Bridging the Gap
Inclusive and accessible communication guidelines

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Final version

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Introduction

Bridging the Gap's Communication and Visibility Strategy (C&V) aims to "vehiculate positive messages and to raise awareness on the socio-economic inclusion, equality and non-discrimination of persons with disabilities in low and middle-income countries through initiatives aimed at informing on the project activities and results" (Action Plan, p. 266).

In order to promote such a positive message and achieve the objectives stated in the C&V, a number of initiatives, tools and products will be developed. The present document intends to guide the project consortium in producing such tools and products, in respect of the principle of accessible and inclusive communication.

The Guidelines introduce useful information on inclusive language, some tips on behaviour to relate to persons with disabilities, instructions to make accessible communication products, and requirements for the organisation of inclusive meetings and events. References to the accessibility of websites and social networks are also present.

Overall, and besides the application of the principles of the human rights-based approach, the Guidelines are inspired to the paradigm of the universal design (the design of products and environments to be usable by all people -older people, people without disabilities, and people with disabilities- without the need for adaptation), which shall be adopted whenever possible.

Inclusive language

To guarantee inclusion and respect of the human rights-based approach, it is essential to define a proper vocabulary.

The best option is just asking the person what words or terminology are preferred to be used.

If this is not possible, we recommend the use of **"person-first language",** which puts the person before his or her impairment. It reflects the human rights model of disability which see disability as the result of barriers created by society. Disability is not a defining characteristic but one of several aspects of the person. For example, we will say "person with disabilities" instead of "disabled". This recommendation is also extended to illnesses and diseases, for which medical labels should be avoided not to reinforce stereotypes of people as 'patients'.

We use this language as it is in line with the terminology enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

Although some people with disabilities may use a non-politically correct language to refer to themselves – using, for example, words like disabled or even *crip* – other people **should not use this terminology**.

Ultimately, we should refer to persons with disabilities in a **positive language**, avoiding passive and victimizing words, and using language that respects persons with disabilities as rights-owners with complete control over their own lives.

The following table illustrates some examples of **terms to avoid and person-first language to be used instead**:

Labels NOT to use	Person first
Handicapped, disabled, PWD	Person(s) with disability/ies
Normal person, able-bodied	Other people
Mental patient	Person with psychosocial disabilities

Mental handicap, mentally defective	Person with intellectual disabilities, person with learning disability, person with cognitive disability
Blind	Person who is blind, blind person
Visually impaired	Person with visual impairment, partially sighted person
Deaf-mute	Deaf, deaf person[1],
Hearing impaired	Person with hearing impairment, person who is hard of hearing
Afflicted by / victim of multiple sclerosis	Person who has multiple sclerosis
Autistic	Person with autism
Learning disabled	Person with a learning disability
Down	Person with Down syndrome
Invalid, handicapped person	Person with a physical disability
Mute	Person unable to speak
Dwarf, midget	Person of little stature, person who has short stature

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[1] The deaf community does not bother to use "deaf" to describe themselves, they consider it as part of their identity. This is reflected, for instance, in the official names of the organisations European Union of the Deaf (EUD) and World Federation of the Deaf (WFD)

Wheelchair bound, confined or restricted to a wheelchair	Person who uses a wheelchair, wheelchair-user
Spastic	Person with cerebral palsy
Post-polio suffered from polio	Person who had polio, person with post-polio paralysis
Birth defect	Congenital disability,

Some tips on behaviour[2]

There are some **general recommendations** to improve communication and interaction skills when interacting with people with disabilities:

- Address people with disabilities in the same way as you talk to everyone else, speak directly to them, even if there is an interpreter.
- Use a normal tone of voice, don't patronize or talk down.
- Ask first when offering assistance to a person with disabilities, wait until your offer is accepted before you help and follow the instructions of the person.
- Be patient to get things done or said. Let the person set the pace in talking and doing things.
- It is appropriate to use the usual cultural greeting, shaking hands for example when introducing to a person with disabilities, also in the case of people with limited hand use or who wear an artificial limb.

In addition to these general hints, there are **some tips when relating with specific disabilities**:

Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing
- To get the attention of a person who is deaf or hard of hearing, wave your hand or tap on the person's shoulder when culturally appropriate.
- Follow the person's cues to find out if he/she prefers sign language, gesturing, writing or speaking.
- Look directly at the person and speak clearly, slowly and expressively without overreacting/overemoting to establish if the person can read your lips.
- Speak in a normal tone of voice.
- Keep your hands and food away from your mouth when speaking. Avoid communicating while smoking or chewing gum.
- Try to eliminate background noise.
- Written notes can often facilitate communication.
- Encourage feedback to assess clear understanding.
- If you have trouble understanding the speech of a person who is deaf or hard of hearing, let him/her know.

Persons who are blind or partially sighted / with visual impairment
- Always identify yourself and others who may be with you.

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[2] Adapted from: Removing barriers. Tips and Strategies to Promote Accessible Communication, The North Carolina Office on Disability and Health, 2nd edition, 2002

- When conversing in a group, remember to say the name of the person to whom you are speaking to give vocal cues.
- Speak in a normal tone of voice.
- Indicate when you move from one place to another and if you leave or return to a room.
- Let the person know when the conversation is at an end
- When you offer to assist someone with a vision loss, allow the person to take your arm to better guide this person.
- Use specifics such as "left at 2 meters" when directing.
- When offering seating, place the person's hand on the back or arm of the seat.

Persons who are deafblind
There are varying degrees of DeafBlindness. For that reason, it is important to take into account the guidelines listed above and tailor them to each specific case.

Persons with speech impairment
- Give whole, unhurried attention when talking to a person who has difficulty speaking.
- Allow extra time for communication.
- Keep your manner encouraging rather than correcting. Be patient, do not speak for the person.
- If necessary, ask short questions that require short answers or a nod or shake of the head.
- Use hand gestures and notes.

