CURRICULUM FOR YOUTH WORKERS

"Designing and implementing accessible educational digital content and activities"

TITLE:
Curriculum for youth workers "Designing and implementing accessible educational digital content and activities"

PROJECT:
"Ensuring accessibility of digital and online resources for youth with disabilities" funded by the JUGEND für Europa, the German National Agency for the management of the Erasmus+ Youth in Action programme.

Project partners are:
- Outreach Hannover e.V., Germany
- Learning Library Oü, Estonia
- Centre for Non-formal education and Lifelong learning, Serbia
- LINK DMT s.r.l., Italy
- Association for improvement of modern living skills "Realization", Croatia

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SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT

In a world where remote & hybrid work became more common, the focus on accessibility became less about the physical workplace and more about the digital workplace — though both are equally significant. To achieve digital accessibility, ICTs should not only be available & affordable, but also accessible, which means designed to meet the needs and abilities of as many people as possible – including those with disabilities. Accessibility of ICT is key given that ICTs have become the primary medium for communications, information, transactions, education & entertainment worldwide. Digital technologies must be as usable & inclusive as possible so that everyone across the globe can benefit irrespective of one's disabilities so that everyone can realize the full potential of the Internet.

The WHO estimates that over 15% of the world's population—or 1.3 billion people—self-identify as having a disability, making this group the largest minority group globally. Inaccessible digital products impact people with disabilities. Some types of disabilities are impacted more in the digital world than others. Without accessibility, people with disabilities are excluded from the workplace, the marketplace, and the supply chain, especially considering that nearly all interactions with large organisations now involve communication using a computer. It is clear to see the barriers that are put in place for those who experience digital exclusion.

SEOywd aims to enhance digital accessibility and inclusivity in youth work organisations, by creating a more inclusive digital environment for young people with disabilities through promoting awareness, understanding, and practical skills related to digital accessibility.

Another crucial thing that we will address through SEOywd project is to rely on people with disabilities to be a part of the construction of an accessible website. After all, who is better than themselves for this validation? It is also interesting to perform tests with people with different disabilities, ensuring that the resources cover different accessibility issues. It will be achieved through the creation of an educational toolkit for young people with disabilities including specially tailored workshops about design creation.

Our project is directly in line with the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030 developed and supported by the European Commission to ensure their full participation in society, on an equal basis with others in the EU and beyond. SEOywd will be contributing to the three main themes of the strategy:

- EU rights - young people with disabilities have the same rights as all other citizens, as well as in digital environments. Through implementation of project we will be addressing and raising awareness about digital rights, challenges and opportunities related to those
- Independent living and autonomy - digital accessibility presents the most important step towards independence of young people with disabilities. The internet has become an indispensable part of our daily lives, which means that it should be equally accessible for everyone – regardless of ability. If young people are not able to access educational resources or do shopping online, they cannot live independently
- Non-discrimination and equal opportunities - as mentioned above, equal access through ensuring digital accessibility must be guaranteed and provided to all health services, education or employment

The specific objectives of the project are:

- To improve the capacities and resources of youth workers for promoting digital accessibility and inclusion, through the development and dissemination of a curriculum that covers

essential aspects of digital accessibility, through organising trainings of youth workers, and through developed e-learning course for youth workers.

- To empower youngsters with disabilities by providing them with the tools and knowledge necessary to navigate and utilise digital and online environments, through the creation of a comprehensive toolkit and the implementation of local piloting workshops, along with an e-learning course designed to meet their needs.
- To widely disseminate relevant resources on digital accessibility and inclusivity through the establishment of the “SEOywd” online platform, targeted online campaigns for the developed resources (curriculum, e-learning courses, toolkit), and by organising national conferences, thereby reaching a broad audience and stakeholders involved in the digital inclusion of youth with disabilities.

Project objectives are in line with the EU Youth Strategy and at least the following EU Youth Goals:
#3 Inclusive Societies - through strengthening the capacities of youth workers & educators to work with marginalised young people & strengthening outreach of information & educational opportunities to them
#8 Quality Learning - through incorporating methods of NFE settings that enable the learner to develop personal skills including critical & analytical thinking, creativity & learning
#9 Space & Participation for All - through ensuring equal access & opportunities in the digital environment to all young people no matter of their abilities

Objectives are also in line with at least following SDGs:
#3 Good Health & Wellbeing
#4 Quality Education
#10 Reduced Inequalities

Project activities are:

- A1 - Project Management
- Transnational Kick-off meeting
- R1 Curriculum
- R2 E-learning course for youth workers
- Transnational Training course "ToT" for youth workers
- Follow-up of the ToT - local/national TCs
- Transnational Mid-term 1 evaluation meeting
- R3 Toolkit
- Local piloting workshops
- R4 E-learning course for youngsters with disabilities
- Transnational Mid-term 2 evaluation meeting
- R5 Online platform “SEOywd”
- Online campaign for R1 Curriculum
- Online campaign for R2 E-learning course for youth workers
- Online campaign for R3 Toolkit
- Online campaign for R4 E-learning course for youngsters with disabilities
- International conference - HR
- International conference - EE
- International conference - RS
- International conference - IT
- International conference - DE
- Transnational evaluation meeting

BACKGROUND OF THE CURRICULUM

The curriculum for educating youth workers on designing and implementing accessible educational digital content and activities is an innovative and empowering educational material developed within the project "Ensuring accessibility of digital and online resources for youth with disabilities" (SEOywd). It is designed for youth workers who are actively involved in digital education and inclusion initiatives targeting young people, especially those with disabilities. Knowing the increasing importance of digital spaces in youth work, the curriculum aims to strengthen youth workers' capacities to ensure that all digital educational activities and materials are accessible, inclusive and aligned with the rights and needs of young people with diverse abilities.

This curriculum support youth workers in understanding different types of disabilities and how these may impact the way young people engage with digital environments. The content offers youth workers a structured learning experience on relevant topics such as accessibility standards and legislation, assistive technologies, universal design for learning, inclusive pedagogical practices and youth engagement in co-creating accessible digital spaces. The curriculum has a strong emphasis on helping youth workers evaluate, adapt and advocate for digital accessibility within their organisations and communities. The curriculum is intended for a 7-day training course. It consists of interconnected training sessions organised in a logical and progressive sequence, with each session addressing key competences youth workers need to implement digital accessibility in their work. The methodology of the curriculum follows an interactive and participatory approach based on non-formal education (NFE) principles and experiential learning, encouraging peer exchange, reflection and practical application of learning outcomes.

The structure of the curriculum consists of two main parts. The first part provides an overview of the project and the curriculum itself, including the theoretical background relevant to the topic. It also includes the training programme table which outlines the full flow of the sessions across the 7-day course. The second part presents each training session in detail. Each session includes: the title, duration, background, specific objectives, a thorough activity flow, required materials, suggested resources, and recommendations for effective implementation and future multiplication.

The curriculum is designed to be used both by trainers implementing the training course directly with youth workers and by organisations wishing to integrate digital accessibility topics into their ongoing capacity-building activities. Through this curriculum, we aim to promote inclusive practices in youth work and empower youth workers to take meaningful action toward ensuring digital access for all.

The specific objectives of the curriculum are:

- To create a supportive and inclusive group atmosphere through team-building and collaborative establishment of learning expectations and principles;
- To analyse and compare the current status of digital accessibility across participants' countries, identifying challenges, policies and good practices;
- To understand the concept of digital accessibility, its importance for human rights and its positive impact on youth work and inclusion;
- To increase participants' understanding of how different abilities affect digital interactions and to cultivate empathy for diverse user needs;
- To learn about WCAG 2.1 success criteria and EU Directive essentials as well as map onto youth-sector digital tools (e-learning, websites);
- To familiarise youth workers with key assistive technologies and introduce them to user-testing practices that ensure accessibility in digital youth work;
- To equip youth workers with practical skills to design and audit accessible digital content;
- To understand ARIA roles and responsive layouts for access through practical activities;

- To learn and practice the integration of UDL principles into an e-learning module outline;
- To strengthen youth workers' ability to design and facilitate accessible activities that engage young people with diverse abilities;
- To strengthen youth workers' skills on practicing evaluating and testing digital accessibility through different techniques;
- To equip youth workers with the ability to adapt existing documents and presentations into accessible formats;
- To strengthen youth workers' capacity to institutionalise accessibility within their organisations and to advocate for inclusive digital practices in their communities;
- To evaluate the learning process and outcomes of the training course, while providing participants with recognition and motivation for continued development.
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Theoretical background

The theoretical background of this curriculum provides the essential foundations for understanding and implementing digital accessibility in youth work. It presents key concepts, models and approaches that support the practical sessions of the training course, ensuring that youth workers not only learn the how of accessibility, but also the why. The theoretical component is divided into four core sections, each addressing a different but interconnected dimension of accessibility and inclusion:

- Models of disability and inclusive mindsets
- Legal and standards framework for digital accessibility
- Assistive technologies and Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
- Inclusive pedagogy and non-formal education methods

Models of disability and inclusive mindsets

Understanding disability is essential to creating inclusive and accessible digital environments in youth work. The way disability is conceptualised has a direct impact on how policies, practices and everyday interactions with young people are shaped. Over time, different models of disability have emerged, each carrying diverse implications for how society perceives and responds to disability. For youth workers aiming to foster inclusion and digital accessibility, it is essential to move beyond outdated models that focus only on individual limitations, and embrace approaches that emphasise rights, empowerment and the dismantling of barriers.

Over the years, several frameworks have been developed to explain and interpret disability. Each model reflects particular social attitudes and carries implications for how people with disabilities are perceived and treated. Below are five influential models. The following overview of disability models has been adapted from resources developed by Purple Goat Agency, a leading inclusive marketing agency that works closely with persons with disabilities (PwD) to promote authentic representation and accessibility.

The medical model
This model views disability primarily as an individual problem that is a condition, impairment or deficit that needs medical treatment, correction or cure. Under this perspective, aids such as wheelchairs or hearing devices are seen as evidence of “failure” or deficiency, and disabled people are often regarded as dependent or burdensome. The medical model tends to reduce people to their impairments, sometimes leading to intrusive curiosity or insensitive questioning. It is a model that focuses more on the individual’s limitations rather than on creating an enabling environment.

The charity model
The charity model portrays disabled people as objects of pity, relying on the benevolence of others. Within this framework, disability is equated with personal tragedy, and non-disabled people are framed as “heroes” who provide support or rescue. While such narratives have historically been effective in fundraising campaigns, they reinforce harmful stereotypes of passivity and victimhood. In today’s context, this model is widely criticised for undermining the agency and independence of people with disabilities.

The economic model
This model measures disability in terms of economic productivity. A person is considered “disabled” if their impairment prevents them from participating in standard forms of employment, typically the nine-to-five job in an office or physical workplace. Policy debates on welfare benefits often draw from this model, focusing on the “cost” of disability to society rather than recognising the broader

contributions of disabled people. As such, it risks reducing individuals to economic outputs while overlooking alternative ways of working, creating value and contributing to communities.

