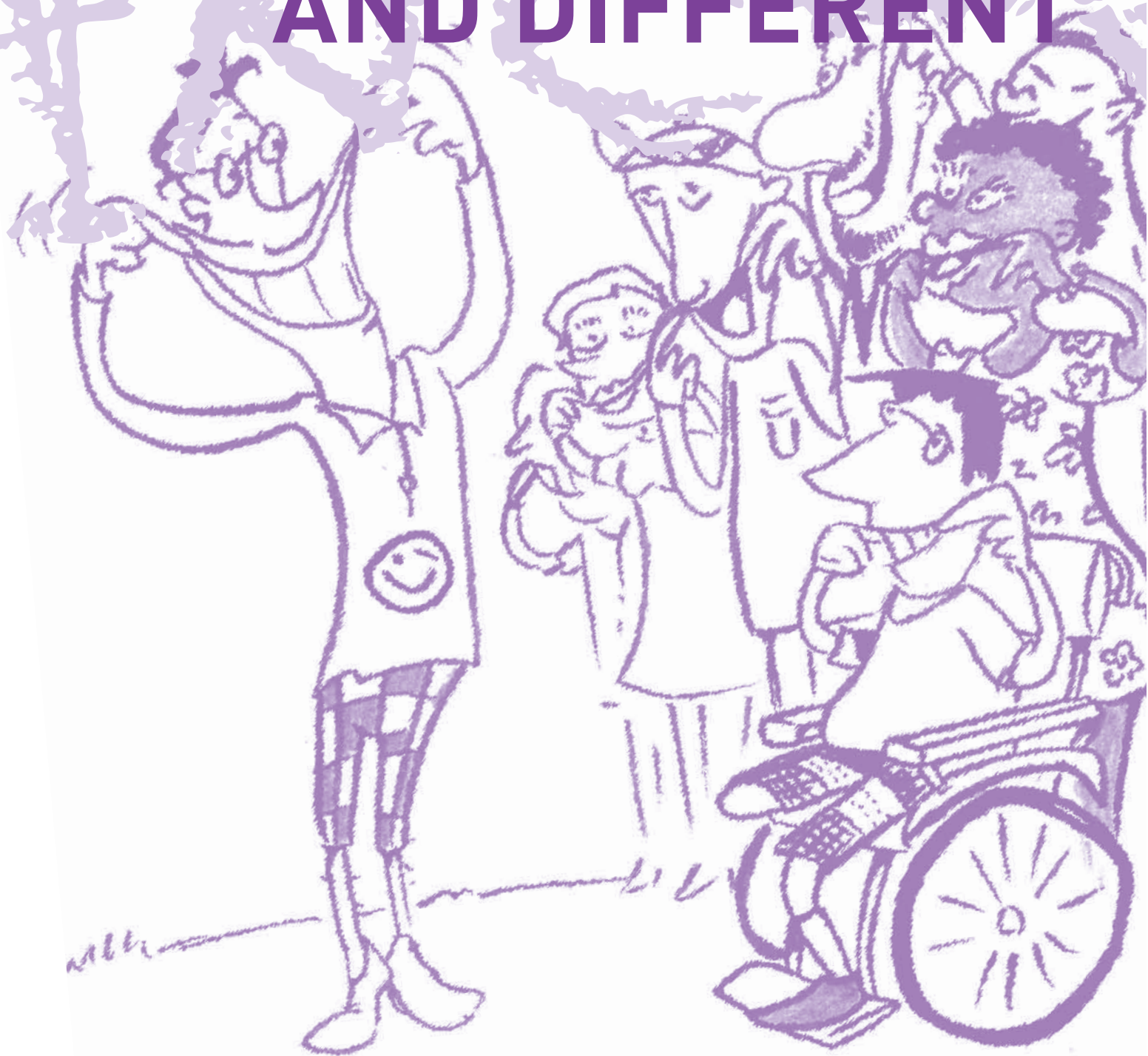
If you are a ‘serious’ youth worker, it is part of your task to be inclusive and get all young people on board, including the 15% of people with a disability. “No Barriers, No Borders” provides youth workers and project organisers (with or without a disability!) with **concrete tips and guidelines to make mixed-ability projects easier**. It explains how you can prepare both young people with and without a disability, but it also gives practical checklists for travelling and guidelines on adapting your programme to different needs.

We hope it inspires and supports youth workers to take some young people with a **disability on an international youth project**, because it is a rewarding experience for all: young people with a disability feel more accepted and integrated and those without learn to deal with disability. But what’s more, you contribute to equality and young people’s right to participate.

👉 Read more about the **benefits of mixed-ability projects** on page 29.

This chapter gives an introduction to disability to demystify the concepts and approaches surrounding it. We do acknowledge that 'disability' is an evolving concept and that the terms and approaches used are different throughout time and space.

YOU(TH) AND DIFFERENT



ABILITIES

We see disability composed of both personal attributes (health condition) as well as social interaction (disabilism, lack of accessibility).

This booklet introduces youth workers both to the medical issues and classifications of disability (knowing what it is) as well as to how to overcome psychological and physical barriers in the interaction between persons with and without a disability (social dimension of disability).

WORKING WITH DISABILITY? YOU ARE ABLE TO!

Everybody has different abilities but people tend to be surprised and modify their behaviour towards people that have limited or 'obviously' different (from them) body functions (walking, seeing, talking, hearing, concentrating, dressing...) or body structures (smaller, bigger, missing body parts). Often people think a disability is something strange. They might feel pity and want to jump in to help, or – on the contrary - hold back because they never really learnt to interact with a person with a disability and avoid them. This can be called conscious or unconscious **disabilism**.

Neither the **patronisingly pitying attitude** nor the **fear of interaction** are very helpful or respectful towards the person with different abilities – and this booklet aims to give you some guidance in dealing 'normally' with persons with a disability.

Imagine... how would you feel?

- if strangers took you by the hand –without asking- and pushed you in a certain direction when you were standing around figuring out the metro-system in a new city
- if people started using baby-talk in a conversation with you because you didn't hear them well the first time because of loud background music or because you didn't speak their language
- if people ignored you, and talked to the friend next to you instead, because you didn't know anything about e.g. cars or computers
- if people were nervous and avoided eye-contact when you were around them because you were wearing strange clothes or had a different hairstyle

Persons with a disability often face these kinds of reactions...

👉 more tips on how (not) to interact with persons with different disabilities in the section **General Tips** for Interacting with People with Disabilities, page 19 and the rest of this booklet.

Everybody has different “**health conditions**”, but some disorders, traumas or diseases cause more or less severe “**impairments**” (*abnormalities of body structure and appearance [and] organ or system function*) which result in different “**disabilities**” (*the consequences of impairments in terms of functional performance and activity by the individual*). From www.who.int.

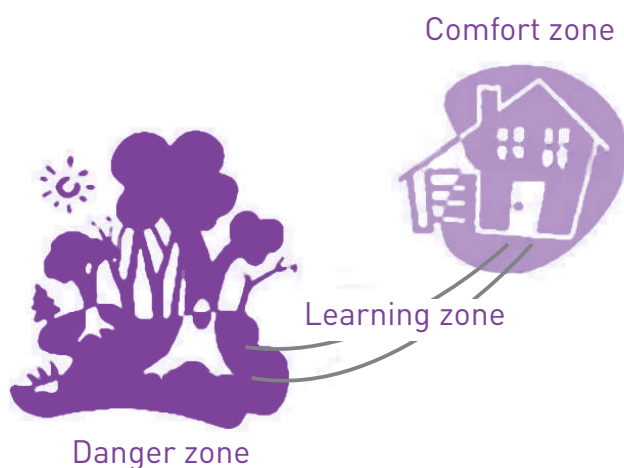
👉 more about disability terminology in section Portraying and labelling, page 20.

But even though people see their “**physical or mental activity**” limited, because of **medical conditions** (impairments), this does not mean that they would not be able to “**participate**” in youth activities, should they be specially adapted. In this sense, disability does not only have medical but also has **social causes**. People with a disability are often excluded or given a different status by other people because they do not fit the **social expectations** i.e. being able to do the same activities in the same way as other people. And this is often the biggest handicap, not the disability itself.

Youth (and other) organisations do not always stop and think about how they can **be inclusive** and ensure everybody’s right to participate (e.g. by having meetings and activities in accessible places, using different means of communication besides talking, etc). However, **it is possible to integrate young people or youth workers with a disability into your project or organisation!** It mainly takes some goodwill, attention and flexibility – and it doesn’t even have to cost much more – but it will give you so much in return. You could even consider affirmative action or positive discrimination to make sure that you reach all young people in your activities. People with disabilities can contribute and participate in society (and in youth projects) in **different ways** and this booklet hopefully gives you some ideas on how to foster this exchange and equal cooperation.

Working with young people with different abilities (referred to in this booklet as ‘Mixed-ability’) is a **learning experience for ALL**. The persons with a disability get the opportunity to interact ‘normally’ (positively) with other young people of their age, participate and contribute to youth activities and build up social relations. People without a disability get to know people with a disability, how (not) to react, help if needed and develop ‘normal’ (positive, respectful,...) relations with them. And the **driving motor** for this learning to live together ‘normally’ is **FUN**.

👉 Have a look at the benefits and potential of mixed-ability youth work in section Why (not) international mixed-ability projects, page 28.



Doing mixed-ability youth work or projects, is about providing **positive experiences of working, playing and simply being together, breaking down barriers and taking on challenges**. Youth work is about taking the young people (regardless of abilities) out of their *comfort zone* (of things they know and are able to do) to go a step further into the *learning zone* (trying out new things, pushing out the borders of their knowledge and abilities) however ensuring that safeguards are in place to prevent the young people getting lost in the *danger zone*.

Achieving goals together in a mixed-ability group – in a good atmosphere - is very rewarding and boosts young people’s **self-esteem**. Young people with a disability realise things they didn’t think they were capable of or have experiences they didn’t think they could access. Everybody acquires new skills and knowledge about **being inclusive**, and the needs of a wide variety of group members when living and working together are addressed.

“Before our mixed-ability youth exchange, I was very conscious of not saying or doing something wrong with the participants in a wheelchair, but now I feel more relaxed and able to joke together and fool around, well ... like with any other kids”

- a youth worker -

INCLUSION? IN WHAT?

It is impossible to talk about inclusion of persons with a disability if you are not involving at the same time persons who don’t have a disability. One could think about organising trips or activities “exclusively” for young people with special needs, but this is rather a form of **exclusion** (separating the young people with a disability again – as they may already be in a special school, undergoing special therapy, working in a sheltered placement, etc). In this booklet and in the SALTO “TC Enable” course we regard as the ideal situation one where persons with a disability can take part and be **fully included in ‘regular’ activities** rather than creating special disability projects.

There is a tendency in some countries (e.g. Scandinavian countries, USA) to move away from specialised institutions and schools in favour of **providing additional support and flexibility** for people with a disability to take part in the regular school system, free time activities etc. How would you feel if you were only allowed to take part in activities with people that had the same shoe size or eye colour as you? Rather limiting, not?

Feel it!

If you are preparing your group for issues of equality and inclusion (regardless of disability or other characteristics) you could do a soft version of the “Blue Eyes/Brown Eyes” experiment (Jane Elliot, 1968). In this famous exercise participants were divided into 2 groups based upon the colour of their eyes (accentuated by a ribbon on their arm – or you could add other symbols, handicaps, etc).

During an activity (e.g. a nature walk, playing a board game, dinner, etc) one group gets all the privileges and limitations are placed on the other group.

Examples privileges

- they can go first
- they get nice food and drink
- they can say what they want
- they get extra money
- ...

Examples limitations

- they are not allowed to talk
- they get dry cookies and water
- they are ignored
- they have to keep their hands tied
- ...

The aim of the game is to experience being excluded and to feel what it is like to be treated differently. Do not exaggerate the discrimination or exclusion and inform the participants about the aim of the exercise beforehand. Schedule a lot of time for debriefing (talking about what happened during the exercise).

Some questions with which to guide discussions:

- Start with saying that this was only a game and that people were playing a role – it is a simulation and not reality – the aim is to learn from this exercise and not to analyse people (avoid accusations, bad feelings,...)
- How did it feel to be in the excluded position? And in the privileged position? Why?
- What makes people behave like this in such situations? Is one better than the other?
- How can we counter prejudice and discrimination? What would have worked in the game?
- Can we see similar incidences of discrimination and solutions in real life?
- What conclusions can we draw for our mixed-ability project?

Make sure that people who were emotional during the game get enough space to voice their emotions and frustrations – focussing on what you can learn from the experience.

👉 More **simulations and exercises about discrimination and inequality** can be found in the SALTO Toolbox for Training at www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/toolbox/ or in the All Different-All Equal Education Pack at www.coe.int/ecri/ (educational resources).

Real inclusion is about **interacting ‘normally’** with other young people (friendships, fights, jealousies, growing pains, etc) and adults (learning from them, being scolded if they do something wrong, pushing boundaries, questioning authority, etc), finding the place in life for the young person where they would be if they didn’t have a disability! So part of a disability organisation’s work is to bring the young people they have in their care into **contact with other young people** in a positive way, e.g. through mixed-ability projects.

Disability organisations should not miss the opportunity to **invite young people without a disability** to activities arranged by their organisation. It is a good test to see if the activities and projects they offer are appealing to other young people, whether they come back for more or not. If the young people without disability do not show interest and don’t come back, then you might ask yourself whether the activities are “**just as interesting**” for the persons with a disability...

Being open for ‘regular youth’ also is a chance to get in some fresh ideas and potential volunteers. With a bit of **training or explaining** they could also take on some assisting tasks and help their peers, as from friend to friend.

- ★ Having put forward the benefits of mixed-ability activities, you should not forget that it is also about **free choice**! As for anybody, it is sometimes nice to be with **similar people** e.g. the guys talk cars or computers together, the girls shop, just to illustrate the point with some (hopefully antiquated) stereotypes. Similarly young people with a disability might want to hang-out every once in a while with people with a similar disability and not feel they are the **odd one out**. But at least they should be **free to choose** with whom they mingle in their free time.

SEE THE PERSON, NOT THE DISABILITY

Every person is an onion, a person's identity is made up of many different elements. One is not only e.g. blind, but also many other things e.g. man or woman; spouse or bachelor; gay or straight; progressive or conservative; and a variety of other categories. Some of the **values** linked to these groups are felt to be more important than others, just like the outer layers of the onion are easier to shed (or change) than the inner core values associated with these aspects. E.g. it might be easier to forfeit your national food, than to change your concept of hygiene or femininity.

Your Onion



Draw a cross section of an onion showing different layers inside.

Ask your participants/young people to think which groups they belong to and which roles they have e.g. man/woman, nationality, hobby, age group,... and what values/behaviours are linked to these categories.

Compare and discuss:

- What are the differences and similarities between your onions?
- Do you think you will always find something in common between people?
- Which part of your onion is the most/least important for you?
- What could happen if two different onions needed to live or work together?
- How could this cooperation be made easier?
- How could you use the idea of the onion in a mixed-ability project?

It is not nice for anyone to be pinned down or **limited to only one** of their identity elements. It is probably not very nice to get a seat in parliament ‘only’ because you are a woman (to fill the quota), or to be invited to come shopping because gays are supposed to be good at this.

Even though some people focus on one part of their identity or interests to categorise themselves and do activities together or fight for their rights (e.g. political movements, immigrant groups, feminists,...), people with a disability do not usually take their disability as a basis for **identification or pride!**

- ☞ Check if this is true by doing the Onion exercise above.
- ☞ More background reading and exercises about Identity and Culture in the SALTO Inclusion & Diversity booklet available from www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/IDbooklet/

Moreover, persons with a disability have a wide variety of identity elements and values, and are not only a “wheelchair user” or a “blind” person. They are also brothers or sisters, husbands or wives, members of political parties, with certain values and interests, dislikes and hobbies like anybody else. Mixed-ability youth work is about **seeing and getting to know the person in total** (the whole onion) – not only as hard of hearing, mentally retarded or wheelchair user.

The Narrow World

Start a discussion about any topic (e.g. what the young people did last weekend, some issue from the news, hobbies etc) – but everybody has to start each sentence with one of the following:

- As a member of this youth organisation/youth club, I think/did XYZ
- Me, having long/short/blond/black hair, I find/did XYZ
- As a woman/man, I feel/did XYZ

How did it feel to see (or at least voice) everything from one perspective?

Do people with a disability see things from only their disability perspective? Why (not)?

What could we do to enlarge this narrow world view? How could we make sure we don’t focus on only one part of a person?

Young people with a disability mostly see their situation in **comparison** to people without a disability. They try to live a life as similarly as possible to their peers (which is a very valid goal). But it can be very difficult for people with a disability to imagine life without keeping in a corner of their mind their disability and the restricted physical or mental activity or limited participation caused by it.

Even when some people with a disability have some extraordinary skills (e.g. wheelchair dance champion, musician, artist, etc) it is tempting to think of this achievement as “*great considering their disability*” rather than appreciating the **skills in their own right** (e.g. most of us would be completely crap at wheelchair basketball or speaking without hearing...).

- ★ Did we say to see the person and NOT the disability? Important in disability work is **visibility** and positive image-building. Have a look at the SALTO booklet about image building for inclusion groups: www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/InclusionForALL/

The Park: a little exercise

(which you could also do with your colleagues or young people):

“Imagine that you are walking in the city and you go to the park. When entering the gate, the gate-keeper gives you a little nod. You stroll along the path and on the lawn a couple of children are playing. Their parents watch over them from the bench along the path. A flirting couple walk by. The ice-cream vendor is busy selling ice-cream and drinks to a row of people queuing up in front of the stall. Etc”

Now think back to all the people you met in your imagination in the park. How many of them had a disability? (or were black, gay, woman,...) Indeed, we are not very used to see persons with a disability, and this could change by making our youth work activities more inclusive.

DISABILITY ≠ DISABILITY

Even though we said that we should see the person and not the disability, the youth workers taking young people with a disability abroad, need to know a minimum about the condition of their participants. Even though some disabilities might resemble one another, it is rare to find two people with a disability who have the same severity of impairment, the same emotional reaction to their (medical) condition, the same use of support equipment or similar relationships with their environment. So it goes without saying that every person with one or more disabilities has **specific abilities, needs and preferences** in how to deal with them. Therefore it is important to **get to know the disability AND especially the person** you are (will be) working with!

Find below an **overview** of some of the disabilities to get a first impression of what different disabilities entail, however it is necessary to get to know the specific situation of each person (severity, medication, equipment used etc). The best way to do this is to **ask the person him/herself** in the first place (s/he knows best her/his own condition!), or the parents, guardians,

helpers or doctors of the person. Open communication in a trustful atmosphere makes the cooperation the best possible experience for all.

There used to be an “International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps” focusing on the **medical conditions** of a person and how to cure or treat them (the so-called ‘medical model’ of disability). This classification was replaced by a more modern “**International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health**” in 2002 (www3.who.int/icf/) to reflect a new integrated ‘bio-psycho-social approach’ to disability which not only focuses on limitations but rather on the level of functioning and health.

People’s **activity** (execution of a task or action) is not only influenced by **medical conditions** (diseases and disorders) or **impairments** (problems in body structure or functions), but also by the opportunities and provisions to **participate** (involvement in life situations). There are both environmental factors (physical, social and attitudinal environment in which people conduct their lives) as well as **personal factors** (personality, personal situation,...) that influence people’s activity and participation..

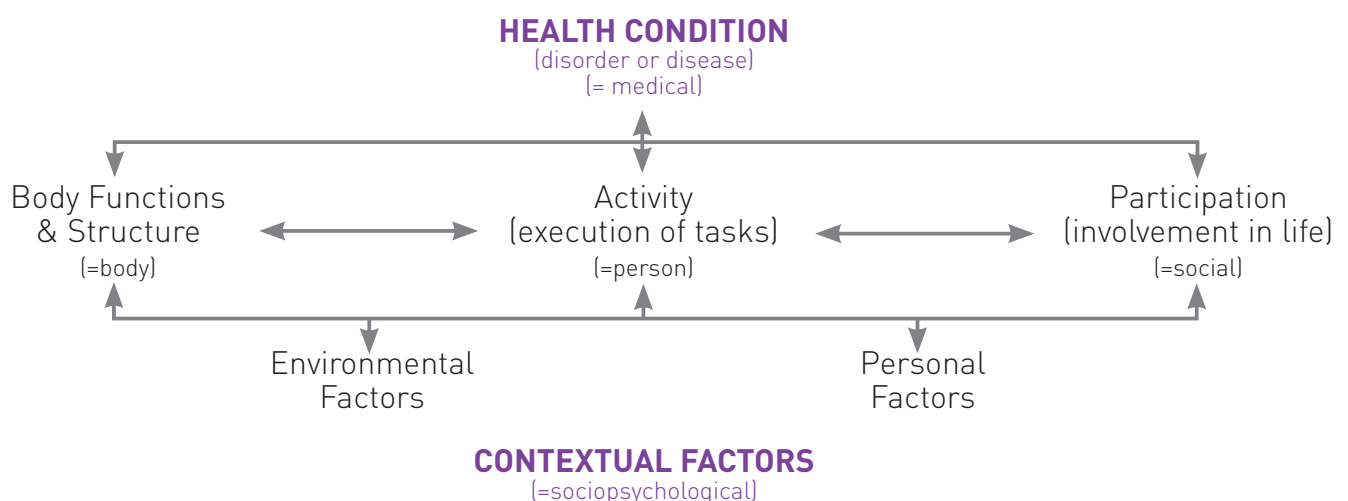


Diagram at the basis of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) - from www3.who.int/icf/

This new ‘bio-psycho-social model’ of disability also leads to **new ways of classifying people’s disabilities** depending on whether you focus on the body functions and structure, on the person’s activity or participation, or on the contextual factors.

