ERASMUS
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Every reader counts

+

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Every Reader Matters – Join Us on a Journey Toward More Inclusive Libraries!

We are pleased to present this publication, created as part of the project "Every Reader Matters. Innovations in Building Friendly, Inclusive, and Diversity-Open Libraries," implemented under the Erasmus+ program.

Our goal was to gain knowledge, inspiration, and practical tools to support the development of libraries that are accessible to all adult readers – regardless of their needs, age, abilities, or experiences.

The project included study visits in Wrocław (Poland), Lille (France), and Košice (Slovakia). Thanks to the opportunity to work in three different cultural and organizational contexts, participants were able to view accessibility challenges from multiple perspectives. Wrocław, Lille, and Košice are cities actively building inclusive societies, also as part of the international Eurocities network. Each of the libraries visited shared their experiences, solutions, and good practices – valuable inspirations for institutions across Europe.

The project was a response to the challenges of ensuring equal access to libraries for people with special needs – whether due to disability, age, migration status, or other forms of social exclusion.

The aim of this publication is to share reflections, tools, and examples of activities developed during the project that can help institutions increase the accessibility and openness of their services. Here you will find descriptions of good practices, innovative methods of working with users, educational initiatives, and tools to help analyze the accessibility of events and spaces. The materials were prepared with librarians, educators, and cultural workers in mind, to serve both as a source of inspiration and practical support in their everyday work.

The publication is divided into sections corresponding to each of the cities that participated in the project, along with brief descriptions of the environments in which the activities took place. We encourage you to use it in whichever way best suits your needs – whether by reading it in full or referring to selected parts that are most relevant to your institution or users.

The publication does not mark the end of our work – quite the opposite. This is just the beginning! We plan to implement at least three of the good practices we learned about during the project and to develop further initiatives in the areas of accessibility and adult education. We also aim to continue international cooperation and build bridges between libraries across Europe.

Participating in the Erasmus+ project has been not only a professional development opportunity but also an unforgettable adventure that broadens horizons, inspires action, and builds a sense of community across borders. We hope that reading this publication will be as valuable for you as participating in the project was for us.
We warmly invite you to read on – and to join us in creating libraries where every reader truly matters.

Spis treści

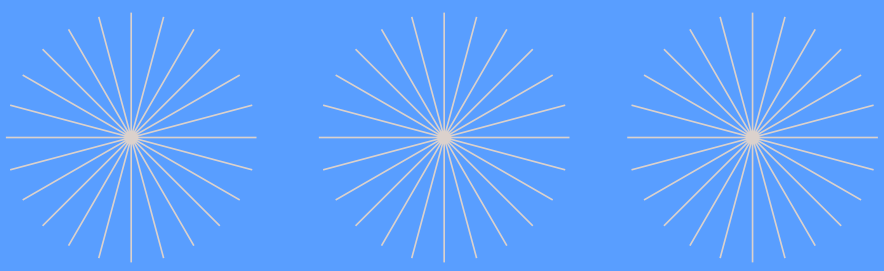
Wrocław 5
Open Pages 8
Museum Enthusiasts – Workshop Series for Seniors 11
Language Cafe 13
Touch the Museum – Meetings with Art for People with Visual Impairments 15
Library for All. Accessibility and Integration of Polish and Ukrainian Communities 17

Lille 20
Mediathèque de la Cité (Hospital's library) 23
The Accessible Youth Space 25
The Meetings of the Aquaphobic Duck 27
Welcoming People with Intellectual or Cognitive Disabilities 29

Košice 31
Library Bits 34
Tea at Fives 36
Human Diversity 39
KVP Community Garden – Exchangers 42

Accessibility Questionnaire 44
Instruction for using the event accessibility evaluation tool 45

Podziękowania 56



Wrocław

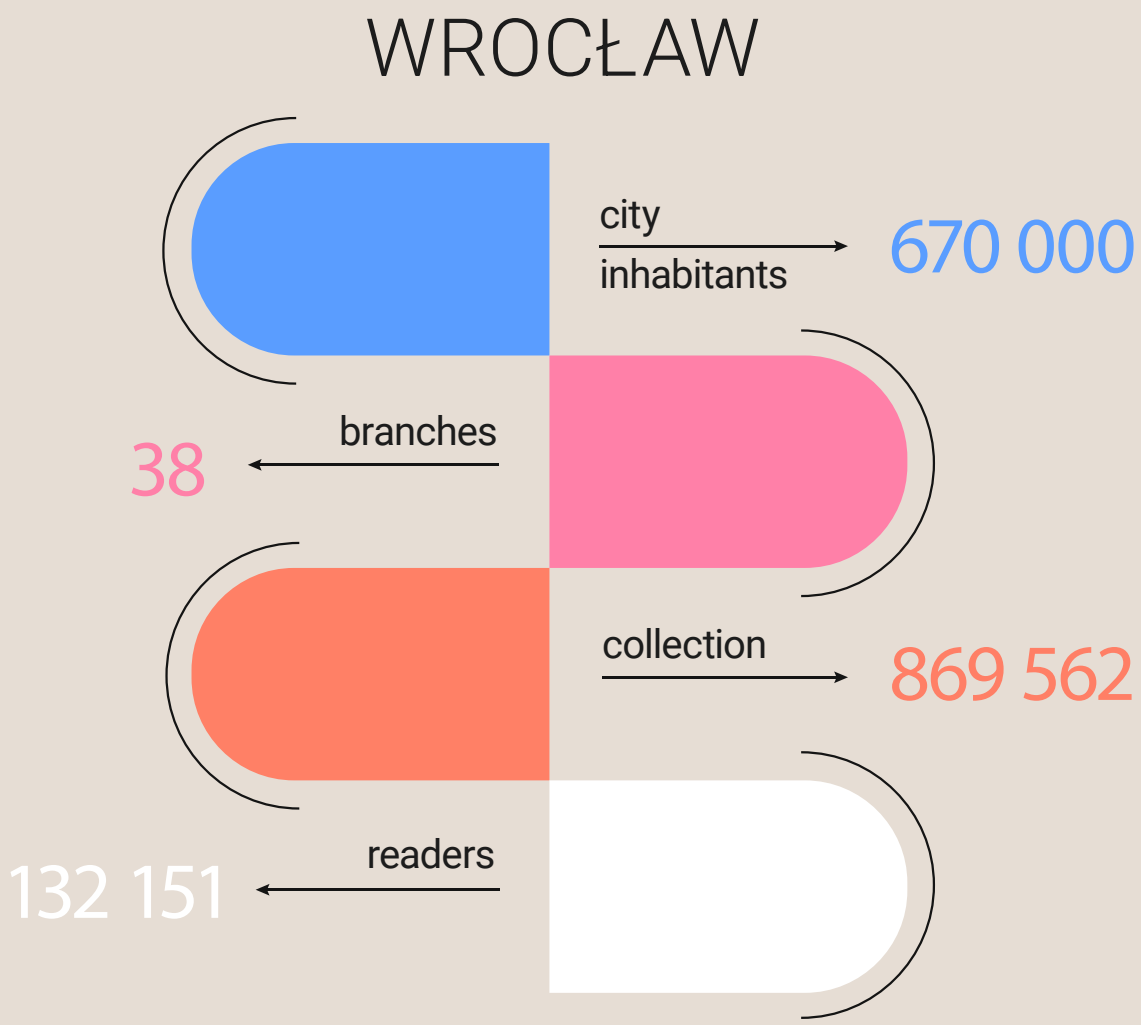
Wrocław

Wrocław is one of the largest and most dynamic cities in Poland, located in the southwestern part of the country. The city has a population of approximately 670,000 and is an important academic, cultural, and technological center.

The Tadeusz Różewicz Municipal Public Library in Wrocław (MBP) was established by the Wrocław City Council in 2000 as a municipal cultural institution. Today, it comprises an extensive network of 38 branches and two specialized centers: the FAMA Library and Cultural Centre and the MultiCentrum. The library operates using the modern Alma library system, which allows users to access the entire catalog from any location.

The library provides free access to literature, e-literature, and multimedia collections. It currently serves over 132,000 active users, and its holdings number 869,562 items.

MBP is an open and diverse space – it hosts numerous cultural and social events, including thematic festivals, family events (such as the Parent Club), puppet theater performances, language classes, literature-inspired city games, night events at the library, and educational and socially engaged projects such as the Living Library.



Name of the practice: Open Pages

+ Description

Open Pages is a series of reading workshops conducted in collaboration with Primary School No. 109 in Wrocław. The series ran from October 2022 to June 2023 and was targeted at first to third-grade students, including Polish-Ukrainian integration classes. It was the library's response to the need for reading education among early primary school children.

During library visits, participants were introduced to the library's collections and took part in literary workshops connected to bestselling children's and young adult literature, such as the *Harry Potter series by J.K. Rowling* or *Fablehaven by Brandon Mull*. The branch also showcased its collection of children's books in Ukrainian during the visits.

The library lessons in this series had a workshop format. The organizers aimed to encourage students to explore literary themes and fictional worlds through play and experiential learning. Most activities included simple chemistry experiments or the creation of models based on descriptions in the books. The goal was not only to provide knowledge but also to integrate Polish and Ukrainian children. Shared play and working toward a common goal are among the best ways to foster international integration. Moreover, since almost every child in the world knows the character of Harry Potter, the language barrier ceased to be an obstacle. A Polish-Ukrainian translator provided by the school was present during every lesson with an integration class.

+ Objective

The main goal of this series was to integrate Polish and Ukrainian children through exposure to world literature from the genre of children's fantasy. The organizers wanted to show children that the library is a safe and welcoming space. A key priority was helping people affected by war and the experience of being refugees acclimate to the local environment.

Another aim was to encourage young participants to engage creatively with literature and enjoy shared activities so that visiting the library would become associated with pleasure and motivate them to return outside of school hours. Additionally, the project sought to instill social, cultural, and literary sensitivity in young readers while promoting positive values through examples from fantasy literature.

Recipients

This project was carried out for first to third-grade students from Primary School No. 109 in Wrocław, with a special focus on Polish-Ukrainian integration classes. The series included nine library lessons with 160 participants in total. The children spent their time creatively during the workshops and expressed enthusiasm about returning to the library. After being introduced to the library space, young readers learned how to use the library and where to find books suited to their age group.

Costs

The implementation of the project required materials for arts and crafts as well as chemistry experiments. The total cost of the materials was 1,000 PLN. Among the items purchased were glass bottles and flasks, test tubes, plastic bowls, food coloring, oil, baking soda, liquid glue, trays, wood slices, poster boards, corrugated cardboard, paints, hot glue, and other art supplies.

