



T-GUIDE Tourist Guides for People with Intellectual Disability
and/or Learning Difficulties in Europe

Partnership Report based on Interviews and Focus Groups

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Abstract (for dissemination)

During in-depth interviews and focus groups experts in the T-Guide field highlighted vital suggestions, what kind of knowledge, abilities, skills might be trained during course for tourist guides, who would like to work with people with intellectual disabilities. Experts suggest that trainings might consist of theoretical inputs and practical exercises. Additionally, skills and experience of candidate for Tourist Guide for intellectually disabled people might be proven either through training, work experience or/and online exam.

Keywords: vocational training for tourist guides, knowledge and skills for people working with intellectual disabled, expert suggestions

References & Applicable Documents		
Document Title	Reference Name	Category*
Italian In-depth Interviews and Focus Group Report		R
Austrian In-depth Interviews and Focus Group Report		R
Belgium In-depth Interviews and Focus Group Report		R
Latvian In-depth Interviews and Focus Group Report		R
Spanish In-depth Interviews and Focus Group Report		R
British In-depth Interviews and Focus Group Report		R
French In-depth Interviews and Focus Group Report		R

(*) Category: R = Report, C = Contract

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Partnership Report based on Interviews and Focus Groups

Qualitative analysis results

The qualitative part of the survey consisted of in-depth interviews and focus group interviews. The main purpose of the use of this survey technique was to gather in-depth information, supplementing the questionnaire survey, concerning interviewees knowledge and experience in working with people with intellectual disabilities and/or learning difficulties. The interviews were carried out by partners from France, Spain, Austria, Belgium, United Kingdom, Latvia and Italy - the following part of the report presents a summary of the answers given by the participants from these partner countries. In total, from the 27th May to the 18th October 2013 from 7 to 10 in-depth interviews were gathered in every country, so in total, 64 people took part in the interviews. Project partners also organized focus group meetings, conducted by appointed moderators. Meetings included from 2 to 7 people, in total, 31 participants.

All participants were asked to give information about their occupation and previous experience in working with people with disabilities. Because of a different amount of detail of the information gathered by group moderators in partner countries, the information reported here is literally taken from national reports and divided according to partner countries.

1. Which way experts were involved in tourism, culture and guiding?

Group of experts from all collaborative countries were represented by:

- Experts in disability care who have specialized in leisure activities and barrier-free accessibility
- Experts in museums/galleries, responsible in charge of visitors with special needs
- Tourist guides
- Workers of KVG (Belgium) - a group for people with disabilities, parents, partners, siblings, volunteers with and without disabilities and professionals who assist people with disabilities.
- Expert trainer who teaches about tourism and handicap

- People with intellectual disabilities who like to travel, make city trips and go on guided tours and members of their family
- Coordinator of the Tourism Degree at the University of Granada.
- Psychiatrist with therapeutic experience
- Expert in social project management
- President of Proodos - a consortium that associates 15 social cooperatives

2. Do you have any experience in providing services to clients with intellectual disabilities or/and learning difficulties?

Most participants had at least brief experience in working with people with intellectual/learning disabilities and guided tours for this group.

France:

All attendees conducted guided tours for groups of people with learning difficulties and intellectual disabilities, two of the interviewees teach at University level about Tourism and Handicap, all others work for organizations for people with disabilities which organize cultural visits and walks for these groups.

Spain:

The majority don't have much experience in the provision of a service to people intellectually disabled, with the exception of the Travel Agency specialized in Accessible Tourism.

Austria:

All attendees interviewed have done guided tours for groups of people with intellectual disabilities or work for organizations for people with disabilities.

Belgium:

All attendees interviewed for this project give guided tours for groups of people with intellectual disabilities, three of them are involved in work with associations and organizations providing service to the disabled, one of them conducts training for guides on how to work with people with disabilities.

United Kingdom:

The attendees experience was with individual family members – both their own family and individuals in groups. Some had had experience as driver guides. One person had previous educational experience with this group.

Italy:

The attendees had experience in working with people with intellectual disabilities on different fields like health care (psychiatry), social service, education, and non-formal occasions.

Latvia:

The attendees interviewed consisted of two groups: people working in tourism field who have no experience in working with people with intellectual and/or learning difficulties, and professionals from organizations of/for people with intellectual disabilities have experience only in providing services on every day basis.