This leads to a following **classification of disabilities**:

BODY

Function:

- Mental Functions
- Sensory Functions and Pain
- Voice and Speech Functions
- Functions of the Cardiovascular, Haematological, Immunological and Respiratory Systems
- Functions of the Digestive, Metabolic, Endocrine Systems
- Genitourinary and Reproductive Functions
- Neuromusculoskeletal and Movement-Related Functions
- Functions of the Skin and Related Structures

Structure:

- Structure of the Nervous System
- The Eye, Ear and Related Structures
- Structures Involved in Voice and Speech
- Structure of the Cardiovascular, Immunological and Respiratory Systems
- Structures Related to the Digestive, Metabolic and Endocrine Systems
- Structure Related to Genitourinary and Reproductive Systems
- Structure Related to Movement
- Skin and Related Structures

ACTIVITY AND PARTICIPATION

- Learning and Applying Knowledge
- General Tasks and Demands
- Communication
- Mobility
- Self Care
- Domestic Life
- Interpersonal Interactions and Relationships
- Major Life Areas
- Community, Social and Civic Life

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

- Products and Technology
- Natural Environment and Human-Made Changes to Environment
- Support and Relationships
- Attitudes
- Services, Systems and Policies

Based on the *International Classification of Functioning, Disabilities and Health (ICF)* -
from www3.who.int/icf/

It is now increasingly common to find references of *‘people with a self-care disability’* (focus on limited activity) or *‘person using assistive technology’* (focus on environmental factor), regardless of what impairment causes these situations. In the frame of this booklet we cannot discuss every type of disability, so we will stick to the disabilities that are most **commonly known** to youth workers.

- 👉 find an overview of concrete **resources and suggestions** for adaptations of activities for the most common disabilities in section **Creating activities for mixed-ability**, page 78.

Your role as a youth worker is not so much to focus on the medical side of disability or on the different body functions and structures that you might encounter (even though some basic knowledge is advisable). But youth work should play a role in **modifying some of the environmental and social factors** in the activities (*e.g. adaptation of activities, the attitudes of persons without a disability towards disability, relationships between people with and without a disability, our policy or strategy towards young people with a disability,...*) so that young people with a disability can **fully enjoy their right to participate** in your youth work and in society in general.



Some examples

health condition	impairment	activity limitation	participation restriction
Leprosy	Loss of sensation of extremities	Difficulties in grasping objects	Stigma of leprosy leads to reluctance of having this person in the youth club
<i>What can you do as a youth worker:</i>		Provide adapted cups & utensils for activities or avoid giving task involving grasping, talk openly about the person's needs,...	Inform yourself and others about leprosy and make the person feel welcome in the youth club, don't make leprosy a taboo,...
Panic Disorder	Anxiety	Not capable of going out alone	People's reactions leads to no social relationships
<i>What can you do as a youth worker:</i>		Build trust with the person, collect the person at home, do group activities, provide a buddy,...	Do activities where the young people get to know each other in different ways
Spinal Injury	Paralysis	Incapable of doing stairs	Meeting room upstairs
<i>What can you do as a youth worker:</i>		Do your meeting in an accessible place,...	

Often, because of different reasons, the actual “**performance**” of young people with a disability (*what an individual actually does in his/her current environment and context*) is below their “**capacity**” (*an individual’s ability to execute a task or action, his/her highest probable level of functioning in a given domain at a given moment*). This gap can be explained in different ways:

- **Protectionism of the environment** (parents, youth workers, others): they cannot or are not allowed to do an activity because “they have a disability”, even though they would have the capacity to OR the activity could be adapted to their special needs
- **Learned helplessness**: the persons with a disability themselves think it is not possible to do an activity because they were never given this opportunity or never have seen anybody with a disability do it (role models)
- **(Dis)abilism**: conscious or unconscious attitude toward people with a disability, assuming that they are inferior beings or have less rights
- **Fear of inaccessibility**: persons with a disability are reluctant to participate because they do not have any reassuring information about the accessibility of the activity, the venue, the transport,...
- **Lack of assistive technology**: often technology does not exist in a ‘ready made’ fashion or it might be prohibitively expensive, but you could invent or construct many tools yourself (ramps, seats, utensils,...)
- **Lack of adaptation and creativity**: youth work methods can be adapted with a bit of creativity: why not draw instead of talking (speech disorder), why not put your arms in the air instead of jumping (wheelchair).
- More ideas on adaptations in section **Adapting methods** (page 85).

Youth work can be instrumental in closing this gap between what people with a disability actually do and what they would really be able to do. **The challenge is yours!**

GENERAL TIPS FOR INTERACTING WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

- When starting to interact with persons with a disability start from the assumption of the **highest possible physical and intellectual skills** and only if needed adapt gradually to the disability. Don’t assume all people with a disability have limited intellectual skills, nor that people using a wheelchair are very slow, nor that people with a white cane or completely blind, etc
- When introduced to a person with a disability, **do the same thing** you’d do with other people you meet. If you usually shake hands, then offer to shake hands. People with limited hand use or who wear an artificial limb do usually shake hands.

(Shaking hands with the left hand is an acceptable greeting.) If you usually give a kiss on the cheek, do the same, maybe taking a blind person by the shoulders to make him/her feel a kiss is coming, etc...

- **Treat adults as adults** (and why not treat young people as fully fledged human beings as well). Address people who have disabilities in the same way as other people. If it is uncommon in your culture to use people's first names (politeness) then also refer to people with a disability in the Mister or Miss format.
- **If you offer help, ask first** if the person with a disability wants help and wait until your offer is accepted (unless someone is in the process of falling down or so). It is best to let the person with a disability give you instructions on how to assist (e.g. some parts of wheelchairs are fragile or detach easily, so that is not a good place to lift or pull the wheelchair,...)
- **Relax. Don't be embarrassed** if you happen to use common expressions such as "See you later," or "Did you hear about that?" that seem to relate to a person's disability. They often use these expressions themselves. Don't try to be too politically correct and reflect days on end how to call a person with a disability – just ask. Also see the next section below.

PORTRAYING AND LABELLING OF DISABILITY

You might have noticed that we are using rather lengthy way of referring to "**people with a disability**" – talking about e.g. "a quadriplegic" (one word) would be easier and shorter. However the words we use determine how we see people (and consequently approach them). And the other way around our behaviour towards and opinion of people determines the way we refer to them or depict them. We made the point above that it is a matter of respect to avoid pinning people down by their disability, but **see them as people first**. Therefore in this booklet, we will always refer in the first place to "a person", who might have an impairment or use certain assistive equipment.

Make a Dictionary

- What words exist in your country and/or language to refer to people with a disability?
- Are these words considered to be negative? Are there alternatives?
- Are there translations for the English 'politically correct' terms in your own language?
- What do the specialised organisations working with disability use?
- What do the persons with a certain disability use themselves?

SOME LANGUAGE & PORTRAYAL TIPS

A reason why people have **pitying attitudes and uncomfortable behaviour** towards disability could be because there is little positive and authentic media coverage of people with a disability and few respectful examples of addressing and portraying this target group. So if you are sending out signals into the world (talks, articles, pictures, TV, radio, applications,...), you might consider the following tips to portray people with a disability.

- ★ **Put people first, not their disability.** Emphasize the people, not the labels. Do not use a disease or disorder to refer to people. This puts the focus on the individual, not the particular functional limitation.

Out	In
The disabled	People with a disability
Birth defect, congenital defect, deformity	Person born with a disability, person who has a congenital disability
The blind, Visually impaired	Person who is blind, person with a visual impairment or who is partially-sighted
Hard of hearing, hearing impaired	Person who is hard of hearing
Deaf-mute, deaf and dumb	Person who is deaf
The epileptic	Person who has epilepsy
Learning disabled, learning disordered, the dyslexics	Person with a learning disability Person with dyslexia
Spastic	Person who has spasms
Victim of cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, arthritis, etc.	Person who has cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, arthritis, etc. Person with a disability. Person with a mobility impairment.
...	...

- ★ **Show people with disabilities as active** participants of society. Portraying persons with disabilities interacting with non-disabled people in day-to-day social and work environments helps break down barriers and gives a good example of positive and respectful interaction. Using images that isolate or call special attention to persons with disability is only appropriate if it is relevant to the story.
- ★ **Update your vocabulary.** The way we refer to persons with a disability has changed over time but some people still use archaic terms (which were used last century!). Avoid using old derogatory terms.

Out	In
handicap(ped) - it comes from the times when persons with a disability had to go with the “cap in the hand” on the streets to beg for food and money to survive	Disability – person with a disability
Invalid - the literal sense of the word “invalid” is “not valid”	Person with a disability
Fit, attack, spell	Seizure
Cripple, crippled, lame	Person with a mobility impairment, person who has a spinal cord injury, arthritis, etc.
Insane, lunatic, maniac, mental diseased, crazy, demented, deviant, psycho	Persons with a mental health/psychiatric disability, person who has schizophrenia, person who has depression
Mentally retarded, defective, feeble minded, idiot, imbecile, moron, retarded, simple, mongoloid	Person with an intellectual disability, person with Down’s Syndrome
...	...

- ★ **A bit of pity for the disabled...** Do not focus on disability unless it is crucial to a story. Sad human interest stories about disability might get you the pity (and alms) of some people but will surely not change the patronising attitudes of people towards people with a disability. Focus instead on issues that affect the quality of life for those same individuals, such as accessible transportation, housing, employment opportunities, and discrimination.

- ★ Emphasize abilities, not limitations. Assistive technology (wheelchairs, crutches,...) enables people with a disability to take part in society, rather than limiting them.

Out	In
Confined to a wheelchair, wheelchair-bound	Person who uses a wheelchair (a wheelchair is a means to get around independently)
Patient (only in relation to a doctor)	Person
Handicapped parking, bathrooms	Accessible parking, bathroom
...	...

- ★ **People with disabilities are not (always) super-heroes.** Even though the public may admire super-achievers, portraying people with disabilities as superstars raises false expectations that all people with disabilities should achieve this level. It is probably the ‘typical’ people who have a disability that we want to put in the picture.

- ★ **Avoid artificial or ridiculous euphemisms.** Using euphemisms to describe disabilities is likely to put people in an uncomfortable or patronising situation in which they do not interact “normally” with persons with a disability, but instead be weary about using the most hilariously politically correct term. Let’s call a spade a spade.

Out	In
Differently abled	Person with a disability
Physically challenged	Person with a disability, person with a mobility impairment
Mentally challenged	Person with a mental/intellectual disability
Vertically challenged	Person of short stature
Visually challenged, hard of vision	Person with a visual impairment or who is partially-sighted
...	...

- ★ Often when the theme of disability comes up on TV, in public, in the theatre, etc., actors or models without disabilities are used to represent persons with disabilities. Why not use **actors or models with disabilities** to portray persons with disabilities (an example on page 42)?

- ★ **A little dose of sensationalism?** Avoid negative terms or emotionally laden words to refer to people with a disability. These terms portray the assumed sensation and drama of having a disability (which is not necessarily correct). They will only get you pity or amazement instead of positive attitudes and respectful interaction with people with a disability. Most of the outdated terms above also belong to this category.

Out	In
Suffers from, afflicted by, stricken with	Person with a disability, etc.
victim of x	Person with x
Pitiful, sad, ...	
Having a disability is not synonymous with suffering. Persons with a disability can have a perfectly happy life, with ups and downs like anybody else.	

- ★ **What to use to refer to people without a disability?** One word to avoid is ‘normal’, as the situation the persons with a disability are in is perfectly normal for them. So we would use ‘people without a disability’ or the ‘non-disabled person’ (but you might want to put the person first?)
- ★ It is generally OK to use **usual expressions** such as “you see?” or “see you later” when a blind person is around, or “let’s walk to z” with a person using a wheelchair, etc. Don’t get paranoid about what you can say and what not – the persons with a disability can indicate what they take offence at and what alternatives they prefer.
- ★ As mentioned before, persons with disabilities are a **very amorphous group**, so it is difficult to refer to “them” or “they” as the individuals are very different from one other.

Note!

Having said this, we shouldn't try to be 'more catholic than the pope' in our political correctness either and **ask the persons** in question how they want to be referred to. *e.g. in the training field the word 'brainstorm' was put on the blacklist because it is a condition that persons with epilepsy go through during a seizure. Instead one should talk about "idea generation" or "thought showers". A colleague trainer - who has epilepsy - laughed out loud when he heard this and is big into using the word 'brainstorm' in his training sessions – just to make a point.*

Conclusion: if not sure about how to refer to a person with a disability – ASK the person!

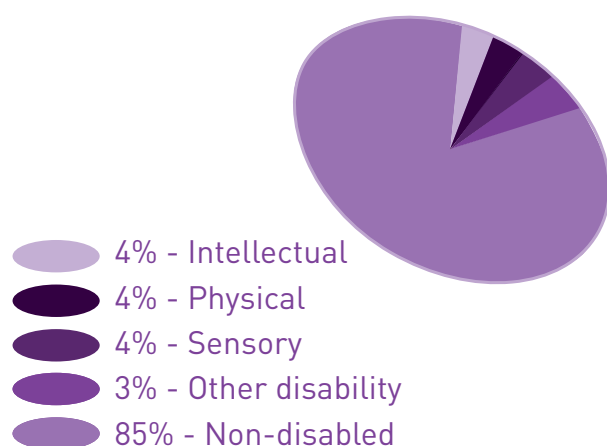
- More guidelines about the **Terminology & Portrayal of Disability** at the 'Products' section of the Research and Training Center on Independent Living: www.rtcil.org



from SALTO TC Enable

IS YOUR ORGANISATION INCLUSIVE?

Disabilities in Europe %



According to EuroStat's 'Disability and social participation report' (2001) approximately 15% of European Union citizens report some form of **disability**. We could roughly state that out of 100 people there would be roughly 4 persons with a cognitive/intellectual disability, 4 persons with a physical disability or reduced mobility, 4 persons with sensory impairments and 3 who have other disabilities. So one could ask, is one young person out of 7 in your youth organisation and activities having a disability? And if not, why are these young people with a disability not there?

👉 More data about **Disability in the European Union** at http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/disability/index_en.html

Including people with different abilities in your youth organisation (both as youth workers, board members or participants) can be a **rewarding learning experience**. It is also a valid trump card to **show the outside world**, that your youth organisation is accessible and open for people with a disability... (because the organisations that do not communicate this to the outside world, that's most likely because they are not inclusive!)

So, to which extent is your organisation (board, workers, volunteers, members,...) prepared to:

- go out and talk to people with a disability- motivating them (and convincing their parents) that they can participate in your activities?
- deal with physical obstacles (installing ramps or hold meetings/activities in accessible places)?
- do activities at different times (persons with some disabilities get tired earlier or need more time for their evening hygiene)?
- Be willing to write down or visualise all decisions and talks (for the benefit of hearing impaired)?
- provide all documents in braille or electronic format (so it can be read with a braille reader)?
- compromise on the "quality" of a final product of some artistic performance or sport activity (theatre, music, sport..) so that persons with an intellectual disability can participate
- find and divide tasks and activities for people with different abilities?
- ...

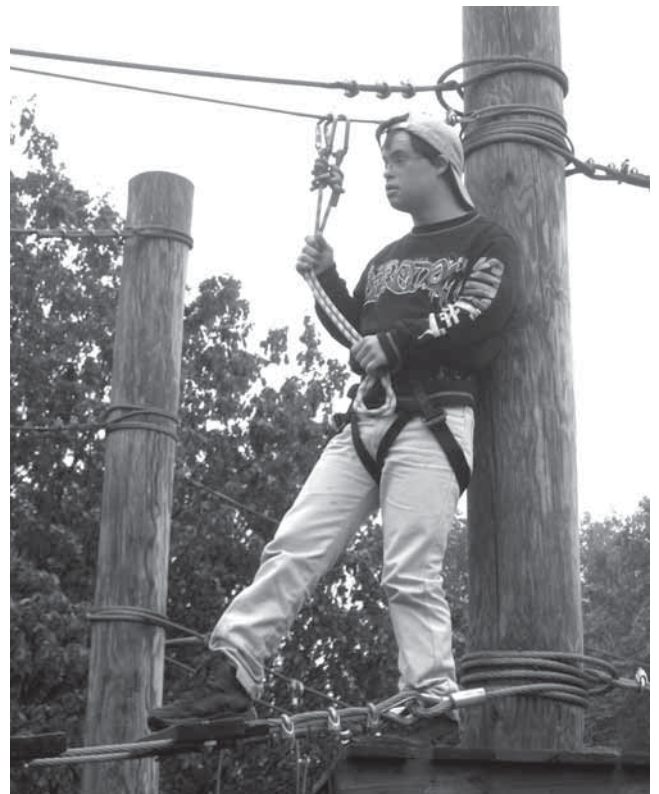
Of course, you won't get (or want!) 10 different disabilities in each of your activities, but it would be an opportunity to **involve** some young people (or youth workers) with a **disability** to take part in some of the activities – preferably in the activities which they have an interest in (logical!). The other way around, it could also be interesting for non-disabled young people to take part in disability organisations' activities as the example below shows.

A colleague told me of an activity she did in a mixed-ability group (young people with mental disability): before christmas all youngsters were making decorations. When drawing christmas trees and displaying them on the wall next to each other, it became very obvious which pictures came from the young guys with a mental disability... they were 10 times more creative and colourful – whereas the christmas trees of the 'others' all looked alike.

☞ You can find a list of potential **benefits of mixed-ability projects** in the next section Why (not) international mixed-ability projects

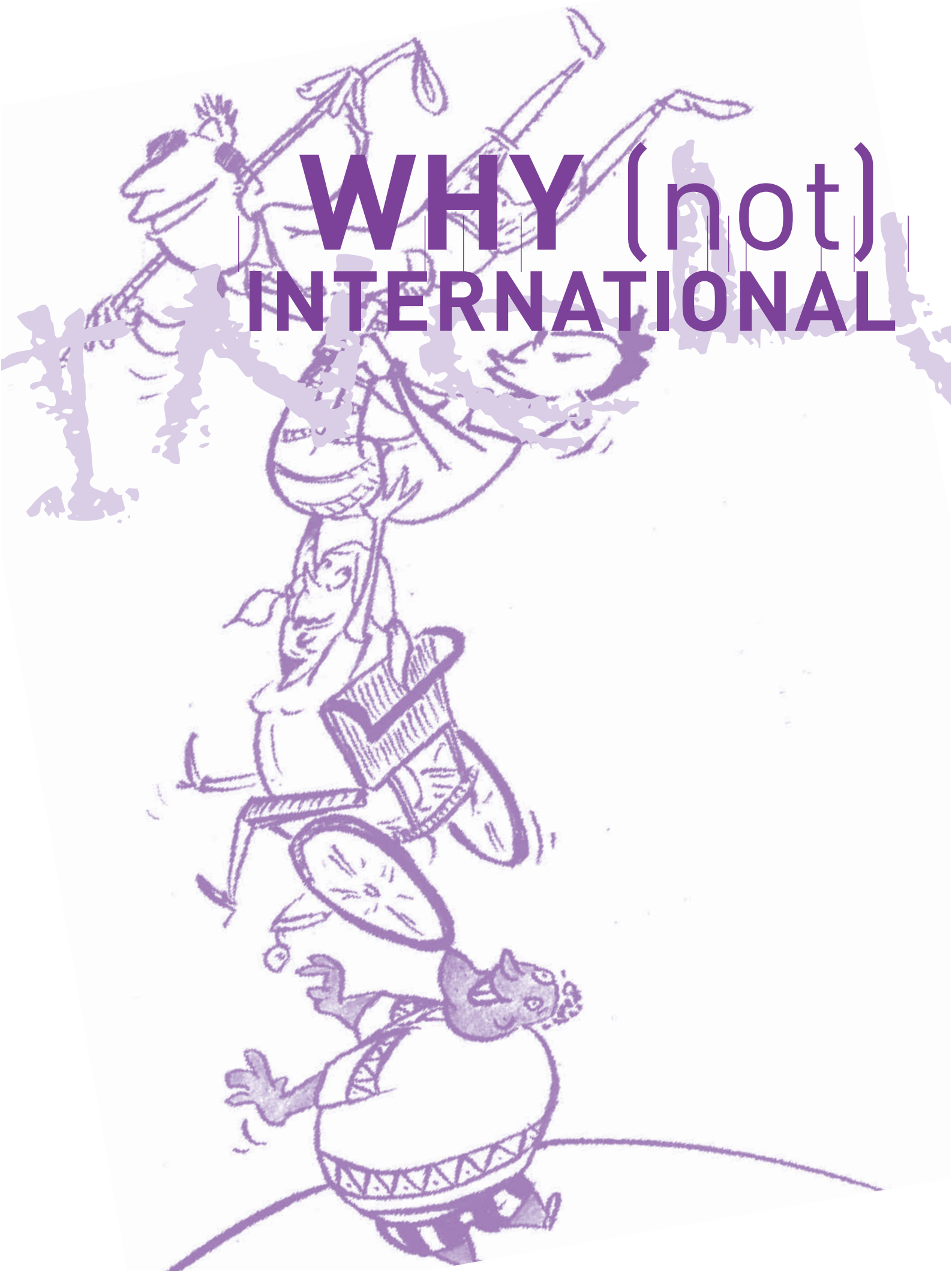
Doing mixed-ability activities or projects mainly takes a **change of thinking and working** (and maybe some investment in material, equipment, aids – but often you can find funding for this) to turn your organisation into an **inclusive organisation**.

