



Lifelong  
Learning  
Programme



PRO RETINA  
Deutschland e.V.  
Selbsthilfvereinigung von Menschen mit  
Netzhautdegenerationen



NOISYVISION

## LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAMME GRUNDTVIG WORKSHOPS

With the cooperation of  
PRO RETINA Germany e.V and Noisyvision.com



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## 1. Introduction

The following report is a summary of the workshop “The Visionary Europe” organized by Pro Retina and Noisyvision within the framework of Grundtvig, a part of the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission.

16 partially sighted young adults from all over Europe met in Berlin from the 6th to the 13th of May to exchange positive and negative aspects of their own lives and places concerning mobility. They have created imaginary, visually impaired friendly models of Europe and used them as an inspiration to formulate recommendations for changes in the real world.

### 1.1 Background

Visual impairment is an invisible disability. It is hard to talk about it as it is a borderline disability. It is not common to have people from all over Europe to share their experiences and daily life problems. If self-help groups exist, they are locally based, while international congresses on visual loss are mostly medical and research oriented. Therefore we strived to discuss the challenges of visual impairment within the context of the **Social Model of Disability**, which understands social inclusion and disability as a human rights issue contrary to the purely medical approach that focuses on cure only.

When we talk about visual impairment we can refer to disabilities that are including one or more sight problems. These could be dark blindness, light intolerance, strong dazzling or a narrow visual field, which in some cases is reduced to a dot. Sight defects such as myopia, astigmatism, presbyopia or walleye are generally not included in the definition of visual impairment, but many partially sighted people have also one or more of these defects. The causes of visual impairments are numerous, from aging to genetic to accidents and in the majority of the cases the loss is irreversible, often degenerative and in most of the cases incurable.

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**As long as there is no cure for this disability it is necessary to learn to live with it, accept it, be more self-aware.** Hence one of the main goals of the workshop was to collect and discuss examples, tools and ideas for a better self-confidence and empowerment for people with visual impairments.

At the same time we wanted participants to get to know self-help structures on a national and European level. We asked them to present organizations working in this field in their home countries and presented the **practices of active participation by youth with disabilities on the European level.**

Finally, another innovation in the Workshop was that educational methods were adapted especially for visually impaired people and their needs, thus making it more inclusive for them than mainstream educational workshops. These methods were documented and will be used later in follow-up activities.

### 1.2 Workshop Objectives

The main goal of the Workshop **was to contribute** on different levels (personal exchange, exploration of Berlin, use of creative methods) **to the mobility of 16 partially sighted people from all over Europe.**

The **concrete objectives** were to:

- raise the self-confidence of the participants in relation to their disability
- transfer knowledge to participants on how to increase their mobility in everyday life
- let the participants know about the situation for visually impaired people in other European countries
- to learn new creative problem solving methods
- to find out about self-help structures on a national and European level

## 2. Setting and Participants

In the following section we outline the Programme within which the workshop was held, give an overview of the organizers and team and finally depict the selection process and present the final participants

### 2.1 Lifelong Learning and Grundtvig Programme

As the flagship European Funding programme in the field of education and training, the **Lifelong Learning Programme** (LLP) enables individuals at all stages of their lives to pursue stimulating learning opportunities across Europe. It is an umbrella programme integrating various educational and training initiatives. LLP is divided in four sectorial sub programmes and four so called 'transversal' programmes.

The **Grundtvig programme** is one of the four subprogrammes. Its objectives are to:

- increase the number of people in adult education to 25 000 by 2013, and improve the quality of their experience, whether at home or abroad
- improve conditions for mobility so that at least 7 000 people per year by 2013 can benefit from adult education abroad;
- improve the quality and amount of co-operation between adult education organisations;
- develop innovative adult education and management practices, and encourage widespread implementation;
- ensure that people on the margins of society have access to adult education, especially older people and those who left education without basic qualifications;
- support innovative ICT-based educational content, services and practices.

**Grundtvig Workshops** bring together individuals or small groups of learners from different European countries for an innovative multinational learning experience relevant for their personal development and learning needs, in which learners are also encouraged to share their competences and insights actively with others.

## 2.2 Organizers

### Pro Retina

“PRO RETINA Germany e.V.” was founded in 1977 as the “German Retinitis Pigmentosa Association” of people affected and their families with the intention to help themselves. Any member can join one of today’s existing over 60 regional groups that exist throughout Germany. At the moment Pro Retina has over 6,000 members.

### Noisyvision

**Noisyvision** is a project of information and culture. First and foremost its a website which wants to become a network for exchange. Noisyvision wants to offer a look towards another possibility, a different approach to sensory perception and to overcome difficulties associated with limited eyesight and hearing. Noisyvision arises from the need to show with images, words and ideas a unique insight on the world and life itself. Created by two brothers affected by Usher Syndrome it is already well known among the visually impaired and Usher Syndrome communities.

## 2.3. The team



### **DARIO SORGATO**

Role: Workshop organizer

Responsibilities: Programme methodology, Organization of the workshop, Information on Accessibility, Coaching on Visual Loss, Internet and Media

Dario graduated in Industrial Design at Politecnico di Milano, his professional background is as an interior designer. After moving to Berlin in 2011 he is now working in the tourism industry. He is a writer, blogger and traveller. He visited several countries in all continents.

He is the curator of the website Noisyvision.com which is the beginning of an experience into the world of visual and hearing loss. He keeps himself informed on low vision issues and he writes articles on the topic. He has Usher Syndrome, a genetic disease that includes hearing and visual impairment. He was diagnosed with Retinitis Pigmentosa when he was 17 and since 15 years he is coping with a degenerative low vision. Together with Olga he developed the idea for the workshop and planned and organized it.

### **OLGA GERSTENBERGER**

Role: Workshop organizer

Responsibilities: Programme methodology, Organization of the workshop, Getting around in Berlin, Logistic of the Venue

Olga is a political scientist and educator based in Berlin. Currently, she teaches at the Alice Salomon University of Applied Sciences in Berlin while developing transmedia productions with KINOMATON Berlin and with [with WINGS and ROOTS](#). With the support of a DAAD scholarship she graduated with a Master in „Ideology and Discourse Analysis“ at the University of Essex. She received a B.A. in political science, during which she was active in international peace and human rights work with Umbruch, Amnesty International, and MEMORIAL in St. Petersburg, Russia. Olga is a long-time friend of Dario and loves to be inspired by his visionary personality. Together with Dario she developed the idea for the workshop and planned and organized it.

### **KARINA CHUPINA**

Role: Trainer

Responsibilities: Programme methodology, resource person on international youth work and international disability rights work

Karina is a freelance international trainer and consultant from St. Petersburg, Russia. She is currently staying in Berlin where she conducts her PhD research on social inclusion of people with disabilities. Karina has been involved in international youth and disability work for more than 14 years. She is active in local Russian disability organization and in IFHOHYP (International Federation of Hard of Hearing Young People), where she serves as its President. She has also been very active in the Youth Committee and Expert Group on Education of the European Disability Forum. Karina has been a project leader for several international mixed ability projects and training programs. Since 2004, Karina is an expert of the international Council of Europe Pool of Trainers. In her work, Karina is especially focused on exploring and developing inclusive approaches to training youth from various minority backgrounds and youth with disabilities.

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### **ZOE PAPASTATHOPOULOU**

Role during the workshop: Coordination of Reports, Logistic, General inquiries

Zoe graduated in Political Science at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece, she achieved a Master degree in Ideology and Discourse Analysis at University of Essex, England MA (Merit) in Ideology and Discourse Analysis. She gained experience as educator in the EU-Funded Project ‘Open State’, Panteion University & KANEP-GSEE, Athens and as a trainer at the Epikinonia Language School of Giannitsa.

### **MARCO SCARABELLI**

Role during the workshop: Audio-Visual Documentation

Marco graduated in Communication Science. He works as a cameramen and art director in several projects, including Rototom Sunsplash Music Festival

### **AMADOR PEREZ RICO**

Role during the workshop: Audio-Visual Documentation.

Amador is a Cameramen and a video producer for his own company Classroom Productions. He worked on several documentaries in Spain and Great Britain.

## TANYA ÖZEL

Role during the workshop: Facilitator during the Exploration day

Tanya is a Social worker based in Berlin. She is working for the organisation [Sinneswandel gGmbH](#) assisting people hard of hearing.

## 2.4 The Venue

*The Alte Feuerwache* (translation:the old fire station) (<http://www.alte-feuerwache.de/>) is a neighborhood center; a meeting point. A place for many people who live, work, study or spend their leisure time in the area. It consists of a living area, a hostel for German and international teenage visitors, recreational facilities for children and youths, a district Café, job and training offers, district oriented counseling; social and cultural related work.