The moral model

The moral model interprets disability as the result of personal failure, sin or weakness. Historically, this view has been tied to religious or superstitious beliefs, with disability perceived as a punishment or consequence of immoral behaviour. Although less common in contemporary Western contexts, this model still exists in some societies and cultural traditions. It can lead to stigma, shame and exclusion, reinforcing the marginalisation of people with disabilities.

The social model

In contrast to the medical approach, the social model argues that disability is caused by barriers in society rather than by impairments themselves. Lack of ramps, inaccessible websites, negative attitudes or discriminatory practices are examples of what truly "disables" people. According to this perspective, it is not the body that needs fixing, but the environment and systems that fail to provide equal access. The social model has been hugely influential in shaping modern disability rights movements, promoting the idea that accessibility and inclusivity are responsibilities of society as a whole[1].

The rights-based approach and the UNCRPD

Building on the social model, the rights-based approach frames disability explicitly within the context of human rights. This perspective is enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), adopted in 2006, which establishes that persons with disabilities enjoy the same rights and freedoms as everyone else. The Convention emphasises dignity, autonomy, non-discrimination, and full participation in society. Article 9 of the UNCRPD specifically addresses accessibility, requiring states to take appropriate measures to ensure equal access to information and communications technologies (ICTs), transportation, public services, and facilities. This article underscores that digital accessibility is not optional or an extra feature, but a legal and moral obligation for states, institutions, and organisations[2].

For youth work, the rights-based approach means that ensuring accessibility is not just a matter of "good practice" or kindness. It is rather about upholding fundamental rights. Youth organisations must see themselves as duty-bearers responsible for creating environments in which young people with disabilities can participate fully, including in the digital sphere.

Stigma, barriers and empowerment in youth work

Despite progress in adopting social and rights-based approaches, young people with disabilities still face widespread stigma and exclusion. Certain stereotypes such as assumptions that they are less capable, less independent or less valuable, continue to influence attitudes and behaviours. These negative perceptions reinforce barriers, both physical and digital, which further marginalise young people. In youth work, stigma can manifest when activities are designed without considering diverse needs, when communication methods exclude non-verbal participants, or when digital resources are developed without alternative formats. Such barriers discourage participation and signal to young people with disabilities that they are not fully welcome.

[1] Carmen. (2025, March 3). What are the models of disability? 5 models explained. Purple Goat Agency. https://www.purplegoatagency.com/insights/models-of-disability/

[2] Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) | Division for Inclusive Social Development (DISD). (n.d.). https://social.desa.un.org/issues/disability/crpd/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-crpd

To counter these challenges, youth workers play a crucial role in fostering empowerment. Empowerment involves creating opportunities for young people with disabilities to take leadership roles, make choices and contribute actively to their communities. It also requires involving them in co-design processes, particularly in the creation of accessible digital tools and resources.

Towards inclusive mindsets

Moving toward inclusive mindsets means embracing diversity as a natural and valuable part of human society. For youth workers that are actively engaged in different programmes and activities, it is important to consistently ask themselves and their team the following questions:

- Who is excluded from this activity or resource, and why?
- What barriers are present and how can they be removed?
- How can young people with disabilities be engaged as co-creators, not just participants?

Inclusive mindsets go beyond technical fixes. They reflect an attitude of openness, respect and proactive inclusion. They also align with the values of non-formal education, where participation, ownership and experiential learning are central. By adopting inclusive mindsets, youth workers can ensure that digital accessibility becomes a lived practice rather than an afterthought.

Legal and standards framework for digital accessibility

Digital accessibility is grounded in strong international and European legal commitments that recognise equal access to digital information as a fundamental human right. These frameworks guide how organisations, including youth work organisations and other structures; design, deliver and evaluate their digital environments. Understanding them helps youth workers move beyond seeing accessibility as a technical add-on, and instead recognise it as an integral part of inclusion, quality learning and participation.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)

At the global level, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) provides the main human rights foundation for digital accessibility. The Convention, ratified by the European Union and all partner countries, establishes that persons with disabilities must have equal access to information and communication technologies, digital services, and online environments. Article 9 emphasises that accessibility is a precondition for independent living, social participation and full citizenship. It requires states and institutions to identify and remove barriers in digital communication, ensuring that websites, mobile applications, electronic documents and online platforms are perceivable, operable, understandable and usable by all.[3]
For youth work, this means that digital activities, communication and learning resources must be designed from the outset with accessibility in mind, rather than expecting young people with disabilities to adapt to inaccessible environments.

EU Web Accessibility Directive (2016/2102)

At the European level, the legal framework is further strengthened through the EU Web Accessibility Directive (2016/2102), which obliges public sector bodies and all organisations using public funding to ensure that their websites and mobile applications comply with recognised accessibility standards. The Directive requires compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 at Level AA, which define how digital content should be structured, navigated and presented so that it works for users with diverse abilities.[4]
Youth organisations implementing Erasmus+ projects fall under this obligation, meaning that project websites, educational materials, online courses and communication outputs must follow these standards. In practice, this includes providing text alternatives for images, ensuring colour contrast, enabling keyboard navigation, and making documents readable by assistive technologies.[5]

European Accessibility Act (2019/882)
The European Accessibility Act (2019/882) complements the Directive by extending accessibility requirements to a wider range of digital products and services across the private sector. Although aimed primarily at producers and service providers, it has indirect influence on youth work because it increases the availability of accessible digital tools, software and online learning platforms. As a result, youth workers are encouraged to select tools that incorporate accessibility features and to

[3] United Nations. (2006). *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)*. https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html
[4] European Commission. (2016). *Directive (EU) 2016/2102 on the accessibility of the websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies*. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32016L2102
[5] European Commission. (n.d.). *Web accessibility – Shaping Europe's digital future*. https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/web-accessibility

avoid those that create barriers for participation. This shift reflects a broader European commitment to universal access and the mainstreaming of accessibility across digital ecosystems.[6]

WCAG

Central to both EU directives and international frameworks is WCAG, the global standard developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). WCAG 2.1 is based on 4 principles: perceivable, operable, understandable and robust; which emphasise clarity, usability and compatibility with assistive technologies. These principles provide a practical foundation for designing accessible educational materials and digital content. For youth workers, WCAG is not only a technical guideline but a tool for transforming digital education into an inclusive and rights-based practice.[7]

National laws across Europe reflect the Web Accessibility Directive through country-specific legislation. While terminology and monitoring mechanisms vary, all require publicly funded organisations to ensure that their digital resources are accessible and regularly evaluated. This includes the availability of accessibility statements, user feedback mechanisms and continuous updates. For youth organisations, this means that accessibility must be treated as an ongoing process, integrated throughout the design, implementation and dissemination of digital activities.

Overall, legal and standards frameworks emphasise that accessibility is not optional. It is a legal responsibility and a core component of ethical youth work. When youth workers understand and apply these frameworks, they help ensure that all young people (regardless of their abilities) can learn, communicate and participate fully in digital spaces. In doing so, they reinforce the principles of equality, dignity and inclusion that lie at the heart of youth work and human rights education.

[6] European Commission. (2019). *Directive (EU) 2019/882 on the accessibility requirements for products and services (European Accessibility Act)*. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32019L0882

[7] World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). (2018). *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1*. https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag/

Assistive technologies and Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Digital accessibility is closely connected to the tools and strategies that allow individuals with diverse abilities to access, navigate and meaningfully engage with digital environments. Assistive technologies and the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) form 2 essential components of the digital accessibility. They offer both individual solutions for specific access needs and a broader pedagogical approach aimed at creating flexible, inclusive and learner-centred educational environments. For youth workers, understanding these concepts is fundamental for designing digital learning experiences which will young people to participate fully and independently.

Assistive technologies refer to a wide range of tools, from software and hardware to built-in device features; that support people with disabilities in interacting with digital content. These technologies do not compensate for a person's limitations, but rather compensate for barriers created by society, design choices or inaccessible environments. Screen readers, text-to-speech programs, voice input systems, captioning tools, magnifiers, switch controls and alternative keyboards are among the most common tools supporting digital access.[8]
Modern devices increasingly come with integrated accessibility features, making assistive technologies more widely available. For example: operating systems such as Windows, macOS, Android and iOS provide native options for screen reading, magnification, live captioning, contrast adjustments and simplified navigation. When youth workers understand how these tools function, they are better prepared to design activities that do not exclude users who rely on them.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Assistive technologies alone are not sufficient if the underlying digital materials are not created in an accessible way. A screen reader cannot interpret an image without alt text, and captioning tools cannot enhance a video if audio quality is poor. This is where Universal Design for Learning provides a broader framework for proactive inclusion. UDL shifts the focus from individual adaptation to systemic design; ensuring that learning materials, methods and digital resources are inherently flexible and responsive to diverse needs. Developed by CAST, UDL is based on three core principles: offering multiple means of engagement, multiple means of representation and multiple means of action and expression. Rather than waiting to adjust materials after barriers appear, UDL encourages educators and youth workers to anticipate diversity and design learning experiences that accommodate it from the beginning.[9]

In digital youth work, UDL is particularly relevant because online learning environments naturally allow for varied formats: text, audio, video, visuals, interaction tools and adaptive pacing. When combined with accessibility guidelines, UDL strengthens the overall quality and inclusiveness of digital activities. For example, offering information both in written and spoken formats aligns with the UDL principle of multiple representations, while also supporting users who rely on text-to-speech or captioning tools. Similarly, allowing young people to respond through writing, recording a short video, or participating in an interactive online tool reflects multiple means of action and expression, while accommodating learners with motor impairments or those who benefit from alternative communication formats.[10]

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[8] World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). (n.d.). *Assistive Technology Overview*. https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/act/
[9] CAST. (n.d.). *Universal Design for Learning Guidelines*. https://udlguidelines.cast.org/
[10] World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). (2018). *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1*. https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag/

The combination of assistive technologies and UDL also supports a rights-based approach to youth participation. Young people with disabilities often face cumulative barriers; not only in accessing content but also in feeling confident, included and represented in digital settings. When youth workers design digital materials with UDL in mind and ensure compatibility with assistive technologies, they reinforce empowerment, autonomy and equal participation. This approach aligns with the values defined in international frameworks, including the UNCRPD, which calls for accessible ICT and inclusive educational practices that support participation without discrimination.

UDL in youth work practice

In practice, integrating assistive technologies and UDL into youth work means moving from a reactive mindset ("we will adapt when needed") toward a proactive and inclusive design culture. Youth workers do not need to become technical experts, but they do need to understand how their decisions, such as writing clear headings, providing captions, choosing appropriate colours or offering varied instruction formats; directly influence whether young people with different abilities can participate meaningfully. When used together, assistive technologies and UDL help reduce stigma and shift responsibility away from learners toward the educators and institutions creating digital environments.

Ultimately, these frameworks highlight that accessible digital youth work is achievable through conscious design choices, awareness of diverse needs and willingness to integrate inclusive strategies. By applying UDL principles and ensuring compatibility with assistive technologies, youth workers can create digital learning spaces that not only comply with accessibility standards but genuinely support creativity, equal opportunities and meaningful participation for all young people.