Are you willing to make this effort? Or do you wish to continue to exclude a whole set of young people (15%) from your activities?



from the Belgian-Slovakian Youth Exchange "I never tried this before"

WHY (not) INTERNATIONAL



MIXED-ABILITY PROJECTS?

BENEFITS AND POTENTIAL

Maybe you think that there's lots more disability work to be done 'back home', before you think of something 'wild' like going abroad with a mixed-ability group. But providing an international opportunity to young people with (and without) a disability in your organisation/country is a **positive change** in itself. Too few international projects include young people with a disability. Providing ALL young people with this chance is a big step forward.

An international exchange or voluntary service, in a mixed-ability group, can be a **life-changing experience**. Often young people with a disability never even dreamt of going abroad, because of all the obstacles they have been told about again and again (learnt helplessness). Taking off could give them an immense sense of achievement, but also of respect: they (finally) get the same chances as anybody else.

Specifically in an international mixed-ability project, there is a unique opportunity to live together with persons with and without a disability. The young people with a disability can interact with people without a disability in a **peer-to-peer relationship** and not the carer-patient relationship that often haunts them. The young people without a disability have a chance to get to know the kinds of disabilities better, but also the **person behind the disability**, which is even more important. By living 24/7 together with their peers with a disability, helping each other, dealing with unforeseen circumstances (which of course you can largely foresee after reading this booklet), joking and laughing together, the young people really get to know each other in both positive and negative ways. It is surely a big learning experience about life with a disability, which goes further than the Saturday afternoon activity in the youth organisation. Disability becomes less daunting: it is just one small layer of their onion (See the person, not the disability, page 12).

Being part of an (international) group is a **real life exercise in social skills**: the young people learn to find their place in the group, deal with others, have to find solutions for communication across cultures, etc. They can find out how to react when confronted with difference (food, climate, language,...), within a safe environment. They can share these new experiences back home with their friends and community. This might give them a higher status and respect in the community, since they do the things everybody does: youth projects and travelling.

Being abroad in a group (e.g. youth exchange) or in a project (e.g. voluntary service) opens a **new world**. They get to know new people and make new friends (quite appreciated if they are isolated), they can try new activities (breaking away from routine), they experience different places and cultures,... It gives them a perspective: a fish only knows what water is, once it is thrown on the shore...

Projects abroad often have a programme with all kinds of **new activities and experiences**. Trying out new things also leads to new skills or ideas (e.g. trying out painting, sports, hobbies, likes and dislikes,...). They increase their hands-on knowledge of a different part of the world (e.g. using a subway, flying, living/seeing someone's house,...)

Going through such an international experience, inevitably **pushes out one's boundaries**. While young people (with or without a disability) discover new cultures and people, they are also discovering more about themselves. They need to find responses to these new situations and learn to handle them. They acquire **new abilities** and a successful time abroad increases their **self-esteem**.

Doing an exchange with a mixed-ability group from another country, also allows the young people to **experience different approaches to disability**. One organisation might try to pamper persons with a disability to the max, whereas another one might work to give the young people as much independence as possible, however both with the same aim of making life of the person with a disability better. Abroad you might also come across new concepts and opportunities (e.g. sheltered apartments, disability rights, novel assistive equipment) from which you can take ideas back home.

This makes the young people and the organisations aware of their own **approach and preferences regarding disability** and experiment with a different one during a shorter period. Especially overprotected young people with a disability might appreciate this air of freedom and self-initiative. It could be the beginning of increased confidence in themselves on the road to more independence and initiative.

For the organisations and youth workers involved it can be interesting to ‘look over the hedge’ and get **new ideas, inspiration and motivation** from working with organisations abroad. Youth and disability organisations in other countries do things differently, with largely the same aim of making life better for young people with disabilities. The activities and approaches taken at a project (or within host organisations) can enrich the activities back home.

Seeing achievements or needs in other countries can be a stimulus for an **increased commitment** to disability rights. If something is possible in country X, why shouldn’t we strive for the same measures in ours (e.g. accessibility legislation, funding for assistive equipment in youth organisations or workplaces,...). Networking with disability organisations abroad or membership of umbrella organisations could increase your political power.

International projects, can also have their **effect on the local community** around the project. It shows that e.g. the European Union finds it important to provide opportunities for young people with a disability, like anybody else. A mixed-ability project could be used to increase the visibility of disability in society, by using public spaces, contacting the local media,... A mixed-ability group of young people doing activities and having fun together contributes to the positive image-building in society and could set an example for other people.

Organising a project for a mixed-ability group, also **confronts** the different facilities at the hosting place with the question “are we accessible”. It raises awareness that indeed there are people with special needs whom they exclude from their facilities (e.g. restaurant, swimming pool, lodging, transport,...) and hopefully pushes them to do something about it.

What about you?

Have a look at the young people you are working with, or -even better- chat with them and find out what they think could be the benefits of doing an international youth project... With a bit of luck you end up with a completely different list of benefits than the ones we listed up here. As long as you know WHY you are doing it and what you want to get out of it!

- ★ We do hope though that one thing is on every list: the main benefit FOR ALL involved in the project, should be **FUN**. You would be surprised how much change, understanding, acceptance, willingness, relations, commitment,... thrive on a **positive experience**. Go for it!



from Land of Harmony, Slovakia

CLIMBING MOUNTAINS – CHALLENGES WHEN GOING ABROAD

As you can see in the previous section, there are plenty of reasons to do an international mixed-ability project. But we are not going to hide that there can be some **obstacles** to surmount. This booklet sets out to give you some suggestions on how to take on these challenges in the best possible way.

First of all, doing a mixed-ability project, does not mean you should have persons from as many different disability types as possible. Be realistic about what your group can ‘carry’. When going abroad it is important that the various partner groups are able to **survive independently** in their own group (enough volunteers or staff to support the persons with disability to move, see, etc) – without relying too much on facilities in the host country. Generally, in a **mixed-ability group**, there are more persons without a disability than with a disability. It is best to start small and increase the number of participants with a disability gradually.

Special needs:

It can be scary for youth workers to take the step to go abroad with young people with disabilities, maybe because they haven’t done it before. Build up your experience gradually- ‘Starting from the young people’s needs’ (page 37) helps you think through the whole project. There are also a whole series of measures to assist you when ‘Travelling abroad in mixed-ability groups’ (page 74), so this should not put you off. We also provide you with guidelines for finding ‘Accessible Venues’ (page 87). At the end of this booklet we also give you lots and lots of ‘Tips & Tricks’ for working with different disabilities (page 88).

Group issues:

It can be difficult to get the young people motivated to go abroad. Young people with a disability might not feel ‘able’ to go abroad and might need to gain some ‘trust and confidence’ (page 41). Young people without a disability might not be used to working, living and having fun together with people with a disability. ‘Peers dealing with peers with a disability’ (page 45) gives some tips on how to prepare young people. Clarifying ‘Roles and relations in the group’ also helps (page 48). And do not forget: ‘The young person is not an island: parents, guardians & institutions’ (page 44). If the project (preparation) takes a longer time, it is important to undertake things to be ‘Keeping up the spirits for mixed-ability work’ (page 51).

Risks & Crises:

Indeed, there is always a potential for things to go wrong in a project, any project. Maybe the responsibility when working with young people (with a disability) is slightly bigger, but carrying out a decent 'Risk Assessment' (page 53) and using a 'Declaration of consent' (page 56) could limit your worries.

International Partnerships:

International projects need international partners (unless you go on a tourist trip). Part of 'Setting up international partnerships' (page 61) is finding partners, but also getting to know them and setting up channels of communications with the young people (page 67). Going abroad can be scary for young people but it can also be a positive opportunity for 'Intercultural Learning' (page 68) and there are many methods you can use to stimulate this process.

Money & Funding:

I can hear you ask: "so who is going to pay for all this travelling?" There are different programmes for 'Funding for international youth projects' (page 69), they might not give you all the money you need for an international project, but a fair deal of it. This booklet also provides you with ideas on where to find 'More funds?' (page 73).

Activities & Methods:

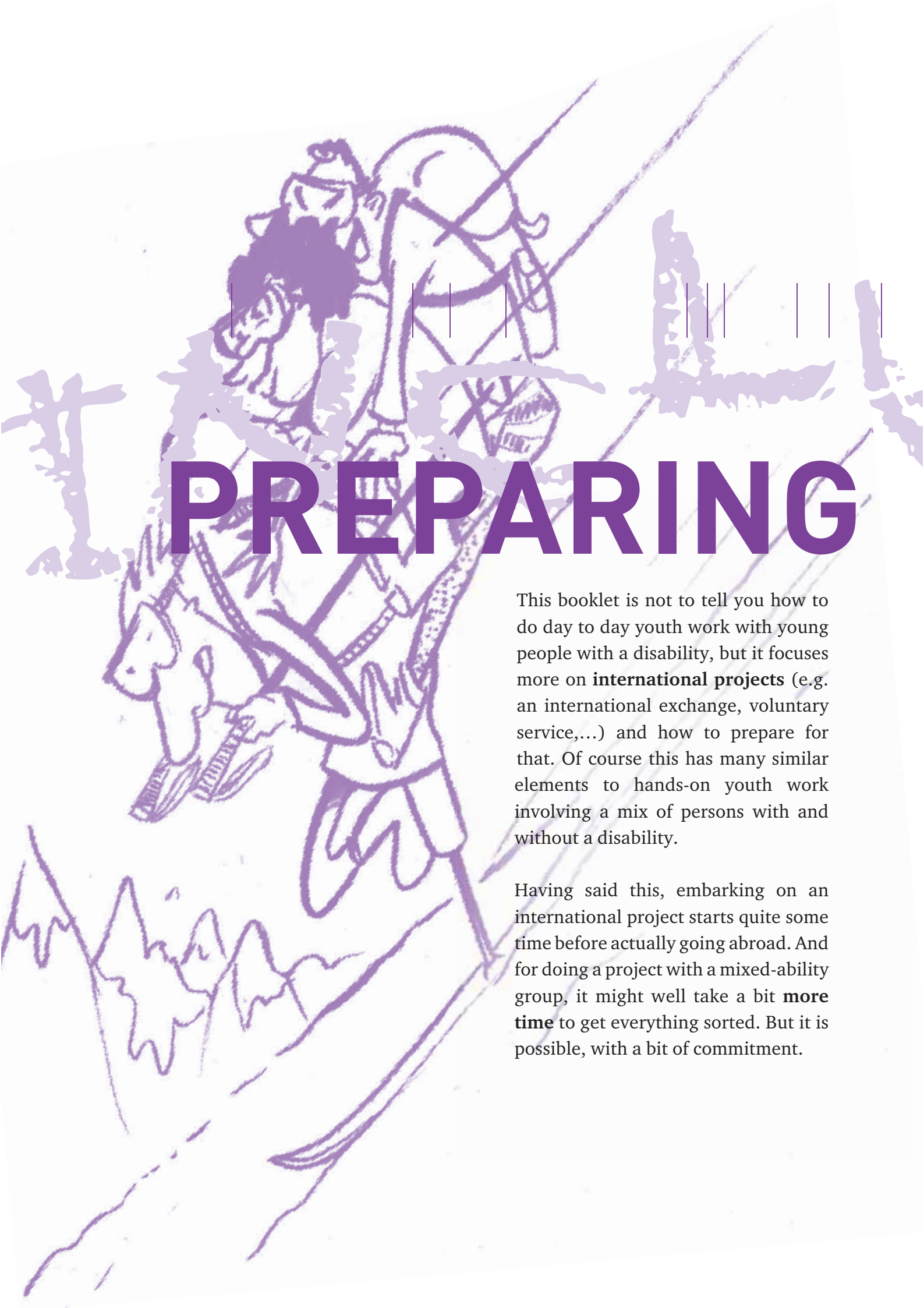
You might wonder how on earth you can offer a programme, in which not only different abilities can participate, but also young people from different countries speaking different languages. 'Creating activities for mixed-ability groups' (page 78) is perfectly possible with a little bit of 'Adapting methods' (page 85). As a matter of fact, you would be surprised how much we already adapt our youth work methods anyway according to the groups we have in front of us.



from SALTO TC Enable

Things to prepare:

- assemble a group of interested young people – stimulate the young people to try something new: an international mixed-ability project – build a positive group dynamic between members of your group (page 23)
- find a partner-organisation abroad – make sure it is a good one – start contact between the young people in the different countries – divide tasks – exchange necessary information about the members of the groups – prepare for the intercultural meeting (page 61)
- develop the project and a programme – adapt methods to suit the group you are working with – involve the young people in giving shape to the programme (page 78)
- draw up a budget – apply for funding well in advance – check the deadlines and procedures – do some alternative fundraising – keep a plan B if the funding falls through (page 69)
- arrange practicalities for people with different needs: prepare for travelling (page 74) – find a suitable venue (page 87) – think of the different needs of the participants in your groups (page 87)
- think of things that can go wrong and ways to deal with them: think of the people & structures around the young persons (page 44) – keeping young people motivated for the project (page 51) – risk assessment (page 53)
- clarify tasks and roles within the groups (page 48) – legal issues – declaration of consent (page 53) – dealing with confidentiality (page 66)



PREPARING

This booklet is not to tell you how to do day to day youth work with young people with a disability, but it focuses more on **international projects** (e.g. an international exchange, voluntary service,...) and how to prepare for that. Of course this has many similar elements to hands-on youth work involving a mix of persons with and without a disability.

Having said this, embarking on an international project starts quite some time before actually going abroad. And for doing a project with a mixed-ability group, it might well take a bit **more time** to get everything sorted. But it is possible, with a bit of commitment.

As in all youth projects, it is vital to **prepare the project and the people** together with the young people themselves. Below you will find some concrete suggestions on how to start working both with persons with a disability and without a disability and on how to bring them together. This chapter will take you through the preparation locally before discussing some project elements internationally in the next chapter The international connection (page 60).

FOR INTERNATIONAL MIXED-ABILITY PROJECTS?

STARTING FROM THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S NEEDS

When looking at the benefits and potential of mixed-ability projects (see page 28) it is clear that the **young people are the central beneficiaries** in mixed-ability projects. Even though you might like an organisational challenge as a youth worker, an international youth project is primarily built up around the young people and their wishes, aspirations, needs,... Including the young people from the start in the development of 'their' project, is vital to provide tailor-made youth work for your 'clients' – who are the reason of your existence as a youth worker.

Real Inclusion... or tokenism

If your aim is to set up a **real 'inclusive' youth project**, then the young people (with or without a disability) should be at the centre of the project and truly included in the development, implementation and follow-up of the project or activities – with of course some help and coaching from a youth worker here and there! One thing is sure – if you don't **give space to the young people** (whatever abilities they have) they will not be inclined to take any space nor responsibility.

☞ You can build up this **participation** bit by bit as described in Hart's "ladder of participation" in **SALTO's Going International booklet** (www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/GoingInternational/)

When going abroad it is important to think through your project from the **young people's point of view** and maybe a bit more from the point of view of your participants (or youth workers) with special needs. They might have some concerns that differ from those of people without a disability.

We could categorise young people's needs in **several categories**. These lists are intended to start you on a thought process, without necessarily covering all situations.

Practical & Technical Needs

This category is related to the infrastructure and assistive equipment needed for the persons with a disability

- **Accessibility** of the venue (bedrooms, bathrooms, toilets, working rooms, restaurants, parking,...) – vertical and horizontal mobility
- **Working methods** – audio loops, braille reader, flipcharts at an accessible height,...
- **Transport**– accessibility of (public) transport, variety of indications of where you are, where to get off, ramps, braille, vocal & visual announcements, alternatives,...
- **Outings** in the city – accessibility, obstacles, (adapted) maps or indicators, always move in couples/group, accessible public toilets,...
- **Free time and relaxation** – a space to switch off when tired, to rest or relax,...
- **Daily life** –appropriate assistive equipment for eating, washing, sleeping,...
- Are there companies that can **hire/sell/repair assistive equipment** (wheelchairs, hoists, walking aids, hearing aids, special glasses, etc) when you need it

Take the most demanding requirement as minimum standard e.g. the largest wheelchair, the slowest walker or eater, the person with the least vision,...). This way you are sure to leave nobody behind.

See also the checklists in chapter Creating activities for mixed-ability groups, page 78.

Individual & Personal Needs	This category is related to the individual persons with a disability in relation to their abilities. • The persons' performance - can the participants stay (sleep, eat, wash) alone or do they need assistance? • Special needs of the participants - care, medicine, material, food,... • Variation in methods to keep up concentration – intellectual, practical, creative, verbal,... • Pace of the programme, moments of rest, possibility to take some time out,... The best way to find out the answers to these questions is to ask the participants, their parents, personal assistant or doctor.
Emotional & Social Needs	This category is related to the individuals and their feelings, as well as those of the whole group • Work on people's self-esteem and sense of achievement – sometimes young people with a disability don't even think that they could ever go on an international project • Making everybody in the group feel comfortable – spend enough time for group building and get to know each other, begin with relatively few activities based on involvement and gradually proceed to more and more challenging activities, create trust and friendship between peers • Deal with frustrations or dissatisfaction – foresee moments of feedback and evaluation (individual, in smaller groups, in national groups, before-during-after,...) • Take time for fun and feel-good moments – can either be during free time or as an incorporated part of the programme • Give enough free time – not only in the group but also alone (to recover from the intense group life) • Foresee a life-line to the home front – create the possibility to speak/mail parents, friends, people back home • ... The emotional needs within the national group can already be dealt with a lot during the preparation (see Building trust & confidence, page 41 and Peers dealing with peers with a disability, page 45). You need to create a similar process in the international group.

Health & Medical Needs

These are all the needs related to the medical condition of all participants, and in particular to the people with a disability

- What particular **medication** do the young people and youth worker need - collect information about their usage, take extra in case of loss, find out the name of the active component (because brands are different in different countries)
- What type of **personal care items** do the people on the project need (e.g. adapted toiletries, nappies, etc) - can you buy more of them abroad when you run out of them?
- Keep the numbers and addresses of **local doctor/nearest hospital/emergency care** handy
- Make a list of **contact numbers** of people that know the people's special needs and how to deal with them – parents, guardians, doctor at home
- Do (any of) the youth workers have **First Aid** (recently) or should you have a nurse with you?
- ...

More about this in the section about Risk Assessment (page 53)

Safety & Legal Needs

These are all the needs of the young people and their parents vis-à-vis the youth organisation and youth workers that are taking the young people abroad

- Get appropriate **insurance** – health insurance for the country you are going to, travel insurance for luggage & expensive assistive equipment, repatriation in case of emergency
- Clarify your **role and liability** as a youth worker towards the young people you work with – get parental consent, inform them about the programme of activities, ask them for agreement, allow opting-out for specific parts of the programme,...
- Check **rules & regulations** for youth work both in your country and abroad – minimum requirements, special provisions when working with mixed-ability groups,...
- Does your programme have any activities for which you need a **qualification/ brevet/ authorisation** – mountaineering, life-guard,...
- Have your action plan ready in case something goes wrong – do a proper risk assessment and have a crisis management strategy ready
- ...

More about this in the section about Risk Assessment (page 53)

- ☞ Find a series of **practical checklists** in the back of this booklet (page 88) which can help you think through an international mixed-ability youth activity.
- ☞ Download the **Good practice guidelines for young person's safety & youth exchanges** from www.leargas.ie/youth/ or www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Toolbox/

BUILDING TRUST & CONFIDENCE

It is sometimes not all that easy for people with a disability, to leave their familiar situation and carers behind to step into an **international adventure**, especially if they depend on care for their basic needs. Therefore, as a youth worker, you might need to do some convincing to get the young person with a disability on board. You need to gain their trust and build up their confidence.

Your first time...

If it is the first time you are organising an international mixed-ability project, or the first a project with a mixed-ability group of people, you'll need to build up trust between the participants through **getting to know each other** (as in any group). You can build this up gradually at several meetings or smaller activities together (e.g. going for a drink together, excursion, talks, workshops,...). As in any trust-building exercise, you begin with activities, where you don't have to reveal your inner self, and progress to activities which take longer and where contact is more intense (e.g. a residential activity in your own region).

- ☞ For a list of **get to know activities** and trust **building games** have a look in the SALTO Toolbox for Training at www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Toolbox/
- ☞ and if you want to learn more about how to **adapt these methods**, have a look at section Adapting methods, page 85.

If the persons with a disability are not convinced that they are able to go on a project, you might need to do something to overcome fears of failure or limitations. You could for example show different **role models** e.g. examples of wheelchair sport, blind parliamentarians, businessmen using a wheelchair, photo models with a disability,.... They all manage to do exceptional things with some assistance and adaptation.



from SALTO TC Enable



from www.gripvzw.be



from SALTO TC Sports

An international exchange could and should be possible as well. Many persons with a disability have **stereotypes about their own abilities** and think they are not able to do other things (*learnt helplessness*) – some examples of other persons can make them realise that they can also achieve many things if the right equipment, motivation and openness is there. It is important to give the young people with a disability something to work towards and give them hope. You should of course make a realistic assessment of the person's disability and build up achievements little by little!