We have chosen this venue because it is in the center of Berlin, therefore easy to reach from airports and stations. It is close to buses and subway stations and was suitable to the needs of partially sighted people. The seminar room was equipped with a microphone, beamer, flipcharts and tool boxes with all the most important stationary tools (moderation cards, markers, scissors, ...)

Three meals per day were provided and also fruits, cakes, juices, coffee and tea for the breaks.

The Participants were accommodated in no more than two people per room.

## 2.5 Selection process and participants

To advertise the workshop we used online and offline tools and **reached out to more than 60 European and national organisations** working in the field of visual impairment. We published an announcement on the noisyvision website, where the applicants could download the official [Learner Application Form](#) and the [Information Brochure](#). The same documents could be downloaded from the website of ProRetina. A brief summary of the workshop was also published in the [catalogue of the Grundtvig Project](#).

As the workshop was designed for Visually Impaired people with a residual sight, we included in the Learner Application Form some questions that could help us to understand the level of impairment. Besides some general information we tried to collect information related to the independence, the capability to read a text, use a computer or other devices. The aim was to select a group we could actually assist with our resources and to reduce as much as possible the risk of unmet expectations.

During the 6 months available to apply **we received over 70 valid applications** from all over Europe. We focused on some specific criteria to select the group, knowing that no choice could be perfect and that for a reason or another we had to exclude some applicants. We tried to consider several factors and to **balance the group in terms of gender, country, level of impairment, participation to previous workshops and motivation**. Once we came up with the 16 names we send a confirmation email and created a small waiting list. None of the selected participants declined the invitation.

The participants were coming from **9 different countries** (Ireland, italy, Finland, Spain, Netherlands, Romania, Hungary, Germany, Great Britain). **The age range was from 22 to 35**. The **visual impairment was related to different diseases**, from retinitis pigmentosa to Neurofibromatosis, from albinism to congenital cataract. Also the levels of impairment were very diverse. Some participants could see better in daytime, others at night, some could use a computer with normal resolution, others needed a magnifier or the screen reader. Although we could not predict those differences, the participants were very helpful with each other and the **heterogeneity of the group** gave them the

possibility to discover how the others are dealing with everyday life and how they are coping with the low vision. The differences were obviously not only related to vision and convenience, but also to studies and activities. Some are still students, others are unemployed or are working in various fields.

During the workshop the participants had the **chance to show their personal abilities** and talk about their hobbies and interests. We could enjoy a juggling fireshow, theater performances and singing, but mostly just to hear that some of them are sailing, travelling and also playing soccer, could motivate the others to move forward and be positive.

Coming to the motivation that brought people to apply, we came across some very interesting statements. Here are some quotations taken from the application forms:

*“I was and am lost and would like to learn to cope and be better and find my limitless self confidence before or at least to be able to do hold my head up when I walk again. I want to be the Patrick I know I can be to meet and learn from other people as mentors in life”*

*“I have been unemployed for some time now and feel like it is time to re-educate myself to broaden my skill base and hopefully this conference will give me the boost I need to do so”.*

*“I find it inspiring to have the possibility to think about accessibility on a holistic level for once and I am very interested on the future workshop as a method”.*

### 3. Workshop structure and activities

The workshop was based on the so-called future workshop method and encompassed **three phases**. The **first phase** served to establish a critical **understanding of the theme and the problems** in question. Hence, the participants were asked to explore Berlin and document (writing, photo, short clips) all what they discover as problematic in connection to their impairment (see 3.1.1. Exploration of Berlin) and compare it to the situation in the places they come from (see 3.1.2. Comparison with Home Countries). The results were categorized on a visual map showing Europe as it is now for visually impaired people. In a **second phase** the participants worked out an utopia, an exaggerated picture of future possibilities. In this so-called **Fantasy phase** the participants used brainstorming techniques and creative games to find and to reflect utopian solutions. They imagined and created (draw, making a collage etc.) “visionary” models of Europe where all the mobility-related problems they experience in the real world were solved (see 3.2.1. Creation of Fantasy cities). In the **last phase**, the participants were informed about **self-help structures** of visually impaired people and possibilities for participation on a national and European level (3.3.1. Presentation of self-help structures on a national and European level ). As an outcome of the exploration, the creation of visionary cities and the new information the participants have gained, they developed ideas that have a realistic and possible application and worked out **practical next steps** in order to realize them (See 3.3.2. World Cafe and 3.3.3 Recommendations to Politicians).

The organizers strived to achieve an **environment of inclusion** by its accessibility, non-discriminatory and respectful atmosphere and professional educational guidance, staffing and resources.

The full program of the workshop and the detailed daily activities can be found in the Appendix.

### 3.1 Phase I: State of the art of Europe for Visually impaired People

The **first day** of the workshop was dedicated to **getting to know each other** and build **an atmosphere of trust** in the group for future work in the coming days. Activities were conducted to introduce the participants to each other, the team and the programme. In addition, space was provided to share personal experiences and to exchange information about positive and negative aspects of dealing with visual impairment in different countries

The **focus of the next three days was to create a visual representation of the state of the art of Europe for partially sighted people**. Through an exploration of Berlin and the comparison to the situations in the different home countries of the participants an image of good and bad examples of accessibility in Berlin and in the rest of Europe was created.

#### 3.1.1 Exploration of Berlin

For the Exploration of Berlin the participants were divided into four groups. They were asked to explore Berlin and document (by writing, taking photos, creating short video clips) on an Exploration Chart (see Appendix) all what they have discovered as good or bad examples related to the mobility of Visually Impaired people in Berlin.

Each group started at a different destination (Potsdamer Platz - Sony Center Shopping Mall; The Berlin Wall Memorial, situated at the historic site on Bernauer Strasse; Holocaust Memorial and Museum and area of Brandenburger Tor; the neighborhood of Friedrichshain). No instruction was given on how to reach the **different destinations** as this was part of the exploration. After they have reached their first destination the participants were free to choose to which one to go next. All groups were accompanied by a person from the team.

The facilitators asked the participants to focus during the exploration on the following points:

- **Street Furniture and Signs** (traffic lights, street signs, benches, posts)
- **Built environment and public spaces** (EU category) (streets, parks)
- **Public facilities and services** (EU category) (Bars, restaurants museum, shops)
- **Transport and related infrastructures** (EU category)

and ask themselves questions like:

- Can I walk on my own?
- Can I cross the road? Why yes, why not?
- Can I find the steps?
- Can I read the map?
- Do I know which direction to go?



To allow each group from the Exploration day to present the results of the Berlin exploration we created a method to help to cluster the results in a uniform way.

Through simple examples and with a step by step analysis of the infrastructures and elements of the city related to mobility, we came out with the main **qualities that define an object and help us, visually impaired and not, to move, see, hear.**

The process is illustrated in the following flipcharts:



Starting from the words that represent the interaction between the person and every element and infrastructure of the city (**visibility, usability, mobility**) we tried to connect them with the senses used in order to see, use and move. For example to use something we need sight, sense of touch and hearing.

The next step was to find out which **qualities or characteristics** of the elements we see, touch and hear. For example: When we hear a vehicle approaching how do we know if it is a bus or a truck or a car? Visually impaired people can see the dimension of the vehicle, but also the sound of a car or a truck is different from the one of the bus. In addition the buses are always of the same color (yellow in Berlin). In this example size, sound, shape and color are qualities that we perceive in order to know that a bus is approaching when we are at the bus stop. With similar examples we came out with the following **list of qualities**:

- Color
- Contrast
- Size
- Sound
- Brightness
- Shape
- Material
- Position/Movement

Other qualities like depth could be included in the above. We tried to reach the most simple qualities, although this topic has room for further investigation which could include other aspects related to different cultures and semantic levels.

During the workshop we were constantly updating the [Facebook page of Noisyvision](#) and when we posted a short description of this process and the list of qualities, one of the followers suggested to add **temperature**, as sometimes it can help to orientate ourselves. For example at the subway station we can find the way out following the breeze or, in summer, following the warm coming from outside. Also we orientate feeling the heat coming from walls of building exposed south.

Once we collected the qualities, we included each one of them in an annular **ring** drawn on a big paper. At this point each group was asked to select the most relevant **good and bad examples** identified during the exploration day. The selected examples, described by pictures and keywords were written with few words on **green** (positive) and **yellow** (negative) **cards** and placed in the appropriate ring, according to the most relevant quality perceived. For example, rubbish bins are a good example as the bright orange allows to easily locate them. In this case a card was put in the ring of Color. Street poles, on the other hand, were seen as a bad example of contrast as they are grey like the pavement. In this case the relevant ring is Contrast and not color as it is not the color itself that is bad, but the weak contrast with the background. The sidewalks are normally divided into lanes, sometimes with white stripes, sometimes just with a different type of cabblesstones or concrete. In this case the material helps to walk in the correct position and direction. A card with a short description was located in the ring of material. The maps of the underground are located on the ceiling of the train wagon. They are small and hard to read. This example could be located in the ring of position or in the one of size.