Inclusive pedagogy and non-formal education methods

Youth work is rooted in the belief that education extends beyond classrooms and formal institutions. It is about creating spaces where young people can explore, reflect and grow through active participation. In this regard, inclusive pedagogy and non-formal education (NFE) methods are powerful approaches for addressing the needs of diverse learners, particularly young people with disabilities. They emphasise participation, ownership and adaptability, ensuring that every individual, regardless of their abilities, has the opportunity to engage meaningfully in the learning process.

Inclusive pedagogy

According to Moriña (2021), unlike the notion of inclusive practice, inclusive pedagogy does not refer exclusively to teaching actions but rather encompasses other teaching skills also. From the perspective of inclusive pedagogy, all decisions made are seen as being determined not only by teachers' knowledge, competence and actions, but also by their values and beliefs regarding students and the nature of teaching and learning, as well as social processes and influences. Conceptually, inclusive pedagogy has been defined as an approach to teaching and learning in which teachers respond to learners' individual differences, in order to avoid excluding certain students[11].

Inclusive pedagogy is not limited to technical adaptations. It is about cultivating a mindset of respect, openness and equality. It requires youth workers to see differences as opportunities for richer learning experiences rather than obstacles. This approach is reinforced by human rights perspectives, particularly the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which calls for equal participation in education and social life. The Council of Europe's Compass Manual also highlights the importance of inclusive approaches in human rights education. It stresses that activities should not only be accessible but also empowering, encouraging young people to challenge discrimination and embrace diversity.

Principles of non-formal education (NFE)

Non-formal education differs from formal schooling/education due to the principles and approach thar are designed to be flexible, learner-centred and experiential. It values learning through doing, reflection and dialogue rather than relying solely on academic instruction or structured curricula. The main principles of NFE include:

- Participation, where learners are actively involved in shaping the process and outcomes of their learning;
- Ownership, where participants take responsibility for their own learning journeys, while facilitators act as guides rather than lecturers;
- Experiential learning, as activities are designed to be practical and often followed by structured reflection;
- Voluntary involvement: NFE respects the choice of learners to engage and recognises their intrinsic motivation;
- Holistic development, where beyond knowledge, NFE supports personal growth, critical thinking, creativity and social skills.

These principles are particularly significant for youth workers, as they encourage inclusivity and empowerment, ensuring that learning environments are not only informative but also transformative.

[11] Moriña, Anabel. (2021). Approaches to Inclusive Pedagogy: A Systematic Literature Review. Pedagogika. 140. 134-154. 10.15823/p.2020.140.8.

Participatory methods in youth work

At the heart of inclusive pedagogy lies the use of participatory methods, which prioritise the active involvement of learners in every stage of the process, from defining objectives to evaluating outcomes. These methods create spaces where young people are not passive receivers of information, but active contributors to the learning journey. For instance, peer learning enables participants to share their own knowledge and experiences, fostering mutual respect and breaking down hierarchical dynamics. A visually impaired participant might, for example, explain how they navigate digital tools with assistive technologies, offering valuable insights to the rest of the group. Similarly, the practice of circle time moves away from traditional hierarchical classroom setups by arranging discussions in a circle, symbolising equality and ensuring that everyone has an equal opportunity to contribute. Experiential exercises, such as games, simulations, or role plays, provide another powerful approach, allowing learners to explore complex issues in interactive and accessible ways. Collaborative projects, where groups work together to produce tangible outputs such as campaigns, digital content or presentations, reinforce teamwork, responsibility and shared ownership of outcomes. Together, these participatory methods help youth workers cultivate inclusive spaces where learning becomes dynamic, interactive, and empowering for all.

Adapting NFE for learners with different abilities

For non-formal education to be truly inclusive, youth workers need to intentionally adapt their methods to ensure accessibility for learners with diverse abilities. This requires proactive planning, flexibility in facilitation and a mindset that recognises diversity not as a challenge, but as an asset that enriches the group. One key aspect is communication, which should be offered in multiple forms such as verbal, visual, written, and tactile, so that every learner can engage in ways that suit their needs. Written instructions might accompany oral explanations, or symbols and icons can be used to reinforce key ideas. Attention to physical accessibility is equally important, ensuring that training spaces provide appropriate ramps, seating and lighting, while activities are adjusted to accommodate varying mobility levels. Time management also plays a role: facilitators may need to allow more time for certain activities or integrate breaks that help maintain focus and energy. The use of assistive tools such as screen readers, captioning, large print or sign language interpretation can further expand accessibility, while role flexibility ensures that all participants can contribute according to their strengths. Some may take the lead in discussions, while others may prefer to document ideas visually or offer reflective feedback. Finally, co-creation is a vital strategy, inviting learners with disabilities to take part in the design of activities so that they are not only relevant but also respectful of diverse needs. These adaptations represent the spirit of inclusive pedagogy, which rejects one-size-fits-all approaches and instead designs learning environments with diversity in mind from the outset.

DEVELOPED SESSIONS OF THE TRAINING COURSE FOR YOUTH WORKERS: "DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING ACCESSIBLE EDUCATIONAL DIGITAL CONTENT AND ACTIVITIES"

Programme of the training course

Day 1	
PM	Arrival of participants
Evening	Welcome evening
Day 2	
AM	Welcome, team-building, expectations and contributions
AM	Country realities analysis
PM	Digital accessibility – overview, importance and impact
PM	Reflection and Evaluation of the day
Evening	Intercultural evening
Day 3	
AM	Understanding different abilities
PM	Accessibility standards and policy frameworks
PM	Reflection and Evaluation of the day
Day 4	
AM	Assistive technologies and tools
PM	Designing accessible digital content
PM	Reflection and Evaluation of the day
Day 5	
AM	Accessible web design
PM	FREE AFTERNOON
PM	Reflection and Evaluation of the day
Day 6	
AM	Inclusive and accessible online learning development
PM	Engaging youth with different abilities
PM	Reflection and Evaluation of the day
Day 7	
AM	Evaluating and testing digital accessibility
PM	Adapting existing materials
PM	Reflection and Evaluation of the day
Day 8	
AM	Inclusive pedagogy and advocacy for digital accessibility
PM	Evaluation of the training course
Evening	"See you again" party
Day 9	
AM	Departure of participants

Introduction to the training course and the group

Session Title: Introduction to the training course and the group

Duration: 90 minutes

Background:
The first session of the training course sets the foundation for the training by establishing a welcoming, inclusive and accessible environment. The aim is to build group cohesion, introduce participants to the training course programme and objectives and encourage participants to take ownership of the learning journey. Participants are introduced to programme, have the chance to participate in an engaging activity that allows them to connect with each other but also get into the mood of the training course's topic. The session also allows participants to express their expectations and co-create a group agreement that will guide the learning atmosphere in the days to come.

Objectives:

- To build group cohesion through an accessible and interactive energiser;
- To provide a space for participants to express their expectations, fears, and potential contributions to the training course;
- To co-develop a group agreement based on mutual respect, accessibility and psychological safety for an inclusive working environment.

Session flow:

I. Introduction to the training course, team and participants (20 minutes)

The trainer welcomes participants to the training course. He/she and the organising team officially open the programme by introducing the project. They provide a brief overview of the project explaining the relevance of the topic, the role of youth workers and their importance in getting involved in the activities, followed by introducing the training course's aim, the specific objectives and the programme for the whole week. Then, a short round of introductions is facilitated, where each participant mentions his/her name, country, sending organisation and professional background.

II. Human Bingo – Energiser (25 minutes)

The trainer introduces the first activity which is designed for participants to get to know each other more as well as their knowledge and introduction to the topic of the training course. He/she explains the rules of the Human Bingo activity, which is an adapted activity that encourages participants to move around, connect with each other and discover commonalities. Each participant receives a bingo-style grid containing 16 squares with statements. Participants are instructed to move around the room and find someone who matches each statement, writing their name in the corresponding box. A person's name can only be used once per bingo card. When someone completes a full row or column, they shout "Bingo!" and the group gathers briefly to reflect on interesting facts they've discovered. The process lasts about 15 minutes. After the activity, the trainer invites brief reflections from participants such as:

- What surprised you?
- Did you find any unexpected connections?

This encourages early sharing and connection among participants. This discussion lasts 10 minutes. The handout for the Human Bingo is presented below.

Human Bingo !!!!!!

You have to do a line or a diagonal by finding persons who have the following characteristics. It has to be different persons!

Who has facilitated an online workshop before?	Who knows what WCAG stands for?	Who uses a screen reader or has tried one?	Who can say “hello” in sign language?
Who has created a website?	Who has participated in a youth exchange or Erasmus+ project?	Who has adapted an activity to be more inclusive?	Who knows someone who works with accessibility or assistive technologies?
Who enjoys using creative methods (like theatre, art, or games) in youth work?	Who has experience working directly with young people with disabilities?	Who uses captions when watching videos?	Who has more than two social media accounts?
Who can name one accessibility tool or app?	Who speaks at least three languages?	Who has organised a community or school event?	Who believes that accessibility benefits *everyone*, not only people with disabilities?

Source: This activity was adapted from SALTO-YOUTH - Toolbox - Human Bingo. (n.d.). https://www.salto-youth.net/tools/toolbox/tool/human-bingo.433/

III. Expectations, Fears and Contributions (25 minutes)

Three large flipcharts (or digital whiteboards) are placed around the room. The trainer has written a title in each paper. The titles are: Hopes, Fears, Contributions. The trainer introduces this as a way to capture how participants are arriving at the training: what they hope to learn, what concerns they may have and what they can offer to the group. Participants are invited to walk around and write or draw responses on each flipchart. Those who prefer not to write can share verbally with the trainer or use stickers or symbols to express ideas. Background music may be played softly to create a relaxed atmosphere. The process lasts 10-15 minutes. Once all have contributed, the trainer gathers the group and reads aloud some examples from each flipchart, offering validation and normalising any common fears such as fear of technical terms, lack of knowledge or discomfort discussing disability. The trainer explains how the training is structured to support participants and address these points.

IV. Group Agreements (20 minutes)

The trainer introduces the concept of a Group Agreement as a tool for shared accountability and safety, as well as for creating a warm, welcoming and inclusive environment for the next days. The discussion begins by asking: What do we need from each other to feel safe, respected, and able to learn together this week? Participants are invited to suggest rules or principles that reflect inclusion, accessibility, mutual respect and well-being. The trainer writes all suggestions on a large sheet and asks for verbal confirmation or hand signs to show agreement. If participants suggest something restrictive or problematic, the trainer gently reframes or invites the group to reflect.
The agreement is then displayed in the training space and will be revisited mid-week if needed.

Materials needed: A4 and A3 papers, pens, pencils, markers, post-its, flipchart and flipchart papers, projector, laptop, Human Bingo handouts for all participants.