The librarians conducting the workshops needed to familiarize themselves with simple chemistry experiments beforehand. They tested the experiments to ensure safety and assess their suitability for children. The next step involved preparing ingredient names, instructions for making potions, and set designs to recreate the atmosphere described in the Harry Potter books.

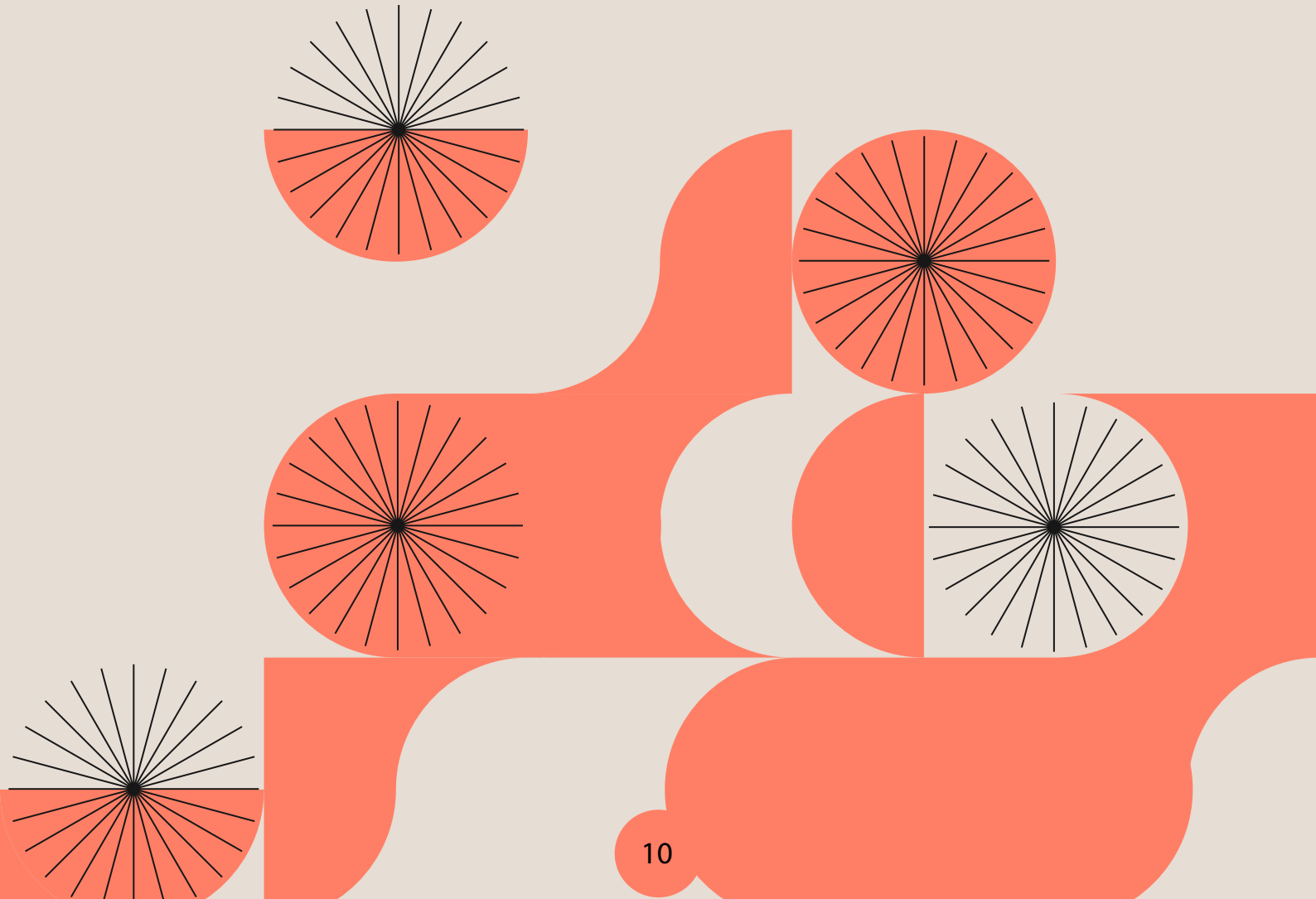
To carry out the workshops, it was necessary to create lesson plans and have a thorough understanding of the books discussed during the sessions.

+ Results

The implementation of the Open Pages project strengthened positive relationships and cooperation with Primary School No. 109. Students from this school now frequently return with their parents to sign up for library cards and borrow books. Since then, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of regular readers among the Ukrainian community. This community has also actively participated in library events, especially those aimed at children and families.

The library lessons also contributed to a significant increase in the borrowing of the Harry Potter series, the Fablehaven series, and other books from the youth fantasy section. Participants expressed very positive feedback about the workshops.

The project demonstrated to the youngest readers that the library is a friendly space for play, imagination, and self-expression.



Name of the practice:
Museum Enthusiasts – Workshop Series for Seniors

+ Description

Museum Enthusiasts is a series of workshops aimed at seniors who wish to develop their artistic interests and gain knowledge about the customs and art of the 19th and 20th centuries. The workshops are organized at the Pan Tadeusz Museum and Ossolineum in Wrocław, including activities such as herbalism workshops, open-air painting, graphic design, and sculpting. Seniors work in small groups (up to 15 people), under the guidance of experienced specialists. The workshops combine both practical and theoretical elements, merging art with historical education.

+ Goal

The aim of the series is to activate seniors through artistic creativity and education. The project-based activities focus on engaging seniors in cultural life, allowing them to develop their passions and build social connections. The workshops are tailored to the needs of this age group, taking into account the pace of work and offering support. The project enhances participants' sense of independence and creativity while promoting cultural institutions as open and welcoming spaces for people of all ages.

+ Target Audience

The target group is seniors, with workshops tailored to their abilities, offering individual support and a comfortable working environment. Participants have the opportunity to acquire new skills and meet others with similar interests, which positively impacts their social lives and well-being. In previous editions, the response was highly positive, and the number of applicants exceeded the available spots.

+ Costs

The workshop costs included engaging experts in painting, graphic design, sculpture, and herbalism, as well as purchasing appropriate art materials. Thanks to co-financing by the Wrocław Municipality, participants could attend the workshops free of charge. The workshops required careful planning, particularly regarding logistics and adapting spaces to meet the needs of seniors, contributing to the project's success.

+ Outcome

The Museum Enthusiasts workshops enhance participants' artistic skills and strengthen their involvement in the cultural life of the city. However, the key outcome of the project is the reinforcement of social bonds and the building of a sense of community, enabling seniors to form new friendships and maintain them after the workshops end.

The project promotes an active lifestyle among seniors while gradually redefining the perception of cultural institutions as open and welcoming to a diverse range of audiences. After the workshops, seniors often continue their artistic endeavors, and their positive feedback supports the development of future editions of the project.

Name of the practice: Language Cafe

+ Description

Language Cafe offers language meetings for adults who want to improve their skills. The sessions are conducted in the form of conversations led by native speakers, language teachers, or enthusiasts eager to share their knowledge and experience. Thanks to their involvement, participants can enhance their language skills and also learn about the culture, customs, history, and even cuisine of a given country. As part of the project, meetings are held in English, French, Spanish, German, Italian, and Polish.

+ Objective

The classes aim to integrate the local community, facilitate cultural exchange, and promote the library as a space for sharing experiences and skills. They also address the need of adults to participate in extracurricular activities. Another important goal is to provide free opportunities to improve language skills. The project has become a permanent part of the library's work plan. Classes are held from October to June, with each language group meeting once a week.

+ Recipients

The project is aimed at adults. The classes are free of charge, removing any financial barriers. Participants include people who want to improve their language skills, among them many foreigners seeking opportunities to make new connections and integrate into the local community. Foreigners take part in conversations both in their native language and in other languages. Classes in Polish as a foreign language are particularly popular.

Some participants sign up for the library specifically to take part in the project's classes. This group is also interested in borrowing materials for learning foreign languages (textbooks and literature in foreign languages), which is why the branch hosting the classes focuses on developing these collections.

A single session can accommodate up to 15 participants. In 2024, a total of 128 hours of meetings were held, attended by over 1,000 people.

+ Costs

The Language Cafe project can be implemented at no cost or with minimal expenses. The standard annual budget allocated for the project is approximately 300 PLN. These funds are used to purchase office supplies and pay for sponsored social media posts (especially before a new semester or when volunteers are being recruited).

The most important resource for the project is people (volunteers) who are willing to lead the classes. Finding committed and responsible individuals is the biggest challenge. Additionally, a space where the classes can take place is necessary. Access to a laptop and projector can also be useful to make the meetings more engaging.

It is important for the project to have at least one coordinator who is responsible not only for recruiting volunteers but also for maintaining regular contact with session leaders, participants, and potential newcomers. The coordinator is also tasked with preparing the schedule, ensuring compliance with project rules, and maintaining statistics. On average, project coordination requires about one hour per day, but the workload increases significantly before the semester starts, during volunteer recruitment and participant registration.

+ Results

The project attracts new users to the library, many of whom become long-term patrons. Thanks to the classes and foreign language collections, the library is perceived as a place open to foreigners and young people looking to make new connections.

Language Cafe has been consistently popular for years. Participants form closer relationships, continue attending classes in subsequent years, and report tangible benefits from the meetings, such as reduced fear of speaking in a foreign language. In some cases, participants become so involved that they themselves take on the role of session leaders.

The project can easily be adapted to the needs of local communities by offering meetings in specific languages or targeting narrower groups of recipients.

Name of the practice:
Touch the Museum – Meetings with Art for People with Visual Impairments

Description

The initiative involved making the collection of contemporary art at the Pavilion of the Four Domes, a branch of the National Museum in Wroclaw, accessible to people with visual impairments. The project focused on adapting the exhibition space to meet the needs of visually impaired visitors. Selected objects were reproduced as tactile graphics, which were then installed in the permanent exhibition space. The selection of objects was guided by educational objectives. The chosen pieces were not only the most representative of the museum's collection but also reflected key developments in the history of Polish contemporary art. This approach made it possible to create a diverse program of meetings and workshops, where the starting point was either a painting or a sculpture. The tactile graphics, together with the original works on display, served as the foundation for building narratives during each session. They also became the starting point for organizing sensory workshops and discussions on broader cultural contexts. The meetings were organized under the title Touch the Museum.