After each group presented their findings **the circles of qualities** were full of cards describing good and bad uses of the qualities of perception.

### Results of the exploration day: Circles of qualities



Here are the results as a **chart**:

Positive	Negative
<b>Color</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Bins</b> are brightly coloured orange</li> <li>● The <b>green light at the ticket validation machine</b> is helpful to have a feedback that the ticket is correctly marked</li> <li>● The <b>buses</b> are all the same colour – yellow. The taxis are cream.</li> <li>● Within the U-Bahn station, the <b>walls were coloured</b> to denote the different lines</li> <li>● The <b>graffiti</b> in some areas of the city made it easy to distinguish different places and houses which we passed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Yellow signs</b> not visible in the sun light (ok with sunglasses)</li> <li>● <b>Road blocks</b> are very low, easy bumping into it</li> </ul>
<b>Contrast</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Advertisements are used on the steps of the metro station exits</b>, this increases the contrast to see the steps</li> <li>● Clear information of East Side Gallery: good contrast and size</li> <li>● <b>U-Bahn</b> (blue and white) and <b>S-Bahn signs</b></li> <li>● The <b>symbols of the toilets</b> in the Holocaust Museum were very well contrasted against the wall, they were also large and easy to locate</li> <li>● <b>Light</b> on both sides of the <b>underground stairs</b> is creating a shadow and increases the visibility</li> <li>● Berlin Wall Memorial <b>descriptions</b> have good <b>contrast and font size</b></li> <li>● <b>Road blocks</b> in different color than the pavement</li> <li>● The <b>pavement in underground stations</b> has a good contrast</li> <li>● At the metro station the <b>first and last step</b> are marked on the stairwell</li> <li>● There was a <b>yellow line on each step</b> of the escalator</li> <li>● <b>Advertisement posters on lamp posts</b> give good contrast</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The <b>contrast of the step marker</b> into some metro stations is not clear enough.</li> <li>● <b>Metal obstacles</b> should have white borders</li> <li>● <b>Shop signs</b> should be with pictures, colors, contrast</li> <li>● The <b>S-Bahn sign</b> has a <b>low contrast</b> (green with white)</li> <li>● <b>silver color stair rail</b> (low contrast)</li> <li>● <b>Road block grey</b>, same color than the street (diffcult to see )</li> <li>● <b>Underground timetables</b> should have black background, white borders, bigger size and white letters</li> <li>● There is <b>no contrast</b> in color between the lines of the cycle lane and the lines of the cars on some of the roads</li> <li>● Information point at Sony Center is not clear, <b>bad contrast</b> (black background white text)</li> </ul>

Brightness	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Lights in the underground on both sides</b> to lead to the exit</li> <li>● <b>Lights of advertisement panel</b> in underground stations contributes to the general illumination.</li> <li>● There were <b>lights on the bollards</b> near subway stations, which were clear to see.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● On the entrance into one of the stations it <b>was too dark to orientate</b> our way.</li> <li>● In some parts of the Holocaust museum, it <b>was too dark</b> to see where to go. Let alone to see any of the information in that room.</li> <li>● The <b>darkest toilet</b> ever is in Prenzlauer Berg</li> </ul>
Size	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Good size of the <b>underground station names</b></li> <li>● Clear information at the East Side Gallery: good contrast and size</li> <li>● The font size of <b>building numbers</b> is large and easy to see</li> <li>● Big <b>maps of underground network</b></li> <li>● The <b>line number of the metro</b> is clearly marked at the entrance of the station.</li> <li>● The Underground <b>elevator has big indications and good contrast</b></li> <li>● There was a <b>large map of the Holocaust museum</b> available with the floor plan of the museum outlined and raised for visitors to explore.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Metro and city maps</b> are too small to see.</li> <li>● The <b>map by the ticket machine</b> in the metro station is too small to see and also too small to distinguish the zones.</li> <li>● The <b>menu</b> in a bar was way too small to read.</li> <li>● The <b>bill</b> in a restaurant was in a tiny text and impossible to read</li> <li>● <b>Information points</b> with small letters</li> <li>● <b>Underground timetables</b> should have black background, white borders, bigger size and white letters</li> <li>● The <b>stools in a restaurant were very low</b>, hard to see and dangerous</li> </ul>
Shape	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Buses and trams have a <b>stop indication screen</b>. In some cases it shows the next three stops, first one is in bold text</li> <li>● White background with black letters for <b>street names</b></li> <li>● The <b>name of the metro station</b> is marked clearly</li> <li>● The Underground <b>elevator indications are in relief</b>. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The <b>hand rail</b> starts before the staircase, providing a feeling of safety for the user.</li> <li>· The <b>stairs</b> into the Holocaust Museum were very displayed and had raised lines on them to indicate the steps</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● There is no clear indication of <b>where to put in your money</b> at the ticket machine.</li> <li>● There are no <b>markers</b> to get into the train</li> <li>● In the Holocaust Memorial museum, the <b>number</b> contrast of the audio guides weren't very clear and they were very small</li> <li>● Underground maps do <b>not have the "you are here" mark</b></li> <li>● There was a <b>large gap</b> between the train and the platform at one of the stations.</li> <li>● In one neighborhood in the city, the <b>footpath was very uneven</b> underfoot.</li> </ul>

Material	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The <b>footpath</b> is clearly indicated by using different materials to mark the area designated for walking.</li> <li>● The <b>Pavement</b> is differentiated through the use of different material to indicate the entrances of buildings</li> <li>● The material oft the <b>pavement changes</b> in front of traffic lights</li> <li>● <b>Advertisement posters on lamp posts</b> make possible bumps softer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>No border in glass door</b></li> <li>● <b>Glass building reflects</b></li> <li>● <b>Glass barrier not indicated</b></li> <li>● There was no proper line at some of the <b>road crossings</b>.</li> </ul>
Sound	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Easy to buy a ticket, <b>helpful bus assistant</b></li> <li>● The <b>information point at the East Side Gallery</b> can be heard in many languages</li> <li>● <b>Vibration and sound</b> in traffic lights</li> <li>● The Underground <b>elevator has sound</b> and clear indications</li> <li>● <b>Free audio guides at the Holocaust Memorial Museum</b> specifically for people with visual impairments. They had large displays and photographs from the exhibit on the screen. They gave directions on which way to walk within the museum. Also there was an option to add a tactile keyboard in to locate the buttons if needed. The staff was very helpful and showed us how to use the guides</li> <li>● <b>Different sounds</b> of the traffic lights, help to understand the direction</li> <li>● There are <b>train announcements</b> to indicate the approaching station and also scrolling text within the carriage of the train</li> <li>● The <b>side</b> where to <b>exit the train</b> is announced.</li> <li>● <b>Traffic lights vibrate</b> when it is time to cross the road.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Cannot access the <b>ticket machine</b> to buy tickets as it does not have a voice assistant.</li> <li>● The <b>audio</b> announcing the stations in the U-Bahn is <b>too low</b> to hear.</li> <li>● The <b>ATM</b> has no sound. Very difficult for visually impaired people.</li> <li>● <b>Not all traffic lights</b> have sound</li> <li>● In some cases it is <b>hard to hear</b> the announcements in the bus</li> </ul>
Position/Movement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>The position of the U-Bahn and S-Bahn signs</b> is good</li> <li>● <b>Post box</b> is in a good position indicated by a different ground material</li> <li>● A <b>grey strip</b> is painted around a <b>glass door</b> to differentiate between the wall</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>No exit sign</b> in underground station</li> <li>● <b>Metro and city maps</b> are too small to see.</li> <li>● There are construction sites without any <b>warning signs</b></li> <li>● <b>Poles and bollards</b> are in the middle of the footpath, obstructing the way</li> </ul>

<p>and the door</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A lot of stations with an <b>elevator</b></li> <li>● <b>Obstacles</b> (such as bicycle rails and lockers) are in a part of the street where pedestrians should not walk</li> <li>● <b>Big Advertisements</b>, like O2 World, are helpful for the orientation</li> <li>● The numbers on streets are clearly indicated on <b>street signs at corners</b>. This helps to understand the direction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● wrong <b>position of the stair rail</b> (low)</li> <li>● On smaller streets, there are <b>no pedestrian crossings</b></li> <li>● Going down an <b>escalator</b>, we could only see the <b>sign</b> as it passed our heads on the way down, too late if we were at the wrong station</li> <li>● <b>Bicycles</b> are in the wrong place on the street – obstacle for the white cane</li> <li>● In certain <b>residential areas</b>, there were a lot more <b>obstacles</b> in the way on the pavement</li> <li>● Rented <b>bikes</b> are <b>parked partially on the pavement</b></li> <li>● <b>Temporary street signs are dangerous</b>, especially at face level, sharp obstacles might do a lot of harm</li> </ul>
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### 3.1.2 Comparison with home countries of the participants

After the creation of the state of the art of Berlin for partially sighted people, the participants were asked to compare it to the realities in their home countries. In order to do so, they added pictures, which they brought with them in the same map. The pictures were marked as good or bad with a **“thumb up” or “thumb down” sticker**. They were placed in the rings with the same method used for the exploration of Berlin. The final result was a big poster looking like a dartboard with pictures and cards giving a **visual image of good and bad examples of accessibility in Berlin and in the rest of Europe**. The information provided by each participant was a valuable discovery for the rest of the group and the facilitators.