Outcomes:

- Participants have established first social connections and a sense of belonging within the group;
- Participants have shared their personal expectations and concerns for the training;
- All group has created a set of shared principles for ensuring inclusive, respectful and accessible group dynamics.

Country realities analysis

Session Title: Country realities analysis

Duration: 90 minutes

Background:
This session is the first session where participants start exploring the topic more and at the same time the realities in their own countries. In this session they have the chance to research, analyse and compare the realities of digital accessibility in their countries. In their tasks, participants will identify both challenges and good practices in their national contexts. This will be done by engaging in collaborative research and peer learning. The session highlights the diversity of approaches across Europe (and beyond), encouraging critical reflection on how local realities influence youth work. It also provides a chance to map key stakeholders and policies, setting the groundwork for transnational exchange and advocacy later in the training.

Objectives:

- To create space for research on the status of digital accessibility in each participant's country, focusing on statistics, policies and practices;
- To analyse and discuss common challenges and highlight examples of good practice relevant for youth work;
- To raise awareness of the role of key stakeholders including governmental, NGOs and youth organisations in shaping accessibility.

Session flow:

I. Introduction to the session and the task (5 minutes)

The trainer introduces the purpose of the session on exploring digital accessibility realities in participants' home countries. He/she further instructs them that they will have the chance in the next 45 minutes to do a research on the realities of their countries by following the guiding questions. Participants are reminded that the aim is not only to find and share information, but also to critically reflect on the challenges and opportunities that exist. The trainer explains that participants have to work in national groups for this research task and introduces the online resources provided (Eurostat, UN World Report, national data sources).

- UN World Report on Disability: https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/world-report-on-disability.html
- Eurostat overview on disability: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Disability_statistics_-_overview

II. National group work: Country realities analysis (50 minutes)

Participants join their groups for the work. Each group is instructed to research online using provided resources as well as their own knowledge and experience. They should present their work in a poster (paper-based or digital). They are given the following questions for a more structured research:

- What is the current situation of digital accessibility in your country?
- What are the main challenges?
- What are examples of good practice?
- Who are the main actors or stakeholders?

The trainer visits each group for support and to ensure they are able to access the resources and providing clarification if needed.

III. Gallery walk and Debriefing (35 minutes)

Once posters are completed, the trainer invites all groups to display them around the room (or uploaded to a shared digital space). One member of the group should stay by the poster to answer potential questions. They should be replaced at some point by another member, to have the chance to visit other groups' posters. Then, participants are invited to walk around, read the posters, and ask questions to group members standing by their poster. This process allows participants to learn from all contexts, not only of their own. The trainer encourages participants to look for differences, similarities and unique examples. After 15-20 minutes, the trainer invites participants to join the plenary for a short debriefing. The trainer facilitates the debriefing by using the following questions:

- What similarities and differences did you notice between countries?
- What challenges appear most common?
- Which good practices could be transferable across contexts?
- How can youth workers play a role in addressing these challenges?

Materials needed: A4 and A3 papers, pens, pencils, markers, post-its, colourful pencils, scissors, flipchart and flipchart papers, projector, laptop.

Outcomes:

- Participants have identified the current digital accessibility situation in their own country;
- Identified national challenges and examples of good practice;
- Participants learned about realities and approaches from other countries;
- Participants have increased their awareness of the role of various stakeholders in promoting accessibility.

Digital accessibility – overview, importance and impact

Session Title: Digital accessibility – overview, importance and impact

Duration: 180 minutes

Background:
This session introduces participants to the core concept of digital accessibility, its definition and its strong connection to human rights and social inclusion. It explores both the ethical and practical reasons for ensuring accessibility in digital youth work environments. The session combines theoretical input, video screening, case study analysis and reflective discussions, in order to help participants understand why accessibility is essential and not optional. Participants are encouraged to consider both the broad societal impact and the concrete benefits for their own practice and organisations.

Objectives:

- To define digital accessibility and explain its link to human rights frameworks;
- To explore how accessibility benefits young people with disabilities and strengthens organisational inclusivity and outreach;
- To discuss case studies of good examples in providing digital access and adapting digital platforms for people with disabilities;
- To reflect on the implications of digital accessibility for youth work practices.

Session flow:

I. Introduction to the session (15 minutes)

The trainer opens the session by asking participants "What comes to mind when you hear the term 'digital accessibility'?". They give their answers, and the trainer writes key words on a flipchart paper. Then, the trainer introduces the session objectives and explains the importance of understanding the accessibility as both a human right and a practical necessity in youth work.

II. Theoretical input: What is Digital Accessibility? (20 minutes)

The trainer delivers a short input on the definition of digital accessibility, focusing on the POUR principles:

- Perceivable – information and components must be presented in ways all users can perceive
- Operable – users must be able to operate the interface
- Understandable – information and operation must be clear and easy to comprehend
- Robust – content must be reliably interpreted by a wide range of assistive technologies.

III. Video screening – W3C introductory video on accessibility (25 minutes)

Following the input, the group watches the 4 minute W3C introductory video on accessibility "Introduction to Web Accessibility and W3C Standards". The source of the video is:

- W3C Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI). (2017, December 4). Introduction to web accessibility and W3C standards [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=20SHvU2PKsM

After the video, the trainer checks in with the group afterwards. He/she asks about their impressions on the video by asking the question "What stood out to you from the video? Did anything surprise you?". Participants are invited to share their impressions briefly. The trainer continues to further explain the practices and concepts mentioned in the video, including some examples from the professional experience (if he/she has).

IV. Small group work: Case Study Exploration and Discussion (55 minutes)

Participants are introduced to two case studies that show the impact of digital accessibility:

- Case Study 1: Rising Flame – Youth Organization Improving Its Website for Accessibility

Overview:
Rising Flame, a Mumbai-based youth organisation led by women with disabilities, developed an award-winning accessible website. The site was praised for being inclusive of various needs, including those related to reading challenges like dyslexia, mild autism, and mental health differences demonstrating that digital accessibility doesn't necessarily require big budgets, but rather inclusive design thinking[12].
Link of the official website: https://risingflame.org/

- Case Study 2: Knowbility's Accessibility Internet Rally (AIR)

Overview:
Knowbility, a US-based non-profit, has hosted the Accessibility Internet Rally (AIR), a competitive event where volunteer web developers and nonprofit organisations collaborate to build accessible websites in a short timeframe, judged based on both usability and accessibility. By combining mentoring, hands-on design, and collaboration, the program promotes inclusive web design and trains youth organisations and developers in WCAG-compliant practices. It exemplifies how capacity-building and community projects can drive accessibility[13].
Link of the official website: https://knowbility.org/programs/air/

Participants are divided into 4 small groups. Two groups get Case study 1 and the other two groups get the Case Study 2. They are invited to use the next 40-50 minutes to explore the designated initiative on digital accessibility and prepare for a presentation.

V. Presentations (40 minutes)

All groups join the plenary for a presentation of their case study. First, groups that worked in the Case study 1 continue with the presentations. Each group has 5 minutes to present their case study, followed by a 3-5 minute of questions and answers.

VI. Reflection: How an improved access change your practice? (25 minutes)

The trainer facilitates a group reflection on the guiding question: "How can an improved access change your youth work practice?" Participants are asked to take 5 minutes individually to write or sketch their ideas, followed by a plenary sharing circle. The trainer encourages participants to link back to their own organisations and consider practical changes they could implement, such as adapting materials, checking website accessibility, incorporating captioning, involving young people with disabilities in co-design.

Materials needed: A4 and A3 papers, pens, pencils, markers, post-its, colourful pencils, scissors, flipchart and flipchart papers, projector, laptop, prepared slides with key points on POUR principles, Case study handouts (printed or digital, in accessible formats).

Outcomes:
By the end of the session, participants will have:

- Gained a clear definition and conceptual understanding of digital accessibility;
- Learned the POUR principles and their relevance for youth work;
- Explored real-world case studies demonstrating the impact of accessibility;
- Reflected on how improved digital access could transform their own practices.

[12] Wikipedia contributors. (2024, August 8). Nidhi goyal. Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nidhi_Goyal
[13] Wikipedia contributors. (2025, January 25). Knowbility. Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knowbility

Understanding different abilities

Session Title: Understanding different abilities

Duration: 180 minutes

Background:
This session helps participants deepen their understanding of different types of impairments and how these impact digital interactions. Youth workers are encouraged to step into the perspective of users with different abilities through practical activities and persona-based empathy exercises,. The session not only builds knowledge about categories of impairments but also fosters empathy and critical reflection on barriers in digital environments. It prepares participants to design more inclusive and accessible digital educational content.

Objectives:

- To recognise the major categories of impairments (visual, auditory, cognitive, motor) and their impact in digital contexts;
- To develop empathy and awareness through user persona creation and empathy mapping;
- To reflect on barriers and accessibility solutions relevant to youth work practice.

Session flow:

I. Introduction to the session and topic (10 minutes)

The trainer introduces the focus of the session that is to gain a deeper understanding of how different impairments affect digital accessibility and to build empathy for users. He/she further adds that this will be done through simulations. Participants are reminded that simulations are not about "pretending to be disabled" but about raising awareness of barriers and encouraging inclusive thinking. The trainer presents the four major categories of impairments: visual, auditory, cognitive and motor, explaining briefly how each impacts digital use.

II. Interactive activity: Impairment Stations (80 minutes)

Participants are divided into small groups. Their task is to visit 4 stations that represent different types of disabilities. They stay in one station for 15 minutes and rotate through four simulation stations when the trainer announces it. Each station demonstrates a type of impairment and the digital barriers it creates. The instructions for participants for each station are:

- Station 1: Visual Impairments: Participants use a screen reader to navigate a website or read a short text with altered visual filters (e.g., blurred, grayscale).
- Station 2: Auditory Impairments: Participants attempt to follow a short video or audio clip without captions or with background noise layered in. They then experience the same material with captions to note the difference.
- Station 3: Motor Impairments: Participants use a dexterity simulator (e.g., thick gloves, taped fingers, or keyboard-only navigation) to interact with a digital form or simple online tool.
- Station 4: Cognitive Impairments: Participants try to read a text with scrambled layout or distracting animations, then compare it with a clear, accessible design.

After they are done, the trainer invites all groups to join the plenary for a discussion. He/she uses the following questions to discuss:

- What barrier did you notice?
- How might this feel for someone encountering it daily?

III. Persona workshop (40 minutes)

The trainer introduces the concept of personas as fictional but realistic user profiles that capture the needs, barriers and goals of people with different abilities. Participants are invited to go back to their small groups. Each group is asked to create two personas representing users with different impairments. They should include the following information:

- Name, age, background
- Impairment type and accessibility needs
- Barriers faced in digital spaces
- Goals, motivations and possible solutions

Groups have 40 minutes to do their work and prepare for a presentation. They can present their personas visually (flipchart, digital board) and highlight key needs.

IV. Presentations and Reflection (50 minutes)

Each group presents their personas using 7-10 minutes. Then, the trainer facilitates a discussion using the following questions:

- What barriers emerged most often?
- How did this exercise change your perspective?
- What solutions can youth workers integrate into their practice?

