



Youth  
for Exchange  
and Understanding

***HANDBOOK***  
***“DIFABILITY”***

(Project Management of Youth  
Activities Involving Youth with Difabilities)

## **YOUTH FOR EXCHANGE AND UNDERSTANDING INTERNATIONAL (YEU)**

Youth for Exchange and Understanding (YEU) is an International Non-Governmental Youth Organization established in 1986 and member of the European Youth Forum in Brussels as an INGYO.

YEU looks forward to increase tolerance and awareness between different countries, cultures and traditions, and to promote a greater level of comprehension through the development of various youth activities.

The main aim of YEU is to promote peace, understanding and co-operation between the young people of the world, in a spirit of respect for human rights. YEU is a non-profit making, interdenominational youth organization independent of all political affiliation, run by young people for young people by means of a democratic structure.

Visit our website for more details about YEU: [www.yeu-international.org](http://www.yeu-international.org)

### **ABOUT THE PROJECT**

This project is built by a partnership between 9 NGOs specialized in international youth work, disability or volunteering and 5 Public institutions from 6 countries from European Union. The objectives are to increase the level of participation of young people from disadvantaged groups especially young people with disabilities and to promote non-formal education among more than 250 stakeholders. During the 2010/11, we re-adapted the NFE resource Eurogames taking in consideration the accessibility for disabled people and host 6 Seminars with the partners in each of the participating countries to promote this NFE tool to more than 250 youth stakeholders and develop 3 Training courses to train 54 youth leaders on inclusion of disabled people especially in volunteering initiatives.

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## INTRODUCTION

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In this handbook we are going to use the term **DIFABILITY**, (which is the outcome of a projet Eurogaming2010) instead of **DISABILITY**. The term comes from putting together the words: *different + abilities*. Our intention is to emphasize the abilities that these persons posses, not the lack of certain abilities. In this sense, persons are not disabled, but they all have various abilities that are differently developed.

The purpose of the handbook is to increase knowledge and awareness about the different types of difabilities and how youngsters affected by them can be involved in projects. It is divided into four sections, according to the different difabilities you can encounter during projects. Each section has instructions on how to deal with the specific difability.

The objectives of this handbook are:

- To contribute to the understanding of the needs of persons with difabilities
- To stress the importance of clear communication with persons with difabilities
- To raise awareness about technologies that can help persons with difabilities live a better life
- To increase understanding of various abilities that persons with difabilities posses
- To propose useful methods for designing and implementing projects that include persons with difabilities
- Eliminate stereotypes about persons with difabilities

Why your organization should use this handbook?

- It will help you in organizing youth projects with people with different abilities
- It will develop different abilities in the youth organizations
- It will help you to develop understanding
- It will open the organization for the youth inclusion
- It gives clear instructions and tips on how to be included
- It has a meaning and a clear aim
- It is easy to use
- It is useable

## BLINDNESS

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Blindness is a condition in which the affected people cannot see. Another term used for this type of condition is “visually impaired” people. There are two categories of visually impaired people – blind and partially blind. Since these persons have less developed vision as a sense they have more developed other senses as hearing, taste, smell, touch, etc. That is why during developing activities for them we should emphasize methods using these other abilities.

Let’s look deeper into the topic and find out special aspects in working with visually impaired people.

### *Communication*

1. Make sure that there are no sounds that prevent visually impaired person from perceiving necessary information;
2. Please make sure you ask visually impaired participant about his / her needs;
3. Please make sure that all communication is done in verbal or audio way;
4. Provide all materials in accessible format (Braille, electronic, audio);
5. Please describe all information that is presented in visual format;
6. Make sure that all participants know how to assist visually impaired person;
7. Make sure that visually impaired person knows who is communicating to this person say name before speaking);
8. Find out if other participants are not allergic to dogs.

### *Guidelines for needs*

1. Ask what is the level of vision of the visually impaired participant;
2. Ask if the participant uses cane / guide dog;
3. Ask if the participant needs special assistance;
4. Ask what kind of food uses guide dog;
5. Ask if the participant walks on his / her own or with assistance;
6. Ask about any special medical needs;
7. Find out if the building where the project takes place is accessible (lift with numbers in Braille / relief, numbers of rooms in Braille or relief, path ways etc.);
8. Make sure that the steps and curbs are marked with colors for the participants with small vision);
9. Find out if the building where the project will take place allows presence of the guide dog;
10. Please make sure that there are no chairs, flip charts or other obstacles standing in the middle of the rooms;
11. Please provide rooms with enough light for participants with small vision;
12. Please provide enough lights in working rooms and in other facilities for participants with some vision.

### *Improving abilities*

1. Make other participants aware of the fact that visually impaired participants use more hearing and other senses and let them develop their senses;
2. Show to other participants the technologies which are used by visually impaired, as well as explain skills and techniques that are used by visual impaired in daily life.