Persons with intellectual disabilities
- Be patient. Take the time necessary to ensure clear understanding and give time to put the thoughts into words, especially when responding to a question.
- Formulate simple sentences and repeat as necessary.
- Use precise language incorporating simple words. Avoid the use of directional terms like right-left, east-west, etc.
- When asking questions, phrase them to get accurate information.Verify responses by repeating each question in a different way.
- Give exact instructions: for example, "Be back from lunch at 12:30," not "Be back in 30 minutes"
- Do not give too many directions at one time.

Persons with reduced mobility/wheelchair users
- When speaking with someone in a wheelchair, talk directly to the person and try to be at his/her eye level, but do not kneel. If you must stand, step back slightly so the person doesn't have to strain his/her neck to see you.

- When giving directions to people with mobility limitations, consider distance, weather conditions and physical obstacles such as stairs, curbs and steep hills.
- Always ask before you move a person in a wheelchair
- If a person transfers from a wheelchair to a car, toilet, etc., leave the wheelchair within easy reach. Always make sure that a chair is locked before helping a person transfer.

Service animals

- Service animals, such as guide dogs for blind persons are working animals, not pets. They should not be petted or otherwise distracted when in harness.
- If the animal is not in harness, permission from the animal's companion should be requested and received prior to interact with the animal.

Accessible communication products

Accessible digital documents[3]

This section has been drafted taking as reference the software Microsoft Office Word since it is the most commonly used. Nevertheless, **the following tips apply also for most text processors**:

- Use the formatting styles such as Title, Heading 1, Heading 2, etc. instead of text attributes (capital letters, italics, bold or underline) to provide structure to your document and make navigation easier through a screen reader. In the case of lengthy documents, use a table of contents.
- Use the sans serif fonts established for the project, Century Gothic and Arial, as these are accessible. We will use a minimum size of 12 for body text, including emails.
- In the case of charts or tables, the size of the font can be between 8 and 12.
- Create tables using the Insert-Table option instead of with text boxes or layers. Make sure that the table is created with a structure that is easy to understand using screen readers. You can check how a screen reader will read the table by putting the arrow in the first cell and clicking tab.
- Emphasize words using bold, not capital letters or underlining. However, screen readers do not differentiate bold text. Following the example of IDDC, we can use square brackets around [emphasized texts] for Bridging the Gap's internal communications.
- Always align text left. Never justify to the right.
- Do not split words
- When a listing or schedule using numbers or bullet points have these one below each other
- Always write abbreviations in full the first time you mention them in the text
- Insert page numbers on the top right corner of the page
- To create space between paragraphs, use the space before and space after properties in your styles toolbar, not the Enter key
- Leave a line of white space between Bridging the Gap logo and the main title as well as between each heading.
- Ensure that all images and logos in documents contain Alt texts describing the image content
- For decorative images, use an empty Alt text using quotation marks on the Alt field (alt=""). That way, the screen readers will know that the image can be safely ignored.

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[3] Adapted from: Julia Wolhandler, IDDC Accessibility Manual, 2013

- Ensure that there are no images running over / under the text
- For shared documents, avoid using track changes. Refer in your cover email how you marked your changes.
- Use the check accessibility in Word documents by using the "Accessibility Checker" tool

Convert Word processor documents into PDF

To create a PDF file from a Word processor document, it is important that Word documents be accessible: providing alternative text for images, proper headings, appropriate link text, etc., as indicated above.

Once we have an accessible word document, **Select File > Save As, and under Save as type: select PDF**. Before you save the file, select Options and ensure that the Document structure tags for accessibility option is selected.
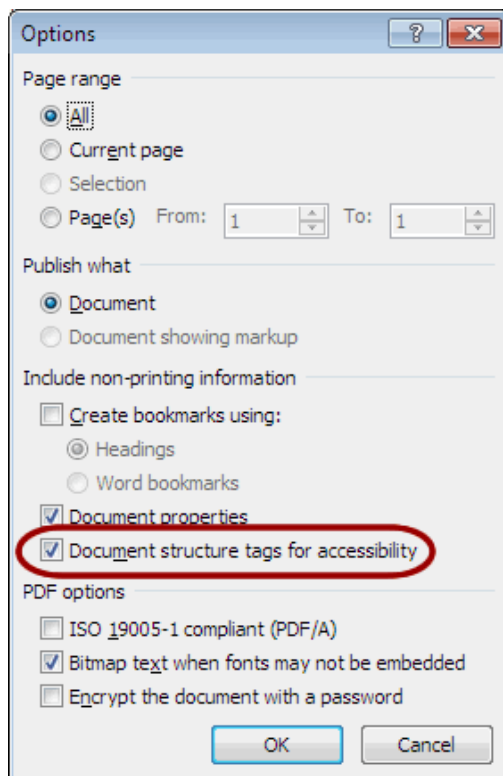
Figure 1 – Select document structure tags for accessibility

Microsoft office's support page offers full information on how to create accessible PDFs from the latest office versions.

Presentations

Whether you are presenting to a group of persons with disabilities or not, the key for an easy-to-follow presentation is **simplicity**. In the same way, it is important to keep

in mind some common rules on communication such as trying to be relaxed, using a proper tone of voice emphasizing some words, sharing stories, and real-life examples to catch the attention of our audience or getting involved by asking questions.