Objective

This initiative aimed to make the permanent exhibition space as accessible as possible for people with visual impairments. It was designed as a long-term effort, focusing on both architectural and informational accessibility. Providing haptic access to the objects led to improvements not only in architectural accessibility but also in communication. The introduction of these changes helped to develop a more inclusive language, with audiodescriptions playing a key role. Visitors could use tactile aids and listen to audiodescriptions of the works. This approach introduced a permanent change in the organization of exhibitions, ensuring that audiodescriptions are now included not only in permanent exhibitions but also in temporary ones.

+ Recipients

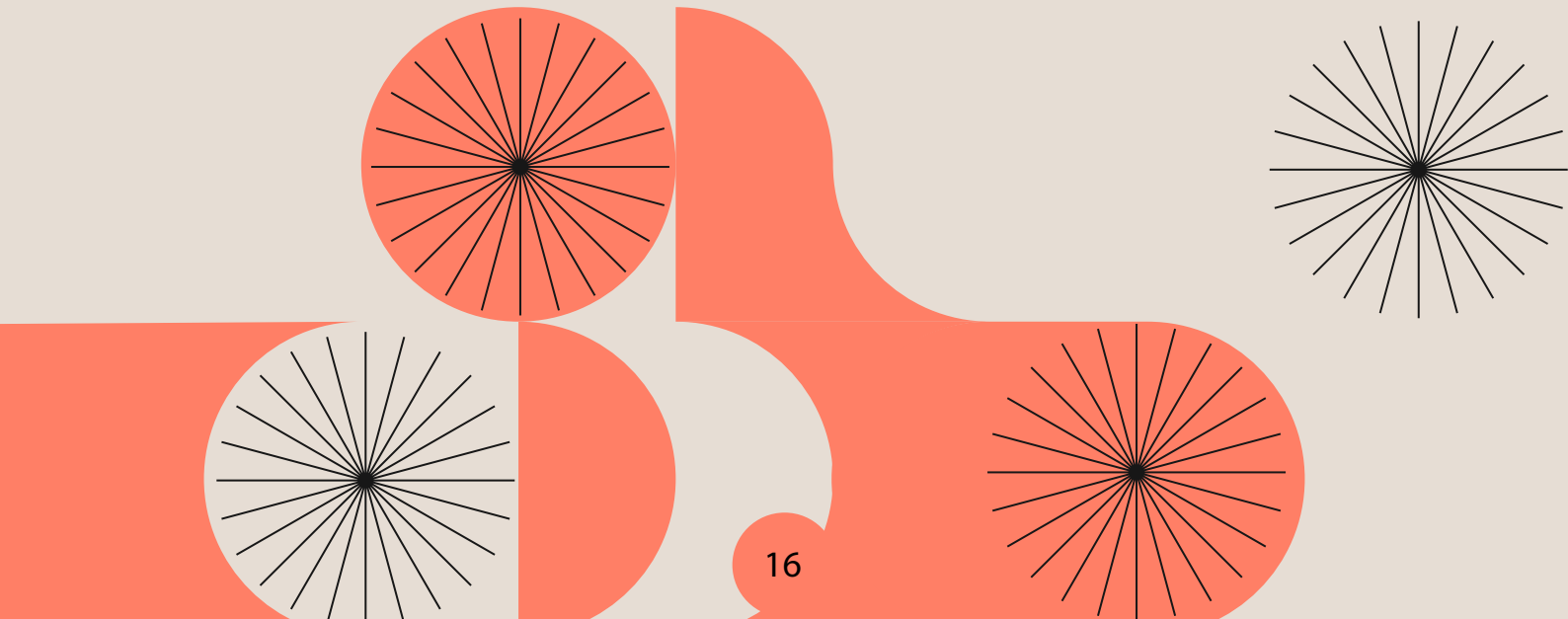
The initiative is targeted at adults with visual impairments. It began in 2018 and continues to this day. A dedicated group of participants has formed around the sensory meetings, developing tools for discussing contemporary art. Participants have become active co-creators of the initiative, expressing their needs for learning about contemporary art and identifying areas of interest to explore in future meetings.

+ Costs

In the initial stage of implementation, tactile specialists were engaged to prepare tactile aids. It was also necessary to train staff to work with visually impaired visitors and to use audiodescriptive language. After the sensory workshops were introduced, additional tactile aids were developed to expand the context and complement the installed tactile graphics. Most of the costs were related to hiring the aforementioned specialists.

+ Results

This initiative enabled the institution to better meet the needs of visually impaired visitors. It fostered an audience aware of their needs, encouraging them to attend all museum events regularly, not just those designed for visually impaired visitors. By making art accessible in a new way, the initiative also helped create a more inclusive environment in the museum. Participants not only engaged with contemporary art but also became active contributors, helping shape future programs.



Name of the practice:
Library for All. Accessibility and Integration of Polish and Ukrainian Communities

+ Description

Library for All is an initiative rooted in the principles of accessibility and integration. It was targeted at children, youth, and adults, particularly those with migration or refugee experiences. The project consisted of two main areas of activities: Library for All: My Place for youth and Library for All: A New Adventure for preschool children.

+ Library for All: My Place for Youth

One of the key elements of the project was organizing activities based on international methods such as TeamUp. These sessions focused on physical and integrative activities to help youth cope with emotions and build relationships with peers. Tools like parachutes, balls, and hula hoops were used to create a safe space for play and learning. Additionally, art therapy-based activities through the HEART (Healing and Education Through the Arts) program supported children's development through art. These meetings significantly improved participants' self-expression (sharing thoughts, ideas, and emotions), communication skills (listening and responding to others' ideas), focus, as well as understanding and managing emotions and behaviors in various contexts. The activities also aimed to foster a positive outlook on the future.

+ Library for All: A New Adventure for Preschool Children

For preschool children, the New Adventure sessions were also based on TeamUp methods, but adapted for younger participants. The activities focused on physical play that developed basic social skills, motor coordination, and teamwork abilities. The children learned through playful activities that incorporated music, dance, and colorful props. Additionally, educational elements were introduced to support cognitive development in a friendly and safe atmosphere.

The planning process included assessing the needs of the local community and

+ Objective

The main goal was to support children and youth in integrating with local communities, developing social skills, and creating a multicultural library offer tailored to the needs of people from Ukraine. The project also aimed to reduce barriers to accessing culture and provide psychosocial support to those experiencing challenging life situations.
The activities were cyclical and included regular meetings. Their outcomes led to a lasting organizational change in the library's operations - intercultural activities and workshops have become a regular part of the branch's activities.

+ Recipients

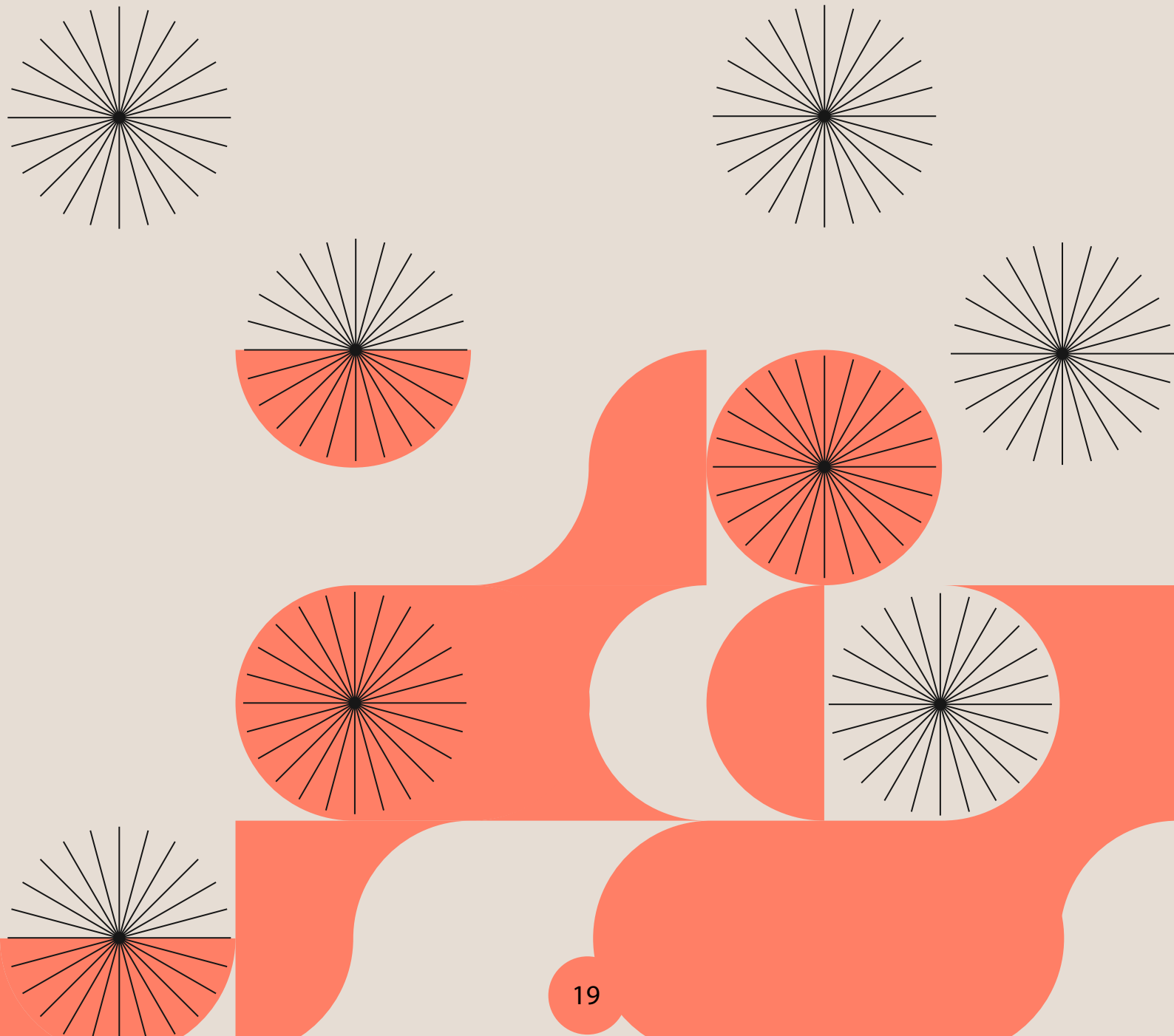
The program was aimed at children and youth aged 3-17, as well as their caregivers, including both Polish and Ukrainian participants, with special consideration for those with migration experience. The sessions facilitated integration, learning the Polish language, and spending time together in a safe environment.
The project engaged hundreds of participants, and feedback from them and their parents highlighted the positive impact of the activities on participants' well-being and development.