3. What should be taken into account when working with clients with intellectual disabilities or/and learning difficulties?

Facts mentioned by experts might be divided into categories:

France/Austria/Belgium/Spain

- The need of gaining specific information before guided trip e.g by answering to the following questions:
 - o What a size of the group is?
 - o What age the group members and what are their names are?
 - o What kind of disability/ies do they have?
 - o Have they visited a museum/gallery/monument or done any tour outdoors before?
 - o How much time they want to spend in a guided tour?
 - o What are their needs and interests?
 - o What do they want to see/experience?
 - o How is it possible to become sure that the needs of the group are met?
 - o What aim does the group want to pursue?
 - o What messages do we want to transmit to the group?
 - o How many carers are going to accompany the group
 - o Is a museum or starting point easily accessible by public transport?

Belgium

- Need of being aware of specific relational aspect of contact with people with special intellectual needs e.g.
 - Be aware of exceptionality of every attendant, their gratefulness and spontaneity
 - Be focused on gaining trust
- Adjusting the size of a group: from 7 to 15 persons; per 5 people, there should be an additional carer to accompany the group.
- Putting stress on safety issues - people with intellectual disabilities might be not aware of danger e.g. pickpockets

Austria

- Being aware of difficulties in assessing_the specific constellation of a group that includes people with disabilities and determining how much of what was said is being registered or understood.
- The need of adjusting teaching methods e.g.:
 - Freizeitassistentz (Leisure Assistance) Methods: no foreign words, slow speech, no long sentences.
 - CAPITO methods: prepare for the guided tour, for instance in written form to control the length, complexity of speech'

Spain

- Diversifying tour programs with audiovisual or easy-reading material, adapted audio-guides, or texts with pictograms, telling them stories, anecdotes
- Using easy and comprehensible language in order to provide enjoyment and understanding.
- Shortening the duration of visits, reducing the content and adapting to a suitable timing.
- Allowing attendants to take part in the visit, to encourage them to take pictures.

Italy

- Controlling own fear and timidity in relationship

- Taking into account attention span of clients
- Recognizing types of disabilities
- Being active listener
- Having abilities of solving problems
- Adopting and simplifying a language with references to the daily life experience
- Being aware of relationships between members of the group
- Cooperating with teachers/ cooperatives
- Satisfying all attendants - etc. teachers, children with intellectual disabilities and without (in mixed groups)
- Lengthening of the time of the visit (with a consequent increase in the cost of the visit).

Latvia

- Gaining extra information about attendants before excursion
- Adjusting the form of presented knowledge in easy-to-understand way with engaging attendant's senses by allowing to see, touch, smell and hear
- Using already existing resources, training materials e.g. from project “Pathways to Adult Education for People with Intellectual Disabilities” - See more at: <http://inclusion-europe.org/en/projects/past-projects/pathways-i#sthash.zNW4RJst.dpuf>
- Remembering about the positive attitude of intellectually disabled people to taking part in any kind of activities.

Summary

Experts decided that working with clients with intellectual disabilities or/and learning difficulties requires:

- Gaining detailed, extra knowledge before conducting a trip
- Being aware of maintaining positive relationship with clients, showing respect and being active listener
- Adjusting teaching methods, programs of a tour, language, delivery size of a group, timing
- Using already existing resources, training materials
- Accenting safety issues,
- Checking clients' attention span, understanding of presented knowledge and seeking for feedback
- Motivating clients by e.g. asking about opinions

- Demonstrating vital personal features like empathy, sensitiveness and ability to control fear and timidity
- Coping effectively with problematic behaviors and problems
- Being aware of relational aspect of contact between members of the group
- Cooperating with teachers/ cooperatives
- Satisfying all attendants - etc. teachers, children with intellectual disabilities and without (in mixed groups)

4. How do you evaluate present activities for integration/inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities or/and learning difficulties into tourist guiding?

France:

A few qualified tourist guides-lecturers working for specific museums and monuments in France offer guided tours for people with intellectual disabilities or/and learning difficulties e.g in the Louvre Museum, the Georges Pompidou Centre (modern art), the Musée des Civilisations, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Maison Victor Hugo.

Furthermore, the training of tourist guides of France includes a study unit in which needs of intellectually disabled might be taken into account called: *Knowledge and organising/management of the professional activity* (level licence as master degree), which includes the following item: *Knowledge of the diversity of each audience, their cultural or sociological specificities, their needs and their expectations*. Additionally In the *University of Nanterre Paris X*, (studies for tourism and handicap), and in the *University of Marne la Vallee*, there is a class about public with special needs.