## ***Technologies***

1. Please provide access for visually impaired participants to visual aids (magnifiers – Magic software), large text, etc. where possible;
2. Please provide access for blind participants to computers with screen readers installed (JAWS, WindowEyes etc.) or Braille displays (PacMate, Braille Note, Braille Sense etc.) where possible;
3. Please provide access to Braille embossers (Everest) to produce materials in Braille format where needed;
4. Please consider providing pictures used during project in tactile format where possible;
5. Please consider using OCR software (FineReader, Openbook) for providing texts in accessible electronic formats (.txt, .doc, .pdf);
6. Please consider providing textual materials in .mp3 format;
7. Please consider transforming text files into .mp3 audio (balabolka).

## ***Instructions for implementation***

1. Please make sure to meet all visually impaired participants at the bus or train station or airport;
2. Please make sure to explain surroundings to the visually impaired participant including showing the rooms, working place, dining room, necessary and existing facilities; show how to get from one place to another;
3. Please organize assistance or help to the visually impaired person where necessary, during trips; explain to other participants the needs of the visually impaired participant;
4. Find out what kind of discounts visually impaired person can have for transportation, communication etc. and what kind of documents needed;
5. Please consider possibility of purchasing special anti-allergic medicine for participants in case the blind participant uses guide dog.

## ***Accessible process***

1. Please provide all documents including applications in accessible formats (.doc; .txt);
2. Don't include any graphical information and complicated tables in applications and other materials;
3. Please prepare special info pack to discover and assess the needs of the participants
4. Provide organizers, logistical and training team with necessary and sufficient information and SKAs on the needs of visually impaired participants.

## ***Adaptive methods***

1. Please adapt all methods, tools and games to the needs of participants with visual impairments;
2. In case if visual presentations are used, please provide audio description;
3. If games, energizers etc. require movements, please make sure to describe them for participants with visual impairments;
4. If it is required to move around in the game, please make sure to provide necessary assistance for participants with visual impairments;

5. Please provide assistance for participant with visual impairments in case if writing or drawing is needed.

**List of things to avoid**

1. Assuming before asking;
2. Noisy places.

## KINETIC DIFABILITY

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Always take into consideration that there are different levels of disabilities and needs change from one case to another.

Cases with this type of difability include:

- Persons in wheelchair
- Dwarfs
- Persons with one leg
- Persons with one leg longer than the other
- Persons with muscle problems
- Persons without hands
- Persons with short hands
- Persons with missing parts of their hands

### ***Communication***

In this case communication is not a big problem. The message has to be clear and understandable to all the participants. The most important thing with difabled persons is not to show them pity.

### ***Guidlines for needs***

After receiving the applications and finding out that you have a person with difability. Make sure that you contact this person and ask him about his needs and if a tutor is required to assist him durring the project. You can contact the person by phone or video call through internet or maybe a questionnaire.

*Things to check at the accomodation*

- Wheel chair friendly
- Elevators
- Bathrooms have all the necessary accessories for a difabled person to be comfortable
- Big rooms
- Ramps/slopes
- Low windows
- Low blackboards/whiteboards
- Low light switches and socket outlets
- Proper tables

You also need to check if the person needs any specific type of transport for his difability.

### ***Improving abilities***

We have to find the ways and needs to understand their imobility. You have to provide the trainers with theoretical background and information about the difability of the person. Also provide trainers with the adequate training on how to handle these people.



### ***Instruction for implementation***

- Check if the accommodation is wheelchair friendly
- Prepare exercises that can be done by persons sitting on a wheelchair
- Provide the appropriate transportation
- Make a midproject evaluation to check that the participants are comfortable in the project
- Assure them that you are always there for them
- Remember that these persons like to feel successful

### ***List of what to avoid***

- In the case of kinetic disability avoid organizing activities that are difficult for disabled persons to accomplish since this could make them feel uncomfortable.
- Avoid showing pity to disabled persons.

### ***Make process accessible***

If the person cannot fill the application by his own it is nice if you contact them (may be by video conversation) to help them to apply for the project.

### ***Adapting activities and methods***

Depending on the disability of the person the games have to be adopted. This can change from one person to another and depending on the case of the person.

## DEAFNESS

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Deafness is a condition where people affected cannot hear. Sometimes this means that deaf people are not able to speak, just because they cannot hear their own voice and for this reason most of the deaf persons are mute also.

Therefore there are deaf persons that choose (and there are some propitious medical conditions) to wear hearing aid or can have a cochlear Implant (C.I.).

On the other hand it is possible to divide deaf people into two categories according to their communication skills:

- **Manualists:** Deaf people that use only sign language for communication, but they are also able to read lips a little bit. And the communication into written language sometimes could be harder as well.
- **Oralists:** Deaf people who are able to use sign language and oral language for the communication.  
They are Lips-readers and they are able to speak also (with the help of Hearing Aid Technologies) even if the communication could be harder.