+ Costs

The project's implementation required the involvement of librarian facilitators trained to work with children and provide psychological support (through training). The costs included purchasing educational materials (e.g., parachutes, balls, art supplies) and organizing spaces adapted to the needs of group activities. Financial resources were sourced from grants provided by the Information Society Development Foundation (FRSI) with the support of Save the Children International Foundation, as well as the library's own funds. The level of difficulty was assessed as moderate due to the need to combine educational and integrative activities.

+ Results

The project's effects were noticeable within a short time—participants developed cooperation and communication skills, and the library became a more accessible and multicultural space. In the long term, the activities contributed to strengthening the library's role as a space for social integration, promoting diversity and openness. The project also served as an inspiration for other cultural institutions in the region.



Lille

Lille

Lille is a city in northern France with approximately 240,000 inhabitants, spread across 10 districts and two associated cities, Lomme and Hellemmes.

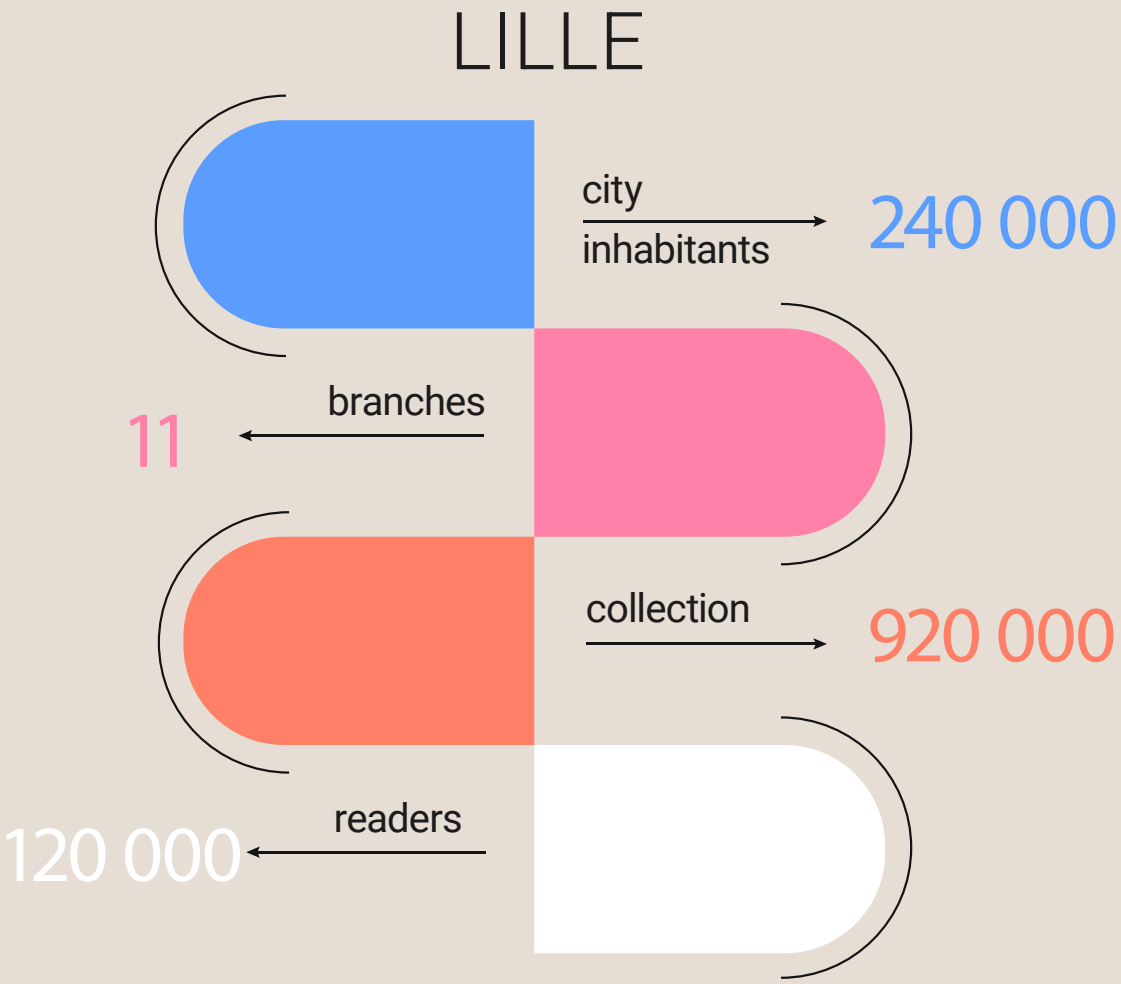
The municipally-run Lille Public Libraries Network (bmL) consists of nine branches across Lille, employing a staff of 120 people. Two additional branches serve the associated cities of Lomme and Hellemmes.

Access to the libraries is open to all, with no prior registration required.
The bmL network operates through an integrated library system, enabling users to explore the entire collection via a single catalogue. The 20,000 patrons can borrow and return documents at any branch, facilitated by a daily shuttle service.

The Jean Lévy Central Library also hosts a heritage collection, providing resources for researchers and curious visitors alike.

In addition to its collections, the bmL network offers a diverse cultural program designed to appeal to all audiences. Activities — offered free of charge — include author talks, concerts, debates, exhibitions, workshops, storytelling sessions, reading groups, and video gaming events.

Finally, the „Bibliomobile," a mobile library van, extends services beyond library walls, bringing resources and activities directly to communities and reaching a broader audience.



BIBLIoMOBILE

Name of the practice:
Mediathèque de la Cité (Hospital's library)

+ Description

Initially located in the hospital lobby with services provided by municipal staff and a system of closed modules, the Hospital of Lille library now benefits from a fully dedicated space. This new area, inaugurated in 2023, offers a welcoming and accessible environment with a generalist collection that is not specifically focused on healthcare. It is open to patients, healthcare professionals, and the public, breaking away from the traditional image of an isolated hospital library. It is managed by a professional team and integrated into the hospital's broader cultural program.
In 2024, the Mediathèque de la Cité became part of the Lille Municipal Library network, officially joining the city's public library system.

+ Objective

This project aims to improve patient well-being by creating a welcoming and accessible space enriched with cultural and educational resources. It also seeks to professionalize services through a dedicated team and to develop an attractive cultural program.

+ Recipients

The library serves several audiences:

- Hospitalized Patients: Accessing a relaxing and enriching space tailored to their specific needs.
- Healthcare Professionals: Benefiting from a cultural resource conveniently located at their workplace.
- Neighborhood Residents and Organizations: Engaging with connections to nearby libraries in Lille-Sud and Faubourg de Béthune.

+ Costs

The library operates under a partnership agreement with shared operating and investment budgets between the City of Lille and the hospital. This collaboration secures funding for both the management of the space and its associated cultural activities.

+ Results

The Mediathèque de la Cité offers a refreshing and enriching experience for patients, although detailed attendance statistics are still being compiled. Its integration into the Lille Municipal Library network is expected to amplify its impact across three main pillars:

1. Participation in the Eurekoi Service: An online question-and-answer platform focusing on health and wellness inquiries.
2. Shared Cultural Programming: Collaborating on events and activities across the library network.
3. Unified Library Management System (SIGB): Facilitating inter-library loans and document exchanges.
4. Designed with accessibility in mind—featuring adapted furniture and pleasant lighting—the library redefines the concept of a hospital library, moving away from traditional models.

+ Challenges and Future Goals

One key challenge is to harmonize the professional services of the library with the volunteer efforts of the hospital librarians' association, which delivers books directly to patient rooms. The upcoming years will be crucial for fostering collaboration and ensuring these two approaches work together seamlessly.

Name of the practice:
The Accessible Youth Space

+ Description

The Accessible Youth Space is an innovative initiative providing children aged 3 to 12, regardless of their specific needs, with equitable access to reading materials through adapted resources. The concept organizes materials not by disability type but by adaptation type.

The collection includes Braille books, tactile books, pictogram books, materials in French Sign Language (LSF), Easy-to-Read (FALC) books, and resources for children with dyslexia or autism. Developed in collaboration with the association Signes de Sens, the project aims to ensure that adapted editions are available within a 10 km radius for every child.

+ Objective

The project tackles key challenges in promoting accessible reading for children:

- High illiteracy rates among children with disabilities or disorders.
- Learning processes that often rely on methods unsuitable for their specific needs.
- Reducing the risk of stigmatization by focusing beyond a child's disability.

This adaptability enables each child to discover their own unique path to reading. For example, large-print books designed for visually impaired children have proven helpful for children with DYS disorders. Similarly, LSF editions for deaf children can assist non-verbal children in communication.

The color-coded classification system enhances children's independence while minimizing stigmatization. Through accessible resources, the Accessible Youth Space promotes inclusion, reduces inequalities in access to reading, and supports families, professionals, and children in their learning journeys.

+ Recipients

The project primarily targets children with disabilities or challenges like dyslexia, autism, sensory impairments, or cognitive disabilities, as well as their families. Librarians, educators, and childhood professionals also benefit indirectly by gaining tools and training to better support these groups.

+ Costs

Launching the project requires an initial investment in a ‚starter pack' of adapted collections, including about 200 specialized books, often expensive or published abroad.

Acquisitions must comply with public procurement regulations, which can be challenging, as these books are usually produced by small, specialized publishers with limited distribution. The budget also covers librarian training sessions to enhance their ability to assist diverse audiences and effectively mediate the collection.

+ Results

Since its launch, the Accessible Youth Space has shown promising results. Books designed for children with DYS disorders and autism have high circulation rates, while Braille and large-print collections are borrowed less often.

The project has strengthened the advisory role of librarians, providing better support to families and professionals. Accessibility-focused events continue to engage the public and raise awareness.

Name of the practice:
The Meetings of the Aquaphobic Duck

+ Description

This project originated from a collaboration with Galerie Frontières, an art gallery in Lille that launched a collaborative artistic magazine. The magazine showcases diverse artistic works while raising awareness about mental health challenges. In collaboration with the magazine's contributors, the libraries organized cultural activities to engage with individuals facing mental health challenges or related issues, such as painting and poetry workshops, exhibitions, linocut workshops, musical readings, and Canadian boxing sessions. The initiative underscores the importance of viewing mental health as a fundamental aspect of overall well-being, akin to physical health.

+ Objective

The initial goal was to support the magazine and its contributors while connecting them with library audiences. In the long term, the project seeks to promote inclusivity, raise awareness about mental health, and provide users with a creative space to express their cultural references. This partnership laid the foundation for future collaboration between libraries and the local EPSM (Public Mental Health Institution) to co-create a new magazine exploring a variety of themes beyond mental health.