Spain:

Experts mentioned only that problem of an integration/inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities or/and learning difficulties is publicly unknown and that there are no training programs tailored for people with intellectual disabilities. However, in all experts opinion integration and inclusion of this group is absolutely necessary.

Austria:

Only the Austrian capital of Vienna offer special tours for people with intellectual disabilities at the Kunsthistorisches Museum, the Naturhistorisches Museum, and the parliament. There are no tailored activities outside the capital whatsoever, but they were conducted in the past.

Belgium:

Of all partner countries Belgium have several projects dedicated to people with disabilities:

- Castle of Gaasbeek, with the audio guide made by and for people with intellectual disabilities. At the moment the guided tours are given experience-based by guides who are in touch with people with intellectual disabilities.
- “Museum Customized” including learning from experience and tailored guided tours. In publication of “Museum customized” the purple pages are for people with an intellectual disability.
- “Guided tour of the 5 senses Kortrijk”
- Training of tourism Flanders: “guiding people with disabilities”

United Kingdom:

Experts referred only to quality of training for tourist guides and stated that there are no classes or trainings covering the topic. Problems are connected with a lack of information, difficulties in identifying problematic behaviours of people with intellectual/learning difficulties and dealing with them, also a little interest in the subject in general.

Italy:

According to experts knowledge at present there are no guided tours initiatives promoting artwork for people with intellectual disabilities (which are available for motor or sensory disabilities), except for tour guides working with school-age students, but still poorly organized in unified strategies.

Latvia:

All experts stated that the discussion concerning integration/inclusion of intellectually disabled people does not exist, mostly because of the economic reasons and lack of financial support. At the same time experts declare interest in providing adequate service and see the need of gaining knowledge and experience.

Summary

It was agreed that current activities are not as good as they should be, or even non-existent, and only in few countries there are classes or trainings covering the topic of supplying touristic guidance for people with intellectual disabilities or/and learning difficulties.

5. What do people with intellectual disabilities or/and learning difficulties expect from tourist guides?

From tourist guide might be expected:

France

1. Gaining vital information from visit organizers and accompanying persons in order to find out participants understanding and abilities.
2. Introducing him/herself and encouraging the group members to introduce themselves, in order to achieve the beginning of a personal acquaintance from the beginning and to have best attention.
3. Using animation and theatrical elements for a guided tour
4. Using objects/pictures to tell a story of a site/monument/park
5. Treating the group as adults and as the rest of the world
6. Giving the group time to ask questions and to discuss/comment
7. Remembering that persons with intellectual disabilities have their own way of thinking, with no limits
8. Adapting to the interests of the group, even if there are unexpected surprises for the guide during the tour

Belgium

- Adjusting approach to the preferences of target group
- Discussing all the possibilities from the first contact with the person, the group or a mentor of the group e.g. Which museum do they want to visit, is it a first tour of a group, are there any special requirements etc.
- Helping participants to be acquainted in advance e.g. by showing the drawing of the facade of the museum, photographs of artworks, facilities of the museum
- Providing a friendly welcome for people with disabilities.
- Explaining the structure of the activities in advance.
- Adjusting the guided tour to the intellectual level of the group e.g. bringing a story in a simple and understandable way.
- Responding to the group and asking questions
 - to know what group members already know, what interests them ...
 - to check understanding.

- to let them guess the answer themselves.
- Using appropriate, simple language
 - Avoiding difficult words and long sentences.
 - Being careful with wordplay.
 - Noting that not everyone can (easily) read.
- Working multi-sensorial to stimulate the different senses (see, hear, taste, smell, touch)
- Using a variation in didactical material e.g. play a game, drawing, dressing up, view at photos

Austria

- Asking clients themselves about their needs
- Treating clients like adults
- Avoiding banal description or quibbles that might undermine the factual relay of information

Spain

- Enabling and encouraging attendants to participate in the visit actively
- Treating equally people with and without intellectual disability
- Providing personal interaction
- Being kind, generous, sensitive
- Spending more time on giving explanations, asking questions
- Adapting timing and language

Italy:

- Providing technical and relational support
- Helping to promote and popularise an idea of organizing facilities adjusted to the needs of clients with intellectual disabilities as a vital part of a marker
- Being aware of understanding, relationships and interactions
- Modifying approach to the individual needs
- Increasing the visit time, number of guides for a group and reducing the number of the participating persons
- Reorganizing a process of a guided tour etc. by adding extra activities (etc. reproducing an art-work), with taking into account the diversity of needs in heterogenic groups

Latvia

- Contacting with the cooperatives who assist attendants
- Making private contact with each attendant
- Providing attendants with easy language, accessible information, understanding of situation
- Have previous information, knowledge and practical experience
- Having personal traits enabling attendants to feel comfortable and safe during tour

Summary

Expectation mentioned by experts might be summarize by suggestions that the tourist guide should:

- Treat people with intellectual disability respectfully by showing courtesy, kindness, generosity, sensitiveness, attention to their needs with avoidance of patronizing
- Adapt to preferences and intellectual possibilities of a target group including adjusting language, timing, number of guides and people in the group, varying and simplifying the tour and/or information, providing extra help, technical and relational support and time when needed etc.
- Modifying approach to the individual needs
- Increase level of understanding, attention, personal acquaintance, comfort and enjoyment, feeling of safety and being treated personally by using variation of didactical techniques and interpersonal skills
- Contact with visit organizers and accompanying persons
- Promote and popularise an idea of organizing facilities adjusted to the needs of clients with intellectual disabilities as a vital part of a marker

6. What skills and tools do tourist guides need in order to provide effective service for people with intellectual disabilities or/and learning difficulties?

Experts focused their attention not only on skills and tools but also on following virtues:

France

- **Personal features:**
 - patience,
 - enthusiasm

- neutrality
 - adaptability
 - creativity
 - imagination
 - humility
 - being calm and relaxed,
 - tolerance
 - self-confidence,
 - being open-minded without feeling prejudice
 - good articulation
 - willingness and interest to work with this kind of groups
- **Skills and tools:**
 - overall and detailed knowledge on the exhibit/item presented by the guide
 - communicational skills:
 - omitting complicated and abstract information from a presentation,
 - describing objects/exhibits clearly with no perplexed interpretations,
 - avoiding using dates, complicated terms or synonymous words without explaining them
 - attracting attention and enhance memorizing e.g finding the most attractive tools connected to reality, asking questions
 - time management
 - creating a relationship of trust and security
 - avoiding situations creating stress, anxiety
 - offering a pleasure of a cultural discovery, treasure hunt, safari, socialization, having fun
 - handling personal questions, physical touch, gestures, impolite comments, without offending the visitors
 - distinguishing the imaginary, the myth from the reality

Belgium

- **Personal features:**
 - openness
 - being interested in the group
 - being open minded

- not being prejudiced
- patience
- flexibility

- **Skills and tools:**
 - working interactively
 - telling exciting stories
 - explaining everything in simple language
 - adapting the guided tour to the target group.
 - taking advantage of restrictions of a disability during a guided tour

Austria

- **Personal features:**
 - empathy
 - willingness to work with a variety of different people
 - interest in working with the target group
 - sense of humor
 - patience
 - persistence
 - staying calm and relaxed

- **Skills and tools:**
 - communicating effectively e.g using simple expressions; omit redundant information from a presentation
 - determining the interests of the group by asking beforehand

Spain

- **Personal features:**
 - empathy
 - sensitiveness
 - kindness
 - focus attention on people from a target group

- **Skills and tools:**
 - distinguishing types of intellectual disabilities

- obtaining information about the needs that the intellectually disabled people may have during the visits.

Italy:

- **Personal features:**
 - Not being prejudiced
 - "Common sense"
 - Empathy
- **Skills and tools**
 - Gaining knowledge about intellectual disabilities and suitable reporting systems
 - Being a participatory and sustainable promoter of a model of local development and of a process of social tourism for students
 - Adapting to different context and situations
 - Having communicational and interpersonal skills
 - Developing the ability to use non verbal language
 - Knowledge of the possibilities offered by the area in terms of the accessibility of tourist sites

Latvia:

- **Personal features:**
 - Patience
 - Empathy
 - Flexibility (react flexibly to different situations; adjusting style of work)
 - High control of emotions e.g. anger
 - Humour
- **Skills and tools**
 - Social competences

7. Have you ever met during your vocational training subjects focused on work with people with intellectual disabilities or/and learning difficulties ? If yes, what is missing during vocational training for tourist guides related to services addressed to people with intellectual disabilities or/and learning difficulties ?