Here are some examples from other places in Europe:



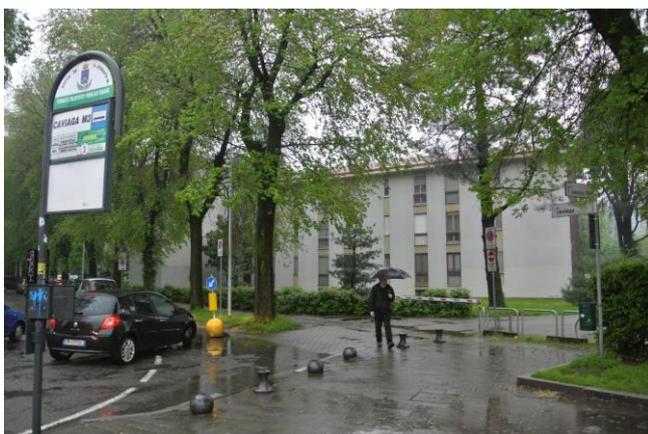
*Oulu, northern Finland*

Very narrow walking street where people also drive bicycle



*Milan, Italy*

Here is an example of confusing space organization inside a subway station in Milan ( yellow line). On the right of the exit/entrance gates there's the station exit from which people get to the bus stops outside. The red arrows indicate the entrance gates. As shown by the blue arrow, people who want to get to the bus stops meet and cross those going to the trains. Because of the limited peripheral vision, it's quite difficult not to bump in somebody else. During rush hours, when the subway station is very crowded, it's almost impossible!



*Milan, Italy*

An example of very low bollards!



*Granada, Spain*

Positive example: Audio announcements to inform about the bus approaching.

## 3.2 Phase II: Dreaming Beyond

After the participants had collected positive and negative examples related to accessibility and have created a visual representation of the state of the art of accessibility for the people with partial sight in Europe and Berlin, now they worked out a utopia, an exaggerated picture of future possibilities. In this so-called **Fantasy phase** the participants first used brainstorming techniques and creative games to find and to reflect utopian solutions. In a second step they imagined and created (draw, making a collage etc.) a “visionary” model of Europe, a **vision of a visually impaired friendly/fully accessible city**, where all the mobility-related problems they experience in the real world were solved

### 3.2.1 Creation of Fantasy Cities

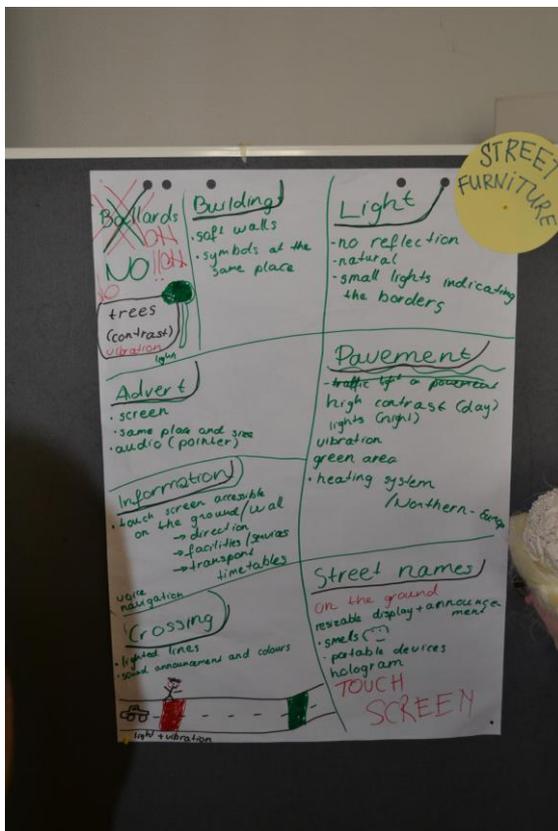
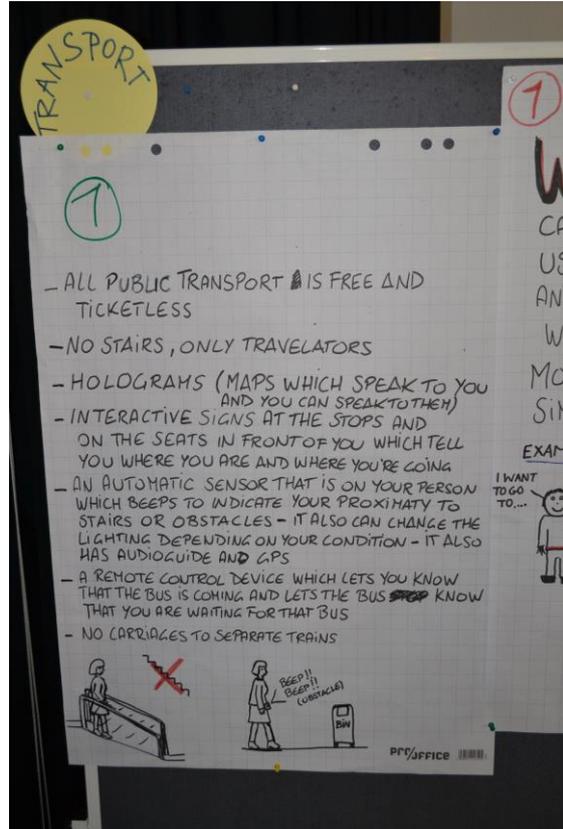
The participants were divided in four new groups and had to imagine and mostly dream of a **Visually Impaired Friendly City**, meaning a place where some of the problems they highlighted were solved or not existing.

They were given total freedom with no limits for their ideas and inspirations. They were asked to think of a limited environment or group of elements, picking from one of the four areas they focused during the exploration: **Street Furniture and Signs, Built environment and public spaces, Public facilities and services, Transport and related infrastructures.**

The facilitators provided **different brainstorming techniques**. One of it was to try to draw imaginary lines over the circles of qualities to find if it was possible to solve a problem thinking out of the box, changing completely the perspective. For example if the problem is that the steps of the subway station are not visible as they do not have a sufficient contrast, the solution is not necessarily a different color to increase the contrast, but could be that instead of steps we use slopes, so, instead of keeping the focus on the quality contrast, we jump into the circle of shape. Another example could be: if the poles are too low to be seen by people with limited vision, the solution is not necessarily to make them higher, changing the size, but we could try to jump into the circle of material and make them out of a soft material so that even if someone hits one, it does not hurt.

Although this process could lead to some unrealistic solutions, this phase was an entertaining one. The participants could feel good and imagine a world where they do not have to worry about where and how they walk, just like any non-visually impaired person. After they started to write their ideas on some flipcharts, we asked each group to visit the others and provide feedback and further suggestions.

Brainstorming posters:



Meanwhile the facilitators unpacked some **tools and materials** the participants then could use to create their imaginary cities. In fact looking at bright stripes, soft sponges, metal wires, plastic balls, colorful papers etc. helped to come up with more ideas and creative solutions.

The afternoon break and the trip on a boat over the Spree gave time to erase the intense thoughts, think of something different, to be fresh again the day after and start to transform the ideas into real models of visually impaired friendly cities.

Everyone contributed to the realization of the model, according to her/his capabilities and possibilities. Even people with very limited vision could cut, paint, touch, feel the materials and create with hands the four models.