+ Recipients

The project targets a diverse audience, including contributors to the magazine, individuals facing mental health challenges, and library patrons. Visitors to the four participating libraries (Hellemmes, Moulins, Jean Lévy, and Wazemmes) were encouraged to participate in inclusive activities and explore the magazine's content. The initiative also aims to engage library staff and raise awareness about mental health issues, equipping them to better welcome and support this audience.

Costs

The project is funded through a mixed budget, with part of the costs covered internally by the Municipal Library of Lille's human and material resources. Specific artistic services were funded, including €1,000 for a theater performance and €200 for a Canadian boxing workshop.

Results

The project successfully fostered inclusivity and seamlessly blended diverse audiences. It created a safe space where everyone could feel secure and express their cultural references, aligning with the Cultural Rights Declaration (Fribourg Declaration (1993)). Although the lack of recurring events presents a challenge for continuity, this initial collaboration has paved the way for new initiatives. A convention with the local EPSM is currently being developed to maintain this momentum, which includes plans to launch a co-created fanzine with library users and staff.

Name of the practice:
Welcoming People with Intellectual or Cognitive Disabilities

+ Description

The Municipal Library of Lille actively supports individuals with intellectual or cognitive disabilities by partnering with healthcare and social support organizations such as ESAT and UEMA. These partnerships provide participants with opportunities for learning, social interaction, and access to library resources through tailored workshops and cultural activities.

An ESAT (Établissement et Service d'Aide par le Travail) is a French medico-social institution for adults with disabilities. These institutions support individuals unable to work in standard environments by offering meaningful professional activities alongside medical, social, and educational assistance.

The Lille-based ESAT, IMPRIM Services, was established in 1973 and specializes in data entry and office-related tasks. Currently, it supports about 60 individuals with disabilities and provides services like mailing, printing, and routing to businesses and individuals.

An UEMA (Unit for Preschool Autism Education) is an inclusion-focused school program. The unit in Lille, based at the Jenner Kindergarten in Vieux-Lille, supports around 40 children aged from birth to 20 with developmental and communication disorders, including autism and related conditions.

+ Objective

The project aims to integrate individuals with intellectual or cognitive disabilities into the cultural life of the community. It fosters personal and social development by providing adapted tools and raising public awareness about the value of diversity.

The initiative uses workshops, lending services, and events to enhance autonomy and promote cultural access.

+ Recipients

The ESAT partnership primarily supports workers with intellectual disabilities and their caregivers. The UEMA collaboration focuses on children aged 4 to 7 with developmental and communication disorders. Although supported by professionals, the activities encourage interaction with the wider public.

+ Costs

These initiatives operate under partnership agreements and require no additional costs beyond the library's staffing and materials.

+ Results

The partnership between the ESAT and the library began in 2019 as a collaborative effort. It has led to monthly meetings, held either during library hours or after closing, creating opportunities for a mix of audiences to engage. During these sessions, small groups of 6 to 10 workers and their caregivers visit the library to borrow materials and participate in tailored activities. In addition to borrowing sessions, the library occasionally organizes workshops focused on emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence and virtual reality (VR) headsets. These workshops provide an opportunity for ESAT participants to explore innovative tools and develop digital literacy skills in an accessible way.

The ESAT group is also invited to attend performances or workshops designed for underserved audiences, with larger groups of 10 to 15 participants. Since 2023, the Vieux-Lille Library has hosted a group of children from the UEMA, consisting of about ten children aged 4 to 7. The group visits every Tuesday afternoon for on-site consultations or borrowing sessions. Looking ahead, the library plans to introduce storytelling and animation sessions specifically tailored for these children.

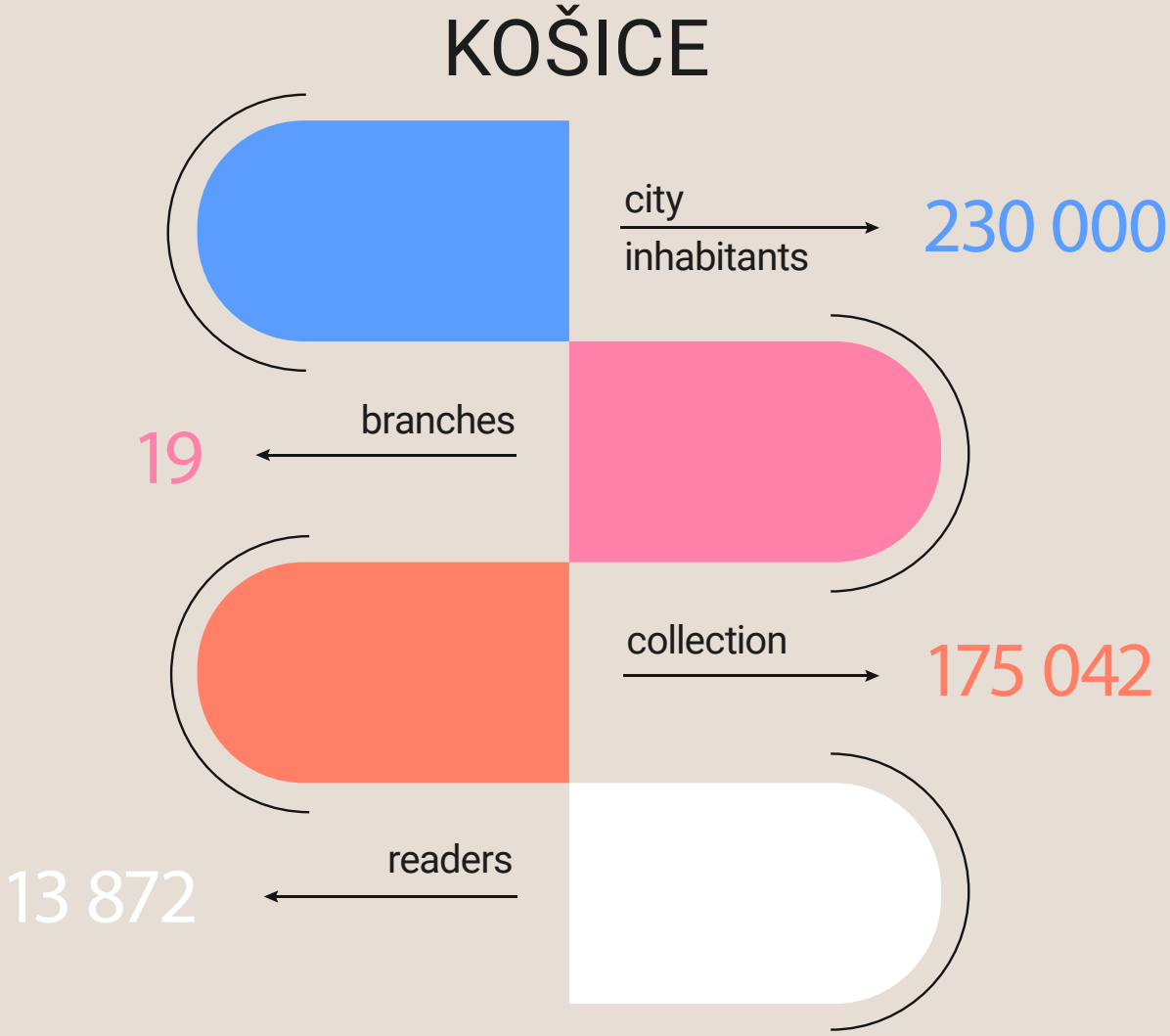
By 2025, the project aims to collaborate with UEMA on a documentary initiative, focusing on the creation and provision of adapted books for their needs, further enhancing accessibility and inclusion.

Košice

Košice

The Library for the Youth of the City of Košice focuses on working with children, youth and families. The founder is the City of Košice. Košice is the center of eastern Slovakia, it is the second largest city in Slovakia. The population of Košice is around 230,000. The library was established in 1955 by separating the children's department of the Regional People's Library. Its establishment is associated with a project from the times of the common state of Czech and Slovakia, the aim of which was to establish special libraries for children and youth in each regional city. At the end of the first year of its existence, the library had a single branch located at Leninova Street No. 63, today's Hlavná Street.

The library currently has 19 branches, of which 14 are school and 5 are public. The newest and most modern branch is the central branch LitPark, located in the Kulturpark area at Kukučínová Street 2. The Nezábudka branch at Poľovnícka Street No. 8, Košice, which specializes in working with readers with various types of disabilities, is also unique. The library currently has 13,872 readers and offers 175,042 books.



Name of the practice: Library Bits

Description

Library Bits (original: Knihovinky) has been running at the Library for the Youth of the City of Košice (Slovak: Knižnica pre mládež mesta Košice) since February 2024. At its core, the project brings young people with disabilities together once a month in our library. The meetings focus on discussing books, participating in literary quizzes, and engaging with interesting guests, including writers and professionals from various fields.

Objective

The project was created to address the need for an inclusive space where young people with disabilities can gain new knowledge, develop social skills, and explore literature and culture. Its goals include promoting their integration into the broader community and providing them with accessible and meaningful ways to spend their free time. Meetings are held regularly once a month.

Recipients

The project is designed for young people with physical disabilities, particularly those who use wheelchairs. Our library is fully accessible, with ample space for wheelchair maneuvering both in the library and the event room, as well as adapted toilets for people with physical disabilities.

