



# **COME-IN!**

## **HANDBOOK FOR MUSEUM OPERATORS**

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## PURPOSE AND CONTENTS OF THE HANDBOOK

The purpose of this handbook is to improve museum employees' skills so that they can deliver a quality service to all museum visitors.

The handbook gives basic information on how to include visitors with disabilities and is structured into four chapters:

- **The COME-IN! project** briefly introduces the COME-IN! project aims, partnership and actions that are carried out to improve accessibility in the museums.
- **Awareness raising:** deals with issues concerning inclusion, accessibility and necessary measures to overcome and remove any barriers in a museum.
- **The service chain** focuses on how to correctly apply procedures and tools available in order to deliver a quality service along all steps of the service chain.
- **Visiting the exhibitions** explains how to accompany and offer proper services to single visitors or groups of visitors.

In the Annex 1 and 2 there are the COME-IN! Accessibility requirements mapping and some online sources for further information about accessibility issues.

# 1 THE COME-IN! PROJECT

## 1.1 Project aims

COME-IN! intends to valorise the CE cultural heritage, increasing the capacities of small and medium size museums, by making them accessible to a wider public of people. The overarching goal of the project is INCLUSION.

The COME-IN! project is financed by the **Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme** and carried out by a European partnership that includes associations of people with disabilities, universities, museums, training centres and other institutions that deal with accessibility issues.

Detailed information about the COME-IN project are published on the project website: <http://www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/COME-IN.html>.

## 1.2 Project's intervention principles

COME-IN! is based on the following intervention principles:

- improving web communication about museum service for all visitors
- removing physical barriers inside and outside museums
- designing exhibitions fully accessible to everyone
- implementing audio and video guides, view enhancement tools, tactile tools and multimedia tools
- facilitating participation to cultural events
- training all museum employees to guarantee the provision of a good service to all visitors
- launching the COME IN! label to award museums complying with accessibility standards.

## 1.3 Inclusion and accessibility for everyone

COME-IN! adopts two key principles:

### INCLUSION

means to respect everyone just the way he or she is. It means that all people have the opportunity to take part fully in the life of society. From its space to its educational activities, the whole inside of a museum must be designed in order to achieve maximum inclusion.

### ACCESSIBILITY

means freedom from any kind of barrier. Museums' purpose should be to promote equal access for all and to ensure a welcoming atmosphere and suitable environment. Accessibility has to take into account:

- **Physical access** to public buildings, roads, transportation and other indoor and outdoor facilities, including museums.
- **Access to any kind of information and communication** providing usable websites, audio and video guides, Braille and tactile signage.
- **Social access**, regards the right to have equal opportunities to participate to all aspects of social life: education, work, leisure, culture, sport, etc.
- **Economical access**, by offering free admission, reductions, and/or priority access for disabled people and/or the accompanying persons.

More detailed information about accessibility to museums are contained in the project document COME-IN! GUIDELINES<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/COME-IN.html>

## 1.4 Legal framework

In addition to the National laws of COME-IN! partners' countries, there are two important legal references on which the project is based on The United Nation Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities and The European Disability strategy 2010-2020.

*The UN Convention<sup>2</sup>* is an agreement which demands respect for the dignity, choices and inclusion of all people with disabilities and requires countries to include people with disabilities in decisions that affect their lives.

In particular, art. 30 of the Convention promotes the right of people with disabilities to take part in cultural life. Persons with disabilities should be able to enjoy access to cultural materials in accessible formats, to television programmes, films, theatre and other cultural activities, in accessible formats and to places for cultural performances or services.

*The European Disability strategy 2010-2020<sup>3</sup>* promotes active inclusion and full participation of disabled people in society, by implementing actions in 8 priority areas:

- Accessibility
- Participation
- Equality
- Employment
- Education and training:
- Social protection
- Health
- External action

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<sup>2</sup> Online: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html> (10.10.2016)

<sup>3</sup> Online: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=URISERV:em0047> (10.10.2016)

## 2 AWARENESS RAISING

### 2.1 Bridging the gap: overcoming barriers to participation

The UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities has stated that “Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”

This definition underpins the fact that **barriers are the problem not the disability**. So we should remember that “The person comes first”.