Furthermore, it is necessary to **follow the suggestions hereunder** to make the presentations more accessible:

- Always use the project's PowerPoint template indicated in the visibility manual.
- Present only one idea per slide with a maximum of six bullet points.
- Simplify the information using key words, not complete sentences.
- Use project colour palette to emphasize ideas and key concepts.
- Use the sans serif fonts established for the project, Century Gothic and Arial, as these are accessible, and at least a font size of 24 points.
- Always justify text to the left.
- Use the official project colour palette[4] not only to keep a consistent image of the project, but also to ensure a proper colour contrast.
- Avoid large and/or complicated tables. If necessary, use simple graphics.
- Describe all the drawings, photographs and graphics used.
- Ensure the videos include captioning and voice over (see below "Videos", p. 15 and 16). Considering that some media players are not accessible, it is recommended to ensure a short description of the video.
- Ensure there is enough time for people to read each visual.
- Provide the visuals on hard copy and offer other alternative formats (see below "Printed Materials").
- If possible, offer electronic version of the presentation to those who use screen readers and have requested them in advance.
- Share the presentations in advance (or even the speeches) to the interpreters, both sign and foreign languages, to facilitate their work.

Printed Materials

It is important to make alternative format options available for people who have visual, learning and cognitive disabilities.

The original publications of the project will include information about alternative formats that are available, notably large print, easy to read and braille.

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[4] Visual Identity Guidelines of Bridging the Gap, page 9

a. Large Print[5]

- White glossy paper produces too much glare. It is advisable to use white matte paper or light-yellow paper instead
- The weight of the paper should be sufficient to prevent transparencies
- Text should be aligned to the left
- Avoid the use of columns. Use bullets for tables of contents.
- Use the sans serif fonts established for the project: Century Gothic and Arial, and at least a font size of 16 points
- Avoid italics because they are difficult to read.
- Do not split words.
- Use one and a half to double line spacing.
- Make sure the ink coverage is dense enough to see the letters properly
- The colour contrast of typeface to background – either dark on light or light on dark – should be high. A 70% contrast is recommended.
- The colour contrast of drawings or other illustrations to background should be as high as the type contrast.
- Photographs need to have a wide range of grey-scale variation.
- Do not place any type or illustrations, such as watermarks, over other designs, photographs, graphics or text.
- The document should have a flexible binding, preferably one that allows the publication to lie flat.
- Provide a braille version or an accessible electronic version of the documents;

b. Easy to read

Through this accessible writing technique, persons with intellectual and learning disabilities, as well as other collectives as persons with limited attention span, improve their access to information in a more understandable way.

The Guidelines for easy-to-read materials, drafted by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, as well as the "European standards for making information easy to read and understand" by Inclusion Europe, provide full information on how to write an easy-to read document.

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[5] For a full understanding of the differences between clear print, large print and giant print, check here on the Royal National Institute of Blind People's website
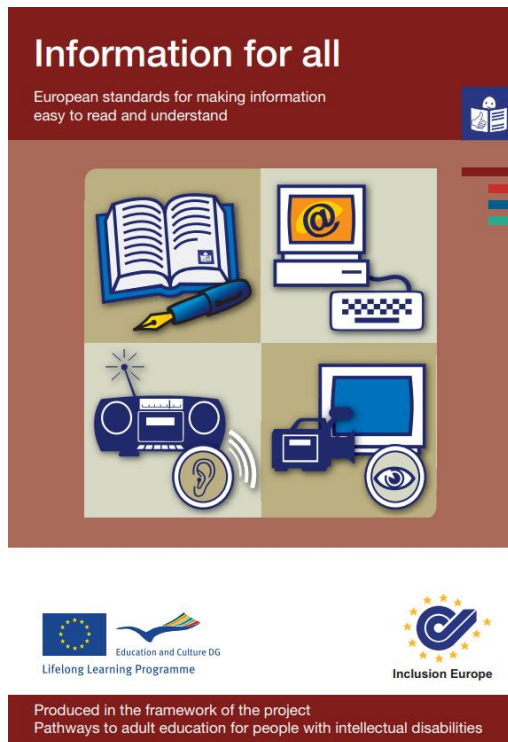
Figure 2 – Cover "Information for All"

c. Braille

● Remove pictures and graphs when printing in Braille
● Table of contents do not need to be removed when printing in Braille
● Keep in mind that Braille print outs are lengthier than common text print outs (about triple the number of pages)
● Some Braille printers have the functionality to print double-sided; technically it is acceptable to use this, but it is advisable to verify personal preferences with the person concerned

Web

Bridging the Gap's website meet the **international standards WCAG 2.0 Level AA**. References to the standards can be found here.

Besides than on BtG's website, project information is/will be vehiculated also via the consortium member's websites (and social networks). In case of websites which do not meet the WCAG 2.0 Level AA, **some adjustments can be made** to make your website more accessible:

● Use clear navigation structure throughout the site, including the main navigation buttons at the top and at the bottom of the page.

- Each page should indicate the place where the user is clearly and showing the navigation menu of the site.
- Select colours with high contrast to facilitate the reading. The tool https://contrastchecker.com/ is a good help for choosing the colours.
- Backgrounds should be simple with high contrast to text and graphics.
- Avoid using numerous graphic images, which should all have an alternative text explaining the content.
- E-mail or telephone contacts should be provided as alternatives to web forms.

Videos

The easiest way to create an accessible video is **building accessibility from the start**. Regardless the content of each video (spot, interview, film, with or without audio, etc.) we must take into account the addition of transcriptions, subtitles/captioning and audio descriptions, to reach the audience with disabilities.

a. Transcripts

Transcripts are the text version of the video content and the audio description if they have it. They should contain additional descriptions, explanations, or comments that may be beneficial, such as indications of silence, music, tone etc.

Through transcripts, anyone can access content from audio or video by reading a text transcript instead. Furthermore, they allow the content of your video to be searchable in case it is online.