The trainer closes by emphasising that understanding user needs is the first step toward inclusive design and that involving real people with disabilities in co-design processes is essential.

Materials needed: A4 and A3 papers, pens, pencils, markers, post-its, colourful pencils, scissors, flipchart and flipchart papers, projector, laptop, Materials for the stations: Computers with screen readers (NVDA, JAWS, or built-in), Videos/audio clips (with and without captions), Materials for dexterity simulation (gloves, elastic bands, adaptive devices), Printed “scrambled” or visually cluttered texts for cognitive simulation.

Outcomes:

By the end of the session, participants will have:

- Recognised the major categories of impairments and their digital impacts;
- Experienced first-hand some of the barriers faced by people with different abilities;
- Developed empathy through persona creation and reflection;
- Identified practical ways to incorporate diverse needs into digital youth work.

Accessibility standards and policy frameworks

Session Title: Accessibility standards and policy frameworks

Duration: 180 minutes

Background:
This session introduces participants to the key legal and standards-based frameworks that define digital accessibility in Europe and internationally. While previous sessions explored accessibility through practical examples and user-centred thinking, this session focuses on the normative structures that shape how youth-sector organisations must design and manage digital content. Through interactive peer-learning activities, participants deepen their understanding of WCAG 2.1, EU accessibility legislation, and how these frameworks apply to websites, e-learning tools and digital educational materials used in youth work. The session demystifies technical standards by connecting them directly to the participants' daily digital practices, emphasising both compliance and inclusion.

Objectives:
- To recognise the structure and purpose of WCAG 2.1 principles and levels;
- To understand the core obligations established by the EU Web Accessibility Directive;
- To map standards and legal requirements onto digital tools and content used in youth organisations;
- To reflect on implications for organisational practice and youth digital engagement.

Session flow:

I. <u>Introduction to the session (20 minutes)</u>

The trainer welcomes participants and briefly introduces the purpose of the session: understanding why accessibility standards exist and how they shape digital youth work practice. The trainer explains the importance of WCAG 2.1 as the globally recognised foundation for accessible design, and outlines the EU Web Accessibility Directive which sets legal expectations for publicly funded organisations, including many youth-sector initiatives. Participants are invited to share examples of digital platforms their organisations rely on (websites, LMS, shared documents) and briefly reflect on whether they have ever checked their accessibility.

II. <u>Interactive activity: "Speed-dating the standards" (45 minutes)</u>

Participants are divided into four small groups. Each group receives a card describing one WCAG principle (Perceivable, Operable, Understandable, Robust) with a simple definition and examples.

Step 1 – Group exploration (5 minutes):
Groups discuss what their assigned principle means and identify one clear example of a barrier that violates it.

Step 2 – Speed-date rotation (25 minutes):
The trainer announces timed rotations. Groups move around the room, explaining their principle to other groups in short 2–3 minute exchanges. In each rotation, the "expert group" shares:
- what the principle means,
- an example of a barrier,
- why it matters for young people in digital learning.

Step 3 – Debrief (10 minutes):
Back in plenary, the trainer guides a short reflection:

- Which principle seemed easiest to understand?
- Which barriers felt most familiar from your organisation's digital content?
- How do these principles relate to your everyday youth work practice?

The trainer emphasises that WCAG is not only a technical framework but a tool supporting inclusiveness and equal participation.

III. Mini-input: EU Web Accessibility Directive (25 minutes)

Using a short visual presentation, the trainer introduces Directive (EU) 2016/2102, highlighting:

- what types of digital content it covers,
- obligations related to accessibility statements and monitoring,
- its relevance for publicly funded youth organisations,
- how it connects with WCAG 2.1.

Participants are encouraged to identify which elements of their current websites, PDF forms, videos or online learning platforms fall under Directive expectations.

IV. Policy scenario quiz (60 minutes)

Participants remain in small groups. Each group receives scenario cards describing typical youth work situations. Examples include:

- "You launch a project website with Erasmus+ funding—what rules apply?"
- "You upload a training manual as a PDF for participants—what standard must it follow?"
- "Your organisation uses an LMS to deliver an online course—what accessibility expectations apply?"
- "You publish a video invitation for young people—what must be ensured?"

In preparation for the session, trainer(s) need to create policy scenarios, having in mind concrete needs and previous experience of the group they are working with.
Groups match each scenario to the correct WCAG principle or legal obligation. Once completed, groups place their answers on a "policy wall," comparing interpretations.
The trainer leads a short discussion on areas of uncertainty and highlights the most relevant accessibility requirements for youth-sector work.

V. Group discussion: Implications for youth organisations (30 minutes)

In plenary, the trainer facilitates reflection using guiding questions:

1. Which digital tools used in your organisation are covered by these standards?
2. What organisational gaps exist in meeting accessibility requirements?
3. What supports or changes would improve your organisation's compliance and inclusion?

The session concludes by emphasising that standards are not only about legal compliance but about ensuring equitable digital access for all young people, including those with disabilities.

Materials needed: WCAG principle cards (4 sets) to be prepared in advance by the trainer(s) using up to date reference (check below), Scenario cards printed or digital – to be prepared by trainer(s) in advance and according to the groups previous experience and needs, Flipchart and markers, Post-it notes, Projector and laptop, EC and WCAG reference sheets.

Outcomes:
By the end of the session, participants will have:

- Clarified the structure and purpose of digital accessibility standards;
- Strengthened their ability to interpret WCAG principles in practical ways;
- Recognised the legal obligations affecting youth-sector digital tools;
- Reflected on next steps for improving accessibility in their organisational context.

Resources:

- Accessibility Principles: https://www.w3.org/WAI/fundamentals/accessibility-principles/
- EU Web Accessibility Directive (2016/2102): https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32016L2102

Assistive technologies and tools

Session Title: Assistive technologies and tools

Duration: 180 minutes

Background:
Assistive technologies (AT) play a crucial role in enabling people with disabilities to access and interact with digital environments. From screen readers and text-to-speech software to captioning tools and switch access devices, AT ensures that digital spaces are usable and inclusive. This session provides youth workers with the chance to have a practical experience of basic assistive tools, deepening their understanding of how they function and how to integrate them into their work. Participants will also learn how to plan simple user-testing protocols, which is an essential skill in ensuring that digital content and activities are truly accessible.

Objectives:

- To introduce participants to the concept of assistive technology and its role in supporting accessibility;
- To demonstrate and practice the basic use of at least two assistive technologies;
- To explore captioning and transcription tools by completing a practical challenge;
- To plan a simple user-testing protocol with clear tasks for accessibility evaluation.

Session flow:

I. Introduction to Assistive Technologies and Tools (20 minutes)

The trainer introduces assistive technologies, explaining their role in supporting accessibility. Examples include screen readers, switch access, text-to-speech and captioning tools[14]. Participants are informed that this session will focus on experiencing these tools directly and considering how they can be applied in youth work.

II. Tech Stations: Hands-On Demos (50 minutes)

The trainer and organising team have prepared a space in the training room for a hands-on demos with NVDA (Windows) and VoiceOver (Mac). Participants are invited to check this and rotate between two technology stations in the following order:

- Station 1: NVDA (Windows)

Participants are shown how a screen reader works, including reading text aloud, navigating menus and interpreting web content. They try simple tasks such as opening a webpage, reading a paragraph, navigating headings.

- Station 2: VoiceOver (Mac)

Participants test VoiceOver on a Mac or iOS device, learning gestures and keyboard commands to move through content.

Trainers at each station explain the basics and guide participants through the tools. Then, a short reflection takes place, by asking participants the following questions:

- What barriers did you notice when using this tool?
- How might this change how you design digital content?"

[14] What is AT? - Assistive Technology Industry Association. (n.d.). Assistive Technology Industry Association. https://www.atia.org/home/at-resources/what-is-at/

III. Captioning challenge through Amara platform (50 minutes)

Participants are invited to form pairs. In this part of the session they are introduced to captioning and transcription tools. In pairs, they complete a captioning challenge which is as follows: adding captions to a short video clip.
They have to use the Amara platform. Link of the platform: https://amara.org/
Trainers initially demonstrate the platform briefly, then allow participants to try. They have 30 minutes to do the task. Then, they are asked to join the plenary for a reflection on the experience using the following guiding questions:

- How easy or difficult was the process?
- Why is captioning important for accessibility?
- How can youth organisations integrate captioning into their digital activities?

IV. User-Test Plan: Drafting Protocols (50 minutes)

The trainer introduces the idea of user-testing protocols as a way to evaluate digital accessibility. Participants are invited to work again in pairs. They are asked to draft five simple test tasks that a user could complete to check accessibility such as: “Can a screen reader navigate the main menu?”, “Can captions be activated easily on the video?”. They have 30 minutes to think, discuss and draft these test tasks.
After 30 minutes, all pairs share their test tasks in plenary, and the trainer collects them into a collective list. They also discuss the tasks for potential improvements and suggestions. This exercise highlights the importance of involving users with disabilities in testing and creates a practical resource participants can adapt in their organisations.

Materials needed: A4 and A3 papers, pens, pencils, markers, post-its, colourful pencils, scissors, flipchart and flipchart papers, projector, laptop, specific materials for the demo and captioning challenge activities: Computers with NVDA (Windows) installed, MacBook or iOS devices with VoiceOver enabled, Headphones for screen reader demos, Short video clip (without captions) for captioning challenge.

Outcomes:
By the end of the session, participants will have:

- Gained hands-on experience with screen readers (NVDA, VoiceOver);
- Practiced adding captions to a video using an online tool;
- Drafted a basic user-testing protocol to evaluate accessibility;
- Increased awareness of how assistive technologies can enhance youth inclusion in digital spaces.

Designing accessible digital content

Session Title: Designing accessible digital content

Duration: 180 minutes

Background:
Designing accessible digital content is central to ensuring inclusivity in youth work. Poorly structured web pages, unclear text formatting, low colour contrast, or missing alternative text can exclude many young people from accessing information. This session introduces participants to essential accessibility practices for content creation, focusing on semantic structure, visual clarity, and alternative descriptions. Through hands-on exercises with auditing tools and rewriting tasks, youth workers will strengthen their ability to both evaluate and improve digital resources.

Objectives:

- To learn about and apply semantic structure, colour contrast and alt-text best practices in digital content design;
- To conduct a basic accessibility audit of a sample web page;
- To practice rewriting and improving a poorly structured digital page into an accessible format.

Session flow:

I. Introduction (10 minutes)

The trainer introduces the importance of designing accessible content and explains the session objectives. Participants are reminded that small changes in formatting and design can have a big impact on inclusion.