An example: Bianca has an orientation problem and would never dream to go out on her own, because she would get lost in her own street. However, with the motivation of a youth worker and the safeguard of a mobile phone in case she got lost, she took on little challenges. Step by step she learnt to travel a few stops by bus, to travel to the next city, and now she is doing trips throughout the country...

If people with different disabilities are coming on the project, you might also want to work on how they feel **about other disabilities**. Sometimes persons with (or without) a disability (subconsciously) create hierarchies or prejudices towards different disabilities – as if there were ‘better’ or ‘worse’ disabilities and consequent rights or priorities that go with it (*e.g. it is worse to be in a wheelchair than being blind so I should be helped more...*). But on the other hand it is normal to have likes and dislikes.

Asking a person with a disability to talk to other people about their disability can help them to accept and understand their disability – nobody usually asks the people with a disability (especially not politically correct peers) **what their disability means** to them. Through positive conversations and interactions the person with a disability might learn to put their disability in perspective and see it more and more as something that is ‘easy enough’ to deal with (with a little help). It helps them to create a positive image of themselves.

If the young people with a disability are not very used to be together with non-disabled people, it is good to put them in contact before – again building up from shorter less intensive activities together to more deep interactions and cooperation. To **boost self confidence** with the person with a disability, you could do activities that the person with a disability would be good at or better than the person without a disability – to gain confidence. Make it clear that the people with a disability have the same right to participate as anybody else.

Some examples

- Young people using a wheelchair can show the others how to do a wheelchair parcours
- People with a mental disability are often very creative (less limited by social conventions) so creative activities give lots of space for their (non-conformist) potential
- hard of hearing can lip read when other people are bothered by environmental noise
- young people who are blind or partially-sighted often have an accrued skill for recognising sounds, voices and music
- ...

THE YOUNG PERSON IS NOT AN ISLAND: PARENTS, GUARDIANS & INSTITUTIONS

But it is not only the young people and the youth organisation that needs to be motivated for the project. Sometimes one of the biggest hurdles are the **parents or the guardians** of a young person with a disability who don't want to let go of their child from their care. They possibly don't trust the situation abroad or sometimes even don't think their child is capable of coping with travelling and the proposed activities. It is the gap between the performance which is kept lower than the actual capacities of young people with a disability (see Disability ≠ Disability, page 14).

Therefore part of your youth work is to also **liaise with the parents or guardians**. Inform them about what your project is about and which specific measures you have taken to deal with the special needs of their child. It is up to the youth worker to make the case (without forcing too much) for the project and to show how this project can be beneficial: chapter Why (not) international mixed-ability projects (page 28) could be of help.

Some parent-friendly actions

- Have **meetings** with the parents. If they don't want to come to meetings you can also go and visit them at a time that suits them better. Explain the project, the funding, the activities, the partner organisation, how their child's needs will be met
- Involving them in the **preparation work** is often a good way to make clear what the project is about, how you deal with the project and their child in a competent and professional way, creating opportunities for their child. Parents could help in the fund-raising, in gathering information about the host country or the visiting group,...
- Parents might be more inclined to let their child go if they see **results** or hear **testimonies** of previous activities e.g. you could show video recordings of previous events/activities, have a slide show and stories of participants of previous projects, etc
- ...

In other cases, there might be **institutions** surrounding the young person that could object against a period abroad, e.g. employment offices, losing social benefits,... It is only in few countries that employment offices consider youth projects abroad as a beneficial learning experience for increasing employability. Your National Agency of the Youth in Action programme has experience in dealing with these institutions and mostly knows what is and isn't possible to be on the safe side.

And last but not least, it is advisable to have contacts with the **parents and health carers** around the person with a disability, to find out what exactly a person with a disability can do, and what could be risky, from a **medical point of view**. This is especially important when you are doing physical activities (e.g. swimming, long walks, rock climbing,...) that the person with a disability has never done before. It sometimes happens that persons with a disability (but also young people without a disability) over-estimate their capacities (under group pressure, because they want to be able to do everything the same as the rest of the group). They could hurt themselves or aggravate their condition. Therefore it is important that the parents and medical staff are **aware of the exact nature of your activities** to be able to decide if it is a good idea – from a medical point of view – to participate in one or the other active part of your project. An alternative would be to take specialised staff with you who know how to assist the persons with a disability in the potentially dangerous situation, limiting the potential of negative consequences.

PEERS DEALING WITH PEERS WITH A DISABILITY

The essence of a mixed-ability project is to create a fun situation in which young people with and without a disability are **living and working together**. This undoubtedly brings you to situations where peers will be helping each other. But not everybody is comfortable in assisting people with a disability. Often it is because they never had the opportunity to interact with peers with a disability, or they are afraid of doing something wrong, or some of the help is related to relatively intimate or embarrassing situations. So it is important to start working on the relations between the young people with and without a disability (if they don't know each other yet), to break away taboos and find ways of helping each other.

It is important to **build friendships** and find **things in common** between the young people with and without a disability. Even though there is a necessary getting to know process regarding the disability and how to interact (and sometimes assist), there should be just as much or even more focus on other interests or hobbies that the young people might have in common. You can suggest activities in which they find out common values, likes, dislikes, problems,... Again to show that the young people are first and foremost persons with feelings, needs, ambitions,... etc and that the disability with which the other person could help out in certain situations is of secondary importance.

My House

Build, draw or describe your ideal house.

Questions: Which places are important for you in the house? Why? Is there a garage? Will there be different floors? Will there be a children's room? Will there be a television? Etc

An exercise to find out that everybody has interests, ambitions, ideals, wishes,...

For the young people going on your project that do not know many people with a disability or have little or never had the experience of interacting with them, it could be important for them to **find out what it is like** to have a certain disability. Talking to the person with a disability is of course the most realistic way, but one could also try and put themselves in the situation of a person with a specific disability.

- ★ **Sometimes people with a disability find these activities very unpleasant** (especially if the person got the disability at a later age, e.g. as the result of an accident or disease). The non-disabled young people can shed their disability after the 'funny exercise', but the person with the real disability can't. Find out if there are sensitivities like this amongst the members of your group before proposing these simulation activities.

Some empathy or simulation exercises could be:

- Do an activity (or a day's work/school) with someone else's glasses or blindfolded (to simulate being blind or partially-sighted)
- Put on upside-down glasses (the mirrors in the glasses make you see the world upside down), write a letter with the hand you don't normally write with, use opposites of adjectives in a conversation with someone e.g. white when you mean black etc (to have an impression of learning disabilities)
- Have yourself dressed by someone else without moving a muscle (to simulate paraplegia)
- Walk around for a full day with loud music in your headphones (to imitate the situation of a person that's hard of hearing)
- Do some daily tasks around the house in a wheelchair (to feel mobility restrictions)
- Walk through the city and feel/react in the mood of the colours you see: green is sad, brown is laughing, yellow is sleepy, blue is danger (like Asperger's syndrome)
- ...

It is important to **boost the confidence** of both the persons with and without a disability for taboo-less interaction. One way to do this is would be to ask the person with a disability to be a **resource person** for explaining their peers (or the group) how to handle his/her disability – what to do and not to do, what she/he likes or dislikes,... It gives the young people with a disability responsibility and allows them to participate in the preparation process, and puts them in a position where they actually are ‘more able’ (know more) than their peers and **helps them to do the right thing** during the project.

The bottom line of creating acceptance and complicity is to go through **pleasant experiences** together in which you get to know each other or have fun together: so why not...

- go to a concert or the cinema together
- play games or theatre together
- go on an international exchange together

No-body is perfect!

Neither the persons with a disability nor the ones without. So (as in any youth project) it is important to create an atmosphere in which **experimenting** is encouraged and **failure** is not a problem. Don't over-dramatise if something goes wrong but take it as a learning experience for next time. Neither blame the persons with nor without a disability!

As for any young people, **experimenting is a source of learning**, and it is not nice to be stuck/limited to the same ‘safe’ activities all the time. Don't focus on the limits but also their ambitions/curiosities/interests (go outside their own perceived boundaries) BUT as any person they should have the **free choice** whether or not they want to go somewhere or do something!



from SALTO TC Enable

ROLES AND RELATIONS IN THE GROUP

Young persons with a disability (and surely their parents or guardians) need to know how their **basic needs** are going to be met during the project abroad. When doing activities with persons with a disability, there is often the need for assistance, whether that is in the form of adapted equipment or in the presence of another person (personal assistant, sign-language translator,...). This is also the case when going on an international project, maybe even more so for some daily care functions (washing, clothing, injections, exercises,...).

There are different options of providing this assistance:

- they could be **peers** from the group who take on the role of a personal assistant/sign language interpreter (for parts of the programme, rotating between different people)
- there could be **personal assistants/interpreters** who are not part of the group (so they can dedicate their time to the needs of the person with a disability, they could be volunteers or hired staff)
- you could have **nurses** if there is a need for it (e.g. for injections, bandages,...) – they could come along with the group or could be found in the host country

It is Important is to clarify **who will go on the project and in which role**. These different categories of people providing assistance all have a different status. Some are ‘professional’ whether others do it voluntarily: this might have consequences on their availability. It needs to be clear for all helpers and young people how far the duties go (working hours, night shifts, breaks, limits in tasks,...).

It should also be clear that the **youth workers** on the exchange have the responsibility for the whole group and cannot at the same time take up the role of a personal assistant of one individual of the group.

Working with volunteer **peer-assistants** of a person with a disability (same age, same interests, etc) usually contributes to a relaxed friendly atmosphere (with the ‘patient-staff’ dimension reduced in favour of the ‘friend-friend’ cooperation). But it is up to you to decide in which degree this is possible, depending on the **severity of the disability** (for some you might need qualified medical or nursing staff) and the **willingness of the peers**. It is fundamental to give the volunteers clear instructions or training on how to deal with the person with a disability. And again, it is the persons with a disability themselves who knows their disability best!

If you decide to work with peer-assistants from the group, don't forget to **clarify and talk about the expectations** of the volunteer-helpers as well (e.g. they might also want to have some 'free time', see or do different things from their friends with a disability, etc). If the peer-assistant is also a 'participant' in the project, provisions should be made that both can fully participate. The ideal situation would be that the group can **talk openly** about different issues that come up, as in any project e.g. diverging opinions, tiredness, frustrations, tensions – and doesn't behave any differently because of a disability.

In order to make clear who of the other young people will take care of the persons with a disability – you could even make a '**contract**' (written or oral) that X is the support person of Y and agree on specific procedures to exchange or rotate support persons if wanted (it is sometimes nice to change). The most important thing is that at all times there is someone **clearly indicated** to be responsible for helping each person with a disability. However, the person with a disability should also be made aware of the **voluntary nature** (if this is the case) of his helper's contribution and not take it for granted or treat him/her 'as a slave' (this goes the same for a paid helper – there needs to be respect from both sides). Here again, open communication works best, as with any agreements to help each other in any project.

If the peer-helpers (or staff) who are going to be with them are new, then it is essential to **build up trust** between the carer and the person with a disability! It is not comfortable to let 'strangers' fiddle around with your body or to be dependant on someone you don't really know. See section Building trust & confidence (page 41) on how you can work on trust and confidence building.

Learning to deal with a disability in day-to-day life is a great **social and practical skill**. Some of the young people that are going on the exchange might be interested in learning it. It can help the young people over the inner barriers or to surmount their initial ignorance. It is important to build up their helper skills gradually, taking their cues from the person with the disability. They can start assisting them with activities in your youth organisation, move on to more day-to-day tasks on an excursion, and why not have 'a final test' staying a period with the person with the disability.

Get to know your limits!

You cannot like everything and sometimes you might have **aversions** against certain things (because whatever reason) and it is good to know this before starting to work/going on a project with people with a disability. It is also important to be open and clear about your limits – it is OK to have your limits and even good to know them and build in ways to deal with them (e.g. someone else can take over, build up procedures to opt out, etc).

Think about what is your **‘favourite disability’** and the disability you dislike most?

Statement exercise – Checklist

I can/I can not/ I possibly can ...

- see blood,
- clean up excrements,
- lift someone into bed (physical strength),
- dress/undress someone,
- wash someone,
- be with someone that is swearing aloud,
- accept patronising attitudes to the person with disability you are with,
- talk to someone who is not 100% coherent in his speech/behaviour,
- patience and respect towards people with behavioural problems,
- deal with provocative, aggressive behaviour,
- accept sexuality of young people with disability,
- touching & hugging of disabled,
- be patient and respectful towards people with behavioural problems,
- accept the exclusion by deaf people who use sign language with each other,
- helping people with life saving equipment (without which there is a risk of dying)...

 You can do a similar exercise with the young people with a disability to find out their limits and preferences as well.

KEEPING UP THE SPIRITS FOR MIXED-ABILITY WORK

Mixed-ability projects are possible! But they also take a bit more **effort and time** than other projects. Therefore it can be sometimes hard to keep the different people involved (young people, youth workers, board,...) motivated to continue believing in the project, especially when the preparation and funding processes take a bit of time.

People don't participate or volunteer for nothing – they want to get something out of it.

Exercise: Why would you volunteer?

List all different reasons why you possibly would volunteer or participate in a mixed-ability project. And why not list the reasons that would keep you from volunteering...

You can ask the same from the other people involved or participating in your project. This gives you valuable information on how to keep people on board the project.

People are often looking for fun, for social contacts, to see/learn new things, to be creative, to challenge themselves,... So as a youth worker you need to **keep an eye on** whether everybody is getting what they want to get out of it. The best way to ensure the success of the project is to base it on the young people's interests and preferences of ways of working.

If people are looking for **fun and social gatherings**, it is important to create space for this. A minimum of preparation work needs to be done together, but there should also be time for leisure activities and hanging around together: e.g. going to the movies together, organising a (fund-raising) party, etc. You can plan these regularly to keep the momentum – without forcing people to have fun of course...

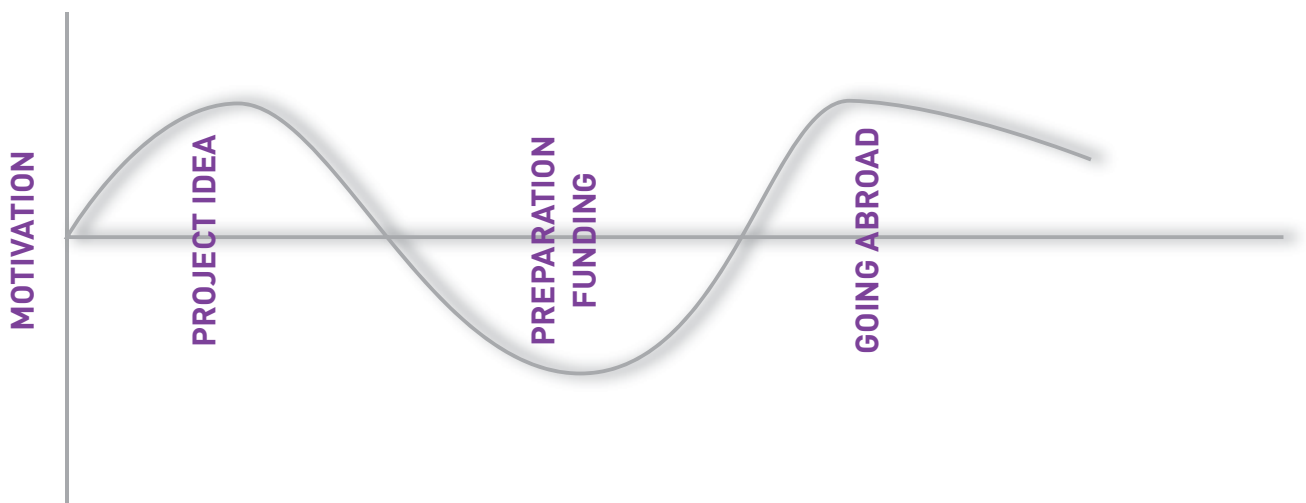
If people want to **challenge themselves**, it is best to give them tasks in the preparation with increasing difficulty, nevertheless with a sort of safety net in case they don't feel up to it. It is important to have **the right person on the right tasks**. If some young people are very creative (and want to do creative stuff), they should get the more creative tasks (making a newspaper about the exchange, developing a logo,...) but other people are probably happy to stay out of the spotlight and do the work behind the scenes.

If people want to **learn new things**, it is necessary to let them experiment. However it is important to give them the necessary guidance and training, if needed, so that they get where they want to get and don't hit the wall. Be clear about what is and isn't possible.

And if the young people contribute so much to the project (they should as it is their project), then it is nice if you also **thank them** for that. This can go from a simple thank you to more elaborated signs of appreciation.

- Give something the volunteers would like e.g. free tickets to concerts, t-shirts,... most of which you often get from sponsors
- You could organise a special (annual?) volunteer event e.g. with food, drinks and why not a little present
- Organise Volunteer Awards e.g. for the best volunteer, for the most developed/courageous person with disability, for the best sponsor,...
- ...

These signs of appreciation can be planned at moments of slumping motivation for the project.



👉 See also T-kit International Voluntary Service, chapter Motivation, page 55
www.youth-partnership.net or www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Toolbox/

RISK ASSESSMENT

Youth work (so also mixed-ability work with young people) is hopefully about **experiencing new things and taking on challenges**, it is about taking initiative and being part of a group – and not just “occupational therapy” or “babysitting”. So the youth workers offer young people experiences outside of the known comfort zone, into the new and exciting learning zone as described in section Working with disability? You are able to! (page 5)

It is important to take some moments to reflect on the **balance between the risks of doing new activities and the reward of new experiences and learning**. It is all the more important for young people with a disability – who traditionally find themselves in an (over)protective environment – to also get the opportunities to **try out new things and push out their borders** of achievement (and not only do the usual ‘safe’ painting or clay sculptures).

In this process, it is important to have a **minimum of knowledge of the person with disability** in the group and his or her disability – what you/he/she can and cannot do. This not only allows you avoid injury, but also helps you to **find ways around the limitations**. e.g. if a person needs the back support of her wheelchair, she can do abseiling in the wheelchair or a go-cart can be adapted to host both the wheelchair/seat and the person. **Creativity** is important in making things possible, regardless of ability, and we’ll give some hints and tips in section Creating activities for mixed-ability, page 78.



from SALTO TC Sports

It is worth while (within your group, but also together with the youth workers of the partner-groups) to have a look at **what could potentially go wrong** in your project (and how likely would it be that this happens) and what are the consequences. On the one hand, you could think of a scenario of what to do when d something does happen (accidents, medical problems, fights, accessibility problems, group/social,...) – but it is better is to think of how the mishaps could be avoided.

Fill out the following **Risk Assessment diagram** for your (international) activity:

What can go wrong?	How likely? (1-3)	Who would be concerned?	Consequences	How Serious? (1-3)	What can we do to prevent it?	What can we do if it still happens?
Example: Asthma attack	💣*💣*	- Participant X - Youth worker - Group	- one of youth workers need to help out with inhaler - probably stop the activity - if bad attack, need to go to hospital	💀 💀 💀💀💀	- take care of long sessions of intense activity - keep an eye on the level of excitement/ exhaustion of participant with asthma - make sure the participant has the inhaler within reach / or have paper bag handy - ...	- keep calm and take young person with asthma to a comfortable place - other youth worker(s) take care of the group - use inhaler or paper bag to counter hyper-ventilation - ring emergency number, get an ambulance - inform parents of the situation - ...
...						
...						

It goes without saying that the **likely risks** (with 2 or 3 🚫*) and the **serious consequences** (2 or 3 ☠️) need your special attention. Make sure to be prepared for these occasions, without making a drama out of it.

- 👉 More documents and **checklists on risk assessment and crisis management** in the SALTO Toolbox for Training (www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/toolbox/)
- 👉 For example the **Good practice guidelines for young person's safety & youth exchanges** developed by www.leargas.ie/youth/

When going on a longer residential trip or on a youth exchange abroad, it goes without saying that the **necessary equipment** is available (e.g. wheelchairs, bed lifts, walk-in showers, swim equipment,... – see checklists page 87 etc) but also the **medical facilities** (e.g. first aid, medication, inhalers, etc). You might rely on **personal assistants** or even a **nurse/medical person** for specific treatment needs (e.g. kinesitherapy, injections,...) or train volunteers or co-participants (where possible) to assist the persons with a disability. Again it depends on good **communication/preparation** with the person with a disability (or with the parents, guardian, doctor) to find out the specific needs for going away for a period of time. The main thing is not to let this extra work and attention revert you to the traditional (boring?) activities.

It is of course always usual to keep the following **emergency information** handy (and thus collect it before leaving on the project/excursion) – this is not to scare you but it should be normal practice in any youth activity.

- **medical information and special needs** (allergies, medical condition, list of medication they take, but also what are the 'active chemical substances' in this medication because brands may differ in different countries, instructions specific to the medical condition,...)
- **emergency card** in the pocket with name of person, his/her disability and first aid instructions specific to the medical condition (e.g. there is a pill in my pocket to put under my tongue, keep sugar/sweets handy in case of diabetic, ...) and phone number to call (of responsible person of the group)
- **emergency numbers** (parents/guardians of the young people, their doctor, health/travel insurance company, closest hospital, local police/ambulance/fire-brigade)

- **special medical and other equipment** if there is a likelihood you'll need it (e.g. respiratory aid, a plank or two to improvise makeshift ramps, special cutlery for people with restricted hand movements, etc...)
- depending on the duration of the activity – **medication** for longer period, **water** to swallow the pills or dissolve the powders,...
- depending on different activities – swimming, skiing, tracking – **special equipment** if needed
- **backup plans** (e.g. a walks in mountains could take longer in a mixed-ability group, so foresee potential shortcuts or alternative transport etc)
- and the usual **first aid** kit – of course – maybe a bit more elaborate for the occasion
- ...