We should consider this accessibility option specially to reach deafblind persons since it allows to get content through the use of Braille and other devices. Likewise, this option is useful for blind or partially sighted persons since although the video may have voice over, they may be using a non-accessible media player and the video description can be read by screen readers.

b. Captioning

Captions are text versions of the audio content, synchronized with the audio and video, while the transcript is most often a text document without any time information presented in a separate document. They also include textual representations of the sounds on a video such as [doorbell], [background music], [applause], timed with the action on screen, providing a more faithful reproduction of the video. For that reason, we will go for captioning instead of transcription as far as possible to reach the deaf audience.

Tips for adding captioning to the videos:

- We can build captioning from a transcript by breaking the text up into small segments and synchronizing them with the media, so that each caption frame can be displayed at the right time. Bridging the gap uses Youtube's [6] sync tool for adding captions to the project videos uploaded on its channel.
- Typography used must be sans serif, with a medium font size (between 18 and 22 points) that optimizes its reading, using simple line spacing, and occupying a maximum of two lines of 35 characters in each one.
- The text exposure time should be between 12 and 19 characters per second (around 150 words per minute).
- Words should not be separated, while lines are separated when they coincide with points, conjunctions or with the pauses that mark the character when speaking.
- Text should be centred and in the lower part of the video or, in case of having another content on this location, in the area above.
- They must have a sufficient contrast with the video, in such a way that they are perfectly legible. The colours white, yellow, green or cyan on a black background are recommended.
- In case of having more than one speaker, each of them will have a different and identifying colour
- Sound effects should be indicated by a descriptive statement in parentheses when appropriate.

c. Audio description

The audio description is an alternative audio track that describes the visual content and that will be essential for the understanding of the video for those people that cannot see what is happening on the screen. The description will be read by the browser or by the screen reading software.

It is essential for blind or low vision users since if the content is very visual, audio subtitles will not be enough to understand the content, as blind or low vision users might miss much information.

Social networks
Bridging the Gap counts on project pages and profiles on **Facebook**, **Twitter**, **Youtube** and **Flickr**.

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[6] More info about how to add captioning on Youtube below, in the section "Social networks – Youtube" (pp. 19-20)

Contrary to the web pages, **social networks normally have designs that are not completely accessible and on which we cannot intervene, or we can intervene marginally**, to comply with accessibility standards. Nevertheless, we can improve accessibility by making some adjustments:

a. Twitter

A good way to increase the reach of tweets and posts is by adding an image. Twitter includes a function to add captions to the pictures from Twitter.com, IOS and Android.

To enable image description from Twitter.com it's necessary to select **Settings and privacy** from your profile icon's dropdown, click **Accessibility** from the list of settings, check the box **Compose image descriptions**, and click on **Save changes**:
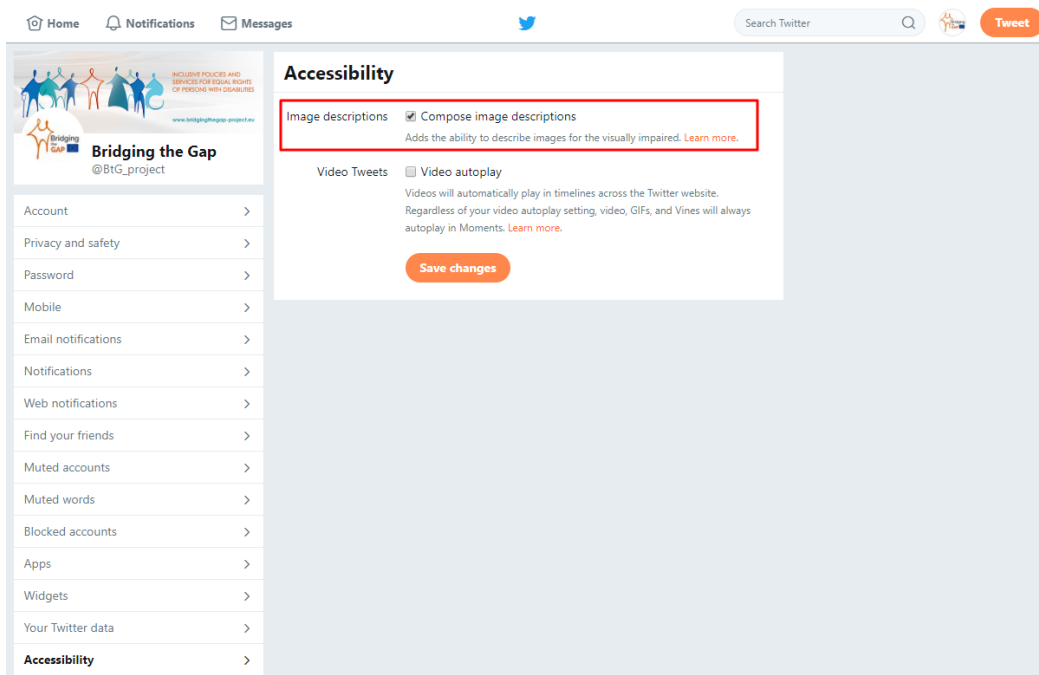
Figure 3 – Accessibility options on Twitter.com