II. Theoretical input: Accessible Content Patterns (20 minutes)

The trainer provides an input on essential accessibility practices using the content from the following sources:

- Writing accessible content. (n.d.). https://design.shelter.org.uk/digital-framework/writing-accessible-content
- W3c Web Accessibility (W. W. A.) Initiative. (n.d.). Content structure. Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI). https://www.w3.org/WAI/tutorials/page-structure/content/

The input contains the following elements:

- Semantic Structure: Correct use of HTML headings (H1, H2, H3), clear page landmarks, meaningful link text.
- Colour and Contrast: Using accessible colour combinations, checking readability with the WebAIM Contrast Checker.
- Readable Typography: Font size, line spacing, and clarity of text.
- Alt Text and Audio Descriptions: Writing effective alternative text for images, ensuring multimedia has text/audio alternatives.

Examples of both good and bad practices are shown for comparison, followed by a short Q&A.

III. Audit workshop in pairs: Using WAVE Tool (70 minutes)

Participants are divided into pairs. First, the trainer introduces them to the WAVE browser extension (WAVE Tool). WAVE® is a suite of evaluation tools that helps authors make their web content more accessible to individuals with disabilities. WAVE can identify many accessibility and Web Content

Accessibility Guideline (WCAG) errors but also facilitates human evaluation of web content[15]. Then, each pair is assigned to audit a youth-work related website (it can be preselected by trainers or chosen by participants). They are guided to do the following:

- Identify issues flagged by the tool (missing alt text, contrast errors, heading structure problems).
- Discuss why these issues matter for accessibility.
- Record at least three accessibility improvements for the site.

Participants are given 60 minutes to do the task and discussion. The trainer visits participants to provide technical support and ensures participants understand the tool's icons and feedback.

IV. Rewrite Task: Improving a poorly structured page (40 minutes)

Participants are divided in 4-5 small groups. Each group is given a flipchart paper or A3 paper. In small groups, they are tasked to research and find a website (or one of the websites used in the previous exercise), and based on the issues found, to rewrite and reformat the page to improve accessibility. They visualise the corrections in the flipchart/A3 paper. Some of the improvements should include:

- Fixing the heading structure
- Replacing vague link text with descriptive alternatives
- Writing alt text for images
- Adjusting typography and layout for readability.

They have 40 minutes for this task and prepare for the presentation.

V. Presentations (40 minutes)

Each group uses 5-7 minutes to present their work on the improved versions. The trainer highlights good practices after each presentation and encourages other groups to give feedback or ask questions for clarifications.

Materials needed: A4 and A3 papers, pens, pencils, markers, post-its, colourful pencils, scissors, flipchart and flipchart papers, projector, computers with internet access and WAVE extension installed, Access to WebAIM Contrast Checker, Sample poorly structured pages (printed or digital).

- WAVE Browser Extension: https://wave.webaim.org/extension/
- WebAIM Contrast Checker https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/

Outcomes:

By the end of the session, participants will have:

- Understood best practices in semantic structure, colour contrast and alt text;
- Practiced conducting a quick accessibility audit with the WAVE tool;
- Improved a poorly structured digital page by applying accessible design principles;
- Gained confidence in applying accessibility checks to their own digital youth work content.

[15] WAVE Web Accessibility Evaluation Tools. (n.d.). https://wave.webaim.org/

Accessible web design

Session Title: Accessible web design

Duration: 180 minutes

Background:
This session introduces participants to key principles of accessible web design, focusing on practical approaches youth organisations can use when creating or improving their websites, landing pages or digital platforms. While many youth organisations rely on templates or external developers, the decisions made during the design phase (colour palettes, layouts, navigation, structure, ARIA roles, and keyboard operability) directly shape whether young people with different abilities can access information, participate in activities or engage with online opportunities. Through hands-on demonstrations and collaborative wireframing, participants will learn essential components of accessible web interfaces and gain confidence in assessing and improving the pages they manage.

Objectives:
- To understand the function of ARIA roles and landmarks, keyboard navigation, and responsive layouts in accessible web design;
- To recognise the importance of inclusive colour palettes, spacing, and visual hierarchy;
- To design a wireframe for an accessible homepage tailored to a youth organisation;
- To provide constructive peer feedback based on accessibility criteria.

Session flow:

I. Introduction to the session (15 minutes)

The trainer opens the session by explaining why accessible web design is essential in the youth sector: websites often serve as the first point of contact for young people seeking information, opportunities or support. The trainer briefly introduces key concepts such as ARIA roles, keyboard navigation, mobile responsiveness, and inclusive visual design. Participants are asked to think of a website they use regularly and reflect on whether it feels accessible, confusing or difficult to navigate.

II. Demonstration: ARIA roles and keyboard navigation (50 minutes)

This interactive demonstration helps participants understand how users with different abilities navigate web pages without relying on a mouse.

Step 1 – ARIA introduction (10 minutes):
The trainer explains Accessible Rich Internet Applications (ARIA) roles and landmarks, highlighting:
- why ARIA exists,
- how landmarks improve structure and navigation,
- how screen readers and assistive technologies recognise ARIA labels.

Examples include:
<header role="banner">, <nav role="navigation">, <main role="main">, <footer role="contentinfo">.

Step 2 – Live navigation demo (15 minutes):
Participants watch as the trainer opens a simple webpage with ARIA roles inserted and navigates the page using only the keyboard (tab, shift+tab, enter, arrow keys).
They observe how the focus indicator moves, how headings structure the content, and how ARIA

landmarks become “anchors” for assistive technologies

Step 3 – Participant practice (20 minutes):
In pairs, participants use available laptops or their own devices to “tab through” a sample page provided by the trainer. They explore:

- whether the tab order is logical,
- if interactive elements receive focus,
- how headings and ARIA labels improve clarity.

The trainer prompts participants to identify usability barriers they notice and think about how young people with different abilities may experience the page.

III. Input: Key elements of accessible visual and structural design (25 minutes)

The trainer provides a short input summarising the most important features of accessible layout and visual design:

- sufficient colour contrast,
- readable and scalable typography,
- consistent spacing and visual hierarchy,
- responsive design for mobile and tablet access,
- clear navigation and simple menu structures.

Participants briefly analyse an example of a highly accessible website and identify which design choices support usability.

IV. Collaborative activity: Wireframe Jam (55 minutes)

In small teams, participants develop a wireframe for an accessible homepage of a youth organisation. The trainer provides templates and suggests that teams consider:

- the structure of the page (header, navigation, main content, footer),
- ARIA landmarks and where they belong,
- inclusive colour palette and contrast choices,
- clarity of calls to action (CTA),
- mobile-first responsiveness,
- accessible placement and labelling of images, forms and links.

Teams sketch their wireframes on flipcharts or use a digital whiteboard if preferred. The trainer circulates to support teams, prompting them to consider how a user with visual, motor or cognitive differences would perceive the layout.

V. Peer review and feedback (35 minutes)

Teams display their wireframes and rotate around the room to review other groups’ designs. Each team provides feedback using a simple evaluation sheet that includes:

- clarity of structure,
- accessibility of navigation,
- effectiveness of visual hierarchy,
- integration of ARIA roles,
- potential accessibility barriers.

After the rotation, each team receives feedback from peers and reflects on what they might improve. The trainer leads a short plenary discussion about common strengths and gaps observed across designs.

Materials needed: Laptops or tablets for ARIA demonstration and practice, Flipchart papers and markers, Wireframe templates (paper or digital), Colour palette and contrast reference sheets, Projector and laptop, Sample page for keyboard navigation exercise.

Outcomes:
By the end of the session, participants will have:

- Strengthened their understanding of ARIA roles, landmarks and keyboard navigation;
- Recognised key elements of accessible web design for youth-facing websites;
- Created an accessible homepage wireframe that reflects inclusive design principles;
- Practised evaluating web layouts through an accessibility-focused lens;
- Gained practical skills they can apply directly within their organisations.

Resources:

- MDN ARIA Authoring Practices*:* https://developer.mozilla.org/en-US/docs/Web/Accessibility/ARIA
- WebAIM Guide to Keyboard Accessibility*:* https://webaim.org/techniques/keyboard/

Inclusive and accessible online learning development

Session Title: Inclusive and accessible online learning development

Duration: 180 minutes

Background:
This session focuses on how youth workers can design online learning that is accessible, engaging and adaptable for diverse learners. Youth organisations increasingly rely on digital platforms (such as Moodle, Rise360 and other e-learning tools) to deliver educational content. Yet, these platforms are only effective when structured in ways that reflect the needs of learners with different abilities. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) provides a practical framework for planning online learning that offers multiple ways to engage with content, multiple ways to access information, and multiple ways to demonstrate learning.
Through hands-on exercises, platform demonstrations and collaborative design, participants will explore how UDL principles and accessibility features can be integrated into digital learning modules to ensure equitable participation for all young people.

Objectives:
- To apply UDL principles to the structure of an online learning lesson;
- To select formats and tools that support learners with diverse abilities;
- To evaluate accessibility features in common e-learning platforms;
- To draft an inclusive storyboard for an online lesson relevant to youth-sector practice.

Session flow:

I. <u>Introduction to the session (10 minutes)</u>
The trainer introduces the session by highlighting the importance of accessible online learning in youth work, particularly for programmes where young people learn independently, asynchronously or from remote contexts. The trainer briefly recaps core UDL principles and explains how accessible design increases engagement, reduces barriers and supports the autonomy of learners with diverse abilities. Participants are invited to share examples of online courses or tools they have used and reflect on whether these felt inclusive or challenging.

II. <u>Activity: UDL Mapping (55 minutes)</u>
Participants engage in a hands-on activity where they apply UDL principles to an existing lesson plan.

Step 1 – UDL checkpoints refresher (10 minutes):
The trainer presents the three UDL pillars:
- *Multiple means of representation* (how content is presented),
- *Multiple means of engagement* (how learners interact and stay motivated),
- *Multiple means of action and expression* (how learners show understanding).

Short examples are provided (e.g., offering text + audio, interactive tasks, flexible submission formats).

Step 2 – Small-group mapping (35 minutes):
Participants work in groups. Each group chooses a simple lesson topic (e.g., digital safety, youth rights, participation, entrepreneurship).
Their task is to map the chosen lesson onto UDL guidelines by identifying:

- at least two ways to present the content,
- two engagement options,
- two ways learners can demonstrate understanding.

Groups document their ideas visually (flipchart or digital board).

Step 3 – Plenary reflection (10 minutes):

The trainer asks:

- Which UDL checkpoint was easiest to apply?
- Which required more creativity?
- How might youth with different abilities benefit from these choices?

III. Mini-input & demonstration: Accessibility features in Moodle and other platforms (35 minutes)

The trainer provides a short guided tour of accessibility features within Moodle (or Rise360/Canvas equivalents depending on availability).

Key features demonstrated may include:

- heading structure in pages,
- alternative text fields,
- keyboard navigation,
- adjustable fonts and themes,
- embedded video accessibility settings,
- quiz settings that support diverse learners,
- content sequencing for cognitive clarity.

Participants follow along on their devices when possible. The trainer emphasises that accessible online learning is shaped both by platform features and by informed design decisions made by the educator.

A short Q&A allows participants to ask technical or pedagogical questions about platform use.