Costs

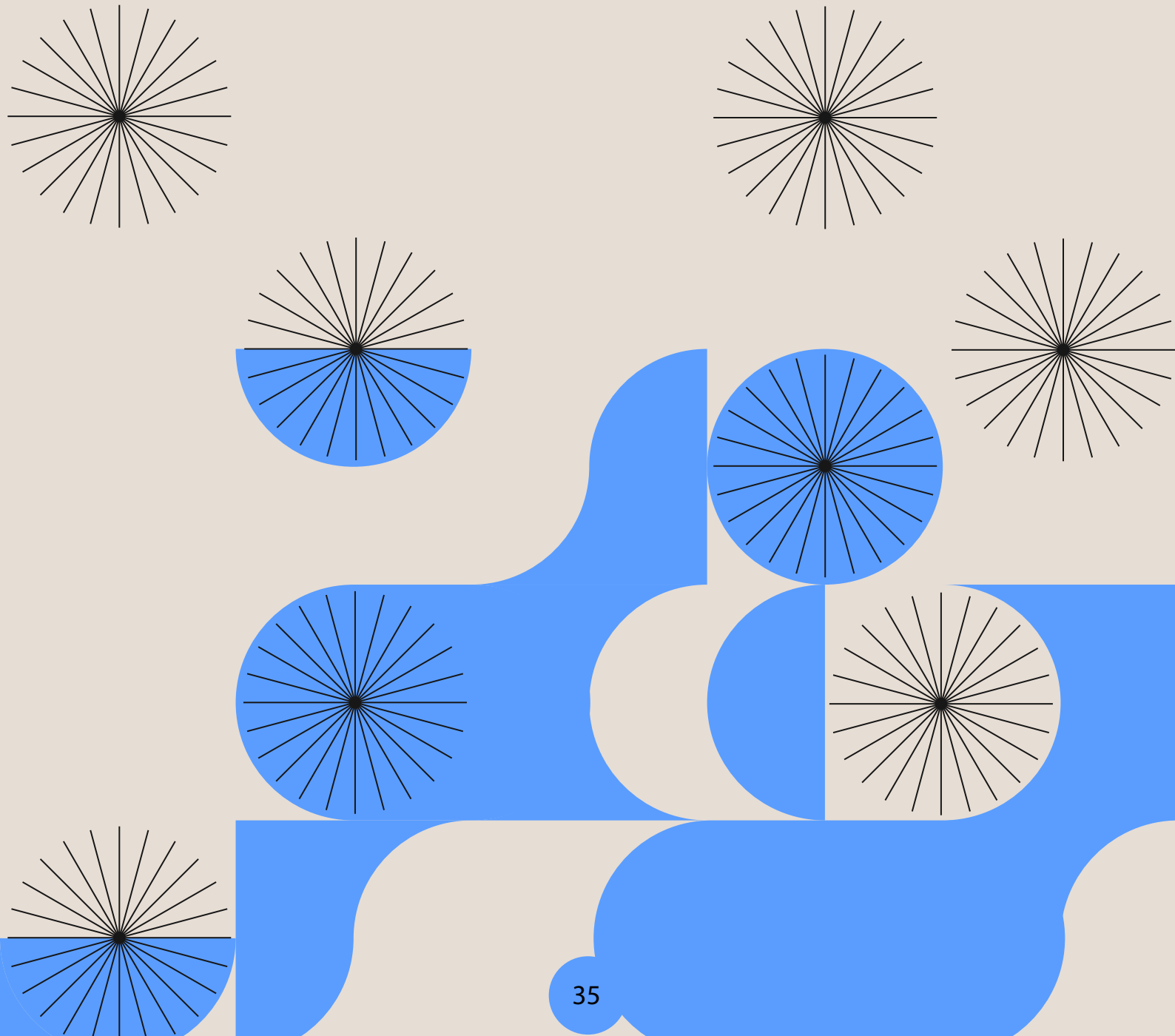
The project mainly required human resources, specifically a coordinator responsible for organizing meetings, creating the program, and inviting guests.
The project required minimal material resources, apart from writing instruments used for literary quizzes. The guests participating in the project volunteered their time without receiving any fee.

+ Results

The project helps young people with physical disabilities feel included in the community. The meetings provide a space for participants to share their thoughts and opinions while actively engaging in social and cultural life.

By discussing books and literature, the project inspires young people to read and explore various literary works. These activities not only foster their interest in literature but also enhance their critical thinking and self-expression skills.

The project activities offer opportunities for fun, learning, and building connections among participants.



Name of the practice: Tea at Fives

+ Description

The program Tea at Five was developed as part of a Norwegian grant and took place at the East Slovak Gallery between October 2022 and April 2024. The program was part of the larger project House of Mine, which explored various aspects of the concepts of house and home. What is a home? What does it mean to us? How does it shape our lives, influence our decisions, and define our future? These questions highlight the complex and deeply personal nature of what home represents. While home is one of the basic human needs, unfortunately, not everyone has access to this fundamental „building block" of life.

Tea at Five was one of several inclusive programs created within the House of Mine project. It not only ran during the project's timeline but continues to be implemented even after its completion. The program's main goal was to connect with senior female artists who have long been engaged in artistic activities and whose works are part of the East Slovak Gallery's collection. These artists shared their life's work and selected pieces from the gallery's collection with registered participants of the program.

The program targeted seniors who have a strong interest in art and enjoy activities that combine theory with creative practice. After presenting their work, the artists led hands-on creative workshops where participants could try out techniques commonly used by the artist in her own creations.

Objective

The Tea at Five program was designed as an extension of the East Slovak Gallery's offerings. Beyond standard guided tours for seniors, it aimed to create an inclusive space for artists who rarely present their work publicly or who primarily create in private.
The program series proved highly successful, receiving positive feedback from seniors who attended, as well as from the participating artists. Many artists shared

that the experience revitalized their passion for creativity, inspiring them to return to their art with renewed energy. Tea at Five continues to be held regularly, once or twice a month, even after the conclusion of the House of Mine project.

+ Recipients

The program primarily targeted seniors who enjoy enriching lectures and creative activities during their free time. Many participants were regular attendees of relaxed guided tours or annual painting workshops.

A key feature of Tea at Five was introducing participants to the professional library at the East Slovak Gallery, which specializes in art-related literature. Although the library operates exclusively as a reference library with no lending options, it provides seniors with an opportunity to explore a vast collection of art resources during their visits.
Feedback from seniors has been overwhelmingly positive, evidenced by increasing attendance and direct communication with both participants and artists.

+ Costs

The project was initiated based on the commitment of the East Slovak Gallery's employees to create a series of programs with inclusive elements. Without the support of the House of Mine project, funded through EEA grants from Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway (€106,490), these programs would not have been possible. The project was also co-financed with €15,974 from the state budget of the Slovak Republic.

The cost breakdown for one meeting under the Tea at Five program was as follows:

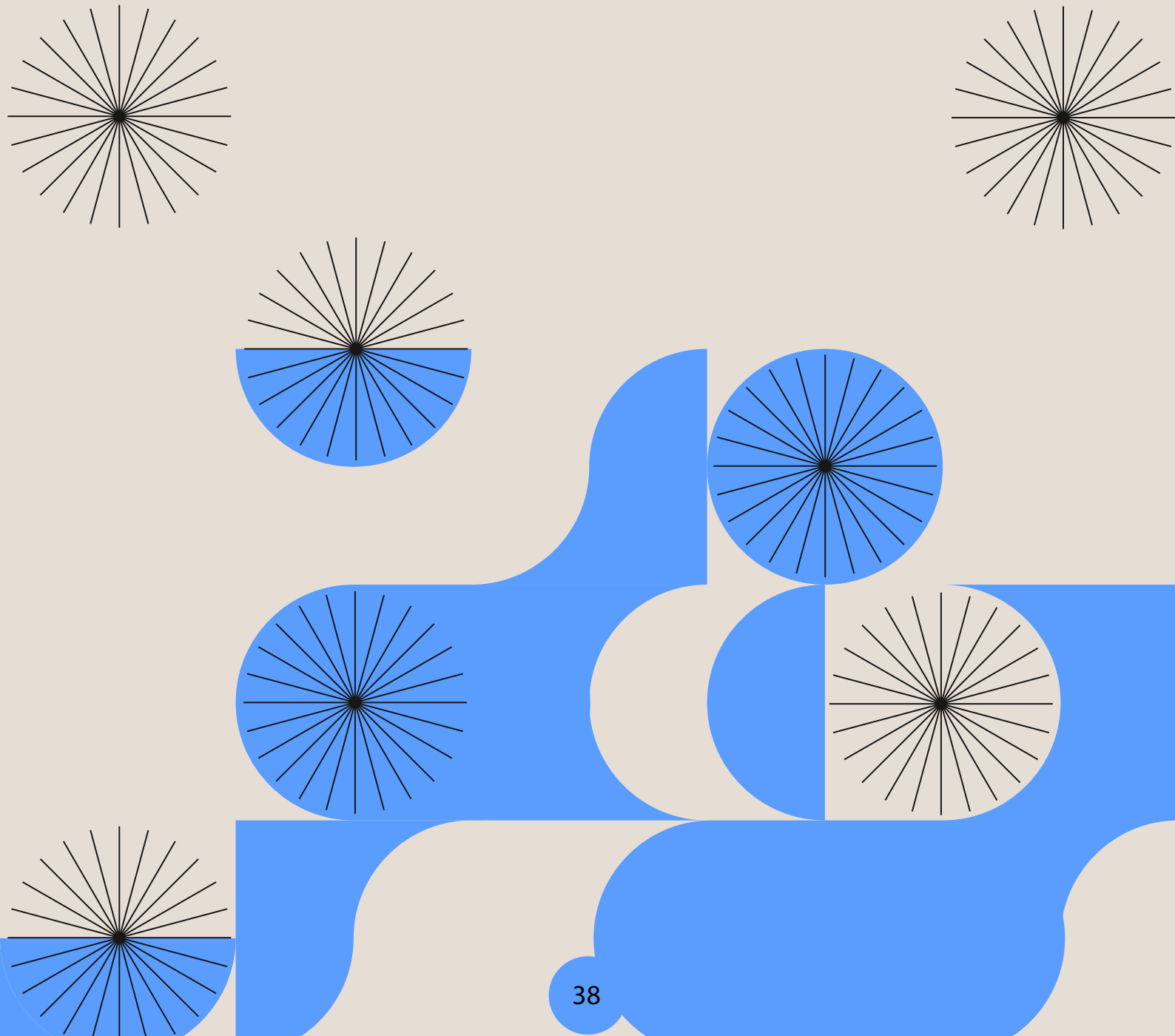
- Fee for the selected artist: €200
- Purchase of materials for the creative workshop: €100
- Purchase of refreshments: €20
- Fee for program production: €50
- Entrance fee: €2 per senior

After the completion of the House of Mine project, the Tea at Five program continues with an increased capacity (from 15 to 20 participants). However, the entrance fee was raised to €5, and budgets for artists' fees and materials were reduced. As a result, the production aspect of the program is no longer feasible.

+ Results

From the perspective of the East Slovak Gallery and its employees, Tea at Five has had a significant positive impact on both the participating artists and the seniors. For the artists, it provided a "second wind," encouraging them to reengage with their art and create new works. For seniors, the program offered a relaxed, comfortable environment where they could make new friendships, share memories, and discuss formative experiences from their youth.

The program's consistently full attendance underscores its value and the need to continue this format. Tea at Five successfully fosters inclusion, creativity, and connection, proving its importance to both participants and the broader community.



Name of the practice: Human Diversity

Description

The project Human Diversity (original: Rozmanitosť ľudskosti) was implemented from October 9 to December 11, 2023, with weekly sessions over a period of ten weeks, at the Nezábudka branch, one of the 19 branches of the Library for the Youth of the City of Košice (Slovak: Knižnica pre mládež mesta Košice). The project consisted of regular meetings between children and a therapy dog named Ajo, who is registered, tested, and insured. Each session was led by Slavomíra Dupláková, an experienced lecturer, dog handler, and certified canine therapist from the civic association Animals and People Together.