Thus the COME IN! PROJECT promotes this change of perspective (**social model vs medical model**), which focuses on the barriers and not on the disability, with an inclusive approach which benefits all the museums customers, not only the people with disabilities, as the following table shows (list not exhaustive):

(ICF) SOCIAL MODEL	VS	(ICD) MEDICAL MODEL
Focus on barriers (Allow inclusive access)		Focus on disabilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Remove mobility obstacles (steps, slopes, small or heavy doors, etc.)</li> <li>- Avoid long distances (reconsidering transport facilities, provide rest isles and comfort areas, etc.)</li> <li>- re-consider available tools/devices functionality (computers, mouse, etc.)</li> <li>- Adapt signs and orientation items and tools</li> <li>- Adopt coherent and respectful physical and verbal relationship</li> <li>- Re-position art pieces and labels (height, surrounding space, etc.)</li> <li>- Provide mobility facilitation tools (wheelchairs, portable chairs, etc.)</li> </ul>		<p>Mobility impairment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- wheelchair users</li> <li>- people with walking sticks or crutches</li> <li>- elderly people with reduced mobility</li> <li>- persons with asthma or heart disease</li> <li>- other affected physical functions: standing, sitting, coordination, manual dexterity.</li> <li>- etc.</li> </ul>

Focus on barriers (Allow inclusive access)	Focus on disabilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide inclusive tools/devices (tactile, audio, Braille, digital, etc.)</li> <li>- Re-position art pieces and descriptions (height, surrounding space, Braille labels and catalogues, tactile books, etc.)</li> <li>- Adapt and clarify signs and audio orientation items/tools</li> <li>- Review art pieces' presentations (simple language, different perspectives, spatial focus, tactile aids, storytelling, etc.)</li> </ul>	<p>Visual impairment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- blind people from the birth</li> <li>- blind people with residual vision</li> <li>- people who lost sight due to injuries or diseases</li> <li>- partially sighted people</li> <li>- elderly people with reduced sight</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide inclusive tools/devices (radio/wifi audio loops, hearing aids, etc.)</li> <li>- Review art pieces' presentations (simple language, sign language, video, etc.)</li> </ul>	<p>Hearing impairment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- people deaf from the birth or from an early age</li> <li>- people which lost hearing in the course of their life</li> <li>- people with a certain degree of hearing loss</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide multisensory approach to arts (experiencing art through all senses)</li> <li>- Adopt a learning by doing approach to arts (provide workshops, laboratory sessions, etc.)</li> <li>- Review art pieces' presentations (simple language, reduced number of art pieces, storytelling, etc.)</li> </ul>	<p>Learning impairment usually affects the way a person interacts with its social environment and processes information. Most common learning difficulties are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- dyslexia: difficulties with reading, writing and spelling.</li> <li>- dyscalculia: difficulties to learn and understand math concepts/symbols.</li> <li>- dyspraxia (developmental coordination disorder) affects motoric coordination. dcd doesn't affect intellectual skills.</li> <li>- people with attention deficit disorder</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide inclusive environments and allow visitors to adopt their own visiting pace (resting places, workshops, etc.)</li> <li>- Review art pieces' presentations adopting a simplified language and different perspectives (simplified timelines, spatial descriptions, storytelling.</li> </ul>	<p>Mental/intellectual impairments can be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- agoraphobia</li> <li>- depression</li> <li>- personality disorder</li> <li>- schizophrenia</li> <li>- anxiety disorders</li> <li>- Alzheimer</li> <li>- autism</li> </ul>



## 2.2 Correct wording

Appropriate wording and phrases are important when speaking to or about people with disabilities. Language can be either a strong inclusive tool or a way to reinforce stereotypes and social barriers. For this reason, it is very important to focus on the person, not on the disability.

Here below some useful suggestions:

- Never use the article ‘the’ with a specific disability to describe people with that disability. The preferred term, ‘people with disabilities’, stresses the humanity of the individuals and avoids objectification.
- Never use the word ‘normal’ to refer to people who do not have a disability in contrast to people with disabilities. Use ‘non-disabled’<sup>4</sup> or ‘people without disabilities’ instead.
- Don’t use language that implies a person with disability is heroic because they experience disability. Conversely, don’t make out that people with disability are victims or objects of pity<sup>5</sup>.
- Avoid phrases like ‘suffers from’ which suggest discomfort, constant pain and a sense of hopelessness.
- Wheelchair users may not view themselves as ‘confined to’ a wheelchair - try thinking of it as a mobility aid instead.
- Most disabled people are comfortable with the words used to describe daily living. People who use wheelchairs ‘go for walks’ and people with visual impairments may be very pleased - or not - ‘to see you’. An impairment may just mean that some things are done in a different way.
- Common phrases that may associate impairments with negative things should be avoided, for example ‘deaf to our pleas’ or ‘blind drunk’.

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<sup>4</sup> Online. Appropriate Terminology - Brown University, USA: [www.brown.edu/campus-life/support/accessibility-services/resources-teaching-students-disabilities/appropriate-terminology](http://www.brown.edu/campus-life/support/accessibility-services/resources-teaching-students-disabilities/appropriate-terminology) (12.10.2016)

<sup>5</sup> Online. Australian Network on Disability: [www.and.org.au/pages/inclusive-language.html](http://www.and.org.au/pages/inclusive-language.html) (12.10.2016)

- Avoid passive, victim words. Use language that respects disabled people as active individuals with control over their own lives<sup>6</sup>.