IV. Collaborative activity: Module Blueprint – Drafting an accessible e-learning lesson (65 minutes)

Participants work in groups to design a storyboard for a short online lesson relevant to their youth work practice.

Instructions for groups:

Your storyboard must include:

- a lesson title and target group,
- learning objectives,
- UDL-aligned content structure (representation, engagement, expression),
- accessible media choices (e.g., captioned video, readable text, simple visuals),
- a short interactive element (quiz, reflection, drag-and-drop, scenario),
- accessibility considerations for each content block.

Groups can work using paper templates or digital tools (Miro, Canva, Google Slides). The trainer circulates, asking guiding questions such as:

1. Is every piece of content available in more than one format?
2. Is the navigation simple and predictable?
3. Are media elements accessible?
4. What supports can be offered to learners who struggle with sustained focus, reading, or motor tasks?

V. Presentations and group feedback (15 minutes)

Each group presents their storyboards in 5-minute pitches.

The trainer invites peer feedback guided by the following questions:

1. Does the storyboard follow UDL principles?

2. Are accessibility needs explicitly addressed?
3. Is the structure clear, and is navigation easy to follow?
4. What improvements could enhance inclusion?

The trainer closes the session by highlighting that accessible online learning requires intentional planning, but becomes increasingly intuitive as youth workers build familiarity with UDL frameworks and accessible platforms.

Materials needed: UDL guideline printouts or digital references, Lesson plan templates, Flipchart papers and markers, Laptops or tablets for platform demo, Projector and laptop, Storyboard templates (digital or paper).

Outcomes:

By the end of the session, participants will have:

- Applied UDL principles to online lesson planning;
- Explored accessibility features within e-learning platforms;
- Designed a clear storyboard for an inclusive e-learning lesson;
- Strengthened their understanding of accessible digital pedagogy;
- Identified practical steps for improving their organisation's online learning environments.

Resources:

- CAST UDL Guidelines: https://udlguidelines.cast.org/
- Moodle Accessibility Overview: https://docs.moodle.org/400/en/Accessibility

Engaging youth with different abilities

Session Title: Engaging youth with different abilities

Duration: 180 minutes

Background:
Engaging youth with different abilities requires creativity, flexibility and inclusive facilitation techniques. Activities need to be designed in ways that consider multiple means of participation, meaning to ensure that all young people can contribute and benefit regardless of their abilities. This session introduces youth workers to multi-sensory approaches, peer mentoring and scaffolding strategies that make learning experiences accessible. The session is designed with different activities such as brainstorming, micro-design and live facilitation, for participants to learn how to adapt activities and experiment with inclusive methods that can be directly applied in their work.

Objectives:

- To design and adapt interactive methods that work across different abilities;
- To practice facilitating a micro-learning activity with peers;
- To use the theory learnt for practical design of inclusive activities;
- To reflect on strategies for inclusive facilitation and youth engagement.

Session flow:

I. Introduction to the topic and theoretical input (20 minutes)

The trainer introduces the session by explaining that inclusive engagement is about ensuring participation for all and not about simplifying content. The trainer briefly presents the concepts of multi-sensory activities, peer mentoring, scaffolded tasks and feedback loops. He/she uses concrete examples such as combining visual aids with tactile elements, assigning supportive peer roles and breaking tasks into manageable steps. Then, the trainer continues with a theoretical input on different types of approaches for inclusive activities such as multi-sensory activities, peer mentoring, scaffolded tasks and feedback loops. The content and examples are taken from the following sources:

- Harkla - Parenting & Child Development Tips. (2022, February 1). Top 5 Multi-Sensory Activities and Why We love them [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eEJUYOVTlh4
- Weller, D. (2025, May 3). 3 types of scaffolding for student success. Barefoot TEFL Teacher. https://www.barefootteflteacher.com/p/3-types-of-scaffolding
- Better Movers and Thinkers - scaffolding practices. (n.d.). Resources | National Improvement Hub. https://education.gov.scot/resources/better-movers-and-thinkers-scaffolding-practices/

II. Brainstorming activity: Adapting youth activities (30 minutes)

The trainer starts with a brainstorming activity. Participants are asked to brainstorm a list of youth activities they currently use in their practice such as icebreakers, group games, learning tasks. On a flipchart, the trainer collects examples. Then, the trainer invites participants to use the next 10-15 minutes to brainstorm in small groups different ideas of how these activities could be adapted for accessibility. The trainer gives them the following questions:

- What adjustments would make this activity work for someone with limited vision?
- How could the activity be facilitated for someone with hearing impairments?

- How could cognitive or motor challenges be accommodated?

Groups write their ideas in a paper and then share one example with the plenary.

III. Micro-Design: Creating a 10-minute micro-learning game (60 minutes)

Participants work again in small groups to design a new 10-minute micro-learning activity that is inclusive of different abilities. Each group selects a theme such as communication, teamwork or creativity, and develops a simple game or task using multi-sensory or scaffolded approaches.
Guidelines provided by the trainer are as follows:
Activity must be playable in 10 minutes.
Activity should include at least two modalities (visual, auditory, tactile).
Activity should consider feedback/check-in moments.
Groups have 60 minutes to do the task and prepare for the simulation of their activity.

IV. Live facilitation and Feedback (70 minutes)

Each group facilitates their micro-learning activity with the rest of the group as participants. They use their 10 minutes for facilitation. Each facilitation is followed by a short reflection led by the trainer and peers using the following questions:

- What worked well in terms of accessibility?
- What challenges did you notice?
- How could the activity be improved further?

In the end, the trainer gives constructive feedback to all groups.

Materials needed: A4 and A3 papers, pens, pencils, markers, post-its, colourful pencils, scissors, flipchart and flipchart papers, projector, laptop, simple props for micro-games (balls, cards, paper, markers, etc.), timer for micro-learning facilitation, accessible versions of materials (large print, symbols, digital text).

Outcomes:
By the end of the session, participants will have:

- Gained practical experience in adapting and designing accessible activities;
- Designed and facilitated a short inclusive micro-learning game;
- Reflected on how inclusive methods can be embedded in youth engagement;
- Built confidence in applying multi-sensory and scaffolded approaches in their youth work.

Evaluating and testing digital accessibility

Session Title: Evaluating and testing digital accessibility

Duration: 180 minutes

Background:
This session guides participants through the practical process of evaluating the accessibility of digital content using a combination of automated and manual testing techniques. While automated tools provide quick insights into common issues, manual testing remains essential for identifying barriers that tools often miss (such as unclear visual hierarchy, confusing navigation, or poor keyboard operability).
Participants will learn to assess websites and online materials with tools such as WAVE and axe DevTools, and they will practise key manual checks including keyboard-only navigation and basic screen reader exploration. The session concludes with drafting a short accessibility evaluation report that identifies key issues, prioritises fixes and outlines next steps relevant to youth-sector digital content.

Objectives:
- To apply at least two automated and two manual accessibility testing methods;
- To interpret testing findings and identify critical barriers affecting users with different abilities;
- To draft a concise accessibility evaluation report with recommendations;
- To strengthen confidence in assessing digital content used within youth organisations.

Session flow:

I. Introduction to the session (20 minutes)
The trainer introduces the purpose of accessibility testing, emphasising that evaluation is not about "checking boxes" but about improving real user experiences; particularly for young people with different abilities. Participants are reminded of the importance of combining automated and manual approaches, and the trainer briefly describes the tools they will use: WAVE, axe DevTools, keyboard navigation and screen reader basics.

II. Activity: Automated testing lab (60 minutes)
Step 1 – Demonstration (10 minutes)
The trainer demonstrates how to run automated accessibility checks using WAVE and axe DevTools on a simple webpage. Participants observe:
- how errors and warnings are categorised,
- the difference between structural and content issues,
- how colour contrast, missing alt text, headings and ARIA attributes are flagged.

Step 2 – Small-group automated testing (35 minutes)
Participants work in small groups on laptops. Each group is given 2–3 sample pages (or pages from their organisations if they prefer).
Their task is to:
- run WAVE and axe DevTools,
- note the top issues each tool highlights,
- compare results between tools (what overlaps? what differs?),

- identify any issues that might be especially harmful for young users.

Trainers circulate to help interpret error messages and highlight patterns that typically appear in youth-sector digital materials (e.g., PDFs without tags, low-contrast buttons, inaccessible forms).

Step 3 – Quick reflection (15 minutes)

Groups share:

- one issue that surprised them,
- one issue they expected but did not find,
- one issue they consider critical based on what they learned in earlier sessions.

III. Activity: Manual accessibility checks (55 minutes)

Step 1 – Keyboard-only navigation test (25 minutes)

Participants perform keyboard-only tests on their assigned webpages.

They check for:

- logical tab order,
- visible focus indicators,
- ability to activate interactive elements with Enter/Space,
- accessible dropdowns and forms.

The trainer explains why keyboard accessibility is essential for users with motor or visual impairments.

Step 2 – Basic screen reader exploration (20 minutes)

Participants follow a guided introduction to a screen reader (NVDA, VoiceOver or built-in tools).

They practise:

- reading headings,
- jumping by landmarks or links,
- checking alternative text,
- navigating through longer text sections.

The trainer reminds participants that the purpose is not mastery, but awareness of how content must be structured to be navigable.

Step 3 – Debrief (10 minutes)

Questions for discussion:

- What issues did manual testing reveal that automated tests missed?
- How might these problems impact young people with different abilities?
- Which manual test felt most useful?

IV. Activity: Drafting an accessibility evaluation report (45 minutes)

Participants work in pairs to create a short evaluation report summarising the findings from both automated and manual tests.

Report template includes:

- Page or content evaluated
- Automated testing summary (WAVE + axe)
- Manual testing summary (keyboard + screen reader)
- Top 5 priority issues to fix
- Recommended next steps and responsible roles
- Timeframe for improvements

The trainer encourages participants to prioritise issues that most affect access:
e.g., navigation barriers, lack of alt text, poor headings, unreadable colour contrast, inaccessible PDFs.

After drafting, pairs exchange reports and give each other quick feedback using colour-coded sticky notes:

- Green – clearly explained
- Yellow – needs more detail
- Red – unclear or inconsistent

Materials needed: Laptops or tablets with internet access, WAVE tool (browser extension or web version), axe DevTools browser extension, Webpages or digital materials for testing, Screen reader installed or available (NVDA, VoiceOver, Narrator), Report templates (digital or printed), Flipchart, markers, sticky notes.

Outcomes:
By the end of the session, participants will have:

- Practised both automated and manual accessibility testing methods;
- Developed the ability to identify and prioritise accessibility barriers;
- Gained hands-on experience using WAVE, axe and keyboard navigation;
- Created a concise accessibility evaluation report applicable to their organisational context;
- Strengthened their confidence in monitoring and improving digital accessibility.