DECLARATION OF CONSENT

It is good practice (especially in countries with a strong court-case-culture) to have a **declaration of consent and responsibility** signed before the project or activity, either by the person with a disability (if over 18) or their parents or guardians (if under age or if they have their rights reduced by court in the case of mental disability).

This **consent form** could mention the following things:

- date & place of the activity
- agreement to go on the project and a declaration that the person with a disability is able to and allowed to do the different activities on the project (especially if they might be more challenging e.g. rock climbing, paragliding, swimming,...) – either by the parents (if person under age) or the young people themselves (if 18 or older)
- emergency contacts (mostly these are the parents or guardians)
- specify the disability and special needs related to it – you could also ask the young people, their parents or doctors for comments on how to handle specific situations (e.g. epileptic seizure, extra clothes in case of loss of body fluids, special equipment for sports,...)
- medication information (names of medication, frequency, ...)
- any other agreements on using pictures taken at the project for documentation purposes, using contact details for an address list of the group members, etc
- (optional) a code of conduct that the young people should agree to for the project and potential consequences if this agreement is not followed

EXAMPLE – REGISTRATION SHEET – CONSENT FORM

→ Title – Place – Dates ←

It is important for us to ask you the following questions in order to take best care of all young people that take part in our activities. All of this information is confidential and will be kept in a safe space.

PARTICIPANT INFO

Name Date of Birth

Gender Nationality/Citizenship

Address

Phone (home) (mobile)

PARENTS/GUARDIAN (emergency contacts)

Name

Phone (home) (mobile)

Alternative contact person (if parent/ guardian cannot be reached)

Phone of alternative contact person

Does your son/daughter have a **disability**? Yes () No ()*A disability is a physical or mental condition that has an effect on carrying out day to day activities.**This will not affect participation on the programme, but it is necessary for us to know.*

If yes, please state

Is your son/daughter currently taking any **medication**? Yes () No ()

If yes, please state name of medication and usage details (frequency, how to take,...)

Please detail specific requirements and needs your child has in relation to their disability.
(Swimming, personal care, mobility, loop hearing systems, special equipment and so forth)

If yes, please state

.....

.....

Has your son/daughter any **allergies**? (Penicillin, types of food and so forth).

Yes () No ()

If yes, please state.....

.....

.....

Name of son/daughter's Doctor/Medical Practice

Contact number for Doctor/Medical Practice.....

Do you consent to your son/ daughter participating in all aspects of the programme, activities (if provided) and residential (if provided)?

Yes () No ()

If No, please highlight which aspects of the programme you are not happy for your child to participate in

.....

.....

Do you consent to your son/daughter participating in a group photograph for press and publicity proposes which will be released with a press release for local papers?

Yes () No ()

Code of Behaviour for participating in the programme.

In order to run this programme safely, we ask all young people to sign a code of conduct of behaviour. This code of behaviour includes:

- Respect all other members of the group
- Listen to the facilitator and staff and follow their instructions
- Listen to each other, ensure that one person speaks at a time.
- Respect property and rules of the activity centre.
- No name-calling or put downs to be used.
- Participate in all aspects of the programme
- Work together as a team
- No alcohol, smoking or drugs allowed

If your son/daughter persists in rule breaking you will be contacted.

Signed by parent/guardian (if son/daughter is under the age of 18)

Signed by participant (in any case)

Date

All information on this sheet is in strictest confidence.

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this sheet!

- Adapted from Louise McBride, Ballyboffy Rural Youth Project, Ireland -

THE INTERNATIONAL



CONNECTION

The whole idea of this booklet is to **do something different**, that some do not consider to be a priority for young people with a disability: **going abroad**. Young people with a disability have just as much right to international projects as any other young people, so why not give it a go.

But when going international, you need to have some **international partners** and the next section will give you some ideas on how you can find relevant organisations for your mixed-ability project. Working together with other organisations raises issues about confidentiality: what information does the partner organisation need about your participants to prepare the project – and what information should remain confidential?

But the main thing of going international is **to learn about the partner group** and about the other **culture** that you will be meeting (page 68). And what's more, there's even **European money** available for this (page 69).

Last but not least, this section will also give you more detailed information about **travelling** with people with a disability, in case you have never done this before. Everything is possible with a little more preparation (page 74).

SETTING UP INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

OK, you have a mixed-ability group and you know how to prepare them for a mixed-ability project, but what you still need is a **partner group** to exchange with or a project to send your volunteers to (unless you're planning a one-sided holiday trip). Where can you find partners?

You can find organisations working on disability issues through **international umbrella organisations** (and their member organisations) or **national federations** of disability organisations in different countries. They often have youth sections, though not all of them.

👉 **European Disability Forum:** gathers more than 115 organisations in 29 European countries: www.edf-feph.org has links to European, international and national disability related organisations.

But maybe you do not want to stick to specialised or ‘exclusive’ disability organisations. Another way to find partner groups in other countries is to contact **mainstream organisations** who have a policy of including young people with a disability in their regular activities.

Within the **European Youth in Action programme** (page 69) you can ask your National Agency for help to find a partner organisation. They make known your call for partners to their colleagues in different countries who disseminate it via their communication channels or pass it on to relevant organisations. Or you can list your interest in doing an international activity in one of the partner-finding databases. Make it clear that you want to do a mixed-ability project.

👉 Find the **partner-finding databases** via www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/partnerfinding/

Another option for youth workers is to take part in one of the international training courses or contact-making seminars organised within the Youth in Action programme (or other such programme). At these training activities you will meet other youth workers who are also (thinking of) doing international youth projects. Some of these contact-making seminars focus specifically on mixed-ability groups (however most don’t).

👉 For an overview of **European youth work courses** see www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/training/

But it is not enough just to find one (or more) partner organisations which are interested in setting up projects together. Once you have been put in touch with organisations which show initial interest, you will then need to check whether you are on the **same wavelength** and whether there is any real **commitment** to a potential project.

Some questions which could help?

- What is the organisation's aims and status? (local authority, NGO, social service organisation, youth centre,...)
- What target group(s) are they working with? What types of disability do they work with? Are they willing to learn/try out new things?
- What activities are they doing? What approach do they have to dealing with disability? What assistive equipment do they have access to?
- Who are their sponsors? How are they structured? Who/what money do they depend on?
- Who makes decisions on doing international projects? Does the decision need to come from a board or general assembly?
- Have they done international projects before? (If yes, successfully?) Have they done international projects with persons with a disability before?
- ...

and the other organisation probably wants the same information from you...

It goes without saying that finding out whether your organisations match involves a lot of **international communication**. So it is important that at least the youth workers of the different organisations speak a **common language**. If the knowledge of a foreign language is a problem for the youth workers or young people in the project, you can always consider doing projects with countries where the same or similar languages are spoken (e.g. Portugal-Italy-Spain, the Slavic language countries, etc) or work with a translator-interpreter.

Language is only one of the possible communication barriers, there could also be differences in **concepts** in different countries (see also Portraying and labelling, page 20). A youth club in Belgium is quite a different thing from a youth club in the UK for example. Therefore it is important to move away from big words to concrete explanations, what you will be doing, how and with which young people. What is obvious for you in your contact is possibly not so clear in another country.



- ★ **Case studies** could be helpful in getting a clearer picture of how the other organisation works. Send each other some situations you encountered and ask them what they would do in such cases.
- ★ Another way to grasp each other's reality better is to exchange **policy texts or legislation** that you adhere to or are bound by.

When you decide to give an international mixed-ability project a go, one of the things to clarify between partners is how they will **share responsibilities** during a project. This should cover the development of the project and programme (between partners with involvement of the young people), the application for funding (see Funding for international youth projects, page 69), the preparation of participants (ideally done in parallel in the different countries), the journey planning (sending organisation), booking and preparing the venue (hosting organisation), the implementation of the programme and the reporting & follow-up (together). It should give all parties involved a clear picture of who does what and there should be an equitable and satisfactory division of tasks. Do not forget to talk about legal issues (health and safety) and rules and regulations that you and your organisation are bound by!

There's plenty of modern communication technology, but it cannot replace **face-to-face meetings** between partners. It is crucial to see each other in context and to see the place(s) where the project is potentially going to take place, instead of basing everything on treacherous assumptions. This is all the more important if the venue needs to fulfil certain criteria of accessibility or have some facilities which you cannot improvise or organise in different ways.

- ★ With a little bit of imagination you can **adapt** to situations that are not completely the same as back home. This is part of the learning experience. It would be sad to stay home because there is no ramp in one of the buildings, even though there will be 20 people in the group to lift the wheelchair up the few steps, or where a plank and a few screws could solve the problem.

There are possibilities to organise “**feasibility visits**” or “**advance planning visits**” (with or without the young persons, or with parents). You could do a job-shadowing in the partner organisation to see the day-to-day work that’s going on, or you can of course also organise your own meetings (e.g. going on holidays in the country of the partner organisation) or participate in festivals/activities in the partner country etc.

- ☞ The possibilities for **funding** of Feasibility Visits, Advance Planning Visits and Job-Shadowing are explained in section Funding for international youth projects, page 69.

Communication nowadays is relatively easy and cheap via the internet, but one should not forget about the **accessibility of the formats of communication** used (e.g. text readers for people who are blind or partially-sighted, use of recorded messages for people with movement restrictions,...). Or some people might just not have access to a computer with internet access.

If this is your first international project, you might want to consider looking for a **partner with experience**. Or you can contact some organisations that have done international mixed-ability projects before to pick their brains. Or you can contact your National Agency of the Youth in Action programme for advice.

- ☞ Find a compendium of previous **disability projects** in the Innovative Projects database at www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/InnovativeProjects/

The main thing is: **don’t despair!** Rome wasn’t built in one day, so your partnership may take some time to work. But don’t think that everything will go wrong from the start.

CONFIDENTIALITY – INFORMATION

An issue in working with young people with special needs is **confidentiality**. What information about the participants from my organisation *should I* and *can I* as a youth worker give to the other organisations and people involved in the youth project? You will be walking a thin line between giving enough information *and* still respecting the young people's privacy and preventing labelling.

It is important to **give enough information** to the partners and participants in the project to prevent (foreseeable) things going wrong. Using a lift could set off panic attacks of claustrophobia, lifting a person with a spinal injury wrongly could cause physical damage, certain colours make a person with Asperger's syndrome react badly, eating certain food could cause allergies with fatal consequences, etc...

It is good practice and respectful (and in some countries it is a legal requirement) to **ask the person with disability** (or their parents/guardian/tutor if under age) whether it is ok to disclose information on their condition and their special needs to the relevant persons in the partner organisations. It is not necessary to explain all the details of the disability a young person has, but link it to the programme and situation of the project. Send **only the essential information** necessary to safeguard the person's health and safety within the framework of the exchange and with respect to their private life.

- ★ Why not **involve the persons with the disability themselves** in describing their disability and the special needs they foresee having during the exchange programme or voluntary service.

If there are going to be peers helping out with some of the needs of the participants with a disability, these peers will also need to have **enough information** about the needs in order to prevent health and safety problems.

It is best to send out the information about the people's special needs **pro-actively**, rather than having the hosting organisation asking for it. It is easier for you as a youth worker in frequent contact with the young person to talk about what information is to be passed on, rather than an unknown youth worker of the other organisation.

In case a young person with a disability (or their legal guardians **do not want to disclose information about their special needs**, this could be a reason for you as a youth worker not to allow the person on the exchange. However you could find a way around this issue, for example by asking a trusted person (that knows their condition) to accompany the person as a personal assistant. This PA provides a sort of safety net around the young person if something threatens to go wrong, and they would know what to do if something is going wrong.

In the case of persons with an **intellectual disability** (and generally people under age), it is up to the discretion of their tutors/guardians, whether they allow them to go on a project. They need to inform the youth workers if they know of any unacceptable ideas or potential risks (e.g. a person with mental disability that wants to go to another country to get pregnant when away from home).

YOUNG PEOPLE ACROSS BORDERS & BARRIERS

Once you are on the road to a project with your partner group(s), the **young people** in the different countries can start preparing themselves by getting to know more about the other country and the participants. There's 1001 ways to do this; the possibilities are only limited by your imagination.

Some suggestions for starting international contacts:

- Prepare a video presentation of the organisation and the people that will come on the exchange
- Start correspondence with the other group – organise chats together
- Send each other a box with artefacts representing the country or the group
- Organise a party on the theme of the exchange or on the country that will be visited
- Send each other challenges/requests between the groups e.g. a recording of their favourite song in an original way, funny pictures with the main sights of the town, riddles...
- ...



More about preparation for international encounters

in the **Going International booklet** www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/GoingInternational/

in the **Use Your Hands booklet** (for EVS) www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/UseYourHands/

Before groups can communicate, you need to find a **common language**. Don't abandon an international project immediately because your young people can't speak English. There are plenty of other languages and some of them are similar, so why not have an Italo-Spanish, Nordic or a Slavic mix as working language. With a little bit of effort you probably get the message of what the others are trying to convey. But the most useful language of all is **non-verbal communication**!

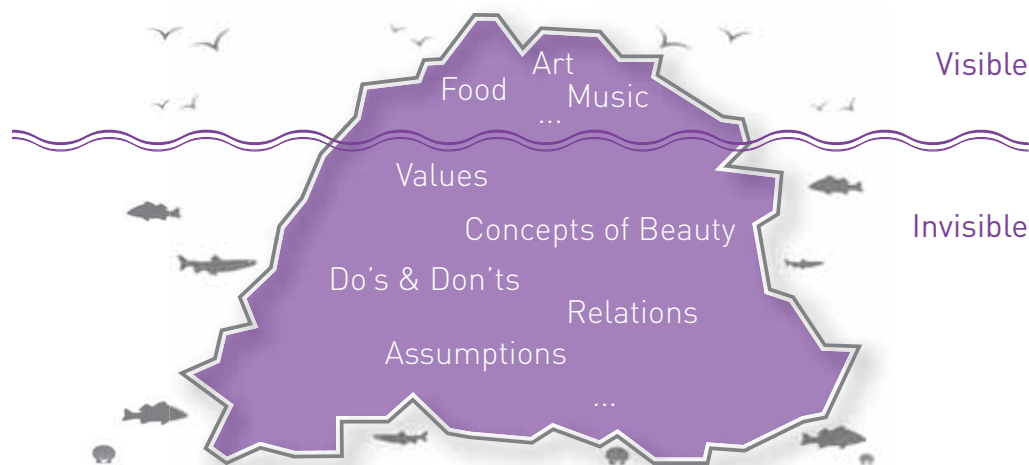
You could base a whole programme on **non-verbal communication**, replacing the words by images or symbols. Instead of talking or writing you could make music or draw.

Instead of discussing you could do sketches or theatrical plays presenting situations. The options are limitless and the exchange is just as strong. All it takes is to get over your initial uneasiness and greet the occasional misunderstanding with a smile.

Or you could work via **translation**. This hasn't even be that expensive. Maybe you have a resource person in the group that is good (enough) at languages who could do a bit of translating where needed. Or you could find online translation programmes such as <http://babelfish.altavista.com/> that don't cost you a thing – just some laughs when something completely incomprehensible comes out of this online translation.

INTERCULTURAL LEARNING

When going abroad, you and the young people are going to **meet a new culture**. This is part of the excitement, but sometimes also a reason for frustration. Within Europe, cultures might seem relatively similar, but there are differences. Some of those cultural differences are above the surface and are easily accepted: food, music, clothing,... but under the surface there can be more **subtle cultural differences**: ways of dealing with rules, notions of a 'good party', men-women relations, importance of family,... to name but a few.



It is important to **prepare yourself and your young people** for this confrontation of cultural differences. You can make them aware through different simulations or exercises that there are different ways of doing things (e.g. eating times, punctuality, personal space, etc) and that one way is not necessarily better than the other: it is just different in different countries. Your intercultural preparation could avoid a fair deal of ethnocentrism and prejudice (my way is the best way) and create openness towards discovering the other culture. It's like playing a game without knowing the rules, and the challenge is to find out the rules while playing.

There are many publications and methods about **intercultural preparation and learning**. Here are a few:

- ☞ SALTO's Toolbox for Training www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Toolbox/
- ☞ All Different All Equal Education Pack www.coe.int/ecri/ (under educational resources)
- ☞ T-Kit on Intercultural Learning www.youth-partnership.net
- ☞ All Different All Equal Education Pack www.coe.int/ecri/
- ☞ ...

FUNDING FOR INTERNATIONAL YOUTH PROJECTS

There are many **different ways of getting money** for your project: your organisation or participants can cover the costs themselves, you can sell cakes or organise parties, you can find a philanthropist or company that wants to support you or you can apply for funding from some funding institutions. Mostly you will be dependent on a combination of these various financial sources.

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S YOUTH IN ACTION PROGRAMME



The Youth in Action programme is the European Commission's **mobility and non-formal education programme** for young people and those working with them, in a leisure time context (outside school). The YiA programme promotes active European citizenship, youth participation, cultural diversity and the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities.

The Youth in Action programme offers various opportunities for young people to set up projects with an **international dimension** and for support activities for youth workers to increase the quality of their youth projects.

The Youth in Action Programme is open to young people and youth workers in the so-called **‘Programme Countries’**. These are the EU member states, the EFTA countries (Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein) and the pre-accession countries (only Turkey for the moment, more can join). There are some (limited) possibilities to set up projects with neighbouring partner countries (South-East Europe, Eastern Europe & Caucasus and EuroMed countries around the Mediterranean Sea) and beyond.

There are **several types of projects** that can receive funding. The funding rules of the Youth in Action programme are largely based on a simple system of flat rates and fixed amounts, depending on the number of participants, the activity, its duration, etc.

- Youth Exchanges (*where groups of young people come together*)
- Group Initiatives (*local projects originating from youth groups*)
- Democracy Projects (*encouraging young people to take part in democracy*)
- European Voluntary Service (*young people volunteer in another country*)
- Training & Networking for youth workers (*training, seminars, job-shadowing, feasibility visits, partnership building, evaluation meetings, etc.*)

👉 Find out more about the Youth in Action programme in the **Programme Guide** which you can download from http://ec.europa.eu/youth/yia/index_en.html or contact the YiA National Agency in your country: http://ec.europa.eu/youth/contact_en.html

The Youth in Action programme & young people with a disability

The Youth in Action programme should be **open for ‘ALL’ young people**. And if certain groups of young people with fewer opportunities are not reached, special efforts should be made to create easier access for them to the opportunities offered by Youth in Action. Young people with a disability are underrepresented in the YiA programme.

Inclusion of ‘young people with fewer opportunities’ is one of the **priorities** of the Youth in Action programme. This means in practice that between two equally good projects, the selection committee would give priority to the project that includes disadvantaged youth (provided that you explain well why your participants are at disadvantage). Besides this ‘extra focus’, there are also a number of **extra measures** that make it easier for ‘inclusion groups’ to do a Youth in Action project.

Of course the **same general rules** apply for you as for any Youth in Action project, but you can get some **extra support** for an Inclusion project, if justified.

- **Exceptional costs:** if you have extra costs because you are working with disadvantaged groups, you can claim these expenses in your application e.g. extra costs for accessible transport, medical attention, personal assistant,... It's up to you to ask – within reason!
 - **In Youth Exchanges**, bilateral exchanges (between only 2 countries) are reserved for new organisations or inclusion groups. This allows you to do 'simpler' project (fewer countries) because you have other complications due to accessibility concerns.
 - You can apply for an **Advanced Planning Visit** to prepare the inclusion project with your different partner organisations, to organise the exchange in the best possible way, have a look at the infrastructure in the host country and find solutions to potential problems.
 - **Youth initiatives** run by disadvantaged young people (projects for them by them) are allowed to have a youth worker **coaching** them when needed (and extra money for this).
 - The regular duration of a **European Voluntary Service project** is between 2 and 12 months. However, for inclusion projects this can be for periods of **2 weeks onwards**, up to a maximum of 12 months, if there are valid reasons for it.
 - There is the possibility of making an **Advanced Planning Visit**, together with the volunteer with a disability, to get acquainted with the EVS hosting organisation and project.
 - If the EVS volunteer needs extra attention, **reinforced mentorship** can be funded, if requested and justified in the application form. Also the volunteer can be younger than 18 (16 or 17) if there are reasons for it. The upper age limit has been lifted to 30.
- 👉 Every country in Europe is different. Therefore your Youth in Action National Agency will have to judge if your **requests are reasonable**, considering the group you are working with. It's up to you to explain why.
- 👉 More about specific measures for inclusion in the European Commission's '**Inclusion Strategy for the Youth in Action programme**' at www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/InclusionStrategy/

The NAs are there to inform you about the possibilities and they can help you with your project ideas or suggest that you attend their information sessions or training activities. Every NA also has an Inclusion Officer that works specifically to include underrepresented groups and people with special needs (e.g. disability) in the YOUTH in Action programme. Most of the NAs also have people from 'inclusion organisations' on their selection committees.