DO'S AND DON'TS: WORDS TO USE AND AVOID	
Avoid	Use
(the) handicapped, (the) disabled	people with disabilities, disabled people
afflicted by, suffers from, victim of	has [name of condition or impairment]
confined to a wheelchair, wheelchair-bound	wheelchair user
mentally handicapped, mentally defective, retarded, subnormal	with a learning disability (singular) with learning disabilities (plural)
cripple, invalid	people with a disability
spastic	person with cerebral palsy
able-bodied	non-disabled
mental patient, insane, mad	person with a mental health condition
deaf and dumb; deaf mute	deaf, user of Sign Language (SL), person with a hearing impairment
the blind	people with visual impairments; blind people; blind and partially sighted people
an epileptic, diabetic, depressive, and so on	person with epilepsy, diabetes, depression or someone who has epilepsy, diabetes, depression
dwarf; midget	someone with restricted growth or short stature
fits, spells, attacks	seizures <sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Online: Inclusive language: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusive-communication/inclusive-language-words-to-use-and-avoid-when-writing-about-disability](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusive-communication/inclusive-language-words-to-use-and-avoid-when-writing-about-disability) (14.10.2016)

<sup>7</sup> Online: Inclusive language: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusive-communication/inclusive-language-words-to-use-and-avoid-when-writing-about-disability](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusive-communication/inclusive-language-words-to-use-and-avoid-when-writing-about-disability) (14.10.2016)

### 3 THE SERVICE CHAIN

#### 3.1 Accessibility mapping

An exhibition should be designed so that it can be accessible, easily visited and enjoyed by anyone. This approach is based on the so-called universal design principles.

*“Universal design” means the design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. “Universal design” shall not exclude assistive devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities where this is needed (art. 2 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities).*

The COME-IN! project has developed an approach about accessibility that takes in consideration not only the issues related to the visit of the exhibition and the museum objects and items. There are other important aspects that guarantee a satisfactory experience to the visitors. They can be split into the so called “Service chain”, which describes all aspects that are relevant for visitors of a museum.



Generally speaking, a *Service chain* of a museum should consider the following components:

- Input - Information and communication before the visit
- Arrival
- Entrance
- Cash desk
- Wardrobe
- Exhibition area
- Toilet
- Shop
- Output - Information and communication after the visit

COME-IN! accessibility criteria are based on the *Service Chain* elements cross-checked with the four relevant aspects of accessibility:

- physical access
- information and communication access
- social access
- economical access

The accessibility matrix shown here below can be used to check whether the current situation in the museum is compliant or not with the accessibility criteria defined by the COME-IN! project.

Accessibility / Service chain	Physical access	Information & communication access	Social access	Economical access
Input				
Arrival				
Entrance				
Cash desk				
Wardrobe				
Exhibition area				
Toilet				
Shop				
Output				

The Service Chain analysis based on this matrix can be adjusted individually according to the respective museum. Each field of the matrix can be marked if the criteria are fulfilled. The Matrix defines only minimum standards. If there is nothing filled in, this does not mean there are no requirements possible.

For each step of the *Service chain*, the museum staff should apply the correct procedures to guarantee a good service.

The benefits of using the Service Chain as a tool to evaluate the accessibility are:

- complete evaluation of all relevant areas and services
- structured procedure
- consideration of the access for ALL visitors.

You can find the list of the accessibility criteria in the Annex “Accessibility requirements mapping”.

### 3.2 Providing an excellent customer service

As you probably know the initial moments of a visit in a museum are very important. If you are **warmly welcomed, clearly given all the information** you need and **helped by the museum staff** to plan your museum route and professionally assisted, you will feel better disposed to enjoy your visit. You immediately get a good impression of the museum and the staff, and of course you get the feeling that the museum provides a quality service.

This approach should be applied for the whole Service Chain to all visitors, with or without disabilities paying attention to all the aspects of a visit.

People with disabilities must plan carefully their visit. They need to know how to get there, whether there are any barriers to the access, what can be visited and what services are available. So they can decide whether the visit is worthwhile or not. For this reason, all relevant information should be **available and accessible for example on the museum website**.

Then, once arrived, they might need further information how to move through the exhibition or what **assistive tools are available**. Or they might ask for any kind of help or assistance.

And finally, once they have finished their visit, they might like to leave **a feedback of their experience**.

If we want to provide a good service, we must deliver the right information in an effective way.

Therefore, in the next sections you find some tips and suggestions:

- what information to provide before and during the visit
- how to gather feedbacks from visitors
- how to communicate in a clear and effective way
- how to address visitors' problems.