### City 1 - Public facilities and services: My City My Way



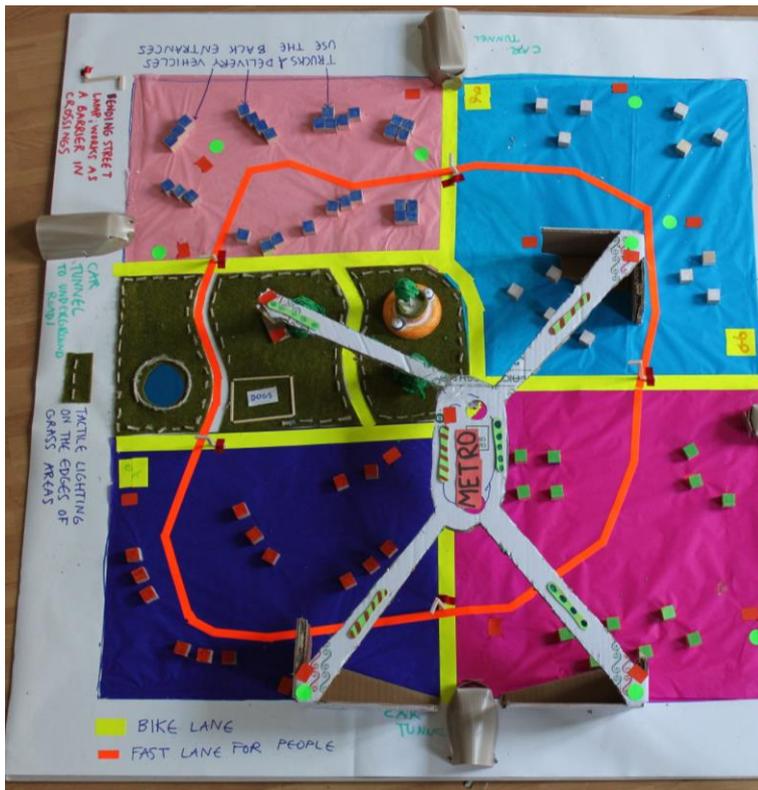
19

- At concerts visually impaired people have the right to be at the front
- The menus of the restaurants are written in very big fonts and they have audio descriptions
- The light in the toilets can be adjusted according to needs
- Glass doors are forbidden

## City 2 - Built environment and public spaces

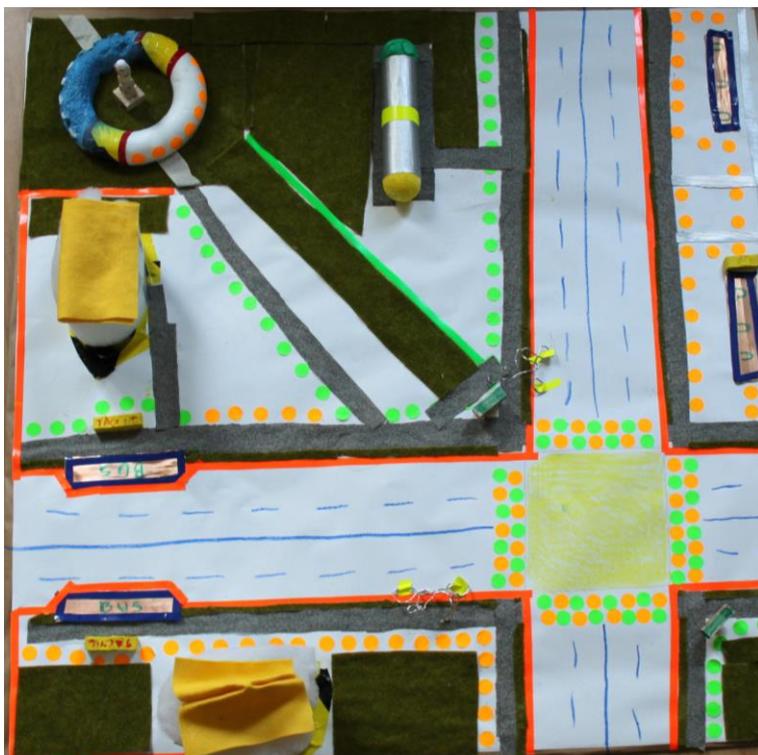


- The participants imagined a city where people, cars and means of transport move on different levels
- Different areas have different colors to easy identify the position and the orientation
- Bicycles are riding on designed lanes and even people could walk on parallel lanes according to their preferred walking speed.
- In this case the imagination went to the detail of reorganizing the logistic of commercial vehicles, that should not interfere with other vehicles.
- At the edges of green areas, tactile lights would indicate the borders, lightening when pedestrians are approaching.
- At the metro stops there should be also wi-fi access so that travellers can easily access information on transportation.



### City 3 - Transport and related infrastructures: We can drive

- This group imagined a city where a car can be driven with the mind. This sounds like a very futuristic idea, but some experiments are already investigating the possibility.
- The group “invented” also other technological devices, like the Travelator, how they called them which vibrates at a different speed when obstacles are in the nearby and when approaching steps or slopes.



### City 4 - Street Furniture and Signs

- Soft buildings, bending signages but also sidewalks backlit sidewalks.
- Bending poles that are not hurting in case someone hits them.
- The materials are completely reinvented, to transform the city starting from the shape. The shape of things is strictly related to the material they are made of, but if we could use any material available or all the technologies, we would be able to live in a world where everyone could adapt the environment to the specific needs.

### 3.3. Phase III: Achieving the visionary Europe

In the **last phase** of the workshop, the participants withdrew from the Fantasy city, they have created, ideas that have a realistic and possible application and **worked out practical next steps** in order to realize them. Through providing **information on the best practices** of orientational mobility training and participation of partially sighted people in Germany and Europe and creating a space for **exchanging information about the best practices of inclusion in their respective countries**, the participants were prepared for a deeper reflection on practical next steps in order to achieve more mobility for themselves and to contribute to more accessible cities. On the last day of the workshop the participants were encouraged **to develop the themes/directions of action** they would like to undertake as a follow-up to the seminar through the **use of the world cafe method** and based on the results to formulate **concrete policy recommendations**.

A final **presentation** of the work done at the seminar to friends and journalists and a final **evaluation** closed the seminar.

#### 3.3.1. Presentation of self-help structures and participation by persons with disabilities on a national and European level

One of the objectives of the seminar was to provide participants with the opportunities to become active participants in their own life and to explore how education can help them to tackle disability barriers. With this purpose in mind, these sessions were designed. They provided participants with the **best practices of disability training and assistance for partially sighted persons in Germany**, as well as with **the practices of active participation by youth with disabilities on the European level**. Furthermore, the participants were asked to share the examples of best practices of inclusion of VIP that they know in their countries, with each other.

#### Input by Ulli Haase, Germany

Ulli Haase from Berlin, Germany, was invited to describe her **personal experiences of coping with barriers as a person with Usher syndrome** (hearing and sight disability). She shared her own story as well as examples of good practices in integration of VIP in Germany and information about the state assistance to VIP.

#### Input by Karina Chupina, Germany/Russia – Participation of Youth with Disabilities on the European level

Karina Chupina outlined the **key disability actors in the EU** and **how young people and adults with disabilities can contribute** to their work and policy-making in practice. In part, she focused on the European Disability Forum which is a platform of disability organisations across all European Union and a voice of persons with disabilities in the EU.

#### European Disability Forum – background and key achievements

EDF was created in 1996 by its member organisations to make sure decisions concerning disabled people are taken with and by disabled people. The role of EDF is important in monitoring all EU initiatives and in proposing new legislation to advance disabled people's rights. In their work, EDF

consults NGOs, industry, consumers and social partners, and provides real expertise to decision-makers.

- In October 2007 the disability movement gathered the impressive 1.364,984 signatures in the “**1 Million for Disability**” Campaign calling for comprehensive protection of the rights of persons with disabilities in the European law.
- EDF actively participated in the negotiations leading towards the **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** and was involved in facilitating the adoption of this key instrument. From the beginning of the process, EDF members were part of the ad hoc committee in charge of drafting the Convention and many of them became official delegates of their national delegations.
- Thanks to the EDF campaigns, in June 2006 the European Ministers of Transport adopted the **European Regulation on the rights of disabled air passengers** - among other provisions, this Regulation makes illegal the possibility to deny boarding on the ground of disability or to charge a disabled air passenger requiring assistance any extra charge.
- “**EU Disability Strategy 2010-2020: A Renewed Commitment to a Barrier- Free Europe**” was based on the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and is a comprehensive framework committing the European Commission to the empowerment of people with disabilities to enjoy their full rights, and to removing barriers in everyday life.
- Since the beginning, EDF has tried to guarantee a place for disabled people within European funding mechanisms. The campaign on the **EU Structural Funds** was one of the most intensive in EDF’s history. Between 2004 and 2006, the majority of EDF’s governing bodies’ meetings and training seminars included a session on this topic. European Structural Funds provide EU Member States and regions with assistance to overcome structural deficiencies and to enable them to strengthen competitiveness and increase employment. They aim to reduce regional disparities in terms of income, wealth and opportunities. Conditionalities on disability and anti-discrimination have to be respected by Members States if they want to access the EU money. People with disabilities are one of the main target groups recognized in the General and Specific regulations of the Structural Funds. Non-discrimination and accessibility for persons with disabilities must be taken into consideration during the design, implementation and monitoring of the future programme.
- On 23 October 2012, the European Parliament adopted a Resolution in reaction to the Communication of the European Commission on **passenger rights** in all transport modes. EDF is now pleased to see that the Resolution shows the commitment of the European Parliament to remove the lack of harmonized rules between transport modes, which prevents persons with disabilities from benefitting from the freedom of movement in the EU.
- Since 2011, the European Disability Forum focused on the “**Freedom of movement**” campaign. EU treaties guarantee basic freedoms to all citizens: free movement of

people, goods, services and capital. This means that anyone, including persons with disabilities, can move, work and live in every country of the EU

**“Freedom of Movement” Campaign – key ideas and actions:**

- Free movement of **persons** = any citizen of a Member State has the right to move, work and live in another Member State
- Free movement of **goods** = Goods produced in one country can be sold in another, under certain conditions
- **EDF wants accessibility to be a criteria for importing and exporting goods**
- Free movement of **services** means - any citizen has the right to provide and receive services in another Member State.