Once the caption function is on, the "Tweet compose" button will show the field "**Add description"** below the images uploaded. It allows typing a description of each image up to 420 characters. Type the description and click on "Apply" to publish the captioning.
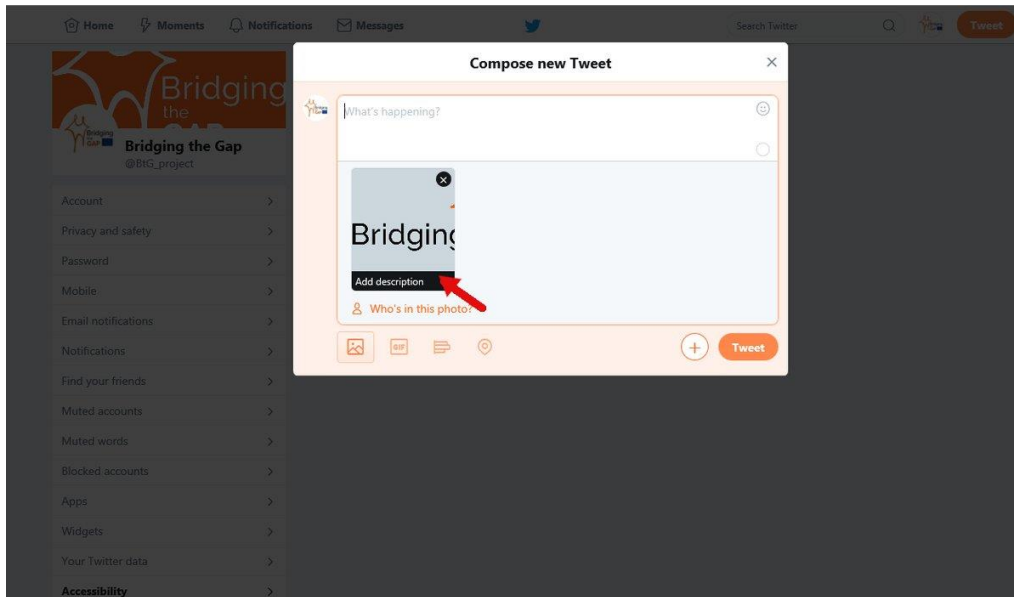
Figure 4 – Add image description on Twitter

Likewise, to add captions to the pictures tweeted from a mobile, it is necessary to set up the accessibility of the device in advance. Twitter's Help Center provides detailed information about how to set image description using IOS and Android, as well as on Twitter.com.

b. Facebook

By contrast, Facebook has an Automatic alt text function which uses object recognition technology to create image descriptions. Nevertheless, **sometimes the automatic description does not respond adequately to the image content**. To solve this problem, Facebook has an option to edit the automatic text, although it is available only on computers and not on mobiles:

1. Click Edit Photo, then click Alt Text
2. The automatically generated text will be shown on the left side of your photo. Click Override generated alt text to edit it and write your alt text in the box.
3. To save your alt text, click Save in the bottom right.
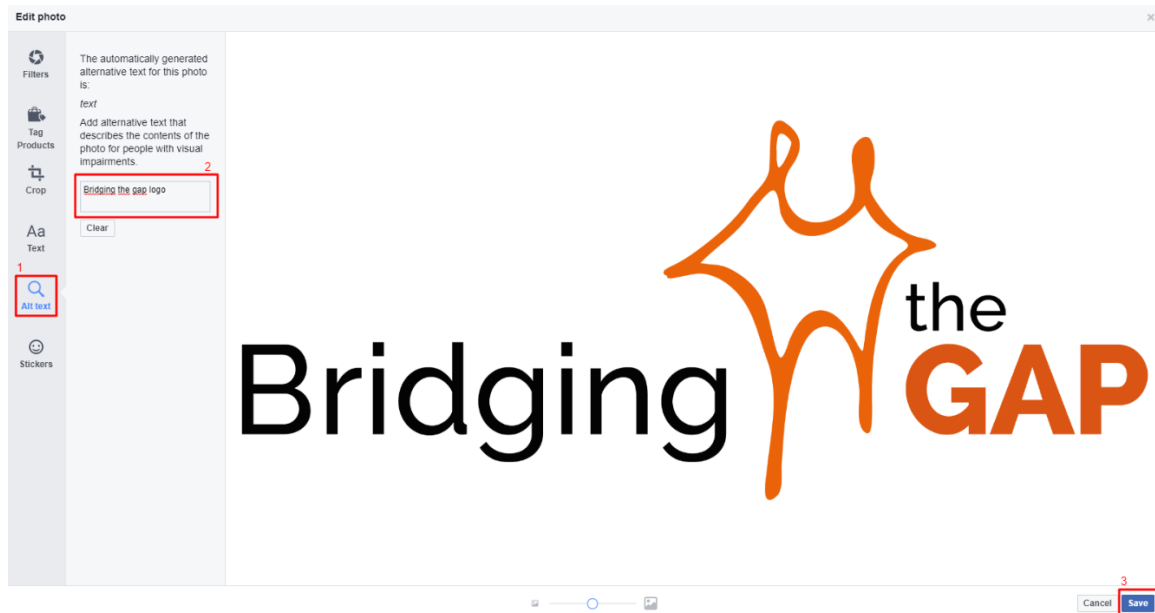
Figure 5 – Add alternative text on Facebook images

Please note that the Automatic Alt text is only available for pictures, not for GIF or Videos. However, Facebook offers the possibility to add captions to videos uploaded directly through the button "add video". Captioning can be generated automatically, written and synchronized by the user or by uploading a file. The complete instructions on how to add captions to a Facebook video are available [here](#).