Belgium:

In Belgium not every tourist guide had a special vocational training. There are people working in this field who work as art teachers or psycho-social workers, connected to the institutions or organizations for people with disabilities.

Training of tourist guides don't have a theoretical subjects concerning disabilities and mostly happen experience-based.

In opinion of the experts it would be good to enrich tourist guide trainings in ability to work multi-sensorial and flexibly match the guided tour to specific group.

Austria:

In Austria oorganizations conducting training for tourist guides (Institute for Economic Promotion, Institute for Vocational Promotion) do not feature during the vocational trainings any modules for people with disabilities.

Only the tourist guide training in the capital of Austria feature 3 hours of training focused on people with special needs. Vienna also provides guided tours for visually impaired and blind people and there is a special course in this topic.

Experts suggest that trainings should consist of theoretical inputs and practical exercises (e.g. preparing for a given subject and giving a guided tour for a group that includes people with disabilities, reflecting on what went well and what did not) and should also be focused on awareness-raising. Experts agreed that no specialization seems necessary at this point.

France:

Tourist guide training in general has a module about guided tours for people with disabilities, but mostly focused on the physically disabled.

Experts suggest that there's a need for basic theoretical knowledge about different types of disability including possible reactions, symptoms or behavior of these special groups. It is also important to raise awareness by keeping the groups own pace, necessity of being patient and flexible.

United Kingdom:

In experts opinion available trainings, focused on helping people with disabilities, do not include sufficient amount of information about people with intellectual disabilities or/and learning difficulties.

Interviewees suggested that there's a need for gaining information about what questions to ask, how to recognise people in difficulty or how to positively manage their experience, also to know what realistically is possible and what's not. It could take form of:

7. A video of what positive guiding of people with intellectual disabilities or/and learning difficulties looks like or an interview with people about what their expectations are
8. Meetings with people with intellectual disabilities or/and learning difficulties
9. Supplying basic knowledge of correct terms for intellectual disabilities or/and learning difficulties, to avoid offending people and ensure unambiguous communication.

Italy:

There are no subject concerning intellectual disability during vocational and educational training. Professionals interested in this subject seek educational opportunities in other contexts.

Latvia:

There are no subjects focused on people with any kind of disability, including intellectual, available. To provide proper service tourist guides need guidelines, basic knowledge of different kinds of disabilities and effective communication.

8. Is there a need for special training for tourist guides in the context of providing services for people with intellectual disabilities or/and learning difficulties?

All experts from collaborative countries/regions agreed with the existence of a need for special training for tourist guides in the context of providing services for people with intellectual disabilities or/and learning difficulties. Experts from some counties elaborated on additional directives for special training:

France

- A special course as additional qualification during life-long training, after gaining some working experience and for the new guides.
- Only the tourist guides who wish to follow it, should attend the course as an additional module for already qualified tourist guides.
- The trainees-tourist guides taking these classes should be open-minded, without prejudice and fears

Austria

- Training after gaining some experience in their profession but only if the tourist guide want specialize.

Spain

- Training not only for the tourist guides; it should also be taught to the staff in charge of the customer service
- It must include teaching knowledge about different types of intellectual disabilities, learning abilities, needs and characteristics of intellectually disabled people in order to provide them with appropriate services
- This type of vocational training, would help to increase the demand for tourist services by the intellectually disabled and normalize the presence of people intellectually disabled in the tourism activities, hotels, tourist visits etc.

Italy

- Special training should be treated as an answer for rising, global needs of coping with intellectual disabilities
- Providing services for intellectually disabled people should be also facilitated by cooperation between organizations working with this target group

Latvia

- During training attention should be paid both to people with intellectual disabilities and disabilities in general
- Special training would help in reducing level of tourist guides' anxiety during contact with intellectually disabled people and increasing an understanding of people with intellectual disabilities

Summary

There is a common agreement that there is a need for special training (as an additional module) for tourist guides in the context of providing appropriate services for people with intellectual disabilities or/and learning difficulties, increasing an understanding of this target group, normalizing the presence of

intellectually disabled people in the tourism and answering for rising, global needs of coping with intellectual disabilities.

9. What type of training do you think would be more efficient in order to get a professional specialization as a tourist guide, to work with intellectually disabled people or/and with learning difficulties? What can motivate this group to get this type of training?