EDF action on the Campaign:

- EDF will produce a shadow ‘European Accessibility Act’
- EDF calls on the European Commission to deliver a legislative proposal on the accessibility of goods and services
- EDF has produced a position paper on the adoption of a European Mobility Card
- EDF launched the Freedom Guide with examples of good practices of mobility and accessibility in the EU

**Youth participation in the EDF Committees and Expert Groups**

Importantly, decisions in the EDF are taken with together with the representatives of the various disability organisations across the EU. The EDF committees and expert groups are comprised of **representatives of the member organisations**, involved in EDF work on policy. The EDF Expert groups work on such topics, as: Transport; ICT; Built environment; Non-discrimination; Social services and community living; Education.

EDF has two Committees at the moment: **Youth Committee** and a Women Committee. Role of the European Disability Forum Youth Committee is to mainstream youth in all EDF policies and documents and to raise awareness about the needs of youth with disabilities in EDF and the EU. The Committee was set up in 2000 and consists of 6 members all of whom are young people with disabilities who meet once a year and have a timetable of actions and share of responsibilities. The Committee has carried out the following key activities and publications:

- **Athens Youth Declaration** - Towards a barrier free Europe for young people with disabilities, 2003
- **Memorandum of Understanding** between EDF and the European Youth Forum, 2005
- **Opportunities for all – Make it real!** – A declaration from Young Disabled People in Europe on the European Day of Disabled People, 2006
- **“Young and Disabled: Daily Challenges for Equality”**, 2009
- **EDF Position Paper** on the Future EU Strategy for Youth, 2009
- **Mapping of youth with disabilities** in EDF Membership, 2010
- **ExchangeAbility project** conducted with the Erasmus Students Network and Youth Agora, including disability awareness training events, 2010-2011

- „**Accessibility of volunteering**“ training workshops at the Youth Convention on Volunteering, 2011

EDF Youth Committee wants to **mainstream** youth issues in disability policies, disability issues in youth policies, and **both disability and youth in All policies**.

Speaking about mainstreaming, the issue of participation was raised, and the concept of youth participation was explored on the basis of the so-called **RMSOS Framework for participation within** which youth participation can thrive and which is based on the following components:

**Rights:** Active participation as a fundamental principle young people have the right to participate.

**Means:** Active participation demands that young people must have their basic needs satisfied.

**Space:** Active participation within a physical, virtual or policy-formulation context which allows young people the means to meet and develop dialogue.

**Opportunity:** Active participation that is based on good quality information within a supportive structure.

**Support:** Active participation requires a climate of support at all levels from youth work practitioners, peers and agencies involved in working with young people. (Source: The Revised European Youth Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life, 2008).

Finally, a few other key examples of participation by young people with disabilities were shared by Karina: from participation in the Council of Europe Youth Sector activities to projects supported by the European Youth Foundation to participation in the consultative body of the Council of Europe such as Advisory Council on Youth:

- Council of Europe Consultative Meeting, 2012 - **Inclusion of Youth with Disabilities**
- Contribution to the Council of Europe recommendation on Inclusion of Children and Youth with Disabilities (launched on 16 October 2013)
- Council of Europe Advisory Council on Youth
- Taking part in producing a Council of Europe Manual on making mixed ability educational activities inclusive,
- And other

In conclusion, Karina presented specific information on funding opportunities for disability youth projects with the support of such foundations as the European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe and Erasmus for All programme.

### 3.3.2. World Cafe

On the last day of the workshop, the participants withdrew from the Fantasy Cities they have created, ideas that have a realistic and possible application and worked out practical next steps in order to realize them. After all the things the participants have observed and learned during the week, the main goal was to use the **method of the world cafe** to collect ideas how to

**a.) improve their personal mobility**

**b.) strengthen self-help structures**

**c.) contribute to a VIP friendly/accessible city**

The participants worked in small groups on three questions related to the realization of what they have learned and experienced during the week.

Three tables were spread in the room. Each had a paper with one question on it and several markers. At each table one of the team members was present as a facilitator. The participants split up between the three tables, sat down and discussed the question on the paper, the facilitators moderated the discussion and noted down the main points discussed.

After 20 minutes the participants switched tables, the facilitators remained.

### The world café:



Here are the questions and the results of the discussions:

#### 1. What are you planning to do to increase your personal mobility after returning back home?

- Find out more information how to use new technologies and applications
- Get a car
- Join organizations of people with disabilities to ensure the principle “nothing about us without us”
- Quite many things ARE POSSIBLE!
- Include people with disabilities in any planning process – inclusion!

- Get an iPhone (it changed life for some VIP)
- Taking part in ongoing processes related to accessibility for VIP (e.g. city planning reviews)
- MORE TRAVELLING + EXPLORATION! – more practice in mobility in different contexts
- Keep on challenging myself
- Get/ bring my self-confidence from this seminar home
- Taking cane lessons
- Applying exploration method in my town/city
- Go to ONCE - take a training on mobility orientation + white cane
- To be more conscious of my needs, to identify them so that I could work on them – to reflect on myself, explore environment more and take more risks. Knowledge of my needs will help me to improve my independency
- Find and use special orange glasses (like Luigina's)
- Organising a special info day on VIP needs for the public
- Use the aids and not be embarrassed by them, but proud
- Consider joining an NGO (in Germany, Italy, Philippines accordingly)
- Inform public about aids and VIP needs
- Awareness-raising!
- Organize a project like this
- Learn echo-locating programme, take a training
- Travel MORE in different countries
- Volunteering in the EU – a very good opportunity to learn skills, build confidence, get experience and travel
- Maybe take part in the European Voluntary Service
- Getting involved in national programmes for youth providing empowerment, training and personal development opportunities
- Tell more people openly: I am partially-sighted. I need support (and explain which support). This will also serve awareness-training opportunities and educating.
- Get internet for more communication!
- Encourage more research of the different VIP conditions – it will serve awareness-raising and better services creation

### **How can you connect more with other partially sighted people nationally and internationally?**

- Organization ONCE: well-connected in Spain, establish connections with Ireland and UK
- Work towards joining of different (international) associations
- National organizations – to create international youth groups
- Contact international organizations on NoisyVision page
- Translate national websites in other languages
- Blogs that collect information, chat -> database -> organization, technology, links
- Share knowledge + experiences + information on best practices
- Fight for your rights!
- More workshops + seminars
- Reach out to other countries, regions, e.g. Venezuela
- Feel more contacted – personal exchange
- Milan: touristic trips for disabled people -> ideas for other places -> opportunity to meet other people
- Exchange email addresses
- Internet is not enough for spreading information - develop skills -> personal contacts -> support groups
- Easier to keep in touch online when you have specific tasks/ targets

- Couchsurfing for partially sighted
- Organise exchanges with non partially-sighted people
- Meeting three times a year
- Mentoring – helping to introduce new people into the programme -> regular exchanges/meetings  
Visionary Europe 2 – continue the connections  
Youth Congress France 2014  
Connect with others -> Facebook groups -> planning new activities tool
- Regional NGOs -> you grow up in a network from the beginning -> start groups -> connect with other international groups
- Do we need to catch more with VIP? - is it not about connecting with people in general? (inclusion)

**Think of 1 or 2 fantasy ideas you developed in your work on the visionary city and how you can make them a reality?**

- More apps for smartphones, not only iPhone
- Braille or raised letters for facilities
- No steps at the junctions (ramps instead)
- More precise/ reliable development of systems (GPS)
- Beeper sensor for stairs/ obstacles and when it is dark
- City center car free also, no taxi no buses
- Audio menu (make it a law)
- Grass border between bike lane and sidewalk
- Lamppost in the colour of the area to help in the orientation
- Possibility to change colour of the time table screen/ Audio comment at bus stop (bus no 8)
- Contrast on steps
- Free transport all over, not only in some countries
- One international card (?)
- Audio description in cinemas
- Bus stations with big touchscreens
- Online menu for all restaurants – convincing all managers is needed!
- Front row for VIP at concerts
- Touchscreen timetable (to enlarge and browse)
- Main thing – raising awareness -> organisations behind to support
- Wi-fi hotspots
- Take part in existing initiatives for pedestrian cities
- No reflection on touchscreens
- Button for a bus so the drivers know exactly where to stop – VIP is waiting for him (this is the case in Finland)
- Mark the last step
- Big site for house number. Always in the same position
- Street furniture of different colour than the ground
- Enlarge menu
- More resources for organisations
- Geo tagging to alert shops around

### 3.3.3 Policy Proposals

The results of the World cafe served as a basis for participants to develop clear action plans for themselves, their organizations and also to develop policy proposals to achieve a better mobility and contribute to more accessible environments.