For more information visit Facebook's [Accessibility page](#).
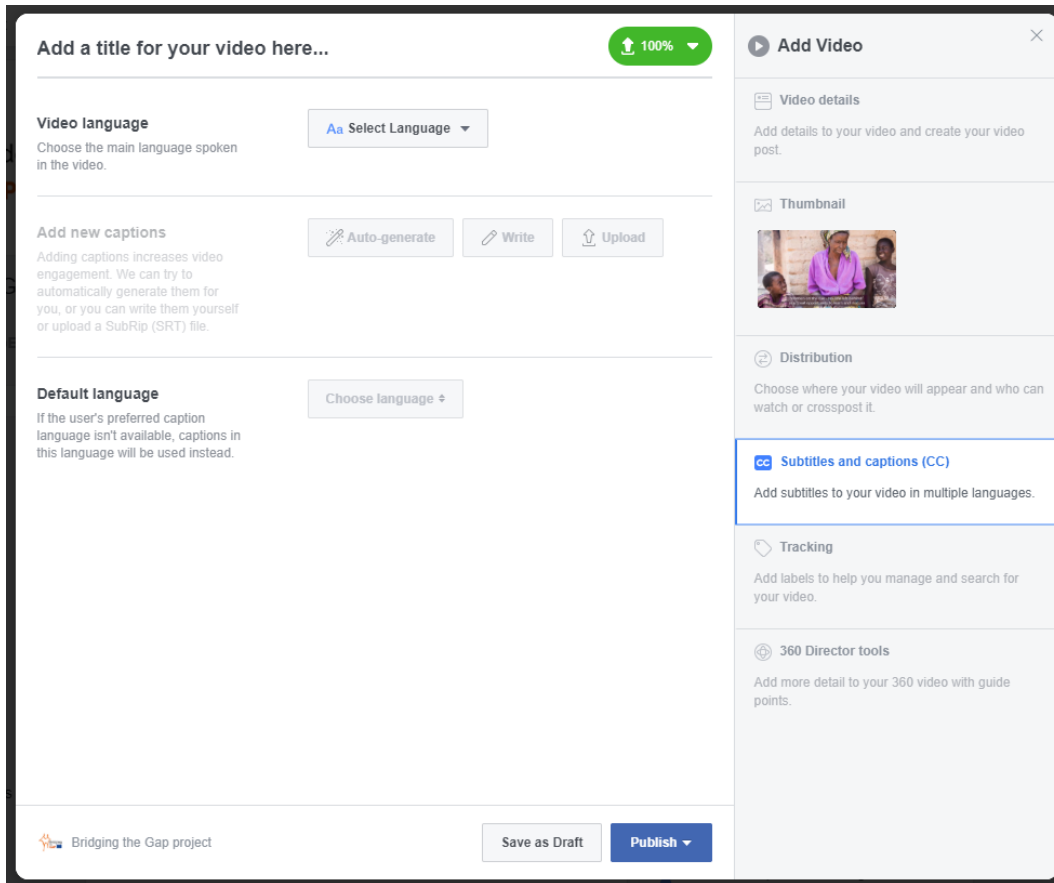
Figure 6 – Subtitles and captions option on Facebook

c. Youtube

In the case of Youtube, we can add captioning through a transcript file or add our own subtitles and captions.

The section "Videos" of the present document (p. 15 and 16) provides additional elements on how to make videos accessible.

The screenshot below shows where to click to add captioning to Youtube videos:

Figure 7 – Add captioning on Youtube

Meetings and events

Events shall ensure **minimum accessibility standards[7] even if they do not necessarily target or count on the participation of persons with disabilities**. As a matter of fact, ensuring and communicating the accessibility will encourage persons with disabilities to actually show up to and participate in events.

Planning the event
What is the event about? Who is the target?

The event format, target(s), attendants, speakers, etc. **shall be decided by the country team, under the coordination of the project director and communication officer (CO) and respecting the visibility rules stated in the C&V and in the visibility manual**.

The events shall normally target the general public, though paying attention to the most relevant stakeholders: national institutions and civil servants, national organizations of persons with disabilities, development practitioners.

Who has got to be there?

It depends on the specific settings of your country and on the target group(s).

However, some actors shall be always invited to attend and/or intervene:

- **EU Delegation**. It must be closely involved in the preparation and implementation of such events, including contacts with the media.
- Institutional representative of the partner country (depending on the type of event)
- **Relevant field actors** (UN Agencies and Programmes, EU Member States' cooperation agencies, international NGOs, etc.).
- **National organizations of persons with disabilities.**

In order to enhance the possibility of the project to enlarge its sphere of influence, think about inviting relevant actors from outside the country, if possible (for instance: African Union, other EU delegations, other pan-regional organizations, etc.)

Project Management Unit (PMU) representatives must always attend project events. The PMU Director, Communication Officer, Knowledge Management Coordinator shall try to ensure, as much as possible, their presence at all country

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[7] i.e. granting at least full accessibility for wheelchair-users and providing sign interpretation/captioning and agendas available either in electronic or print formats in accessible formats

events. **Country teams' members must always attend their country's project events**.

In order to allow the participation to the events of persons with disability, the **registration forms must be accessible**. In order to facilitate the setting of the event and its accessibility, **registrants shall be asked to indicate**:

- Their accessibility requirements (i.e.: I am guide dog user and will come with my dog; I am a person with visual impairment; I am a deaf person; I am hard hearing person and using hearing loop; I am wheelchair user; I use a cane; I use crutches to walk; I do not have accessibility/assistance requirements)
- Their needs in terms of accessible material (i.e. Braille; Easy to read; Large print; I do not need accessible documents).

Knowing the needs helps in identifying what settings and material are needed and shall be available to guarantee the accessibility of the event.