The main focus of each session was to improve children's reading skills, while also addressing the individual needs of each participant. Librarians Gabriela Híľovská and Jana Vargová were responsible for selecting appropriate literary titles, primarily focusing on books with animal-related themes. The children were then allowed to choose their preferred book from the curated selection. During the sessions, the therapy dog Ajo, under the supervision of the canine therapist, moved freely among the children while they read. In some cases, children who needed a more private environment were given an individual and intimate space, accompanied only by the dog and the dog handler.

As part of the project, a professional lecture by Slávka Dupláková, titled *The Dog as an Assistant in Non-Formal Education*, was also organized. During the final session, participating children were awarded certificates of completion for their participation in reading therapy with the dog.

Objective

The primary aim of the project was to improve children's reading skills and abilities. Following the completion of this specialized reading program, we can confidently

provided several other benefits: it boosted children's self-confidence, self-esteem, and communication skills—both verbal and non-verbal—when interacting with the dog. Regular contact with the therapy dog, including stroking and playing, also stimulated the children's sensory perception. Furthermore, the project served as a significant motivator for children to continue reading, as they discovered a variety of interesting book titles within the library environment.

+ Recipients

The target group of the project included children with various disabilities, learning challenges, and difficulties in reading aloud. The participants primarily came from the Unified School at Vojenská 13 in Košice, which focuses on the education of children with intellectual disabilities.

+ Costs

The project was financed with the support of the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic, which provided a financial subsidy of €2,400. The project manager, graphic designer, and marketing specialist from the Library for the Youth of the City of Košice contributed to the preparation and implementation of the project. Their responsibilities included creating a timeline, coordinating the details of the project with the participating school, and preparing graphic materials and media coverage.

The therapy sessions themselves were carried out by librarians who selected suitable literature, along with the canine therapist, Slavomíra Dupláková. The financial costs included the therapist's fee and the purchase of a special tent, which was used to create an intimate reading zone within the library.

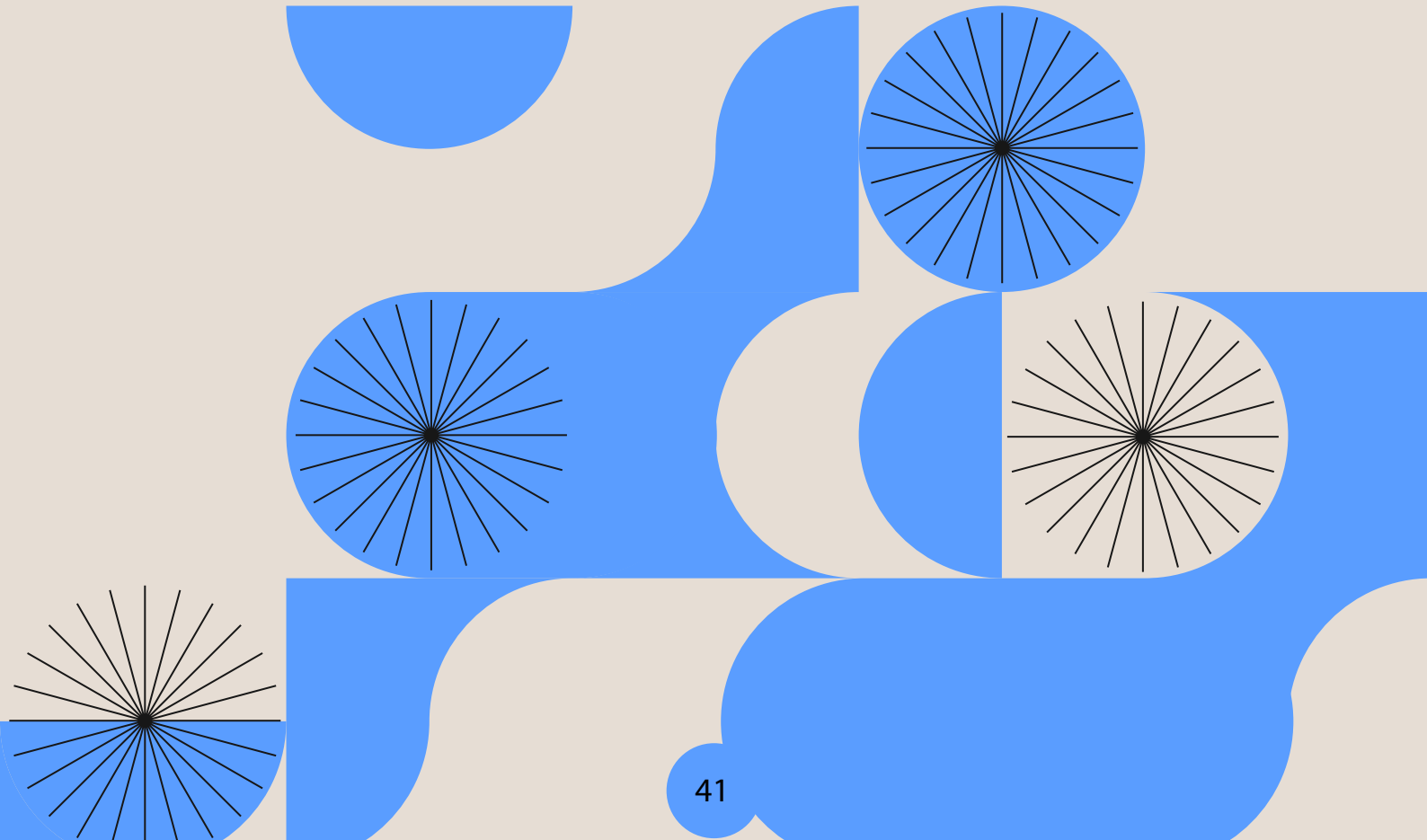
+ Results

The project had a profound impact on the children who participated. Over the course of the sessions, they gradually became more confident in reading aloud, even in front of an audience. This progress transformed them into more self-assured readers while also boosting their self-esteem.

We focused on creating a safe and supportive environment in the library, allowing the children to feel relaxed, accepted, and valued. The presence of the therapy dog and the library setting provided emotional and psychological support to the participants.

The project also aimed to contribute to the social inclusion and integration of these children by offering them an activity that was not only educational but also enjoyable and associated with positive experiences.

For us, as library staff, the project was significant in broadening our horizons and fostering professional growth. It also strengthened the library's relationship with the Unified School at Vojenská 13 and the civic association Animals and People Together.



Name of the practice:
KVP Community Garden – Exchangers

+ Description

The KVP Community Garden (original: Komunitná záhrada KVP – Výmenníky) project is a unique project that transforms unused public spaces in the KVP housing estate in Košice. The garden is more than just greenery – it serves as a space for inclusion and support, offering a setting for disadvantaged groups, people with disabilities, seniors, and other marginalized groups. The result is a functional and aesthetic place that offers a platform for community, educational, and therapeutic activities.
The project was created in 2013 on the initiative of a group of enthusiasts and is built on the principles of sustainability, collaboration, and active community engagement. Today, the garden hosts over 126 species of plants and herbs, functioning as an oasis of peace and creativity in an urban setting. The project is part of the Exchangers initiative, which has been active for over 10 years and is supported by the organization K 13 – Košice Cultural Centers.

+ Objective

The main goal of the project is to create a space that fosters community collaboration, inclusion, education, and environmental awareness. The project places special emphasis on involving disadvantaged groups, including individuals with disabilities, seniors, and marginalized communities, in its activities.
The community garden serves as a therapeutic space where these individuals can actively contribute, meet, and participate in the creation and maintenance of a green space. The project offers a platform for developing manual skills, builds self-confidence, and brings the community together through shared activities and collective goals.

+ Recipients

The KVP Community Garden is intended for the general public, including children, parents, students, and seniors, as well as local communities, schools, and organiza

tions. A particularly important part of the project is its openness to disadvantaged groups, offering them the opportunity to engage actively in community and therapeutic activities.

The workshops are led by expert lecturers who blend educational and practical elements to foster positive experiences and encourage cooperation between participants.

Costs

The implementation and maintenance of the project required the following resources:

- Time: Regular meetings and manual work to enhance the garden, such as clearing construction waste and building pathways.
- Finance: Providing planting materials, tools for work, and creating artwork.
- Personnel: Volunteers and professionals leading workshops and supervising activities.
- Cultural mediator: Facilitating community engagement and support.

Results

Since its inception in 2013, the KVP Community Garden – Exchangers has delivered both tangible and intangible benefits. The garden has become a place for meeting, education, and relaxation for hundreds of residents. The unique herbarium, documenting the garden's plants, showcases the ecological diversity and creative efforts of the community. The Little Gardener's School project engaged children in plant cultivation, fostering their connection with nature.
The expansion of the garden to the roof of the Exchanger is another step towards sustainable development and innovative solutions in an urban environment. Today, the KVP Community Garden stands as a model of best practice in community cooperation and inclusion, offering support and inspiration for similar initiatives in other cities.

Accessibility Questionnaire

Instruction for using the event accessibility evaluation tool

Accessibility is not just about adapting spaces for people with disabilities, but also about addressing the diverse needs of participants — from parents with children, to older adults, neurodiverse individuals, those with migration experiences, or people in mental health crises. We have created a tool that will help you assess the accessibility of your event in a comprehensive way.

With this guide and tool, you will be able to create events that are open, diverse, and truly accessible to everyone.
Its main advantage is that it allows for events to be adjusted in a way that makes them accessible and understandable for the widest possible range of participants, regardless of their individual needs. This can include, for example, adding subtitles to presentations, offering sign language interpretation, adapting content for visually impaired attendees, or ensuring comfortable communication options.

With this tool, you can easily create events that are not only open but also inclusive. The tool's format is very simple, intuitive, and doesn't require advanced technical knowledge, meaning any organiser – regardless of experience – can use it.
We encourage everyone who organises public events to make use of it. This way, they can reach a wider audience and create a space where everyone, regardless of their abilities, can fully participate. It's a great way to make events more accessible and welcoming for everyone!

How to use the tool?

1. **Go through the questions step by step**: each section covers a different area of accessibility — from participant characteristics to space, to communication. „Yes" answers indicate readiness, while „No" answers highlight areas for improvement.
2. **Identify participant groups**: consider who might attend the event.

The better you understand the needs of your audience, the easier it will be to ensure their comfort.