EUROPEAN YOUTH FOUNDATION

The Council of Europe in Strasbourg manages the **European Youth Foundation** which also gives support to International Youth Meetings (Cat. A) and Pilot Projects supporting disadvantaged young people, new forms of participation and combating social exclusion (Cat. D). It goes without saying that mixed-ability projects fall into these three categories.

Youth Meetings should have participants from a minimum of 7 Council of Europe member countries who are under 30 year of age. The youth meetings should contribute to the objectives and priorities of the Council of Europe:

- Human rights education and intercultural dialogue
- Youth participation and democratic citizenship
- Social cohesion and inclusion of young people
- Youth policy development

The European Youth Foundation also gives '**Administrative Grants**' to European youth organisations and networks (Cat. C) and grants to '**International Projects other than Meetings**' (Cat. B) for example studies, research, documentation, special publications, exhibitions, campaigns, the production of audio-visual material and the development of websites on youth matters.

👉 More information about **criteria and application procedures** at www.coe.int/youth/

SOLIDARITY FUND FOR YOUTH MOBILITY

For every 'Inter Rail Card' that is sold (European rail pass for a month's travelling), the Union of Railways puts one Euro into the **Solidarity Fund for Youth Mobility**. This fund supports rail travel for groups (minimum 10 people) of 'disadvantaged' young people (e.g. mixed-ability groups) when going on an international project.

👉 More information about **criteria and application procedures** at www.coe.int/youth/

MORE FUNDS?

EuroDesk and **ERYICA** are two networks of youth information offices throughout Europe (in some cases they are in the same office). EuroDesk provides information about Europe and various European funding sources, whereas ERYICA works more generally in the areas of youth information and counselling. They can also help you in finding national funds. Or ask your **national youth council** about what national funding exists for youth projects.

- ☞ Have a look at www.eurodesk.org and www.eryica.org
- ☞ Find a list of national youth councils, members of the European Youth Forum at www.youthforum.org

If you are looking for more **creative ways of raising funds in your local community** (selling goodies, organising events or offering services have a look at the ‘Fundraising Idea Bank’ at www.fund-raising.com/fundraising-ideas.php

There is also a **T-Kit on Funding & Financial Management**, developed by the European Partnership for Youth with lots more tips & tricks for funding your youth projects.

- ☞ Download it from www.youth-partnership.net or www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Toolbox/



TRAVELLING ABROAD IN MIXED-ABILITY GROUPS

There are various options for travelling – but one thing which is the same in each case is that **you will need more time** for travelling in a mixed-ability group. And more time travelling also means more time in a situation in which you need to take care of your participants' needs (food, medication, toilet, security,...) within external constraints (departure times, taking off, assigned seats,...). As for all journeys, it is advisable to get **travel-insurance** on top of your usual health-insurance, adapted to the needs of your group.

Having your own adapted transport or renting **adapted vans/buses** is of course easiest, but maybe not the cheapest or the most authentic when you want to experience some real travelling. Also far away destinations are more tedious to reach by car or bus. A not so social option would be to have the persons in wheelchairs arriving separately by adapted transport while the rest go by train or plane. It is advisable though to make it a **group challenge** to travel together as a group as far as possible – and in the process become aware of the fact that many transport facilities are not adapted to persons with less mobility 'yet'.

Nowadays, many railway stations are equipped with ramps to make the **trains wheelchair accessible**. However in many cases you need to make a reservation to get this assistance, and the assistance might be limited to certain hours of the day and to certain railway stations. So check in advance! If you're planning on last minute changes to your travels, and you have participants in the group using wheelchairs, you might want to practice lifting the person in appropriate ways to get them on board. Usually the person in the wheelchair (or the parents/carer) knows how to do this. One detail, if you are talking about electric wheelchairs, you might easily lift the person, but the wheelchair will be too heavy to lift. Also check if the station actually has lifts to get you onto the platform...

Airlines generally provide **special assistance** for passengers with reduced mobility or ill passengers, however this needs to be booked in advance or even better when booking your flight ticket. Check with the different companies what they offer and how that affects your travel. Persons with a disability can sometimes check-in at a special assistance-counter and get priority boarding, however this also means that you need to be at the airport earlier than usual. It is generally possible to reserve wheelchairs, if some of your participants are going to have difficulties walking long distances through big airport terminals. You might also need more transfer time if changing planes – unless the company offers you a special van that brings you straight to the next plane.

*from SALTO TC Sports**from SALTO TC Enable*

People in a wheelchair who cannot walk at all are **carried aboard** (before other passengers) strapped onto a narrow chair with wheels which fits through the aisle of the plane, while your wheelchair is stowed in the hold. During the flight there are only limited opportunities for moving around (only some long-haul flights have adapted toilets, so you better go before boarding, or take precautions). At disembarking, the ground staff will come and pick up the persons using wheelchairs after all other passengers have left the plane, with a similar narrow chair on wheels, and your wheelchair should be waiting for you at the door of the plane. People who have never travelled might find this an unpleasant experience to be taken out of their wheelchair by airport staff and rolled on board. You might want to discuss this beforehand to put it in perspective and know what to expect. Do tell the airport staff how they should carry you and how to handle your wheelchair!

It is possible on **regular flights** (not on low-cost carriers) to order special meals (in case of allergies, vegetarians or religious needs). At check in you can also request a specific seating order (window, aisle) so that you can sit together and assist one another if necessary, or ask to sit in the first row of the plane if you cannot bend your legs. It is not permitted by law for people with reduced mobility or physical strength to sit at the emergency exits.

Generally, **larger equipment** is not allowed on board inside the plane, unless you negotiate this previously, because it cannot be stored in a safe place on board during take-off and landing. You will need to check it into the luggage hold of the plane. Sometimes it is also possible to take your equipment (walking aid, etc) as large hand luggage and they take it from you before boarding and they deliver it back to you at the door of the plane when getting off the plane. This way you can use it as soon as you disembark. If your equipment is fragile, do tell the staff how to handle it.

- ★ If your participants with a disability plan on travelling more often, there exists a **Frequent Traveller's Medical Card** (FREMEC), which contains your special needs and requested services. This way each time you fly, you don't need to explain your medical condition again.
- 👉 Find an overview of airlines and their **policies towards travellers with disabilities** at www.everybody.co.uk/airindex.htm

If you are travelling with young people who have **behavioural problems or a mental disability**, you might need to prepare them for sitting still (seatbelts fastened). In the aeroplane it is the crew and captain that are in charge and they can decide not to take off with unruly or panicking passengers. For safety, the seatbelts should be kept on during take off, landing and turbulence. Maybe you can do a flight simulation to get the young people with a disability (or other participants that are not so much into flying) accustomed and prepared for flying, to avoid panic reactions.

Some airports provide information boards or braille indications for **people with visual impairments**. In some cases, airlines also allow guide-dogs. Most airlines and airports have a section on 'barrier-free travelling' or 'special assistance' on their websites – or ask in their call centres.

Luggage occasionally gets **lost or damaged**. In this case you need to file a complaint with the luggage handling company before you leave the luggage pick-up area. The handling company will bring the luggage to your address abroad as soon as it is found and has arrived by the next plane (they will give you a file reference number and a telephone number to enable you to keep track of what is happening). If the luggage is not found after a day or so, the company usually has to give you some money per day to buy clothes and toiletries. Or they reimburse you for the damage done or for the loss of your luggage or equipment. Note that there are official maximum amounts that you will get paid for damage, so it is a good idea to get extra travel insurance that covers expensive equipment!

- ★ In case of loss of luggage (which luckily doesn't happen so often) you will, of course, be some time without your suitcases. Therefore it is important never to put any **vital documents, money or medication** in the suitcase you check in. Keep them in your hand-luggage. And why not add some toiletries and a pair of socks and undies to be on the safe side.

As for **local transport** (trams, buses, metro), if they are accessible, these companies mostly mention it on their website or documentation. If nothing is mentioned about people with special needs or accessibility, then be suspicious and look for alternatives. But first ring the public transport companies to find out.

- ★ If all this sounds a bit daunting, it doesn't have to be! There is always some trial and error the first time. You could find organisations or people with disabilities who have travelled before to **learn from their experiences**. But of course everybody is different and will have different needs which you need to take into account.

There are **three approaches** when going abroad with people with a disability:

1. either you double check everything (e.g. organise preparatory or feasibility visits with one or two of your participants with a disability) and refuse anything short of your standards back home OR
2. you prepare yourself to be surprised and improvise (of course ensuring minimum health and safety) and go with the flow to make travelling with a disability part of the learning experience for the whole group OR
3. or you create a healthy mix of both 😊

- 👉 More **accessible travel resources** (info about accessibility of different cities, different types of transportation, different programmes) at www.emerginghorizons.com/resources/

CREATING ACTIVITIES



FOR MIXED-ABILITY GROUPS

As in any youth project, the project should be **by and with young people**. Sometimes it happens that the youth workers have a genial idea for a project, a lovely setting in a beautiful country, they have found partners, they stuck together an innovative programme, even got funding, but they do not find young people to go on the project. Most likely they are not interested in the topic, the destination, the programme or the partner group. It's like putting the cart before the horse.

In a real youth project, the project idea should come from the young people. They are at the centre of the programme's development, together with the young people in the partner country. This way you ensure that it is a **real youth project** carried out and developed by young people. This way it is a great learning experience for them, rather than signing in to a meaningless package. You as a youth worker can stimulate and guide this process, and help out where necessary (e.g. setting realistic limits, funding application and financial management, making sure preparation is carried out properly, etc).

A real youth project is about **participation and experiential learning**. The young people get the chance to try out new things, nevertheless in a safe environment (safeguarded by the youth workers). Young people can take care of many tasks within a project: they can suggest activities, ideas, themes and then also take responsibility for certain parts of the final programme. Some examples:

- The young people can prepare a presentation of their country, their youth club, their family,...
- Young people can work out theatre plays, work on paintings or decorations, prepare a sing-song night, cook a dish from their country,...
- A group can take the tasks of doing the wake-up calls in a funny or creative way
- ...

Assuming that you do mixed-ability projects to learn from the **interaction of people with and without a disability**, it could be a part of the programme to bring this up and find out more about disability and their outlook on life and their and other disabilities. If it doesn't happen automatically, you might want to create a space to bring up the questions that many are afraid to ask. It is sometimes difficult to explain what it is like to be disabled, because it is part of your daily reality (it is like the fish in the water, who doesn't know what water is until it is thrown ashore). During the SALTO TC Enable we provided a space for questions in the format of a 'nosey question room'.

Nosey Question Room - Breaking the taboos

Often people have questions about the lives of persons with a disability that are hanging in the air but they never got around to asking or were afraid to ask. Nosey question room is a method which allows all questions to come to the open and to break the taboos around them.

Ask one or more person with a disability if they want to give answers to questions from people – but only if they are ready for it! Find a comfortable place where you can sit together in a relaxed way (comfy chairs, dimmed lights, drinks and nibbles,...).

There are two rules in the nosey question room: 1. all questions are allowed, including the most crazy, the most intimate or the most shocking ones. 2. it is up to the answerers to decide whether they want to answer or not.

People can ask all the questions they were always afraid to ask. This often leads to very intimate questions about personal care, relations & sexuality, etc. Adapt this exercise to the age of your group. If you think the group could be shy starting off, the youth workers could agree with the answerers that they ask some first 'expected questions' to get it going (e.g. how do you go to the toilet, how can you recognise a person by feeling,...) or the person with disability could start with a very personal intimate subject, to break the ice.

Also create space for laughs and jokes!

The programme should be built up around the **interests and capacities** of the young people. Even (or particularly) in a mixed-ability group it is important to look at the project from the point of view of the **person and not the disability**. It depends on the personalities, interests and needs of the people, what they would like to see in the programme. It is not because someone has limited mobility that they don't want to do physical activities, it is not because someone is blind that they want to spend the rest of their life sculpting in clay, it is not because someone has an intellectual disability that they should only play children's games etc. It all depends on the person's acceptance and how they deal with their disability

- ☞ More about how to actively involve young people in a youth project in **SALTO's Going International booklet** in the same "Inclusion for All!" series
www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/GoingInternational/

When working in a mixed-ability groups, it is important to **take enough time**. Even the simple action of moving from the bedroom to the restaurant to the working room will take longer if there are people with mobility impairments. Similarly you will need to leave blank spaces for the sign language interpreter to catch up when you are having a discussion.

One way of planning the programme is to **offer options of various intensities**, keeping the energy level of the group and of the individuals in mind. You can for example foresee three different routes for a nature walk of various lengths, and let the group decide which one to take. Similarly, you could offer to work on a certain topic, either by very interactive methods (theatre, statement games,...) or by watching/listening to a movie about the topic. Another funny way to make the programme more digestible is to give the choice of speed: 100, 50 or 20 km/h. This allows the participants to indicate how fast they would like to hear you talk, how quick there should be changes in methods, etc. In each case there should be the choice of opting-out and taking a rest (if health or energy levels indicate it).

- ☞ You can find suggestions for **specific adaptations for various disabilities** in the different sections below.

An international project is about going through new **fun experiences** which are learning experiences all the same. When going on an international mixed-ability project, young people will be learning to live and work together, they learn about the other people and their cultures, they build up self-esteem and friendships (see chapter Why (not) international mixed-ability projects?, page 28). But as we mentioned before, the trick is to coax the young people away from their comfort zones into the learning zone (e.g. trying out something new) without letting them slip into the danger zone (where things are too scary and different). Gradually young people appropriate more and more of the learning zone as their comfort zone. (see section Working with disability? You are able to!, page 7)

Therefore it is important to structure the **programme** of your exchange accordingly. You should start with activities which don't demand much involvement in order to break the ice between the groups, to warm to each other. Only after the groups and people feel comfortable with each other, should you do more intensive activities where the young people need to reveal more of themselves, their personalities and their capacities.

👉 For **ice-breaking and getting-to-know each other exercises**, you can have a look in the SALTO Toolbox for Training at www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Toolbox/

In order for people to learn you should think of the **3 Cs: Challenge, Connection, Capacity**.

“This means that an activity should be challenging for young people, it should entice them to try it and jump on board expanding their borders. The challenge, however, should not look insurmountable as this makes them drop out or, if they should fail, causes frustration and make them think twice before joining in such a project again. On the other hand, the challenge should be high enough so as not to bore the young people or take all sense of achievement – “yes we did it” – out of it. Therefore, the youth worker should know the capacities, the skills of the young people and adapt the project accordingly to obtain a sequence of little achievements and successes. Last but not least, the young people should feel connected to the activity. The activity should be adapted and compatible to the world the young people live in. When you manage to address these three Cs in your project and keep them in balance, the first step towards a successful project has been set”

👉 From the **T-Kit on Social Inclusion** (page 19) – download this T-Kit and others from www.youth-partnership.net or www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/TkitInclusion/

But youth exchanges are not only about learning, they are also about **fun**. What is more, fun actually stimulates the learning. It is only when people feel comfortable in the group or in the project that they are open to learn, to make mistakes, to question, etc. Therefore your programme should also incorporate fun activities. Some examples:

- Creative methods (theatre, painting, using music,...)
- A games or jokes evening
- Going to the pool, to an amusement park, to a farm, to a leisure centre,...
- A fancy-dress or themed party
- ...

If you are doing an international project with a country which has a **different language**, communication could be an issue. You could decide to work with an interpreter (for the programme parts with the whole group), but it is probably impossible to have interpreters in each working group or in the evenings or during free-time. Some ways of dealing with this is to use different ways of communication! Many of us are used to talking, but there are other ways of expressing yourself e.g. through drawing, theatre, sketches, noises, music, living sculptures, symbols etc. The advantage is not only that you can **communicate across languages**, **but also across disabilities** (e.g. hearing impaired, mental disability, speech disorder,...)



from SALTO TC Enable

One way of communication is **humour**. Some people find it distasteful to tell jokes about disabilities but many groups use jokes about themselves to make their situations more light-hearted and take away the seriousness of it all. The highest respect of a person with a disability is when you can have real fun together (without being patronising) and make fun of the disability. This is often a sign of being **comfortable together** and accepting each other in a respectful way. Note though that humour (and also what is accepted as humour) depends not only on the country but also on the person, and most likely also on the moment.

It is important **not to act differently** with people with a disability than with other people. Remember that the young people are youth in your care first, and only secondly do they have a disability. So if you would make jokes about someone's long nose, why wouldn't you do about a person with a disability's funny eye? If you would have a rule about relationships during the exchange, then this rule should be kept for all. The fact of having a disability does not condone starting a relationship with a volunteer on the exchange.

On an exchange, one of the participants with Down Syndrome fell in love with one of the personal assistants from the other group and courted her (giving flowers, sweets, wanting to kiss her). The personal assistant went to see the youth leader from her group, and complained that she doesn't know what to do, almost feeling guilty if she were to reject the other participant's attentions. The youth worker asked her how she would react if this person didn't have a disability... And the personal assistant got the point.

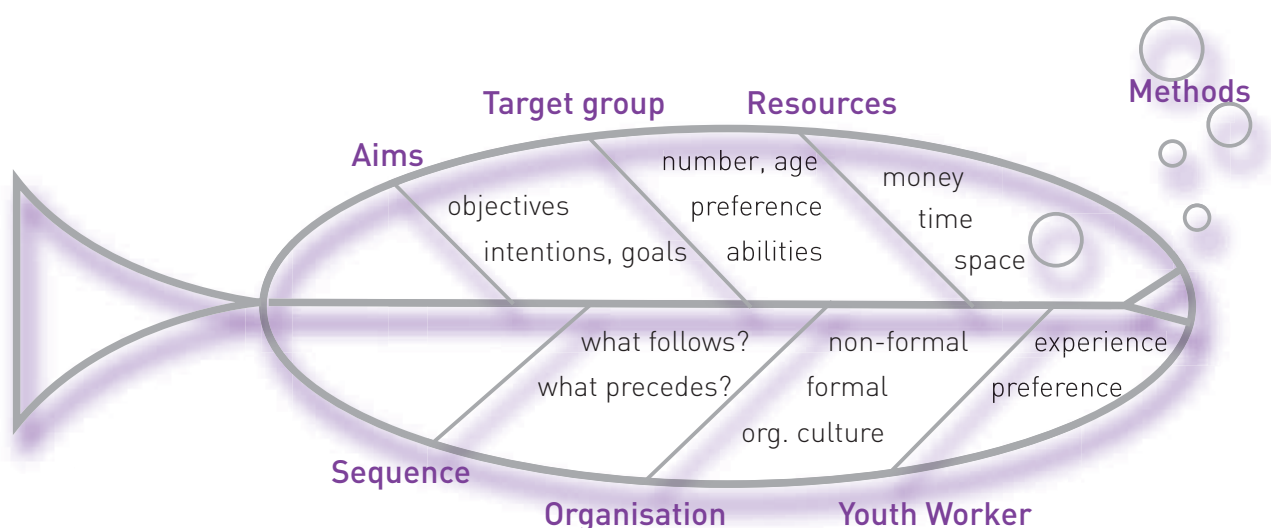
Going abroad for a period of time is not always easy for young people, especially if it is the first time away from their familiar environment at home or if it is the first time they are working and living intensively together with other young people (some of whom they didn't know before). Therefore it is important to build in some mechanisms to **keep an eye on young people's emotional needs**. Here are some suggestions:

- Ensure that there's a way of **contacting the person's home** (parents, friends,...) in case of homesickness – internet connection, a phone-card,...
- build in regular **feedback-moments** – ask how they are doing/feeling, have regular evaluations, take time to talk in your own language with the participants (if it would be strenuous to be talking a foreign language all the time)
- Create a system to **indicate distress or problems** – they could be given a red card which they can use when it goes too fast, there could be a letter box for messages to the youth workers (and read them regularly)...
- Keep an eye on the **group and the group process** – check why participants are not taking part, make sure everybody is involved, stimulate socialising for the shyer participants,...
- Plan enough **free time** (with nothing organised) where young people and the team can come back to their senses – make sure that participants also use this free time for resting,...
- ...

👉 More tips about organising training courses (also valid for youth projects if adapted) in the T-Kit Training Essentials www.youth-partnership.net or www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Toolbox/

ADAPTING METHODS

This is probably nothing new. Youth workers see activities or methods and adapt them to their context all the time. As shown in the diagram below, it depends on the **aims or objectives** we have in mind, which **method or activity** we'll do and how this will look. A method or activity only works if it is adapted to the **target group** (being aware of the different abilities), but also to what you as a **youth worker** feel comfortable with, to the resources you have available (money, time, space) and what the policy of your **organisation** is.



There are innumerable useful exercises, methods and activities in the **SALTO Toolbox for Training and Youth Work** at www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Toolbox/. Here are some examples of adapting methods.

- **Alphabetical chairs** www.salto-youth.net/find-a-tool/98.html

This method is a funny way of getting to know each other's names and of breaking the ice. Everyone stands on a line of chairs and then has to sort themselves in alphabetical order according to their first name (or birthday or ...) without touching the floor.

If you have people with a disability in the group, you could instead of standing on chairs ask participants to hold onto a rope, and they need to order themselves without ever letting go completely of the rope (always one contact point)

- **Perfume Groups** www.salto-youth.net/find-a-tool/12.html

You can divide people into groups by spraying a perfume on their hand (while they have their eyes closed). Participants have to go and find the members of their subgroup who have the same perfume.