Resources:

- axe DevTools: https://www.deque.com/axe/devtools/
- WAVE Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool: https://wave.webaim.org/

Adapting existing materials

Session Title: Adapting existing materials

Duration: 180 minutes

Background:
Many youth workers already use a variety of materials in their work, starting from handouts and flyers to PowerPoint presentations and reports. However, these materials are often not designed with accessibility in mind, which can create barriers for young people with disabilities. This session helps participants identify common strategies for adapting existing materials into accessible formats. This is done by practicing with real documents and using accessibility-checking tools. In this way participants gain practical skills to transform their materials so they can be used by all learners.

Objectives:

- To identify three common adaptation strategies for PDFs, Word documents, and PowerPoint slides;
- To apply accessibility features such as headings, alt text and contrast to improve materials;
- To practice converting a sample handout into an accessible format;
- To promote peer support and teamwork when working with people with disabilities.

Session flow:

I. Introduction and input (20 minutes)

The trainer introduces the session by highlighting the importance of adapting existing materials, since many youth workers rely on pre-made resources. Then, the trainer continues with an input session where he/she presents three key strategies for accessible materials:

- Tagged PDFs – ensuring navigation and screen reader compatibility
- Heading structures in Word – logical hierarchy for navigation
- Alt text in PowerPoint – describing images and visuals

Colour contrast and readable fonts are also introduced as cross-cutting elements.
The following sources are used to get the content for this input:

- Everything you need to know to write effective alt text - Microsoft Support. (n.d.). https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/everything-you-need-to-know-to-write-effective-alt-text-df98f884-ca3d-456c-807b-1a1fa82f5dc2
- Check accessibility while you work in Office apps - Microsoft Support. (n.d.). https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/check-accessibility-while-you-work-in-office-apps-ae9e8ea7-1f22-41af-ad04-cc2919daebae
- Improve accessibility with the Accessibility Checker - Microsoft Support. (n.d.). https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/improve-accessibility-with-the-accessibility-checker-a16f6de0-2f39-4a2b-8bd8-5ad801426c7f

II. Document Audit with Microsoft Accessibility Checker (40 minutes)

Participants are provided with a sample document (Word, PowerPoint, or PDF) that contains accessibility issues such as missing headings, low contrast no alt text. They are asked to work individually or in pairs and run the Microsoft Accessibility Checker. Their specific task is to identify the following:

- Which issues are flagged
- What the errors mean

- How these issues impact accessibility for users

The trainer goes around to provide support and ensures participants understand how to interpret the tool's feedback. They have 30 minutes for this task. When they are done, the use 10-15 minutes to share their work with other pairs/individuals.

III. Conversion exercise: Rebuilding a flyer (70 minutes)

Participants are divided in small groups. They are asked to do some research online and find a sample flyer or a document that has poor accessibility features such as text embedded in images, poor contrast, no heading structure. They have 30 minutes for this first part of the task. When they are ready, the trainer announces the second part of the task. In the second part, they are tasked with rebuilding the flyer into an accessible Word document, ensuring that:

- Proper headings are used
- Fonts and colours meet accessibility standards
- Alternative text is added for images
- Logical reading order is applied

They have 40 minutes for this part. Groups are encouraged to use both the Accessibility Checker and their own judgment.

IV. Peer testing and Feedback (30 minutes)

Groups are invited to exchange their adapted documents with another group for peer testing. Each group reviews the other's document and provides feedback on the following aspects:

- Strengths (what was improved successfully)
- Areas for further adaptation
- Ease of use and readability

They have 30 minutes for this process.

V. Group discussion (20 minutes)

After testing, the trainer invites all participants to join the plenary for a short discussion on the activity. The discussion is based on these questions:

- What did you learn from testing someone else's work?
- What adaptations were most effective?
- How will you apply this in your own context?

Materials needed: A4 and A3 papers, pens, pencils, markers, post-its, colourful pencils, scissors, flipchart and flipchart papers, projector, computers with Microsoft Office installed, sample inaccessible documents (Word, PowerPoint, PDF, flyer), Microsoft Accessibility Checker enabled

Outcomes:

By the end of the session, participants will have:

- Identified common accessibility issues in existing materials;
- Practiced using the Microsoft Accessibility Checker;
- Converted a flyer or document into an accessible Word document;
- Exchanged peer feedback to improve and refine accessible documents;
- Gained confidence in applying adaptation strategies to their own resources.

Inclusive pedagogy and advocacy for digital accessibility

Session Title: Inclusive pedagogy and advocacy for digital accessibility

Duration: 180 minutes

Background:
Digital accessibility is not only about technical adjustments, but also about building a culture of inclusion in organisations and communities. This session bridges inclusive pedagogy with advocacy, equipping youth workers to embed accessibility into their organisations through policy and to promote change through outreach and training. Participants will learn the basic elements of drafting an accessibility policy and explore practical methods for spreading awareness, including peer-to-peer training and community advocacy campaigns.

Objectives:

- To learn more about inclusive pedagogy and advocacy for digital accessibility;
- To draft a mini accessibility policy tailored to their organisational context;
- To practice peer review of policies to refine and improve them;
- To design a peer-training session or outreach event to raise awareness of digital accessibility.

Session flow:

I. <u>Introduction (10 minutes)</u>

The trainer starts the session with a brief introduction on the link between inclusive pedagogy (practical approaches for accessible youth work) and advocacy (strategic actions to influence organisations and communities). Then, the session objectives are announced and the focus of the task on drafting a mini policy and preparing an advocacy initiative.

II. <u>Policy brainstorm "What must be included?" and theoretical input (45 minutes)</u>

The trainer asks participants the question "What should an accessibility policy include for your organisation?". When they give their answers, the trainer collects ideas by writing them on a flipchart paper. Then, he/she introduces the key components of a simple accessibility policy:
Section 1: Statement of Commitment
Section 2: Define the Purpose
Section 3: Policy Scope
Section 4: Assign Roles and Responsibilities
Section 5: Compliance
Section 6: Standards
Section 7: Procurement
Section 8: Training
Section 9: Timeline
Section 10: Budget Allocation
Section 11: Documentation and Reporting
Section 12: Accessibility Statement
Section 13: Feedback and Support[16]

[16] Rivenburgh, K. (2024, May 24). How to write an accessibility Policy. accessible.org. https://accessible.org/how-to-write-accessibility-policy/

After the input, the trainer continues with brainstorming activity. Now, participants are divided into small groups. In these groups they are asked to brainstorm examples relevant to their own contexts, for example ensuring accessible websites, captioning videos, adapting documents. They are given 20 minutes for this.

III. Drafting a mini accessibility policy (60 minutes)

Participants are asked to still work in small groups. In this part, their task is to draft a mini accessibility policy (1–2 pages). Each group focuses on a realistic example for their own or a fictional organisation. They have 60 minutes to do their task and prepare for a peer review afterwards.

IV. Peer review (20 minutes)

Once drafts are prepared, groups start to exchange policies and conduct a peer review, providing constructive feedback on these aspects:

- Clarity and feasibility
- Inclusiveness and scope
- Practical measures for implementation

The trainer goes around to check the process and support groups, as well as to ensure that drafts remain practical.

V. Advocacy Plan: Social Media or Workshop Outline (45 minutes)

The trainer introduces train-the-trainer methods and youth advocacy campaigns as practical approaches to promote accessibility. Participants are asked to work in pairs or small groups to design one of the following outreach activity:

- Option A: Outline a short peer-training session for youth workers or volunteers.
- Option B: Prepare a social media campaign plan (2–3 posts, hashtags, messages).

Groups have 30 minutes to do their task and present their advocacy plans briefly in plenary. The trainer closes the session by emphasising that accessibility is sustained when it is embedded into both organisational policy and community advocacy efforts. Participants are encouraged to finalise their policy drafts and test their advocacy plans after the training.

Materials needed: A4 and A3 papers, pens, pencils, markers, post-its, colourful pencils, scissors, flipchart and flipchart papers, projector, laptops/tablets for digital drafting.

Outcomes:

By the end of the session, participants will have:

- Drafted a mini accessibility policy tailored to an organisational context;
- Practiced peer review to refine and strengthen accessibility measures;
- Designed a practical advocacy plan (peer-training or social media campaign);
- Strengthened their ability to promote digital accessibility through policy and outreach.

Evaluation of the training course

Session Title: Evaluation of the training course

Duration: 120 minutes

Background:
The final session provides space for participants to reflect on their learning journey, evaluate the training course as a whole and identify how they will transfer new competences into their personal and professional practice. This session gives them a chance to revisit initial expectations and applying structured evaluation methods. By doing so, participants can clearly assess what they have gained and what next steps they want to take. The session concludes with a Youthpass reflection and certificate ceremony, marking both the recognition of competences developed and the celebratory closure of the training.

Objectives:

- To assess overall learning in relation to initial expectations and contributions;
- To use a structured reflection method (KALPA) to evaluate knowledge gained, impact and next steps;
- To recognise learning achievements through Youthpass and provide further self-study resources.

Session flow:

I. Expectation check-back (20 minutes)

The trainer reintroduces the posters from Session 1 (Hopes, Fears, Contributions). Participants are invited to walk around, revisit them and reflect. They have 5 minutes for this. Then, the trainer facilitates a discussion asking participants the following:

- Were expectations met?
- Were fears addressed or reduced?
- How did participants contribute to the group and learning process?

This activity closes the learning circle and reminds participants of their journey.

II. KALPA Evaluation: "What? So what? Now what?" (45 minutes)

The trainer introduces the KALPA evaluation method (SALTO tool). Participants reflect individually for about 10 minutes and then share in small groups. They have to reflect on the following questions:

- What? (What did I learn or experience during the course?)
- So what? (Why does this learning experience matter to me and my work?)
- Now what?(How will I apply this learning in my organisation or context?)

After sharing in small groups, they then share highlights in plenary. The trainer writes key themes on a flipchart to capture collective learning outcomes.

III. Youthpass Reflection and Ceremony (45 minutes)

The trainer introduces the Youthpass as a tool for recognising competences gained in non-formal education. Participants are given time to reflect on their individual learning journey and fill in the Youthpass framework, guided by the eight key competences for lifelong learning.
Once reflections are completed, the session continues with the certificate ceremony. Trainers distribute Youthpass certificates (or training certificates), by acknowledging each participant's contribution and growth. This creates a positive and memorable conclusion to the course.

The link for Youthpass tool and generation: Youthpass login – Youthpass. (n.d.). https://www.youthpass.eu/en/login/?redirect=/en/youthpass/

IV. Closing remarks (10 minutes)

The trainer thanks participants, partners and organisers. Participants are encouraged to stay connected, share their future accessibility initiatives, and continue self-study using provided resources. A group photo or final circle can close the event.

Materials needed: A4 and A3 papers, pens, pencils, markers, post-its, colourful pencils, scissors, flipchart and flipchart papers, projector, laptop.

Outcomes:

By the end of the session, participants will have:

- Reflected on their learning journey in relation to initial expectations;
- Applied the KALPA method to evaluate personal and collective outcomes;
- Identified concrete next steps for applying digital accessibility in their youth work;
- Received recognition of competences through Youthpass or training certificates;
- Concluded the training course with a sense of achievement, closure, and future motivation.

References

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