What do we have to do? General tips on communicating and coordinating the events

- The country teams shall share all relevant information about the event with the Communication Officer (date and place, type of event, target, speakers, special guests, media coverage etc.) so that the information can be published online with enough advance to promote it and to inform the Steering Committee and European Commission accordingly.
- All the communication materials (roll-ups, posters, banners, leaflets, press releases, nameplates, etc.) shall be made according to the project's visibility manual and validated by the PMU. The use of the project and EU logo is mandatory in all products; it is strongly advised to include all partner logos to ensure the promotion of the overall project image.
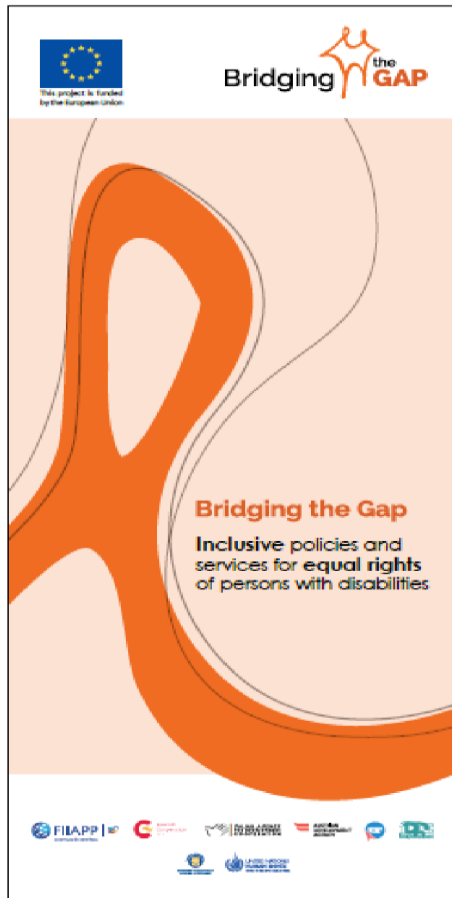
Figure 8 - Examples of the application of the visual identity: roll up and press release's templates

- Partners wishing to issue press releases or make public statements related to the project must first secure approval of the text from the EU. Where the press release is issued by the Union, the implementing partner concerned must provide all the requisite technical information and background on request.
- Both during and after the event, it is important to send photos and/or videos to the CO to support the online dissemination. Since coordination with the social network accounts of the partner agencies shall be ensured, it is highly recommended to put the CO in contact with her/his peer on the field.
- In case of media coverage, the country teams, in accordance with the CO, shall identify establish a spokesperson with a good knowledge of the project[8] and identify potential interviewees. It is also recommended to prepare the messages and a synthetic press dossier with information about the project in advance.
- Instruct the photographers/videomakers: ensure the visibility of the project logo and the EU, showing not only the representatives but also the civil society, ensure the idea of an interactive and open event is represented, etc.

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[8] Normally the Country Coordinator

How do we do it? – Ensuring accessible communication and visibility

All event-related communication activities and products must ensure a **coherent and recognizable image of the project**. The visibility manual proposes guidelines for the use of the logo, the official colour palette, fonts, EU funding mention, as well as some usage examples for stationery papers, roll-ups, and other branding applications.

It is essential to use an inclusive language as described in the first part of the present Guidelines. First and foremost, the most important principle to follow is to use the "person-first language" described at the beginning of the present document.

Specific visibility requirements for the project events include:

- All the project events should show the logo project and the EU flag in a prominent place of the room. For that purpose, it is recommended to use a project roll up. When it is difficult to print materials, the project logo can be projected.

Figure 9 Bridging the Gap's launch event. Use of project and EU logos on the screen behind the speakers' table

- Ensure that during the event introduction there is a short yet meaningful presentation about the project as a whole (i.e. not only your country action!): use the common project presentation, show project photos or videos (the latter once available), ask the European Union Delegation (EUD) to talk about the EU commitment to the inclusion of persons with disability in development cooperation through Bridging the Gap, instruct (as much as possible) the institutional representatives to describe the project as a whole, ask another country coordinator to attend and talk about the activity in her/his country (or

to send a video), ask the CO or the project director to talk about the project in its entirety, etc.

Figure 10 – Presentation of the project during the launch event and use of the project visual identity close to the speakers

- Boilerplates for the written products (leaflets, brochures, press releases, etc.):
  - o Bridging the Gap is a targeted thematic response to the requirement to make development cooperation accessible to and inclusive of persons with disabilities, which is an obligation for the European Union (EU) and Member States as parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and which can have a significant impact in improving the social inclusion and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities.
  - o This project is an initiative funded by the EU and implemented by a consortium led by FIIAPP – Spanish Cooperation and composed by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), the Spanish Agency for Development Cooperaiton (AECID), the European Disability Forum (EDF) and the International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland and the UN's Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR) participate as observers".
- All project publications must include the following disclaimer:
  - o "This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of FIIAPP –

Spanish Cooperation and [partner] and does not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union."

Figure 11 - Example of the use of EU disclaimer in a project leaflet

- Videos produced by the project must be approved by the EU before they are screened, broadcast or distributed. They must feature the EU emblem at the beginning and/or end of the production, accompanied by the following text:
  o 'This [film/video/…] was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of FIIAPP – Spanish Cooperation and [partner] and do/does not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union".
- A copy of all photographs produced in the context of the project events must be made available to the European Union. The photographs must be accompanied by IPTC8 metadata or a separate metadata file in English detailing (for each image) the photographer's name, date of production, place of production and a short description of the image including names and functions of any identifiable individuals.

How do we ensure full accessibility? Practical arrangements

First of all: do not be afraid to ask! Ask speakers and attendants about their needs (see above): it may happen that you have to follow all the instructions below, or just part of them, or even further adapt the event:

- Send invitations and accessible registration forms (it recommended to use either JotForm or Google Modules) via email, asking whether there are any accessibility requirements and whether they will be traveling with a personal assistant. Offer electronic version of documents so those who use screen readers can request them in advance
- In the form, provide information on the venue including how accessible it is (assure all rooms and facilities use are accessible – room, coffee break room, bathroom, etc etc.) how to get there, accessible transport options and what support will be available.

a. What are the characteristics of an accessible event venue?