If you have participants who are allergic to perfume or who can't smell, you could alternatively divide people into groups giving each a different textures (wool, linen, plastic, paper, tin foil,...) or colour.

- **Statement Game** www.salto-youth.net/find-a-tool/280.html

The usual format of this discussion exercise is that people position themselves on different sides of the room (there is a sign 'I agree' and 'I don't agree' on the different sides) based on a statement.

If it is difficult for some people to move or for some people to see where everybody stands, you could alternatively ask some participants to make faces of live statues (with some participants) according to their reaction to the statement. The visually impaired persons could then feel the faces or live statues.

In the following sections we will list some **tips and tricks** for doing projects with young people with specific disabilities, and different accessibility checklists.



ACCESSIBLE VENUES

Not only your programme needs to be accessible, but also the venue where you are going! Since there are relatively few venues that are fully accessible for persons with a disability, this means that there is a big demand for them, so you will need to **book well in advance!**

If certain '**exclusive criteria**' are not met, some of your young people with a disability will simply not be able to come on your project (because they won't get on or off a train, or there is no adapted washing possibility, etc)

It is part of your preparation (with your partner organisation abroad) to make sure the venue where you will be staying is adapted to the needs of the people in your group. Always try to speak with a person that knows the venue well before booking it (not an intermediate booking agency) and **ask specific accessibility questions** (see the checklists page 88 etc!). The disability ♿ sign on the website or brochure can mean different things in different countries (from having an accessible toilet only, to being fully adapted for persons with a disability – mostly this means wheelchair-users). So check more in detail whether the venue is adapted to your needs (and numbers).

It is also a good idea to check if the venue has **adapted alarms and procedures for emergencies** i.e. fire. Are there adapted alarms for the deaf? How will evacuation take place? You might prepare a division of tasks amongst your group in case something happens. Better safe than sorry!

Most hostels or hotels are a business like any other, so they try to sell rooms, and maybe tend to give you the answers you are looking for and make their establishment look just a little bit better than it really is. Therefore it could be good to **ask open questions** instead of questions which only require yes-no answers and to which they would too easily be able to give an evasive 'yeah yeah' answer, e.g. 'could you describe the entrance and the route from the bedroom to the breakfast room?' instead of 'are there any stairs'. Often it helps to send your list of questions **in writing**: you are less likely to forget to ask some questions and you will also have the answers on paper (or email).

You could consider going on a **prospection visit** of the venue with one of your young people (or colleagues) who uses a wheelchair (preferably with the largest and heaviest wheelchair) to test the venue. But surely, even after double checking a million times, things abroad will still be different from back home. So never forget to take a dose of **improvisation** and a positive attitude with you.

TIPS & TRICKS - WHEELCHAIR AND MOBILITY IMPAIRMENT

When you are developing your **programme of activities** for the international project (or any other project), you can adapt little things that make it a whole bit easier for wheelchair users and people with mobility impairment to take part. Also note that not all wheelchair users are constantly using wheelchairs, some like to change to chairs, some can walk short distances, some like to dance,... Also it is not always visible that someone has a movement restriction (e.g. someone with a heart or respiratory condition might not be able to walk long distances or do very active games). **Don't assume, but ask.**



from SALTO TC Enable

Here are some concrete tips, based on the SALTO experiences of various training courses.

- ★ It is best to **discuss openly** with the participants in question how they would feel most comfortable participating in activities. Some would prefer not to participate in methods which comprise a lot of activity, whereas other people like to participate as much as possible, maybe in their own adapted way. It is up to the youth worker (or the participant) to suggest adaptations.

- Foresee more time for moving between areas (breaks, dinners, doing activities outside), give the person with reduced mobility indications beforehand on where the next sessions will be, so that they can start moving on time. Do not move around excessively between areas (get a venue where the working rooms and accommodation are close to each other)
- Place sign-up lists (e.g. for working groups) or flipcharts to write on at a lower level, within reach of people in wheelchairs
- Place the materials within reach (pens, paper, paint, sticky tape,...) and not in inaccessible places (in a box under a table, on the top shelf,...)
- Do activities where people are sitting down or are at the same height (or alternatively where everybody is at a different height anyway). When talking to people in a wheelchair, put yourself at eyelevel for longer conversations or do not lose eye-contact when you are talking standing up.
- Do not lean, step or sit on people's wheelchairs. They are considered by many persons in a wheelchair as part of their body (so they are not the place to hang your shopping bags or coats, put your glass on their desktop or to transport things you don't want to carry – unless they agree).
- Make sure people ask/know how they should behave with the persons using a wheelchair (this can vary). Some want to be pushed (because it is very tiring) others make a point of moving independently.
- Always ask where the person wants to move – instead of just pushing them 'somewhere'. Do offer assistance (e.g. opening the doors, pushing,...) but wait until your offer is accepted.
- When taking hurdles or little steps or moving downhill always go with the big wheels first (backwards), tilting the wheelchair a bit. Ask where you can pull, push or lift the wheelchair (some parts come off easily – so best not to grab those to lift a person)
- People with a mobility disability do not like to be carried like a bag of potatoes. Provide ramps and accessible vehicles where the person can enter using the wheelchair. Lifting people with a physical disability in a wrong way could lead to injuries (for both the person carrying and the one being carried), so if you are likely to be lifting one of your participants, make sure you learn how to.
- If the person using a wheelchair needs to change from the wheelchair to a more comfortable/different seating position (e.g. to prevent aches), you might need to provide comfortable chairs (with arms), or pillows to increase sitting comfort.

- Have chair(s) for people with difficulties walking or standing, when your activity involves long periods of standing. Rent/borrow some extra wheelchair(s) or have alternative transportation for long distances. It is best of course to have a solution where the group (or at least part of the group sticks together)
- Foresee alternatives when doing activities with people with hand/body movement restrictions. For example instead of lifting your hand, you could ask everybody to lift their heads – instead of pointing to someone, you could nod or blink. It's good to use this alternative for the whole group in order to not stigmatise the persons with a disability as the odd-ones-out.
- Make sure that passageways are uncluttered. Do not leave material/cables/decoration/sharp objects (thumb tacks, etc) lying around on the floor in spots where people need to step over or pass in a wheelchair.
- Be clear about roles – who is the personal assistant – who helps when and for what (not). The team cannot be a personal assistant, but they can ask some of the participants to help (e.g. with an exercise) – see also Roles and relations in the group (page 48)
- ...

ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES FOR WHEELCHAIRS

When preparing for an international project with one or more people with a wheelchair, you might want to check the following **accessibility guidelines** (not exhaustive), to see if the venue where you will be staying is adapted for wheelchairs – and to which extent you will have to improvise with make-shift solutions. It is up to you (and the young people, plus their parents) to balance adventure and improvisation with comfort and safety.

Some of the following items are an 'exclusive criteria' (if it is not there a person in a wheelchair could simply not take part) - other things can be solved with a bit of creativity and good will.

- Check your venue for all horizontal (from room to room, from outside to inside) and vertical (from floor to ceiling, up and down curbs/steps/streets) moving needs!
- There should be a convenient access (to the work room, the restaurant, the bedrooms, the leisure hang-out places) without any stairs or steps (especially in the case of heavy electric wheelchairs)

- How does the access work – sometimes you will need to press a bell for staff to come and open the accessible entrance, does this function all day long, every day of the week? Are the most accessible routes through a building signposted?
- Ramps should have a gradient of 1/12 (preferably 1/15) and be 120cm wide and on the top and the bottom there should be a horizontal landing of at least 120cm. Make sure ramps are not cluttered.
- Door widths should be at least 85cm and open outwards, with no threshold. Door handles should be lever type (not door knobs) and approximately 104cm high
- How many accessible rooms are there (in case you have more than one wheelchair user)? Most hotels only have one or two. How does the evacuation work in case of fire.
- Bedrooms should have a 120cm free rotating space to at least one side of the bed. All places where a wheelchair needs to turn (around corners, in front of lifts, dining room,...) there should be a turning circle of minimum 150cm.
- Shower should have level access (floor draining) and shower seat. It would be practical to have a showerhead you can take down (and that this one is also down)
- (Public) toilets should have a 85cm door width, opening outwards. There should be a clear floor turning space of 150 x 150cm. The toilet seat should be 45cm high. There should be liftable support rails either side of the wc. Ensure clear space under the wash basin of approx. 70cm high
- Are there accessible toilets near the work rooms and in the dining room/restaurants? To avoid having to go all the way to the accessible bedroom every time to go to the toilet.
- How many lifts are there (if needed) and how many wheelchairs fit in them? Do other participants have reasonably easy alternative ways to get down or up? Lifts tend to be slow and can be a bottleneck causing part of the group to be late for appointments.
- Public telephones should have handsets of no higher than 90cm (even though nowadays most people have mobile phones)
- There is a lower part of the service counter available (reception desk, ticket counters,...) so that the person in a wheelchair can actually see the person behind the counter and vice-versa
- Is there parking space wide enough for a wheelchair to embark and disembark?

- 👉 You can find many more practical **Access for All guidelines** on the website of the Maltese National Commission Persons with a Disability www.knpd.org (www.knpd.org/pubs/pdf/accessforall2005.pdf)

In your **practical preparation**, you will also need to think about the following:

- Insurance for the wheelchair/assistive walking equipment, preferably with on site reparation. Does the country where you are going have the same brand of wheelchairs/equipment? Find and take there contact details.
- Are there parts of the wheelchair/equipment that frequently/easily get damaged? Can you take spare parts? Can you easily repair it yourself?
- If you have an electric wheelchair, can you recharge the battery or do you need to take a spare one. Is the voltage/plugs the same abroad? (e.g. UK, Malta, Ireland have different plugs from mainland Europe)
- Wherever possible locate important functions centrally – try to group rooms used by persons with a disability closer together.
- Is the transport you are going to use accessible? Do you need to arrange it in advance? Plan more time for transport. See also Travelling abroad in mixed-ability groups, page 74



from the Belgian-Slovakian Youth Exchange “I never tried this before”

TIPS & TRICKS - BLIND AND PARTIALLY-SIGHTED

When you have people with a visual impairment in the group (they are not always totally blind!), you can do a variety of things to make your activity accessible and enjoyable for these participants. There are a **variety of visual impairments**, ranging from colour blindness, absence of seeing depth, not seeing in the dark, bad eyesight to total blindness. Find out from your participants what exactly their impairment is and how you could **adapt your activities** so that they can participate.

- Provide orientation points in the working and living spaces – do a tour of the space (by touch) you will be working/sleeping in
- Read out/mention all the things you show or do, e.g. when you write something on a flipchart, when you stick signs on the wall, etc
- It is possible to prepare ‘three dimensional flipcharts’ with things in different texture stuck on it, e.g. different texture tape, thick paint, etc so that blind persons can come and feel it - this should not replace, but add to the spoken information.
- In the beginning when meeting blind people or people with a visual impairment, identify yourself when speaking, till they start recognising the voices. In group discussions, make clear who you are speaking to.
- Give verbal indications of how discussions or activities are proceeding, e.g. say aloud who has raised their hand to speak, summarise what you see on people’s face (agreement, incomprehension).
- Give information about what is happening, give points for orientation (e.g. if people are changing position, if people are sitting on the floor, if people have closed their eyes,...). Tell blind people when you are leaving!
- Don’t use ‘here’ and ‘there’ but describe these places according to the orientation points the blind persons know or go to these places and say ‘here’.
- Ask aloud if people want to add or ask things (because often we do this with a questioning face expression only)
- Provide, as far as possible, all written materials before the activity either in large print format so that they can read it (with a magnifying glass if needed) or in electronic format to read it with a braille reader. Alternatively, you can ask a local organisation for people who are blind or partially-sighted to print your texts in braille.

- Use touch/hands more in your activities – allow for presentations that can be heard or felt, e.g. theatre, living statues, clay or other constructions,...
- Use colours to reinforce directional guidance for people who are partially-sighted (to the different rooms, to the exit, to working groups)
- Exercises with blindfolds can be useful to integrate the Blind (mostly they are more efficient at these activities than seeing participants). However some blind participants can be sensitive to these activities, as they will not be able to take off the blindfold at the end of the game. Also one could reflect on the fact that the sudden change in seeing or not would be just as confusing for the seeing person with a blindfold, as it would be for a blind person who would all of a sudden see again for an hour.
- If there is a visual interpreter who explains what is happening, who reads what is written etc, allow time for this translation (talking) and for possible late(r) questions or comments. Check regularly if they need more time.
- Blind people focus on sounds, so avoid exercises activities in places where there is lots of background noise (streets, machines,...) or loud music in the background. Make sure people speak loudly and clearly enough.
- The most common colour blindness is the inability to distinguish red and green. Do not use these two colours to put contrast in a drawing or text.
- If you use a flipchart or blackboard: write big and thick enough, so that people with a visual impairment (and others) can see it clearly. Use contrasting colours (black on white or white on black. Red and green are most difficult to see from a distance).
- Avoid putting obstacles in the way. One type of obstacle is the type that stick out above ground level (they cannot be felt by using a cane) e.g. bunk beds, tables with central legs instead of legs on the corners, things sticking out from the wall, passage ways under stairs,... Other obstacles are the ones below waist-height (they cannot be felt when feeling the way with their hands) e.g. boxes on the floor, low fences or steps,...
- Do inform blind participants or people with visual impairments of a change in the setup of the room, e.g. if you rearranged chairs for a session, if you created a little stage for a theatre play etc.

- Do not grab or push a visually impaired person in the direction you think they want to go – ask first if they need assistance and how they wish to be guided.. Most blind people will take your arm or elbow. This way they can walk half a step behind you and gain information about steps etc. Give information about how and where you are moving (e.g. number of steps, going outside, passing orientation point X, etc)
- If a blind participant is assisted by a guide dog, make sure the other participants don't distract and start playing with it – unless they have asked the owner. Also provide pee and drink breaks for the dog.



from SALTO TC Enable

- If you help blind people with their meals, you can use the clock to indicate where the different food is located on the plate, e.g. 3 o'clock is to the right and 9 o'clock is to the left.
- Always make sure that there is one person 'in charge' of a blind person or a person with a visual impairment, to avoid this person getting lost or bumping into someone or something, especially outside of the known environment, e.g. in a new town, outside, while travelling,...
- Be clear about roles – who is the interpreter – who helps when and for what (not). The team cannot be expected to help all the time, but they can ask some of the participants to assist (e.g. with an exercise) – see also Roles and relations in the group (page 48)
- ...

ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES FOR THE BLIND AND PEOPLE WHO ARE PARTIALLY-SIGHTED

- Are guide-dogs allowed (in the hotel, transport, restaurants, meeting places)? Can they arrange food for the dogs? Are there any extra costs?
- Are there any hazardous protruding objects (above waist level) which the blind person could bump into? Therefore bunk-beds, passage-ways under stairs, etc are not advisable.
- Is there braille signalisation or raised signs and symbols in places where the blind participant would go (on their own)? These signs and symbols should be positioned where they can be touched. Knobs on the floor at curbs, steps, etc.
- Do lifts have voice announcements on which floor it stops, when doors are closing, etc? Do push buttons have braille on them?
- Avoid fast-closing automatic doors and plate glass doors with no colour-contrast. Avoid signalisation in red-green (for the colour-blind)
- Wherever possible locate important functions centrally – try to group rooms used by persons with a disability closer together.
- Are there handrails along stairs and corners? Avoid winding and angled routes – stick to straight angled layouts.
- Light switches and doorknobs should be approx. 104cm high
- What are the procedures in place in case of an emergency? How will blind participants be evacuated?

TIPS & TRICKS - DEAF AND HEARING IMPAIRMENT

As with visual impairments, there are also a wide **variety of hearing disabilities**, ranging from people that hear ok when they use assistive equipment to people who do not hear anything. People that were deaf at birth have learned to **communicate in visual ways** (e.g. sign language has its own grammar, lexicon and idioms). Speaking or writing a verbal (foreign) language is often a second or third language for them. Some deaf or hard-of-hearing people can lip-read and some use sign language. There are a number of deaf people who have a speech impairment but others speak fluently. Find out what **assistive equipment** or methods they use for communication.

With a little bit of adaptation you can make your programme suitable for all.

- A sometimes funny mistake many people make, is to start shouting louder at deaf persons when they don't understand. Instead repeat more clearly what you said before (if the deaf person lip-reads), use other words and gestures or allow time for other ways of communication (writing, etc)
- Quite obviously, if the deaf or hard-of-hearing people can lip-read, you will need to speak facing these persons so they can see your lips. Pronounce words clearly and articulately but without overdoing it. Do not obscure your lip movements with your hands, chewing gum, a cigarette, etc
- However, it is not easy to lip-read a foreign language! Also, it is more complicated to read lips of a non-native speaker speaking the language of the lip-reader because the pronunciation or accent (the use of the lips) can be different. Rephrase or explain rather than repeating the same sentence.
- People with hearing impairments need to concentrate on the gestures, expressions and lips of others so well planned lighting and distance is necessary – make sure the background of the speaker is not distracting.
- If you choose to work with a sign language interpreter (between voice and sign language), make sure that you leave enough time for interpreting, and possible questions after that. Speak in coherent blocks, take a pause and when the signing is finished ask your questions to which participants can react. Speak directly to the person, not the interpreter.
- Ask regularly if the interpreter has enough time and ask pro-actively if the participant has a question or something to add. You could learn the basic sign language for “do you understand?” or “is it clear?” and use this regularly.
- Note that sign language is different in different countries! So it usually does not work to have sign language as a communication tool between people with hearing impairments from different countries (even though some basics can be the same).
- Gain deaf people's attention before starting to say (lip) something - i.e. you can tap the person(s) gently on the shoulder or arm, wait till the person turns to you, make a visible gesture or flash the lights of the working room.
- Agree with the group on visual ways to start and end a session or activity, e.g. after a break, rounding off working groups,... - you could switch the lights on & off, use different colour lights, etc it is important is to keep deaf people within visual distance, so that it is easier for you to attract their attention, e.g. for rounding off an exercise and for calling them back again
- The opposite of working with the blind, where it is important to say everything you write, with the deaf you need to write or visualise everything you say (e.g. provide handouts, write on the board or flipcharts,...)

- To make yourself understood, you could act out an exercises or provide an example (e.g. of energisers, games, expected flipcharts coming from group work,...)
- When having group discussions, agree on a sign for the deaf participants which they can use to indicate they want to contribute. Some deaf or hard-of-hearing persons have speech disorders which can make it difficult to understand them – do not feel embarrassed to ask them to repeat. If you don't understand them, say so, and revert to alternative ways of communication (writing, sign language with translation)
- It is useful to carry around a pen and paper if you are with deaf or hard of hearing people and you don't know their sign language. It comes in handy for communicating.
- Some waves (e.g. mobile phones) could interfere with the assistive hearing devices used by the participants that are hard-of-hearing. Make sure they are switched off – the mobile phones of course.
- The Deaf or hearing impaired can party and dance – they can feel the beat (add a bit of extra bass) or dance to the lightshow based on the music (according to rhythm). No need to scrap the disco night from your programme.
- Be clear about roles – who is the personal assistant – who helps when and for what (not). The team cannot be a personal assistant, but they can ask some of the participants to help (e.g. with an exercise) – see also Roles and relations in the group (page 48)
- ...

ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES FOR PEOPLE WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENTS

- It is possible to install an 'induction loop system' for the benefit of people with hearing aids in the work room(s). With this system the sound is transmitted as a magnetic field, and those with hearing aids designed to receive induction loop sounds can, a bit like a TV aerial. Does your venue have one of these systems or can you rent/take one?
- Deaf and hard of hearing people cannot hear fire alarms. Does your hostel have alarms with stroboscopic lamps and bed-frame vibrators (or other?). Make sure the project organisers know exactly where people with a disability are located in the building in case of emergency – and what to do. You could make an emergency division of tasks for all participants with a disability.
- Is there a Text Telephone (TTY) available? You could find out if there exists a telecommunications relay service, which makes the link between the voice of a caller and the Text Telephone. Alternatively you could have a computer with email or chat function (or sms).

- 👉 You can find a special section on aural environment guidelines in the publication **Access for All** from the website of the Maltese National Commission Persons with a Disability www.knpd.org (www.knpd.org/pubs/pdf/accessforall2005.pdf)

Practical tips

- If some participants use hearing aids, make sure to take enough batteries. Some of this equipment is very expensive and fragile. Take out a good insurance, and find out if there is a repair service where you are going.
- If you will be taking an induction loop system, make sure it works in the venue where you will be. Take some back-up cables etc. Talk it through with the technician of the venue what exactly you need.
- You could create a backup communication system via SMS when going into the city (free time) or on excursions

TIPS & TRICKS – COGNITIVE, LEARNING AND INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

It is not always obvious from the start that a person has a cognitive or intellectual disability. Also, there are **many different types and levels of cognitive disabilities**, so read this section with this variety of conditions in mind. It is also a wrong assumption to think that people with a physical disability also have a mental disability. Therefore always start from the **highest expectation** regarding intellectual skills and capacities when interacting with people with a disability and if needed adapt gradually to a lower standard (and not the other way around!).