### 3.2.1 What visitors need to know

Don't assume that nowadays everybody uses the Internet or reads a leaflet to get information they need before the visit. Lots of people, especially elderly people prefer using the phone or having a person answering their requests. And when they arrive they prefer asking rather than reading signage or instructions before starting the route. They feel much more confident having to do with a person rather than with a piece of paper or a screen. For this reason, it is important to always assist all visitors with equal attention to their requests, providing the following information:

#### About physical access

- how to get there
- connections to accessible public transport
- parking facilities for disabled people and accompanists
- tactile and/or sensorial trails and pavings
- accessible entrance
- seating available around the museum

#### About the exhibition

- what can be visited and if there are any restraints or parts of the museum not accessible
- costs, tickets, discounts and free of charge services for disabled persons or their accompanists
- available audio-video tools and support for visual and hearing impairment
- Braille guidebooks available
- tactile tools or tours available
- estimated visit length
- additional services available: e.g. wheelchairs, accompanying staff
- on demand guided tours or accompanists for free
- workshops and laboratories

#### About additional services

- location of accessible wardrobe, dressing rooms
- location of accessible toilets or baby change facilities
- café, bar or refreshments
- resting rooms
- visitor assistance



### **3.2.2 Visitor feedback management**

It is important to gather remarks, comments and suggestion from visitors after the visit, because it is possible to make improvements and provide a better service. Each museum is provided with different ways of collecting feedback: from the traditional visitor's book, to the more sophisticated touch screen devices. Visitors might also leave comments later on social media like Facebook if available. So it is important to:

- ask the visitors if they want to leave a feedback
- show where and how to do it
- provide different accessible formats to give feedback
- give assistance, if necessary
- collect and evaluate these feedbacks and take measures if necessary
- inform the visitors about measures that have been taken after feedback has been given so that they see that feedback is appreciated and can change things

### **3.2.3 How to communicate**

The very first thing to do is to welcome heartily every visitor who enters the museum. A smile and warm greeting makes people feel at ease. Eye contact establishes real communication with the visitors. Whenever giving directions, instructions or answering questions at the telephone, at the reception or inside the museum's premises, the following simple rules should be followed:

- pronounce sentences and words clearly
- use short sentences
- never put your hand before your mouth while speaking
- give clear and easy instructions avoiding over-complicated language
- use a language appropriate for your audience
- be patient and repeat if necessary
- avoid background noises when answering the phone
- if you record messages in the answering machine, they should be slow and clearly pronounced.

This approach will benefit not only people with disabilities, but anyone!



### ***3.2.4 Do's and Don'ts in interaction with visitors***

Interaction is one of the most important factor in the connection between visitors and museum staff.

Here you can find an example list of positive and negative approaches:

- focus on the person and not on the disability
- direct your attention to the person with the disability, never to his or her assistant or interpreter
- ask if and what help is needed
- if assistance is accepted, wait for the instructions
- respect people's personal space and privacy
- speak eye level with the person
- let people see your lips and facial expression when talking
- you can give verbal instructions when walking with a blind or visually impaired person, describing the surroundings and obstacles (eg. about steps, seating, etc.)
- never distract guide dogs
- don't be afraid to make mistakes, anyone can make them, just learn from them and move on

### ***3.2.5 Solving problems***

One of the most appreciated features by anyone is finding someone solving your problem. Visitors could need help anytime so be always prepared to look for a solution!

Here are some simple suggestions on **how to behave** (Do's)

- listen carefully to any requests, you must understand exactly what the problem is
- look in the eye when he or she is explaining, he or she must feel that you are really paying attention and caring
- make questions to verify that you correctly understood what the concern is about
- think about possible solutions
- be flexible unless you don't break any important rules
- if you can't find a solution, accompany the person to a colleague that might be able to address the problem.



Here's a list of **behaviours to avoid** (Dont's)

- don't pretend to listen to and then say you can't help without having really understood the problem
- don't say you can't help because you are not in charge for that issue, without mentioning who is in charge and could maybe help
- don't discharge the person to other colleagues, without knowing whether they can help or not.

It isn't always possible to find a solution. Visitors won't expect from you a miracle. But they will appreciate your efforts and the care you have demonstrated.

## 4 VISITING THE EXHIBITIONS

### 4.1 Multisensory exhibition

Multisensory presentations give the opportunity to enjoy exhibitions also to people with visual, hearing and cognitive impairments. Multisensory means accessing information through more than one of our senses. Beside sight, an exhibition should be experienced as much as possible through the other senses: hearing, touching, tasting and smelling.

At a multisensory tour, art can be appreciated by combining the use of different senses. For example, when a spoken tour is held in simplified language and in sign language and includes objects to touch, smell and taste. Positive experiences are also made with creative workshops where visitors are actively involved in different activities (drawing, painting, etc).

Museums provide visitors also with assistive devices like audio and video guides, view/audio enhancement tools, multimedia devices, tactile tools and simplified museum guides.