3. **Analyse your responses**: after going through all the questions, summarise the results. Areas marked with „No" should be treated as priorities for improvement.
4. **Act repeatedly**: accessibility is a process. You don't need to achieve perfection immediately. The key is to make improvements with each event.

This tool was created as part of the Erasmus+ project Every Reader Counts, in which staff from libraries in Košice, Lille, and Wrocław participated.

Propozycje nazwy narzędzia do przedyskutowania:

Answer the following questions to check if your planned event meets the needs of diverse groups. „Yes" answers indicate accessibility in a given area, while „No" answers signal aspects that need improvement.

Event Characteristics and Participants

1. **Have the needs of the target group been identified?** Indicate all target groups that will participate in the event and list their specific needs:

- O People with physical disabilities
- O People with sensory disabilities (vision, hearing)
- O People with intellectual disabilities
- O People with chronic illnesses (e.g., diabetes, asthma)
- O Older adults
- O Parents with children / child caregivers (e.g., changing tables, play areas)
- O People facing financial difficulties
- O People from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds
- O Neurodivergent individuals (e.g., autism, ADHD, CAPD, dyslexia)
- O People experiencing mental health issues
- O Other: _____

2. **Does the event consider age, cultural, social, economic, and health diversity among participants?**

- O Program adapted for older adults
- O Program adapted for children
- O Program adapted for people with migration experience
- O Program adapted for different cultural groups
- O Program adapted for different religious groups
- O Program adapted for different age groups
- O Other: _____

3. Does the event date consider important cultural holidays?

- O Yes, the holiday calendar has been checked
- O No, the date is fixed and independent
- O No, but we plan to consider this in the future

4. Have the needs of people caring for children been considered?

- O Yes, a children's area/play corner is available
- O Yes, participation with children is allowed
- O Yes, a breastfeeding area is available
- O Yes, a changing table is available
- O Yes, there is an option to heat food/boil water
- O Yes, a place for stroller, for scooter, bike
- O Yes, a hanger for coats, helmet…
- O Yes, there are designated areas for families with children in strollers.
- O No, such facilities are not available

5. Are there accessibility features planned for older adults?

- O Yes, seating is provided
- O Yes, assistance with navigation on-site is available
- O Yes, information is easily accessible
- O Yes, elevator
- O Yes, space for wheelchair
- O Yes, there have been separate areas for wheelchair users.
- O No, such accommodations are not available

6. Is event information available in different languages or formats?

- O Audio
- O Audio description
- O Simple language/ Easy-to-read and understand language
- O Foreign languages
- O Pictograms
- O Video
- O Text

7. **Can participants report their accessibility needs during registration?**

- O Online form/email with an option to describe needs
- O Phone contact
- O In-person request to the organizer
- O No option to report needs
- O Venue Accessibility

8. **Is the event venue accessible for people with mobility disabilities and parents with strollers?**

- O Ramps
- O Handrails
- O Elevators
- O Paved pathways
- O Flat surface
- O No stairs on key routes
- O Designated parking spaces for people with disabilities and families with children
- O Other: _____

9. **Are the restrooms adapted for people with disabilities and families with children?**

- O Wide doors
- O Handrails
- O Low sink and mirror
- O Changing tables
- O Children toilet
- O Other: _____

10. **Are there parking spaces near the event venue for people with disabilities and families with children?**

- O Public parking available
- O Parking for people with disabilities and families close to the entrance
- O No parking available

11. Is the signage inside the building (e.g., directional signs) clear and intuitive?

- O Yes
- O No

12. Are there designated rest areas available on-site?

- O Benches/seating/chairs
- O Quiet zones
- O Sensory-friendly room

13. Are evacuation routes adapted to the needs of people with disabilities and families with children?

- O Yes
- O No

14. Does the venue allow entry with an assistance dog?

- O Yes, assistance dogs are welcome
- O Yes, a rest area for dogs is provided (e.g., water, mat)
- O No

15. Can participants easily leave the event if needed?

- O Yes, entrances/exits are well-marked and accessible
- O Yes, staff assistance is available at the exit
- O Yes, designated areas with easy exit access are provided
- O No

16. Does the event's technical setup accommodate various participant needs?

- O Access to power outlets (e.g., for medical devices, electric wheelchairs)
- O Technical support for assistive hearing devices (e.g., induction loops, FM system)
- O Microphones and sound systems ensuring clear audio
- O Alternative lighting (e.g., no flashing lights)
- O Designated areas with better acoustics for deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals
- O Other: _____

Communication and Information

17. Is the event program presented in a simple and clear manner?

- O Yes
- O No

18. Does the event website meet WCAG accessibility standards?

- O Yes
- O No

19. Is translation into sign language, foreign languages, or other alternative communication methods provided?

- O Sign Language translation
- O Subtitles for videos and broadcasts
- O Presence of a foreign language interpreter
- O Materials available in different foreign languages
- O Other: _____

20. Are event materials available in formats such as:

- O Large print
- O Screen reader-compatible files

21. Are assistive listening devices available?

- O Induction loops
- O FM systems
- O Designated areas with better acoustics for deaf or hard of hearing individuals

Participant Support

22. Has the staff been trained to support people with diverse needs?

- O Yes, all staff members
- O Yes, some staff members
- O No

23. Are volunteers available on-site to provide assistance?

- O Yes
- O No

24. Are the needs of individuals with sensory disabilities considered?

- O Quiet areas/silent zones
- O No intense lighting
- O No intense sounds
- O Space for isolation/sensory-friendly room
- O High-contrast visual materials
- O Availability of noise-canceling headphones
- O Catering and Additional Amenities

25. Are participants' dietary needs considered?

- O Allergen labeling
- O Vegan/ vegetarian options
- O Gluten-free options
- O Lactose-free options
- O Alcohol free

26. Is the buffet organized in a way that is accessible for wheelchair users children, and short-statured individuals?

- O Yes
- O No

27. Are food and beverages clearly labeled?

- O Large print
- O Pictograms

Logistics and Safety

28. Are alternative transportation options provided for people with difficulties in reaching the venue?

- O Organizer-provided transport
- O Reimbursement of travel costs
- O Other: _____

29. Are all key areas (e.g., stage, reception) accessible to people with diverse needs?

- O Yes
- O No

30. Are emergency procedures planned to inform participants with different needs?

- O Yes, through multiple channels (text, sound, visual)
- O No
- O Informing the Local Community

31. Have neighbors and the local community been informed about potential disturbances?

- O Noise
- O Lights
- O Sudden sounds, explosions
- O Parking issues

32. Has the impact of the event on the well-being of non-participating individuals been considered?

- O Yes
- O No

Representation and Inclusion

33. Have the organizers ensured diversity among speakers, panelists, and authors?

- O Yes, the program considers diversity in gender, age, and background
- O Yes, representatives of underrepresented groups have been invited
- O No, no such actions have been taken

34. Does the volunteer recruitment process promote diversity?

- O Yes, the process is open to everyone
- O Yes, we actively seek candidates from diverse backgrounds
- O No, recruitment is limited

35. Has space been provided for different cultural groups to present their work, if relevant to the event's theme?

- O Yes
- O No

Economic Accessibility

36. Is participation in the event accessible to people with different financial situations?

- O Yes, the event is free of charge
- O Yes, discounts or financial assistance are available
- O Online participation is possible
- O No, full payment is required

37. Are support options available for people with lower incomes?

- O Yes, we provide travel cost reimbursement
- O Yes, we offer free materials
- O No, no such support is available

Respect for Different Values and Identities

38. Are promotional materials free from stereotypes and biases?

- O Yes, they have been reviewed for diversity considerations
- O Yes, they use inclusive/equality-based language
- O No, no such analysis has been conducted

39. Does the event support gender and sexual identity diversity?

- O Yes, we use gender-neutral language
- O Yes, everyone can choose their preferred pronouns
- O Yes, we provide an option to self-identify gender on name tags
- O No, this is not included in the event plan

Social Integration

40. Does the event promote integration of people from different backgrounds?

- O Yes, through diverse speakers/panelists (e.g., gender, age, cultural background, experiences)
- O Yes, through a diverse range of topics
- O Yes, through activities fostering participant integration
- O No, the program does not include such actions

41. Are activities planned to help build connections among participants?

- O Yes, through workshops/integrative meetings
- O Yes, through spaces for conversations and networking
- O No, no such activities are planned

42. Are the needs of lonely or socially marginalized individuals considered?

- O Yes, through individual support
- O Yes, through open spaces for conversation
- O Yes, through opportunities to engage in group activities
- O No, no such actions are planned

Acknowledgments

Lille:

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Mrs. Catherine Morell Sampol – Deputy Mayor in charge of reading, memorial policy, and the Saint Maurice Pellevoisin district.

Mr. Jérôme Pianezza – Deputy Mayor in charge of combating discrimination and of international and European relations.

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The team of Le Canard Aquaphobe

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East slovak gallery (Východoslovenská galéria)

Centre of active aging (Centrum aktívneho starnutia)

Úsmev Cinema (Kino Úsmev)

Alka – Michaela Vlasáková

ZŠ Belehradská 21, Košice

Odpadnesh

Ema Mačáková

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We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to our partners in Wrocław, whose support made it possible to organise the project participants' visit to Wrocław and to create this publication:

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- Centrum Historii Zajezdnia
- Fundacja Katarynka
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- Fundacja Prodeste

We also wish to thank the librarians of the Miejska Biblioteka Publiczna we Wrocławiu for their dedication in preparing the workshops and presentations.

Sara, Poland

"What I liked most about the Erasmus+ programme was the opportunity to meet new people and work with them. It was an incredibly enriching experience for me – both professionally and personally. I believe that the tool we worked on together will be very helpful in the daily work of librarians and will support us in creating more inclusive and open events for everyone."

Michał, Slovakia

"It's hard to point out just one most interesting thing, but if I had to choose, it would be the experience of working with people with different disabilities. It was also valuable to see how a library can cooperate with other institutions – not only as a stand-alone facility but as an active partner in the local ecosystem. I believe that our task is to remain open, share knowledge, and learn from one another."

Guillemette and Sidonie, France

"The most valuable aspect of the project for us was the opportunity to share good practices and experiences between the three participating cities. We work in the international cooperation department, so we often interact with people from different countries, but this project was truly unique – because of its focus on accessibility and inclusiveness in public libraries. On a personal level, we really enjoyed discovering the world of librarians – we were impressed by the participants' dedication and by the chance to explore new places and meet new people across Europe. It was these encounters that meant the most to us."

MBP

Wrocław
miasto spotkań