Austria:

- Training with the target group itself is the best training, it may be helpful to have the target group subsequently assess the guided tour and to be given feedback from it.
- Creating points of contact; visiting organizations for people with disabilities to get to know the target group
- Learning new communication and presentation techniques, being familiar with “easy to understand” language. Also CAPITO (Experts for Barrier-Free Access) recommends a module in “easy to read” language as an additional qualification for tourist guides. Alternatively a class about “barrier-free Graz” or a “tandem workshop”, with presenters with and without disabilities.
- Working with presentation material, images, tangible objects, role play: training in theory.
- Concentrating more on interpersonal issues rather than on conveying knowledge alone.
- A course about group dynamics and training for special situations and being prepared for it and what to do when faced with one.
- Awareness of mobility and assessing potential hazards, which people with intellectual disabilities are not aware of in, e.g., traffic.

The experts agree that there are different interests in every area, so the special courses should be considered as additional qualifications. The trainees taking these classes should be open-minded about people with intellectual disabilities.

Belgium:

As an example of an efficient course experts introduced “Museum Customized”, a training created by Tourism Flanders, consisting of theoretical course followed by internship and practical training supported by experienced guides. In evaluation, as most effective,

participants acknowledged having an opportunity to accompany and learn from user experts on guided tours for people with intellectual disabilities.

France:

Propositions introduced by experts could be divided into two parts:

10. Pre – practice part covering: knowledge about different pathologies, watching films in which groups of intellectually disabled are guided in a museum/monument, note their and the guide’s reactions and comment on them, role playing, testing the training program with the target group of guides and gaining feedback, hiring an actor or director to demonstrate how to use the body, language, gestures.
11. Practical part containing: visits in institutions for intellectually disabled in order to watch their behavior and to expedite communication with them, observing experienced colleague on the spot, to see what one can expect from a guide, what are the behaviors, which methodology tools can be used, working with visual support (models, images, reconstructions, etc.), using the “facile a lire” language to guide and experimenting with methodology.

In addition, French interviewees were asked what would they suggest to include as modules in a special life-long training program for guiding people with intellectual disabilities or/and learning difficulties and their answers covered:

- Starting with theory in classroom on definitions and different pathologies and tips on how to recognize different alert signs and possible reactions
- Learning new communication and presentation techniques
- Crisis management and dealing with unexpected behaviors
- Adapting a museum/site/nature/neighborhood visit for these special groups by creating and trying a “model” tour for each kind of visit
- Creating different imaginary scenarios with case-studies and special conditions of visits with special groups on the spot and adapt to them
- Starting guiding with children as an experience, as they do not have the rhythm and way of thinking of adults
- Establishing contact with people who are family, accompany or teach the intellectually disabled in order to receive their testimonials and learn from their experiences
- Co-operation and relation between the guide and escorts/attendants and the museum staff

- Visiting a place where people with intellectual disabilities work (ESAT) or day hospital or institution as an observer
- Coming in contact with a group of intellectually disabled at a late stage of training in order for the guide to avoid any panic and fear
- Practicing the “facile a lire” language to guide
- Practicing in guiding a mixed group of intellectually disabled and of “healthy” people together, to make them feel included like the rest of the world
- Organizing a workshop to help the group acquire experiences for themselves, maybe taking back home a small souvenir, i.e. drawing, pottery
- Asking the group members in advance to prepare a presentation of their own for a specific exhibit they will chose themselves and let them talk to the others like “guides”
- Asking the group members to do an exercise: We describe an image to someone who cannot see it, so he is then asked to recognize it or draw it, or we tell something to someone who then - based on the story – is asked to build a place using cubes. This way we perceive immediately if we were accurate enough or if we allowed somebody to create an image without looking at it.
- Asking the group members to use their five senses to feel and understand the exhibit/item/building, even if they are not physically impaired
- Trying ways to make the group have fun, experience pleasure, discover things and leave the place with good memories
- Checking if the message/s has been transmitted and if the pleasure and knowledge targets have been achieved after each presentation by asking questions

Spain:

Spanish experts agreed than in depth knowledge of different kinds of intellectual disabilities is crucial, because it leads to understanding other aspects of this impairment: behavior, reactions, communication skills, language difficulties, which is the only way to carry out an efficient work. Two participants also pointed out that there is a big ignorance concerning this topic and as consequence helplessness and avoiding working with this special group.