#### 4.1.1 *Audio and video guides*

Audio guides are very useful when visiting an exhibition because they allow visitors to watch the artefacts and have an immediate explanation without reading labels or panels. This is a great help especially for those people who can have difficulties with reading, like elderly people, children, persons wearing bi-focal lenses or persons with dyslexia.

Then they allow all visitors to appreciate better artefacts: standing back and having the opportunity to admire the work of art as a whole.

Audio guides are usually available as devices you can rent at the museum entrance, or apps downloadable on your smartphone. Blind people can use audio guides on accessible touchpads.

Audio guides content might present a simple description of the artefacts of an exhibition or have more advanced interactive features for different purposes and recipients.

They usually provide:

- interactive map of the museum (text and audio)
- text, audio and video description of the artefacts of an exhibition in one or more languages
- guided or recommended exhibition tours
- interactive game-based experiences (e.g. for children)
- storytelling based tours
- audio descriptive guides for blind visitors
- video guides with subtitles or captions
- video guides in sign language

#### ***4.1.2 Tactile tools***

Tactile tools can be used as interpretation aids by visually impaired people. Tactile drawings or paintings can translate works of art, spaces or buildings into a tactile language.

They do not reproduce exactly the original artefacts, but they allow people to create a mental image.

They can be used together with Braille information and audio explanation.

## 4.2 Interacting with visitors

Since accompanying groups through exhibitions consists in describing, explaining and telling things, all basic communication techniques should be fully employed: use of voice and body language, logic and clarity of reasoning, rhythm and narration.

In case of visitors with visual impairments, it is important to describe and reproduce verbally the work of arts so that they can really get an idea of it. Our description can be combined with the use of some tactile reproductions or models.

### 4.2.1 *Introducing the tour*

One of the most important moments of the visit is the first contact with the visitors: **introduce yourself** and, if it is a small group, greet each visitor.

If the persons of the group don't know each other, ask their names and where they come from. In this way it is easier to establish a relation between the participants.

Ask them about their expectations for the visit or why they chose to come to the museum. This will help to modify the tour according to the interests and needs of the visitors. The visitors will get the feeling that they are important and that the museum is arranging a special tour for them, not a standard tour.

In this first phase it is important to get a first idea of who the visitors are and **how to interact** with them. From this one-minute feedback try to get enough information to choose an appropriate type of communication.

At this point **introduce the tour programme**: what they are going to visit and how long the route will last. Hand out leaflets or other information materials they might want to have.

If there are any important **prescriptions** they must know or rule of **behaviour** they have to follow during the tour, be clear, gentle, but firm. And explain the reason why they must comply with.

Provide **practical information about facilities**, like location of toilets, rest rooms, cafe or shop. Ask in advance if they need anything, like special requests about the exhibition and what to see, or about available facilities.

Check whether some participants want to use audio/video guides, aid tools or any other devices.

If the visitors realize that the museum staff cares for them and their wellbeing, it is likely to gain their trust and sympathy. And this will make the task much easier.

#### ***4.2.2 Presenting museum objects and items***

In order to deliver a clear and orderly presentation of a museum object or item, the following aspects should be taken consideration:

##### Structure

- Introduce briefly the objects anticipating the topics you will deal with, so the visitors will be able to follow the presentation more easily.
- Describe or explain the objects
- Involve visitors asking their opinions, impressions or feelings that the objects arise.
- Apply storytelling techniques: they have been proofed effective in getting the attention and raise curiosity, especially among children.
- Don't make too many digressions from the main focus of the presentation. There is the risk that the presentation might lose logical sequence of the contents and the connections between them.
- End the presentation with a powerful and effective final sentence, something which will be remembered by the visitors, leaving in this way a positive impression.

##### Language register

- Pay attention to the type of language used during the presentation. The style and degree of formality will depend upon the type of the visitors.
- Keep your talk simple and direct.
- Use words and expressions that are natural to you

- Avoid difficult abstract concepts.

### Voice

- Before starting the presentation make sure that everybody can hear you and adjust your voice until they can hear you clearly, without sounding like you are shouting.
- Keep the attention of the visitors, varying the tone, rhythm and volume. In this way the voice will sound richer and more expressive. So never speak in a monotone or everybody will stop listening.
- Don't talk too fast or too slow. And don't forget the pauses! Pauses have the same value and power of words. Pauses are used for emphasis, or for comic or dramatic effects.
- And finally remember to breathe correctly. Deep and regular breathing allows to improve the sound quality of the voice and reduce tension.

### Body language

- Establish real communication making eye contact.
- Use your hands consciously. Above all, avoid to scratch your head or other parts of your body. Use your hands, fingers and arms to accompany and reinforce the things you are describing.
- And don't rock from side to side!

### 4.2.3 Describing art to blind people

Before starting the actual verbal description of the work, it is important to provide some preliminary information. The following questions might help structure the introduction to the work.