Remember that:

- Deaf does not mean mute, because to be mute is a consequence of deafness or a consequence of education.
- Not all deaf people are able to read lips and if they are, it's harder to keep the concentration all the time on the mouth.

### *Communication*

Communication for deaf is very important and the main tool for a better communication is Sign Language.

If possible, get an interpreter on national Sign Language of participant, or ISL (International Sign Language).

Catch attention from the deaf person by weaving hands.

Apart there are cases where deaf people don't know Sign Language.

In those cases what to do??

1. Establishing a new method of communication like: visual instructions, written questions
2. Creating a new communication bridge with gestures
3. Sharing deaf experience with the other hearing people.
4. Manage time for understanding

### ***Guidelines for needs***

Make sure to have big and bright working spaces and working in a circle in order to have a better eye contact. The trainer shall introduce the communication methods: speaking slowly, clearly and when one person talks the others don't interrupt. Trainers should make sure that the deaf person has eye contact with each other and remember that they cannot stay too far.

### ***Improving abilities***

Improving and sharing understanding abilities putting the shoes of deafness for all the participants.

### ***Technology and Tools***

1. Computers
2. Projector
3. Blackboard
4. PPT presentation
5. Speakers
6. Switching music with lights when possible

### ***What to avoid***

- Speaking too fast
- Giving your back while somebody is talking
- Interrupting the translation of the interpreter
- Forget that him/her is deaf (even if the difability is not visible)
- Avoid small and crowded spaces for the sessions
- Avoid activities in the dark
- Time pressure (e.g. Managing the time for communication, because not everybody is receiving the information at the same time).
- Misunderstanding (make sure that the message is received correctly)

### ***Make process accessible***

Before the arrival would be useful to translate the application in the mother language of participant who is applying. In the application make questions if the participant has special needs and about level of English.

At the arrival: organize transportation.

During the training course make sure that all the special needs are satisfied. In the middle and at the end of the training course make evaluation for understanding other needs.

After the training course the participant/s could write an article for the Internet web page previously managed about: their impressions, their feelings, their outcomes and what they want to share with their own community.

## ***Adapting activities and methods***

Pay attention to use more images and examples in the activity. Make more group-building-games, if you make activities where the group is divided make sure that deaf participants are divided equally in each group.

Use activities to increase the understanding and trust.

Including the deaf participants through creation of activities (energizers, trust building, etc.)

### ***Examples***

- Gestures-Names: Getting to know each other
- Names-Tags: Getting to know each other
- Cultural-Language exchange: Disability experiences
- Presentation with subtitles

## MENTAL DIFABILITIES

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There are two major categories of mental difabilities: *mental illnesses* and *intellectual disabilities*.

Mental illnesses are patterns of feelings, thoughts and behaviors associated with subjective distress. The definitions and classifications of mental illnesses have changed over time, but there are currently two widely standardized systems that classify mental disorders—*ICD-10 Chapter V: Mental and behavioral disorders*, part of the International Classification of Diseases produced by the World Health Organization (WHO), and the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-IV) produced by the American Psychiatric Association (APA). According to these two documents, the most common mental illnesses are: depression, panic anxiety disorders, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, eating disorders, etc.

*Intellectual disabilities*, that mainly affect the person's intellectual capacities (IQ and functional skills).

### **Mental illnesses**

*Most important needs:*

- Avoiding situations/ objects/stimuli that cause them distress
- Feeling of control over the things that regard them
- The feeling that they are equal to the others
- Social support

### **DO'S**

- Give up prejudices when interacting with them
- Try to find out during the selection process about the medication that they are taking
- Offer clear information about what happens at all times
- Set clear rules
- Use stimuli that facilitate positive emotions / positive mood: pleasant environment, music
- Use feedback and encouragement
- Create space for relaxation: special activities, respect personal time
- Take into consideration that those of them who have to take medication regularly might experience secondary effects (slow rhythm of moving and speaking, numbness of the body, sleepiness) that might affect their performance during activities and distract other participants
- Keep in contact with the doctor of the person and one of his family members

## *DON'TS*

- ambiguous messages / situations
- stressful stimuli
- treat them as children / victims
- have a very busy schedule and work under time pressure

## *Intellectual disabilities*

### *Most important needs:*

- assistance to clearly understand the tasks
- constant guidance during the activities
- respect of personal rhythm
- respect of personal routines
- to be given the opportunity to use other abilities that they have

## *DO'S*

- use simple assignments
- use a slow rhythm of speech
- offer very clear instructions and repeat them when needed
- use expressive gestures during communication
- make use of various arts
- use complementary explanatory methods (other than verbal): model behaviors, drawings, pictograms, etc.
- make use of different stimuli during activities: visual, audio, physical, etc.
- adapt schedule to personal routines
- use feedback and reinforcements

## *DON'TS*

- intellectually challenging assignments
- use of difficult terms
- relying very much on verbal material
- long activities
- change the schedule after they got used to it