Experts suggested that discourse with specialists and direct contact with intellectually disabled themselves (in form of e.g. farm-trip) would be beneficial in order to discover what

interest them and how to give the explanations. It would also be necessary to elaborate some type of material explaining the particular needs that every intellectual disability has.

United Kingdom:

All experts agreed that any training needed to be short, accessible, flexible and inexpensive. It should include a short online video on good and bad guiding practices with people with learning difficulties, an interactive online guide, optional half-day training, short talks and on-the-job training with “experimental” group of intellectually disabled and/or having learning difficulties, willing to be guided.

Italy:

Experts suggested that the training should contain, promote and develop:

- knowledge of the different types of intellectual disabilities
- knowledge of the policies and the rights of people with intellectual disabilities
- knowledge of the territory in terms of opportunities for this type of target
- the use of interpersonal skills and nonverbal communication
- opportunities for knowledge direct target
- to develop problem-solving skills
- support from experts in the field intellectual disability (mentoring; educational and psychological supervision)
- opportunity to field test what they have learned (on-the-job training).

Latvia:

Experts stated that in order to fulfill different roles of tourist guide (leader, educator, host, tour manager and facilitator) in the work with people with intellectual disability and/or learning difficulties they need training on communication with people with intellectual disabilities, knowledge on how to prepare information in easy to understand way and what kind of specific reactions to different situations could be for this group of clients.

Summary

Experts suggested that effective training should contain both theoretical and practical part supported by experienced guides. For example, It might include:

- Watching films in which groups of intellectually disabled are guided in a museum/monument or visiting organizations for people with disabilities in order to

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gain in depth knowledge of different kinds of intellectual disabilities and expedite
communication with the target group

- Observing or accompanying experienced colleague on the spot, to see what one can expect from a guide, what are the behaviors, which methodology tools can be used
- Theoretical and practical module concentrated on communication skills
- Practical work-shop containing role playing, teaching how to work with visual support (models, images, tangible objects, reconstructions, etc.), enabling to test prepared by gaining feedback from other guides

Additionally, experts from United Kingdom stressed that training should be short, inexpensive and flexible.

10. What skills do tourist guides already have, of which they are often unaware in the context of providing services for people with intellectual disabilities or/and learning difficulties?

British experts noticed that many of the skills that make for good tourist guide, are also those needed to guide people with intellectual disability or/and learning difficulties. Experts from all partner countries agreed that tourist guides are flexible, adaptable, creative and adjustable to the groups needs. They have strong interpersonal skills. They are experienced in working with people with different cultural and intellectual background and have the ability to engage a whole group, regardless of their prior knowledge. They have stamina and enthusiasm but also organizing abilities, patience, composure and good stress control. And, above all, they are, unprejudiced, open – minded and interested in peoples stories and working with them. Those skills and features are best assets of tourist guides, but, as Belgian experts stated, they often have to be triggered. “Sometimes asking them (guides) questions is enough to encourage them to develop those skills.”

11. Do you need the certification of certain skills required to work as a or/and learning difficulties?

Belgium

However, it should be advisable to follow a vocation training for tourist guides, a certificate should not be obligatory to guide people with intellectual disabilities. A tourist guide working with people with intellectual disabilities should:

- have a basic training (vocational training of a guide OR a training in art history combined with a teachers training)
- have talent - be in touch with intellectually disabled people and feel comfortable in contacting with them
- prove skills and experience, either through training or through work experience (institution, organization for persons with disabilities etc.

Austria

All experts agree that an additional seal of quality would be helpful

Spain

Experts only included information that such a certificate doesn't exist in Spain and that any tourist guide can offer her/his services to intellectually disabled people.

Italy

The certification of the new acquired skills is considered desirable by all respondents, as a result of diversification in tourist industry. It should distinguishes the skills of guides for intellectually disabled people. In this process the social cooperatives have to play a fundamental role. Additionally, it might be useful to schools and associations to orientate the choice of a guide.

Latvia

The certification of certain skill could be useful to enable recognition of professional who has real skills and knowledge.

Summary

Experts from France, Belgium, Austria, England, Italy and Latvia answered precisely to the question. Even though experts agreed that tourist guides somehow should prove their qualifications, the one, common decision if the certification should be required, cannot be formulated. To sum up, skills and experience might be proven either through training, work experience (Belgium) or online exam (England). Experts from Spain refers only to the current status of Spanish requirements connected with certification in the context of guiding intellectually disabled people.