- What is it? A painting, a statue, an archaeological relic ...
- Where is it placed? How big is it? What is made of?
- What is the theme of the work?
- Who is the artist?
- When was it created?
- Why was created?

Then start describing the piece. If there is a tactile reproduction of the painting, you can use it. The person, touching the reproduction, can have more clues to reproduce mentally the image. But remember, the tactile



reproduction is not like a photograph, it is more like a map where one can find the position of the elements represented.

So at the beginning, you need to accompany the person's hand in the exploration of the reproduction, explaining the key elements of the image he or she is touching.

Colours could be “translated” or compared with the perceptions of other senses. For example, comparing colours to materials they can touch, like earth, water, wood or stone.

#### **4.2.4 Workshops, interactive activities and seminars**

Museums can be ideal places for inspiration, learning and enjoyment. They can provide lots of opportunities to anyone regardless their cultural or social background to enjoy art, science and history, as well as to support learning in a creative environment.

Workshops, interactive activities and seminars are an effective way to attract a wider range of visitors, involving not only specialists, but also people who might not be interested in visiting museums.

- **Workshops** are designed to engage more actively visitors and amplify their enjoyment of the museum. Furthermore, they can enhance a deeper understanding of the themes related to an exhibition, gain hands-on experience, learn new skills or techniques and carry out creative projects.
- **Interactive activities** act as an incentive to explore what people see on their visit. They can stimulate learning by first-hand experience. There are many activities aimed at schools and children offered by museums like activity boxes used for playing and learning at the same time.
- **Seminars** are usually aimed at professionals, but they could be also appealing for non-experts interested in learning something new.



## 4.3 Storytelling

### 4.3.1 *Every piece of art tells a story*

Every piece of art tells a story. Well, usually lots of stories that can be told: stories about the artist, the fortune of the work and the characters represented.

The use of storytelling will enrich the visit in the museum. You can combine objects at the exhibition and make a story based on them.

Of course, storytelling can be used also to describe or explain items displayed in natural history or sciences museums as well.

You can also engage visitors asking them questions or giving tasks. For example, talking about mummies of people you can ask if ancient Egyptians mummified only people. Most visitors usually say "No, they mummified also animals, like cats". So you might ask a group, for example some children, to find animal mummies at the exhibition. Or ask them to invent their own stories.

When you describe a work of art to a group in an exhibition you have no more than five minutes. Visitors are likely to stand while listening to. So it is important to be concise. Otherwise, if more time is needed, better make a briefing in a room with seating and using some visuals or videos.

### 4.3.2 *Structuring a story*

All stories have more or less the same dramatic structure that can be split into five main moments:

Initial situation

- Description of the background of the story (space and time) and the main characters.

Something happens

- Event that breaks the equilibrium of the initial situation (e.g. a conflict between characters, the arising of a problem, the discovering of a crime, etc.).

### Development of events

- Description of the sequence of events. It is the core of the story where things usually get entangled, characters fight against each other, and it is not clear what the outcome will be.

### Climax

- Moment of highest dramatic intensity of the story that can lead to different outcomes: the solution of the problem, the discovery of the assassin, the hero dies etc.

### Resolution or final situation

- Describe the new equilibrium established after the conflict has been resolved: peace re-established, the rightful king on the throne, etc.

Each story should be balanced between different kinds of narration:

- **Narrative sequences**, where the events and the action of the story is told.
- **Descriptive sequences**, where places and characters are described.
- **Reflective sequences**, where comments or considerations are made about the characters or the meaning of the story.

The combination of these elements determine the pace of the story.

There is a last important feature that can be applied. It is how the events are combined. For example, one can:

- follow the chronological events
- start from the end
- from the middle, telling what has already happened and then go on till the end of the story.

Of course, there are many options and combinations. It is up to you to decide how to tell your story.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

COME-IN! Handbook has focused on the knowledge and skills necessary to deliver a good service to visitors, taking into consideration all issues regarding INCLUSION and ACCESSIBILITY in museums, and in particular:

- the AWARENESS that BARRIERS ARE THE PROBLEM not the disability, which means having always an inclusive approach which benefits all the museums customers, not only people with disabilities
- the importance to know how to IDENTIFY AND REMOVE ANY BARRIER that could hinder the full access to museums and galleries
- the use of an INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE, which focuses on the person, not on the disability
- the Museum SERVICE CHAIN, as an innovative approach about accessibility that includes all aspects of the visit: information and communication before the visit, arrival, entrance, cash desk, wardrobe, exhibition area, toilet, shop and information and communication after the visit
- and last but not least, the relevance of COMMUNICATION AND CUSTOMER CARE, which implies paying always attention to all visitors' needs and requests.