- Entrance wide enough to allow the appropriate mobility to persons with reduced mobility. In the case where tables are necessary, they must be at an appropriate level for wheelchair users
- The room should be wide enough to accommodate not only the expected number of attendants, but also interpreters, personal assistants, guide/assistance dogs. Furthermore, it is self-evident that the space for wheelchairs is always bigger than a common seat.
- Make sure there is no barrier nor object in the room that could obstruct the movement to people with reduced mobility
- It is strongly recommended that the room is equipped with an induction loop system to allow people with hearing impairments to listen clearly and free of other distracting noise in the environment
- When an accessible room is hard to find, it could be possible to make some adaptations such as a temporary ramp. However, ensure that the ramp as a correct inclination to allow persons in all types of wheelchairs to use it.
- It is advisable to have a common entrance for everybody to make no differences among the attendants
- If it is possible, make an accessibility checklist[9] and visit the venue in advance to ensure that it is an appropriate place to hold the event before signing the contract. Also, it is essential to check the accessibility of the venue again a few hours before the beginning of the event (preferably the day before) to check that there are not any items which may obstruct the movement of persons with disabilities, the doors are wide open, the number of chairs removed to allow space for wheelchair users is appropriate, the floor of all the rooms (specially the toilets) is not slippery, etc.
- The venue should include visible, legible and understandable signage to facilitate the movement of the attendants (entrance, meeting room, lunch room, emergency exits, etc.), using large print, contrasting colour and supported by images and symbols if possible.

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[9] The CO can provide you one, in case.

b. What do we need to ensure the full accessibility of the communication material and event documents?

- Documents to be distributed during the event, such as the agenda or leaflets, should be tailored according to the needs of the attendants. Since they normally need to be prepared quite in advance, it is highly advised to prepare all formats (standard, large, braille, easy-to-read) as soon as possible.
- Consider contracting photo and video coverage in advance, and if so, give them the instructions for the coverage (see above). It is important that if you have this kind of coverage, you state it on the registration form and provide an option for persons not to be covered.
- If possible, ask the speakers for their speeches so they can be share with the interpreters, both sign and foreign languages, to facilitate their work.
- If there are presentations to support the interventions, it is important to consider the accessibility recommendation for those too (for instance: describe all the drawings, photographs and graphics used)
- Ask the speakers for a short bio to share in advance to the moderator/s so they can have some information which may be useful to address the discussion

During the event

A few practical hints:

- The staff involved during the event should help all participants (whether the disability is obvious or not (it is useful to have a list with the special requirements of each attendants) and, if necessary, escort them to the location of the event, and then give them an appropriate seat, depending on their disability
- Before starting the meeting, it is important to make a short speech to indicate clearly where the doors and emergency exits are, and to remember the schedule of the event during the initial introduction, indicate fire exits, toilets and refreshment areas
- Reserve seats for persons with reduced mobility near the doors and seats for persons with hearing and visual impairment at the front near the speaker
- Provide a space with good visibility for the sign language interpreter
- Catering: ensure access to food for everyone in a room that allow the free movement to everyone. It is recommended that someone help serve meals to those who have limited autonomy and offer straws and assistance as needed.
- Ensure that there is only one speaker at a time, especially in the time for questions. This is helpful for people with learning disabilities, as well as for interpreters and stenographers.
- If you have speakers with learning/intellectual disabilities, please assure they talk in first place.

After the Event

- Evaluation: It is important to conduct an evaluation of the event in terms of its effectiveness and accessibility to identify the difficulties and suggest improvements for future meetings. This evaluation may be in the form of a short questionnaire that can be distributed at the beginning and filled out and returned immediately after the meeting[10].

- Ensure the dissemination of key materials related to the event (reports, training guides, documents, presentations, training guides…) in different formats (accessible written documents, online folders, pendrives, compilation CDs, etc.).

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[10] A standard project questionnaire's template, currently in use for the evaluation of the webinars is available here.

Essential bibliography and additional useful resources

Accessibility and Reasonable Accommodation Policy, European Disability Forum March 2018 - http://www.edf-feph.org/sites/default/files/edf_accessibility_and_reasonable_accomodation_policy_final_march_2018.pdf

Accessibility, Facebook - https://www.facebook.com/help/273947702950567/?helpref=hc_fnav

Contrastchecker, Acart Communication, https://contrastchecker.com/

Digital Accessibility Toolkit, CBM - https://www.cbm.org/article/downloads/54741/CBM-Digital-Accessibility-Toolkit.pdf

Guidelines for easy-to-read materials, International Federation of Library Association and Institutions IFLA Professional Reports, No. 120 - https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/hq/publications/professional-report/120.pdf

How to make images accessible for people, Twitter Help Center - https://help.twitter.com/en/using-twitter/picture-descriptions

IDDC Accessibility Manual, Julia Wolhandler, 2013 - https://iddcconsortium.net/sites/default/files/pages/files/iddc_accessibility_manual_22082013.pdf

Inclusive Language, Australian network on disability - https://www.and.org.au/pages/inclusive-language.html

Information for all. European standards for making information easy to read and understand, Inclusion Europe and Lifelong Learning Programme (Education and Culture DG, European Commission) - http://easy-to-read.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/EN_Information_for_all.pdf

Office Accessibility Center - Resources for people with disabilities, Microsoft - https://support.office.com/en-us/article/Office-Accessibility-Center-Resources-for-people-with-disabilities-ecab0fcf-d143-4fe8-a2ff-6cd596bddc6d

PDF Accessible website - http://www.pdfaccessible.com/en/

Removing barriers. Tips and Strategies to Promote Accessible Communication, The North Carolina Office on Disability and Health, 2nd edition, 2002 -

http://fpg.unc.edu/sites/fpg.unc.edu/files/resources/other-resources/NCODH_PromoteAccessibleCommunication.pdf

Social Media Accessibility - Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, Queen's University Accessibility Hub website - https://www.queensu.ca/accessibility/how-info/social-media-accessibility

Visual Identity Guidelines, Bridging the Gap II, 2017

W3C standards, World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) - https://www.w3.org/

WebAIM. Web accessibility in mind - https://webaim.org/

What are the different font sizes such as clear print, large print and giant print?, The Royal National Institute of Blind People - https://help.rnib.org.uk/help/daily-living/reading/large-print-size

Youtube Help Center - https://support.google.com/youtube/#topic=7505892