**Here is a list of concrete policy proposals:**

- **Street numbers and signs on public and private buildings located in same place and level. Big Size, high contrast.**
  - This would make visually impaired people feel more independent and safe. It could be beneficial for other groups in society such as the elderly
- **Legislation that all shops, public buildings and facilities have to have geotagging**
  - Geotagging is a service that lists places that you walk by. It connects users through their smartphone. Geo tagging can benefit not only people with disabilities but normal sighted people as well. By Tourists or even locals can easily find shops and other facilities and new places that they have never seen.
  - People with disabilities can benefit from this as they can easily find locations and be more independent and have a feeling of control and less stress
- **More resources should be allocated to organizations dealing with visually impairments.**
  - Medical research
  - Developing new technologies
  - Counselling
  - Mobility training including new technologies such as GPS
  - Social groups
- **Shops should have interactive apps for smartphones to find the prices and products**
  - The costs of doing this are at a minimum in general as the information stored in the internet has no wear and tear and can be easily update.
  - It will save time, space and money as well it would be good for the environment
  - This will also make it easy for old people and disabled people to find the location of goods.
  - It is a leap in innovation to reduce the overall time spent by the average person in deciding what to get and where it is cheaper
- **50% discount for people with disabilities on the contracts for internet connection**
- **Car free city center**
  - We suggest that city centers should be pedestrian access only. This would mean that only walking and biking are allowed. Car can cross the city center via an underground tunnel. Public transport terminals should be located right outside the pedestrian zone
- **Sidewalk ramps**
  - We think that it is good if sidewalks at junctions are barrier free. In this context it means no steps. This can be easily done by building **ramps instead of steps. Colors and texture in the ramp** create visually impaired friendly guidelines.
- **Official signs**
  - We think that all public facility signs should be written also in Braille. The sign text letters need to be minimum of 20 cm high

- **Audio menus**
  - To help visually impaired people enjoy their meals, we suggest that restaurants should have audio menus and digital versions of them.
  - In order to do this the government should support the restaurants financially and help to create the new services.
- **Beepers**
  - To prevent visually impaired people from falling from stairs in public places for example metro stations we suggest that sound beepers need to be installed. When a person approaches the stairs the device starts to beep in order to alert the person.

#### 4. Results and Future planning

*“This workshop was a great initiative to get in touch with visually impaired people from different countries and share knowledge and especially feelings about our condition. I think it should become a yearly workshop so that more and more people can enjoy it”.*

*Statement of one participant in the evaluation form*

*“The end of the Visionary Europe was just a beginning for something else. Fight for better VIP-accessibility keeps going on and I am more than sure I will meet many of these people sooner or later. We are busy while studying, working and living our daily lives now, but all the numerous photos and other evidence hopefully help us to re-live this great week whenever we want to. After 10 days of digesting it, I can say that The Visionary Europe Workshop was a life changing workshop”. From [www.noisyvision.com](http://www.noisyvision.com)  
written by Timo Vehviläinen*

We could look at the **results** of the workshop on **two different levels**. The ones **achieved by the workshop itself** and the **ones that will be tangible in the future** and can be considered as the roots for something that will grow on a later stage. The **lists of observations of the Exploration day** is already a clear example of how much the participants have learnt. It is not obvious or spontaneous to look at the environment with a critical eye. Normally we just try to manage to live with what the environment offers, but we do not try to see if we can approach the situations, the obstacles and in general the way we interact and move, in a different way. While exploring with an attentive eye, participants were confronting each other on the different ways of moving, on the different services and technologies available in their own countries.

The **list of the results of the World Cafe** is another clear example of how much the participants were inspired and although not all the ideas will become reality we already know that little steps forward were taken. Once they went home they already started to connect to each other and exchange recommendations on technologies and techniques that help them to move around in everyday life. If we look at the intensity of such an experience, if we listen to the comments in the documentary videos and read the evaluation forms and articles of the participants, we cannot imagine that this should be the only workshop and that those 16 people are the only ones that could experience this.

When we selected the participants for this first edition of The Visionary Europe, we were already thinking about a second one, to give the chance to all the people that we had to exclude, to also take part in such an extraordinary experience. This is the first point of a future project: **The Visionary Europe should be repeated, either in Berlin or in another city of Europe, or, why not, of the world.**

The **methods** used during the workshop should be expanded, standardized and transformed into a tool, possibly a **virtual tool that every visually impaired person** could use to gather information and to improve the accessibility of cities. This would be a concrete way to raise awareness also with people that are not partially sighted.

As many of the participants were wishing, not even after two months since the end of the workshop they started writing on the Facebook Group created by themselves and they started organizing the first **reunion**. At the end of August, 7 participants and 3 trainers met **in Budapest** for 3 days. We rented a couple of flats, we booked flights and we gathered together for some fun activities. It was inevitable to recall the days of the workshop but it was astonishing to see how they were moving around the city trying to catch good and bad examples of accessibility. Although the exploration was informal, people were spontaneously using the methods of the workshop and allocating the examples into the circles of quality. The observations were not only on the level good-bad but already on the next step of contrast, size, shape, color etc... This was a proof that the **method used was simple and easy** to understand but mostly it helps to classify immediately the elements and think already at the **solutions or improvements**. Read more about the follow-up meeting in Budapest here: <http://www.noisyvision.com/2013/08/29/isola-margherita-budapest-agosto-2013/?lang=en>

Mobility is nowadays such a relevant part of our daily life that everyone can relate to it and understand its problems and possibilities. Noisyvision wants to increase the awareness towards visual impairment and expand the knowledge of this grey area between sight and blindness. To reach these goals we need the **support of bigger organizations that have the instruments and the resources to set up a workshop or fund the projects of future campaigns**.

One of the first steps to reach a wider audience would be the **redesign of the webpage** of Noisyvision. Beside a more professional and appealing look, the biggest need would be to make it more accessible and also responsive (adapting to the device used, phone pad, pc) noisyvision.com should become a platform to explore the world and rate the cities and places according to accessibility. We imagine that users could assign scores to different parameters in order to classify different cities and **create a visual map of the most accessible cities** and countries.

During the workshop also the idea of **visualsurfing** was suggested. This would be a remake of couchsurfing, where visually impaired people could get in touch and provide each other assistance to visit the city, move around, and enjoy the most comfortable places in terms of lighting, size of menu, etc.

## 6. Conclusion

*“Thank you for exploring the insight and foresight of those whose sight are partially lost. Thank you for restoring confidence, building hope, planning future and most importantly the experience brought them to dig for meaning and purpose. I am so proud, the confident and bright persona got back in my son”*

This comment was left on Noisyvision Facebook Page by the mother of one of the participants. These words, like many other words we heard from participants and read in their letters, are the true motivation to continue.

We know that The Visionary Europe is not for 16 people. They enjoyed and lived this experience and they are now spreading the word to inform about the method and the results. But most of all we know that The Visionary Europe is the first step of The Visionary World. The perspective of life of Visually Impaired people can change and they can find in cities their way to move confidentially.

The cities, the places and the objects designed with the perspective of the visually impaired can only improve the quality of life also for people with normal sight or no disability. A more accessible city is just a better city to live in for everyone. Here a TED talk where this same concept is shared.

[http://www.ted.com/talks/chris\\_downey\\_design\\_with\\_the\\_blind\\_in\\_mind.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/chris_downey_design_with_the_blind_in_mind.html)

There are cities more accessible than others, but there are also different ways of living in them. We decided that a dark street or a crossing without traffic light will not stopping us from moving and exploring. And maybe one day a small change will happen, or maybe the next time if a road is build the blind will be kept in mind. Nevertheless, the participants and the whole team know and have experienced that we can change the way we perceive the environment and learn a different way to live.