## Annex 1 - Accessibility requirements mapping

Accessibility Service chain	Physical access	Information access	Social access	Economical access
<b>INPUT</b> Information and communication before the visit		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access Statement</li> <li>• Web access A/AA or</li> <li>• Web access AAA</li> <li>• Web pages with video components in sign language</li> <li>• <i>Information in simplified language</i></li> <li>• Accessible design of printed information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation and Collaboration with associations of people with disabilities</li> <li>• <i>Schools' inclusion policy</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free of charge or</li> <li>• Equal service for equal price</li> </ul>

Accessibility Service chain	Physical access	Information access	Social access	Economical access
<b>ARRIVAL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Norms/rules compliance</li> <li>• Parking facilities for people with disabilities near the entrance</li> <li>• Connection to accessible public transport</li> <li>• Tactile / sensorial trails and paving</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about the arrival (part of Access Statement)</li> <li>• Accessible orientation system</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free parking or</li> <li>• Equal service for equal price (and personal assistance for free)</li> </ul>

Accessibility Service chain	Physical access	Information access	Social access	Economical access
<b>ENTRANCE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Norms/rules compliance</li> <li>• Accessible doors</li> <li>• Ergonomic stairs</li> <li>• If stairs, then also ramp or elevator</li> <li>• Moving space</li> <li>• <i>Carpet suitable for the usage with wheels</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessible information about the entrance (Access Statement)</li> <li>• Orientation maps (easy to read, tactile)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Entrance customer care</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free of charge or</li> <li>• Equal service for equal price (and personal assistance for free)</li> </ul>

Accessibility Service chain	Physical access	Information access	Social access	Economical access
<b>CASH DESK</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Norms/rules compliance</li> <li>• Ergonomic desk (suitable also for wheelchair users)</li> <li>• Moving space</li> <li>• Tactile trails</li> <li>• Induction loop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trained staff</li> <li>• Clear marking of cash desk</li> <li>• <i>Accessible pricing information (font size, high contrasts, etc.)</i></li> <li>• Brochures/leaflets in alternative formats (easy to read, braille, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Employees with disabilities</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free of charge or</li> <li>• Equal service for equal price (and personal assistance for free)</li> </ul>

Accessibility Service chain	Physical access	Information access	Social access	Economical access
<b>WARDROBE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Norms/rules compliance</li> <li>• <i>Close to cash desk</i></li> <li>• Accessible wardrobe (e.g. height, etc.)</li> <li>• Accessible lockers (tactile numbers or signs, hangers in different heights)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trained staff</li> <li>• <i>Accessible pricing information (font size, high contrasts, etc.)</i></li> <li>• Clear marking of wardrobe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Employees with disabilities</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free of charge or</li> <li>• Equal service for equal price (and personal assistance for free)</li> </ul>

Accessibility Service chain	Physical access	Information access	Social access	Economical access
<b>EXHIBITION AREA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Norms/rules compliance</li> <li>• Floor suitable for wheels</li> <li>• Moving space</li> <li>• If stairs, then also ramps or elevators</li> <li>• Exhibition's orientation system</li> <li>• Stream of visitors does not differ in people with or without people with disabilities</li> <li>• Position of the artefacts</li> <li>• Resting areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about the exhibition area (Access Statement)</li> <li>• Exhibition's orientation system</li> <li>• <i>Description of the artefacts in different formats</i></li> <li>• <i>Audio and video guides in alternative formats (Sign language, etc.)</i></li> <li>• <i>Immersive experience (meeting several senses)</i></li> <li>• <i>Offer of devices (induction loop, etc.)</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Employees with disabilities</i></li> <li>• <i>Inclusive guiding tours</i></li> <li>• <i>Trained staff</i></li> <li>• <i>Assistant dogs allowed</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Free of charge or</i></li> <li>• <i>Equal service for equal price (and personal assistance for free)</i></li> </ul>

Accessibility Service chain	Physical access	Information access	Social access	Economical access
<b>TOILET</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Norms/rules compliance</li> <li>• Accessible toilets (moving space, height of equipment, handgrips etc.)</li> <li>• Euro Key to toilets for people with disabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about the toilet in the access statement</li> <li>• Clear marking of the toilets</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Free of charge or</i></li> <li>• <i>Equal service for equal price</i></li> </ul>



Accessibility Service chain	Physical access	Access to information and communication	Social access	Economical access
<b>SHOP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Norms/rules compliance</li> <li>• Accessible doors</li> <li>• Moving space</li> <li>• <i>Accessible Cash desk (height, etc.)</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Accessible pricing information</i></li> <li>• Accessible books and guides available</li> <li>• <i>Trained staff</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees with disabilities</li> </ul>	

