



International Conference
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**Social inclusion, a challenge for Europe:
Accessible language Learning and job opportunities
The case of visually impaired persons**

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Abstract

- This presentation summarizes efforts deployed by MoLLVIS consortium to improve accessibility for language learning of Visually Impaired people (VI) and to promote their social inclusion.



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- The consortium consists of special schools for VI, common language schools, ICT experts.



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Transferability

- This model of networking could serve as a good example of integration of experiences and of know-how



Taking advantage from previous experience

- Based on the results of the ELLVIS and VET4VIP projects, MoLLVIS aims to provide a German course for VI available on apps for Windows, Apple, Android mobile devices and on desktop version for Windows.



Sight first

- Visual impairment has an impact on all development areas of the individual, indeed, World Health Organization classifies blindness as the heaviest invalidating disease.
- 80% of our knowledge are based on visual information. Our environment is full of sensory stimuli and sighted people use only part of these, others are used only in specific circumstances (i.e. dark rooms), or by VI people.



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- Deficit VS handicap
- Deficit = minus of something
- Handicap = disadvantage
- International classification of functions (ICF - 2001) defines the handicap as a specific relationship between the individual and its environment



Enviromnent

- physical environment (architectonic barriers)
- relationship (accessible and comfortable communication)
- technology (accessible and usable).
- disability and differently able

The right help makes the difference



Why language learning?

- Language, vision of life and behaviours are in a mutual relationship and can help us to better communicate and to better understand differences. Language and terminology are the echo of thoughts.
- Communication - thinking - behaving



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- Clear language generates clear ideas and clear ideas create coherent behaviours.



Seeing through words

- Word is a substitute of visual information (explanations, audio description, captions) more than tactile images. The word has greater importance for VI, because turns to be the main communication means. Body language, movie, images have to be translated into spoken or written words, in order to be grasped also by VI. Therefore, learning a foreign language is helpful especially for VI people.



Walls & bridges

- For VI people language is a bridge towards communication and social inclusion.



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Learning materials - tradition and innovation

- While in the past VI used similar training materials being in special schools, now mainstream publishers don't take into account VI students when developing materials. Our consortium aims to close the gap by producing accessible materials for VI people, in inclusive didactic settings.



Information society and visual impairment

- We live in the Information society and we are experimenting a fast evolution of technology. What was a wall/a limit 20 years ago is now a border (i.e. scanner and OCR for VI people). The introduction of ICT-based synthetic voice is a breakthrough for the VI, opening new perspectives for employment opportunities as well as for leisure (reading, travelling, etc.).



Technology is not always accessible

- Too often technology doesn't consider accessibility and turns to increases digital divide.



Catching the raising wave

- Current economic trend shows that German economy is growing, and German tourists are still world-wide leaders in travelling abroad. Consequently, job opportunities based on verbal communication are central in view of social integration of VI in Europe.



Mobile platforms

- In this context mobile devices are attractive for younger people, offer accessibility features for VI people and are becoming the standard lifestyle, business, training and communication gadget of our main target groups. As the user-interface is designed to be also attractive to sighted learners, the impact goes beyond the VI students and will reach a wide audience.