Some tips for your programme and activities

- Be specific in the things you say or ask. Avoid figurative speech, difficult expressions and subtleties like irony or sarcasm,... But don't go to the other extreme: baby-talk. People with cognitive disabilities also deserve respect.
- Take things light-heartedly, smile and send positive vibes as a way of communication. Don't rely on verbal communication only. Some visual support like a picture or a symbol might help.
- Be patient, flexible and supportive. Take time to understand the individual and make sure the individual understands you. Ask questions to find out if the persons with a cognitive disability understood or not.
- Repeat as many times as necessary, in different ways, and check their understanding. Take time and respect their speed. Don't assume people understood all the information or will remember it.

- Reduce long introductions to activities and cut up the activities and explanations into different sequential parts, which you introduce one at a time. Help make complex ideas understandable by breaking them down into smaller digestible parts.
- If you use powerpoint presentations, handouts or other written material support the content with visuals and use short uncomplicated sentences conveying just one concept or action at a time.
- Use different creative ways of expression e.g. art, dance, painting, collage, theatre,...
- Offer assistance (you can ask someone from the group) for demanding intellectual tasks (e.g. writing, completing forms, understanding written instructions). However wait for the individual to accept the offer of assistance; do not “over-assist” or be patronising.
- Make sure the participants with a cognitive disability (as any other participants) understand the group rules for your activity: what is and isn’t acceptable behaviour.
- It can be difficult for people with cognitive disabilities to make quick decisions. Let them know in advance what decisions need to be taken so that they can take extra time for decision-making.
- Persons with mental disabilities might have trouble concentrating in an over-stimulating environment e.g. too many people, too much noise, too vivid colours,... Take care to provide a working space that allows them to concentrate (when needed).
- If you are in contact with other groups/people and the persons with a mental disability behave strangely, you can simply explain it to the passers-by. Strange behaviour can be part of their condition but it is not dangerous or contagious.
- The reaction of the group leader towards strange behaviour is often taken on by other members of a group. If you react calmly to troublesome behaviour, the rest of the group probably does as well. If you panic, the rest of the group might panic as well.
- It would be good to do activities in your project in which the people with cognitive disabilities can show their abilities and skills. Some are good at sports, singing, maths,... This would support their position and prestige in the group. You could create a fair of skills, in which every participant offers a skill to the group (e.g. singing, massage, telling jokes,...)
- Ask persons with **learning disabilities** what helps them to understand and remember e.g. some people benefit from writing instructions down or from saying them aloud

- Persons with **Asperger syndrome** or **autism** (or other cognitive disabilities) can have panic reactions towards certain objects (e.g. tunnels, colours,...) or in certain situations. It can be helpful to find out from the person, the parents or a social worker what causes these reactions (so you can avoid them) and what can comfort this person (in case it happens anyway). Often however, it is a process of trial and error.
- Some people with **traumatic brain injury** might have a poor short-term memory or poor social skills. You can consider having a personal assistant take care of this person (e.g. guiding the interaction with the group, following instructions, etc...)
- People with **Tourette's syndrome** undergo spells of involuntary speech, swearing or uncontrolled movements. Wait until the person has finished and is calmed down and then continue as normal. Often, the more the person tries to contain these urges, the more they build up. It could be helpful for them to leave the session temporarily to release these compulsions and come back when calmed down.
- When a participant has a panic attack or behaves problematically in a public area with many distractions, you might consider moving to a quieter or more private location
- Clear signalisation with pictograms and arrows can help a person with cognitive disabilities to find their way around the venue.
- Make sure that you have an emergency procedure in place (e.g. in case of fire) and that the persons with a mental disability know what to do.
- ...

“Mental or cognitive disability is just a term doctors use because they don't know what to do with us”

- J. from Slovakia – Down's syndrome

SPECIFIC TYPES OF DISABILITIES

It is impossible to cover all types of disabilities in this booklet, but for the following conditions we give you some tips about what to do in the most frequent situations. But as in most cases, it is best to ask the people themselves, and follow their indications.

PERSONS OF SHORT STATURE

- Do not treat adults as cute or as a child because they are small
- Put the material you are using for your activities within reach (not on the top shelf)
- Have flipcharts for writing on or sign-up lists low down or provide (makeshift) steps
- You could offer a pillow to put on chairs, provide steps in the bathroom, take the showerhead down,...
- Check if there are lower public phones at/around the venue, lower urinals and lower service counters available
- Do activities where people sit down or are at the same height (or where everybody is at different heights anyway)
- Place yourself at eye-level to communicate, e.g. sit down, kneel, or stand back so you can watch without straining each other's neck
- Small people also have shorter legs, which means that doing long distance can be tiring. Provide alternative means of transport if necessary.
- ...

SPEECH DISORDER

- If you didn't understand the person, do not pretend that you do. Don't be afraid to ask the person to repeat. Getting nervous or embarrassed doesn't help the communication.
- Repeat to see if you understood the person. Be patient and take as much time as necessary.
- Don't interrupt or try to finish the person's sentences. Don't just nod unless you have understood the full messages.
- If you really didn't understand the person, you can use alternative means of communication: writing, drawing, gestures,... but first ask if this is ok
- Try to ask questions which require only short answers or a nod of the head.
- Do not speak for the individual or attempt to finish her or his sentences.
- Communication works best in a quiet environment where you can concentrate on what the person is saying.
- Make sure people with a speech disorder are not laughed at or teased.
- ...

EPILEPSY (SEIZURE DISORDERS)

- Know the severity of the epilepsy. Some people only get shaking hands whereas others fall over and experience wild movements
- To find out from the person, the parents or the social workers what they have experienced is the best thing to do in case of an epileptic seizure. Sometimes they use an injection that calms them down, sometimes they simply wait till it's over,...
- Be aware that flashing lights or beepers sometimes can provoke an epileptic seizure, so it is advisable to avoid this as much as possible (e.g. stroboscopes in discos, car lights passing by in the dark, mobile phone beeps,...)
- If a person has a seizure, there is not much you can do about it – just give them time until it finishes. If the person falls down, make sure the head is protected and make sure they don't swallow their tongue, but do not restrict their movements.
- Think of taking a spare set of clothes when going on excursions. A person could lose bodily fluids during a seizure.
- When a seizure has finished, the person may feel embarrassed or disoriented. Provide some time and private space to collect him or herself again.
- ...

CEREBRAL PALSY

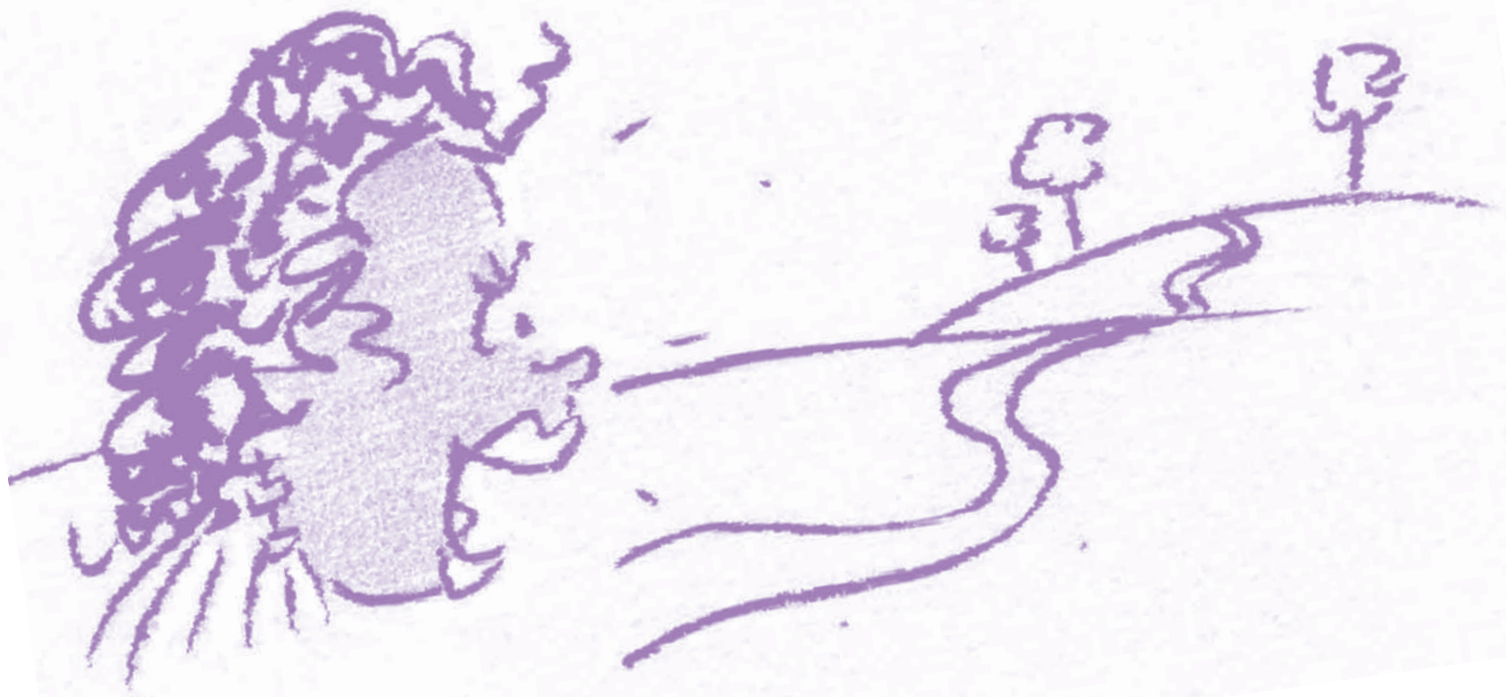
Cerebral palsy is an impairment that makes it difficult for the person to **control their muscles**, which has an effect on their movements and sometimes speech (in varying degrees). But this doesn't mean that they have limited intellectual capacities or a cognitive disability. Therefore, start interaction assuming the highest possible level of intellectual skills and simplify if this person with cerebral palsy also has cognitive disability.

- ☞ Most of the tips & tricks provided for people using a wheelchair or who have a mobility impairment (see page 88) are valid as well for people with cerebral palsy.

PSYCHIATRIC CONDITIONS

It could happen that you have people with **phobias, depressions or other psychiatric disorders** on your project. The most difficult part is that these conditions are not visible, so you would need to find out from them what their psychiatric condition is. Many don't consider this as a disability, even though in many cases psychiatric conditions do affect people's effective functioning in society. Persons with a psychiatric condition can be fine usually, but they can be **sensitive** to stress and strong emotions. It is best to find out, before your project, from the young person, their parents or psychologist what their conditions is, what things you can do/avoid to make them feel better and how you can best behave if they get into a crisis.

THERE'S MORE AFTER THE PROJECT



A project should not stop at the last day of the exchange or activity. Your project is just one of the steps on a **path towards change**, towards your objectives. You could use your project as the basis for sparking off lots of impact, if you plan it well.

Think about the **visibility of your project**: how can you let as many people as possible know about it? You can involve as many people as possible (organise an open door day, a party,...) or you can use the media to show off your project.

If you have **nice results and outcomes** from your project, it is clever to spread these results around (get them in the media, tell it to your funders, the parents and the politicians). But it would even better if your project results would be also USED by others. Document what you did so that others can have a similar experience. Share!

Already when applying for funding (e.g. in a Youth in Action application), you are asked what you are going to do in terms of follow-up and dissemination of results. The better you plan the visibility, dissemination & exploitation of your project results, the higher impact you will have with your project.

- 👉 SALTO has developed a booklet on how to create the greatest possible impact with your youth project, called 'Making Waves'. It contains lots of tips and tricks on how to increase the visibility, dissemination and exploitation of your project results.

Download it from

www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/MakingWaves/



'AUTHOR'

& RESOURCE PERSONS



TONY GEUDENS [Author]

<http://trainers.SALTO-YOUTH.net/TonyGeudens/>

Tony is the coordinator of the SALTO-YOUTH Inclusion Resource Centre in Belgium-Flanders and has been active as a trainer for many years, adapting different activities and exercises to a variety of groups with different needs. One of the most challenging (and rewarding) training experiences was having youth workers with disabilities on the SALTO courses. He is convinced that it is possible to do international projects with or without a disability – if you have the will and creativity to do so. That's the message he tried to give in this booklet.

tony@salto-youth.net or tony@geudens.com



SONIA HOLÚBKOVÁ

<http://trainers.SALTO-YOUTH.net/SoniaHolubkova/>

Sonia did a PhD in psychology and currently works as the coordinator of the Social Work Advisory Board in Slovakia, working to improve the social conditions for people with special needs. She has worked before in different social care services for people with intellectual disabilities and still volunteers in organisations and projects for persons with disabilities. Every year she coordinates an international cultural festival, in her town of Zilina, for young people with and without disabilities. Sonia participated in the first SALTO Inclusion training course in 2001 and had the pleasure to give back some knowledge and experience at the SALTO TC Enable as a trainer.

nkh@slovanet.sk



RENÉ OPSOMER

<http://trainers.SALTO-YOUTH.net/ReneOpsomer/>

René is one of the few trainers from Germanophone Belgium. He studied disability education and has been working for 25 years for an organisation that organises mixed ability activities, mingling people with and without physical or mental disabilities. They also offer a free accessible taxi service for people using wheelchairs. Rene had the pleasure to organise mixed-ability youth exchanges between Belgium, Estonia and Latvia. He organises regularly training courses about the integration of young people with a disability in youth work. His advice for youth workers is: Give it a try!

opsi@mail.be

REFERENCES, RESOURCES AND FURTHER READING

Read this booklet in conjunction with the SALTO resource page for setting up mixed-ability projects: www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/MixedAbility/

FURTHER READING

Some more SALTO “Inclusion for All” publications:

- **Going International - Inclusion for All (2004)** – a booklet with practical inclusion methods and advice for preparing, implementing and following-up on international projects for young people with fewer opportunities
- **Use your Hands to Move Ahead (2004)** – using practical tasks to increase participation by young people with fewer opportunities in short term European Voluntary Service projects
- **Fit for Life (2005)** – using sport as an educational tool for the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities in youth work and international youth projects.
- **No Offence (2007)** – exploring opportunities and setting up youth projects with young ex-offenders and those at risk of offending
- **Village International (2007)** - a practical booklet for youth workers about setting up international projects in rural and geographically isolated areas
- **Youth and the City (2008)** - a guide about setting up meaningful youth projects in disadvantaged (sub)urban areas
- **No Barriers, No Borders (2008)** – a practical booklet on setting up international mixed ability youth projects (including people with and without a disability)
- **Over the Rainbow (2008)** – a practical booklet on setting up international projects with young lesbians, gays, bisexuals and young people questioning their sexual orientation
- **Inclusion & Diversity (2008)** – how to make your youth work and youth projects more inclusive and reach more diverse target groups (co-operation SALTO Inclusion & SALTO Cultural Diversity)
- **Making Waves (2007)** - Creating a greater impact with your youth projects, a booklet about visibility, dissemination and exploitation of your project results
- **Coaching Guide (2006)** – a guide that explores the concept of Coaching, including practical tools, methods, advice and information (by SALTO Participation)

👉 Find them all at www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/

Looking for youth work and training methods on Inclusion and other topics?

Browse through the SALTO Toolbox for Training at www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Toolbox/



T-Kit Series: *The training kits are thematic publications written by experienced youth trainers. They are easy-to-use handbooks for use in training and study sessions, published by the Partnership on Youth between the Council of Europe and the European Commission.*

- Social Inclusion
- Project Management
- Organisational Management
- Methodology in Language Learning
- Intercultural Learning
- International Voluntary Service
- Under Construction... Citizenship, Youth and Europe
- Training Essentials
- Funding and Financial Management
- Educational Evaluation in Youth Work
- Euromed Co-operation

📎 Downloadable at www.youth-partnership.net or www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Toolbox/

PUBLICATIONS USED FOR THIS BOOKLET

- **Disability Etiquette:** tips on interacting with people with a disability, Judy Cohen, Published by EPVA – download it at www.unitedspinal.org (Free publications)
- **We're not ready yet!** A guide for people with disabilities, voluntary organisations and all volunteers on integration and volunteering, Jackie West, Published by Mobility International – www.miusa.org (they used to have a European branch)

ONLINE RESOURCES

More inclusion links and resources at www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/

- **Methods and Tools for Inclusion Projects and Training** - www.salto-youth.net/InclusionTools/
- **Looking for a Trainer or a resource person on Inclusion** - www.salto-youth.net/InclusionTrainers/
- **Training Opportunities on Inclusion** – www.salto-youth.net/InclusionCourses/
- **SALTO Newsletter on Inclusion** - www.salto-youth.net/InclusionNewsletter/

INFO ON DISABILITY

- **Disability World:** *A bi-monthly web zone of international disability news and views*
www.disabilityworld.org
- **Independent Living:** *Serves self-help organisations of disabled people who work for equal opportunities, self-determination and self-respect. With extensive library, partner organisation search, vacation home exchange, disability radio, personal assistants network and exchange, forums, etc*
www.independentliving.org
- **Enable Link:** *A Canadian website full of links to resources on the web for people with a disability and regarding different aspects of disability - Youth, Travel, Sexuality, Housing, Sports, etc*
www.enablelink.org

TRAVELLING WITH A DISABILITY

- **Accessible Travelling- General:** *Lots of tips and links about going abroad, travel stories, accessible destinations guide, contact numbers*
www.toegankelijkreizen.be (in English, French, Dutch, German)
www.emerginghorizons.com/resources/ (American)
- **Flying with a disability:** *A practical step by step guide on how to organise your plane trip*
www.flying-with-disability.org
Airline information about travelling with a disability
www.everybody.co.uk/airindex.htm
- **More links**
A variety of websites about travelling with a disability in different languages
www.wheeltheworld.net

ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES

- **Accessibility for All guidelines**
Extensive guide with accessibility criteria for accessible buildings of the Maltese National Commission People with a Disability
www.knpd.org
- **SERI - Special Education Resources on the Internet**
A collection of online resources relating to access to education (special education). The links are grouped per disability or per issue (psychology, legal, products, parents, etc)
www.seriweb.com

DISABILITY ORGANISATIONS

- **European Disability Forum**

EDF is a European umbrella organisation representing more than 37 million disabled people in Europe. Its mission is to ensure disabled citizens' full access to fundamental and human rights through their active involvement in policy development and implementation in the European Union.

www.edf-feph.org

- **Inclusion Europe**

A non-profit organisation campaigning for the rights and interest of people with intellectual disability and their families throughout Europe

www.inclusion-europe.org

- **European Blind Union**

EBU is an organisation that aims to protect and promote the interests of all blind and partially-sighted people in Europe. Their speech-browser accessible website has lots of background documents and resources for being accessible for people that are blind or partially-sighted.

www.euroblind.org

- **IFHOHYP – International Federation of Hard of Hearing Young People**

IFHOHYP is the umbrella organisation of youth organisations for hard-of-hearing youth. They organise a variety of international activities such as study session for their members.

www.ifhohyp.org

 More links online on the SALTO website

www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Links/inclusion-disability.html

EDITORIAL INFO

First published in April 2006, second updated edition April 2008

SALTO-YOUTH Inclusion Resource Centre

www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/

(Support for Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities
within the YOUTH in Action Programme)

SALTO-Jint, Grétrystraat 26, 1000 Brussel, Belgium

Tel +32 (0)2 209 07 20 - Fax +32 (0)2 209 07 49

inclusion@salto-youth.net

Based on the SALTO TC Enable 2003 - www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/TCenable/

and on discussions with experts working with mixed-ability or living with a disability:

Sonia Holubkova & Rene Opsomer (trainers of the SALTO TC Enable)

Thanks to Barbara Verbic (*Slovenian Association of Disabled Students*), Inez Adriaensen (*Jint NA-Flanders, Belgium*), Jim Crowe (*Learning Disability Wales, UK*), Karina Chupina (*International Federation of Hard of Hearing Young People, Russia*), Louise McBride (*Ballyboffy Rural Youth Project, Ireland*), Mokrane Boussaid (*European Blind Union, Paris*), Rita Vella (*LAND-Living Ability Not Disability, Malta*), Simon Stevens (*Enable Enterprises, UK*) for their feedback and contributions

Coordination, Writing & Editing: Tony Geudens, tony@salto-youth.net or Tony@Geudens.com

Layout: miXst, info@mixst.be

Illustrations: Zomarr, www.zomarr.be

Printing: Galio Crossmedia, www.galio.cz

Proofreading: Fionnuala Walsh, fionnualawalsh@hotmail.com

Reproduction and use for non-commercial purposes is permitted provided the source www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/ is mentioned and inclusion@salto-youth.net is notified

Approximately 15% of people in Europe have a disability. So we could ask ourselves if 15% of our friends have a disability, or 15% of our colleagues at work, or 15% of the young persons in our youth organisation.

“No Barriers, No Borders” is a practical booklet aiming to stimulate the participation of young people with a disability in international youth projects. It is not about setting up specific projects for people with a disability, but it promotes International Mixed-Ability projects, in which young people with and without a disability live, work and have fun together as peers.

“No Barriers, No Borders” helps mainstream youth workers and project organisers to think more inclusively and to involve young people with disabilities in their international projects. The booklet gives lots of practical tips and tricks on how to make a Mixed-Ability Project a positive and mind-changing experience for all involved.

If you are a youth worker (mainly) working with young people with disabilities, this booklet wants to challenge you to involve young people without disabilities in your activities. Because social inclusion is about creating opportunities for pleasant and respectful contact and cooperation. And an international mixed-ability youth project does just that!

Based on the SALTO “TC Enable” youth worker training course (2003).

This booklet is part of the SALTO “Inclusion for All” series. Download them for free at: www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/