Accessibility Service chain	Physical access	Access to information and communication	Social access	Economical access
<b>OUTPUT</b> Information and communication after the visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Norms/rules compliance</li> <li>• If feedback point, then accessible</li> <li>• <i>Different formats to give feedback</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliance with the Museum Quality Management System</li> <li>• Information about feedback management</li> <li>• <i>Feedback provision</i></li> <li>• <i>Trained staff</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social access oriented feedback</li> <li>• Quality enhancement strategies</li> </ul>	

## Annex 2 - Online sources

### Interaction and communication

- National Service Knowledge Network on YouTube, *Communicating with people with disabilities - Ask me first*,  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VH0To4kXwfs>
- Coordown, short film “*Not special needs*”.  
<http://www.notspecialneeds.com/>
- National Service Knowledge Network Website:  
[www.serviceandinclusion.org/index.php](http://www.serviceandinclusion.org/index.php)
- The International Council on English Braille website, [www.iceb.org](http://www.iceb.org)
- Perkins School for the Blind and Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, [www.pathstoliteracy.org](http://www.pathstoliteracy.org)
- The Tommy Edison Experience. *The Funny Side of Being Blind*.  
<https://www.youtube.com/user/TommyEdisonXP/featured>
- British Dyslexia Association, *What are specific learning difficulties*,  
[www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/educator/what-are-specific-learning-difficulties](http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/educator/what-are-specific-learning-difficulties)
- DysTalk, *Talks on Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Dyspraxia* (videos)  
[www.dystalk.com](http://www.dystalk.com)
- British Deaf Association Website: [www.bda.org.uk](http://www.bda.org.uk)
- National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders website:  
[www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/hearing-aids](http://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/hearing-aids)

### Multisensory exhibitions

- Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien. *Museum’s Book*.  
<https://shop.khm.at/en/shop/detail/?shop%5BshowItem%5D=100000000029464-1693-0&shop%5Bfilter%5D%5BtagsFacet%5D=>
- Macval Musée D’art Contemporain Du Val De Marne. *Multi-sensory Tours*.  
[www.macval.fr/english/visits-events/visits/article/multi-sensory-tours#h3\\_tdm](http://www.macval.fr/english/visits-events/visits/article/multi-sensory-tours#h3_tdm)
- Metropolitan Museum of Art.  
[www.metmuseum.org/blogs/digital-underground/2015/multisensory-met](http://www.metmuseum.org/blogs/digital-underground/2015/multisensory-met)
- Typhlological museum (Tiflološki muzej) Croatia.  
[www.tiflološkimuzej.hr/home\\_en.aspx?id=48](http://www.tiflološkimuzej.hr/home_en.aspx?id=48)
- Van Gogh Museum. *Feeling Van Gogh*.  
[www.vangoghmuseum.nl/en/whats-on/feeling-van-gogh](http://www.vangoghmuseum.nl/en/whats-on/feeling-van-gogh)



## Audio guides

- British Museum, Audio guides, [www.britishmuseum.org/visiting/planning\\_your\\_visit/audio\\_guides.aspx](http://www.britishmuseum.org/visiting/planning_your_visit/audio_guides.aspx)
- Metropolitan Museum of Art, Audio guides, [www.metmuseum.org/visit/audio-guide](http://www.metmuseum.org/visit/audio-guide)

## Tactile tools

- Anke Brock, Christophe Jouffrais. *Interactive audio-tactile maps for visually impaired people*. <https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-01237319/document>
- British Museum. *Room 4 Touch Tour*. [http://www.britishmuseum.org/learning/access/egyptian\\_touch\\_tour.aspx](http://www.britishmuseum.org/learning/access/egyptian_touch_tour.aspx)
- Deutsches Historisches Museum (Berlin). *Inclusive communication stations*. [www.dhm.de/besuch-service/barrierefreies-museum.html](http://www.dhm.de/besuch-service/barrierefreies-museum.html)
- Louvre Museum. *Touch Stations on Historic Architectural Development*. [www.louvre.fr/accessibilite](http://www.louvre.fr/accessibilite)
- Zentrum für Virtual Reality und Visualisierung. *Tactile Paintings/ Art beyond sight. Tactile diagrams*. [www.artbeyondsight.org/handbook/acs-tactile.shtml](http://www.artbeyondsight.org/handbook/acs-tactile.shtml)

## Storytelling

- British Museum. *Fieldnotes Storytelling*. [www.britishmuseum.org/PDF/storytelling\\_resource\\_changed\\_font\\_size.pdf](http://www.britishmuseum.org/PDF/storytelling_resource_changed_font_size.pdf)
- The National Gallery (London). *Paintings for storytelling*. [www.nationalgallery.org.uk/learning/teachers-and-schools/teaching-english-and-drama/paintings-for-storytelling](http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/learning/teachers-and-schools/teaching-english-and-drama/paintings-for-storytelling)
- Children Museum (Pittsburgh, USA). *Museum Story Guide*. <https://pittsburghkids.org/visit/accessibility>