## **7. Material and Documentation**

### **Videos**

Full Documentary

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4M47E9SmU8Y>

Short Documentary

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-YuGW3Kiedo>

Fun Facts

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QRarKOeydcA>

### Articles

*To see beyond the city*

<http://www.noisyvision.com/2013/06/08/2276/?lang=en>

*The Visionary Europe – Sensations of a participant 10 days after*

<http://www.noisyvision.com/2013/05/23/the-visionary-europe-sensations-of-a-partecipant-10-days-after/?lang=en>

*Daily reports written by participants during the workshop*

<http://www.noisyvision.com/workshop/?lang=en>

### Links

ProRetina

<http://www.pro-retina.de/>

Noisyvision

<http://www.noisyvision.com/>

Noisyvision Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/NoisyVision-Usher-Syndrome-more/124776474256552>

Grundtvig

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/grundtvig\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/grundtvig_en.htm)

NaBibb

<http://www.na-bibb.de/>

## Appendix

### Program

Mon 6 May	Tue 7 May	Wed 8 May	Thu 9 May	Fri 10 May	Sat 11 May	Sun 12 May	Mon 13 May
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<i>Arrival</i>		<i>Exploration Phase</i>		<i>Fantasy hase</i>	<i>Realization Phase</i>		<i>Departure</i>
	<i>Breakfast 08.00 – 09.00</i>	<i>Breakfast 08.00 – 09.00</i>	<i>Breakfast 08.00 – 09.00</i>	<i>Breakfast 08.00 – 09.00</i>	<i>Breakfast 08.00 – 09.00</i>	<i>Breakfast 08.00 – 09.00</i>	
	9.00-10.30 Introduction  Getting to know each other	9.00 - 10.30 Preparation of the Exploration day	9.00 - 10.30 The mobility situation for partially sighted people in different European countries - Presentation by the participants	9.00 - 10.30 Preparation of the Creation of a visual impaired friendly city - the Visionary Europe	9.00 - 10.00 Presentation on the practices of participation of youth with disabilities on the European level and relevant policies	9.00-10.30 World Cafe - Next Steps	Bye-bye!
	<i>Coffee 10.30 – 11.00</i>	<i>Coffee 10.30 – 11.00</i>	<i>Coffee 10.30 – 11.00</i>	<i>Coffee 10.30 – 11.00</i>	<i>Coffee 10.30 – 11.00</i>	<i>Coffee 10.30 – 11.00</i>	
	11.00 – 11.50 Expectations and fears  11.50-12.30 Ground rules and organizational information	11.00 - 13.00 Exploration of Berlin in small groups	11.00 – 11.30 Assessing accessibility - circles of qualities  11.30-12.30 Preparation for the presentation of the exploration day	11.00 – 12.30 Creation of a visual impaired friendly city - the Visionary Europe	11.00 -12.30 Preparation of sharing Best practices - Presentation by the participants	11.00 - 12.30 Development of personal action plans and (policy) guidelines	
	<i>Lunch 12.30 – 14.00</i>	<i>Lunch 13.00 / 14.00 (Lunchbox)</i>	<i>Lunch 12.30 – 14.00</i>	<i>Lunch 12.30 – 14.00</i>	<i>Lunch 12.30 – 14.00</i>	<i>Lunch 12.30 – 14.00</i>	
	14.00 - 15.30 Sharing experiences: what is it like to be partially sighted in different countries?	14.00 - 18.00 Exploration continues	14.00 - 14.30 Preparation for the presentation of the exploration day continues  14.30 - 15.30 Presentation of the results of the exploration	14.00 - 15.30 Creation of the Visionary Europe	14.00 - 15.30 Sharing Best practices - Presentation by the participants	14.00 - 15.30 Presentation to press and politicians (to be confirmed)	

			day				
	<i>Coffee</i> 15.30 – 16.00		<i>Coffee</i> 15.30 – 16.00	<i>Coffee</i> 15.30 – 16.00	<i>Coffee</i> 15.30 – 16.00	<i>Coffee</i> 15.30 – 16.00	
	16.00 – 17.30 Sharing experiences continues  17.30 – 18.00 Reflection groups		16.00 - 17.30 Presentation of the results of the exploration day continues  17.30 – 18.00 Reflection groups	16.00 Presentation of results  16.30 Departure for Boat trip  17.30-18.30 Boat trip	16.00 - 17.30 Best Practices in Germany - speaker - Ulrike Haase, Organisation ?  17.30 – 18.00 Reflection groups	16.00 - 17.00 Evaluation  17.00-17.30 Handout of Certificates  17.00-17.30 End of Program	
	<i>Dinner</i> 18.30-19.30	<i>Dinner in town - 18.30</i>	<i>Dinner</i> 18.30-19.30	<i>Dinner</i> 19.00-20.00	<i>Dinner</i> 18.30-19.30	<i>Farewell Dinner in the garden</i> 19.00-21.00	
	19.30 – 20.00 Report Groups	20.30 – 21.00 Report Groups	19.30 – 20.00 Report Groups	20.00 – 20.30 Report Groups	19.30 – 20.00 Report Groups	18.30 – 19.00 Report Groups	
Filming of arrivals			Participants Night	Filming of portraits Museum (optional)			

**List of participants:**

NAME	COUNTRY	M / F	AGE
Bernard King	Ireland	M	29

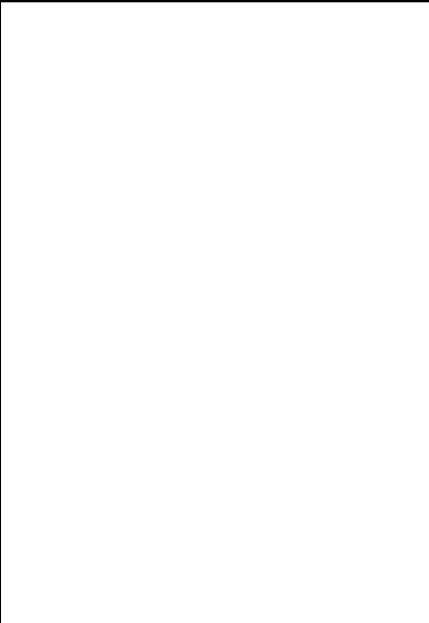
Giulia Polito	italy	F	22
Heikki Ketola	Finnland	M	33
Lucia Nogues Marino	Spain	F	24
L C	Italy	F	30
Maike Bennink	Netherlands	F	35
Marian Padure	Romania	M	31
Nelli Berezcki	Hungary	F	23
Patrick Fehr	Germany	M	24
Rosemary Sweeney	Ireland	F	27
Rosio Alejandra	Spain/Venezuelan	F	31
Szabolcs Orbán	Hungary	M	29
Tamara Conde Vera	Spain	F	32
Taraneh Nasiri	Great Britain	F	28
Timo Vehvilainen	Finnland	M	29
Tytti Matsinen	Finnland	F	35

### Exploration Chart

<b>EXPLORATION CHART</b>	<b>Street Furniture and Signs</b> (traffic lights, street signs, benches, posts)	<b>The built environment and public spaces</b> (EU category) (streets, parks, ...)	<b>Public facilities and services</b> (EU category) (Bars, restaurants museum, shops)	<b>Transport and related infrastructures</b> (EU category)

<b>Visibility</b>	How is the contrast with the ground? Can you see the traffic light? Can you read the name of streets?	Can you see the steps, the paths? Can you walk on the sidewalks?	Can you find a place to seat? Can you read the menu, order food? Can you find the toilet in the restaurant? Can you see what you eat?	Can I see the directions in the Underground? Can I find the signs? Can I read the maps? Are the bus stops easy to find? Can you read the names of direction? Can you see where the train stations are? Can you find the way to your destination? Can you find the stations were you have to stop? Can you see inside stations?
<b>Usability</b>			Can you explore the museum, buy a ticket, read the description of paintings Do you understand which side you have to move the door?	Are you having problems to buy a ticket? Is there a voice assistant?
<b>Mobility</b>	Can you move at night? Are the lamps bright enough? Are they in the right position?	How can you walk on sidewalks? Are there dedicated lanes?	Can you reach the toilet easily? Are there stairs? Tables and chairs on the way?	Can you see inside the train/bus? Can you walk inside the station?

TIPS AND RULES	SOME EXAMPLE OF WHAT TO OBSERVE		THE DESTINATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Walk slowly and spend time to observe.</li> <li>- When you find something difficult, it is time to stop and think</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uneven paving</li> <li>Street Furniture</li> <li>Unexpected level changes</li> <li>Varying kerb heights</li> <li>Narrow pavements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bins</li> <li>Outside dining areas</li> <li>Signage / Street Names</li> <li>Lamp posts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GROUP : Potsdamer Platz</li> <li>GROUP : Bernauer Strasse Memorial</li> <li>GROUP : Friedrichshain (starting from East Side Gallery)</li> <li>GROUP : Holocaust Memorial and Mu</li> </ul>

<p>:WHY?          - Take notes, photos, short video clips.          - Consider the time taken to perform an action, to move from place to place.          - Write in the moderation card a key word related to the object/situation and the reason why it is a positive or negative one. Choose a color of the moderation cards for negative examples and another one for positive (all should have the same colors, e.g. red for negative, green for positive)</p>	<p>Type of street lighting          Type of paving          Lack of dropped kerbs          Misuse of tactile paving          Lack of tactile paving          Bollards</p>	<p>Seating          Bus stops          Railings          Trees          Telephone boxes          Sign of Shops          Taglines (Museums).</p>	
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