Summary and implications for the T-Guide project

Interviews with experts proved indisputable need of equipping Tourist Guides, willing to work with intellectually disabled people, with specific tools, skills, hints that seems to be inevitable to fulfill special needs of this target group. In most collaborative countries there is lack of a specialist training focused on people with special needs. However, some of trainings includes few hours connected with this topic, most of them are focused on physical limitations like visual impairment. In experts opinion trainings that are available, do not include sufficient amount of information about people with intellectual disabilities or/and learning difficulties and do not enable to work multi-sensorial and flexibly match the guided tour to specific group.

Experts elaborated on following topics:

1. Knowledge and abilities needed

During training should be possessed:

- Ability to distinguishing types of intellectual disabilities, knowledge about their specificity, learning abilities, needs, characteristics and practical implications of it in order to provide them with appropriate services
- Knowledge about practical clues of managing group represented by people with intellectual disability e.g. a need of reducing the size of a group (12 persons as a maximum), shortening the duration of visits, shortening the duration of visits, providing at least one additional carer to accompany the group, taking into account mobility and safety issues etc.
- Knowledge about what information should be possessed before guided tour in order

to maximize safety and comfort.

- Knowledge about correct terms for intellectual disabilities or/and learning difficulties, to avoid offending people and ensure unambiguous communication.
- Ability to collaborate with supportive persons, organizers in advance
- Linguistic skills that might be required in communicating with people with intellectual disabilities e.g. using simplified vocabulary and grammar; omitting complicated and abstract information from a presentation, giving explanations in a concise way, repeating and clarify information
- Crisis management and ability to deal with unexpected behaviors
- Didactical methods that help to focus attention, enhance understanding, memorising, and feeling of enjoyment and satisfaction of clients from a target group
- Interpersonal skills enabling to maintain positive relationship with clients and showing them respect

2. Personal skills needed

Even though some features of personality cannot be taught during a course, experts stress that empathy, patience, enthusiasm generosity, courtesy, kindness, sensitiveness, neutrality, adaptability, creativity, tolerance, self-confidence, being calm, relaxed and open-minded, are virtues that should characterize a person who decides to work with intellectually disabled clients. It's also important to raise awareness during training by keeping the groups own pace, necessity of being patient and flexible.

3. Recommendations for didactic methods

To cover the goals of the T-Guide project experts highlighted vital suggestions, how above-mentioned knowledge, abilities, skills might be trained during course. Experts suggest that trainings might consist of theoretical inputs and practical exercises as:

- Starting with theory in classroom on definitions and different pathologies and tips on how to recognize different alert signs and possible reactions
- Watching films in which groups of intellectually disabled that are guided in a museum/monument, note their and the guide's reactions and comment on them

- Watching e.g.
 - a short online video on good and bad guiding practices with people with learning difficulties;
 - an interview with people about what they expectations are
- Hiring an actor or director to demonstrate how to use the body, language, gestures.
- Role playing
- Preparing presentation of a chosen exhibit and having other guides as an audience
- Adapting a museum/site/nature/neighborhood visit for these special groups by creating and trying a “model” tour for each kind of visit
- Creating different imaginary scenarios with case-studies and special conditions of visits with special groups on the spot and adapt to them
- Experimenting with methodology and working with presentation material, tangible objects, visual support (models, images, reconstructions, etc.) with the support from the trainer/ supervisor training “facile a lire” language
- Observing /accompanying experienced colleague on the spot, to see what one can expect from a guide, what are the behaviors, which methodology tools can be used,
- Watching an interactive online guide,
- Visiting in institutions for intellectually disabled in order to watch their behavior, expedite communication with them and avoid panic, fear and prejudice in the future practice
- Testing the training program with the target group of guides and gaining feedback
- Starting to guide children as an experience, as they do not have the rhythm and way of thinking of adults
- Short talks and on-the-job training with “experimental” group of intellectually disabled and/or having learning difficulties, willing to be guided Practice in guiding a mixed group of intellectually disabled and of “healthy” people together, to make them feel included like the rest of the world
- Training with the target group

Additionally, skills and experience of candidate for Tourist Guide for intellectually disabled people might be proven either through training, work experience or/and online exam.