



SHAPES

Smart and Healthy Ageing through People Engaging in Supportive Systems

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1. FIRST SHAPES WORKSHOP

1.1 SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER'S SCREEN

The screen was too small, meaning the information provided was not fully accessible for deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind individuals.

Recommendation: The sign language interpreter should be displayed on at least

$\frac{1}{6}$ of the screen. Regarding image quality during 1st SHAPES workshop, it was good. For information only, the quality of image input to the interpreter shall be kept on a level that prevents visible distortion such as blurring or freezing ¹

1.2 INTERVENTIONS

Two interventions from speakers in Czech, with no simultaneous translation, only captioning in English and Czech. This is not accessible for persons with visual impairments.

Recommendation: Ensure audio description or simultaneous translation in English, as well as captioning during interventions and videos

¹ <https://aiic.net/page/8734/aiic-guidelines-for-distance-interpreting-version-1-0/lang/1>



1.3 SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETATION

While sign language interpretation was indeed provided in the morning, this was not the case for the workshops that took place in the afternoon. Deaf persons were obliged to communicate via the chat box. Deaf persons were required to communicate in written form. The configuration of this workshop requires an active, spontaneous participation, and this would have only been achieved through a sign language interpreter. More specifically, the exchanges in smaller groups during the sessions (such as the group on ethics or personas) was not fully inclusive and accessible.

Recommendation: An accessible registration form should ask for contact information, as well as information about accessibility needs. That way, SHAPES consortium ensures accessibility requirements are being met both for participants and speakers e.g. sign language interpretation and/or captioning (for deaf and/or deafblind persons).

Sign language interpreters should be present for the duration of the entire workshop. Generally, a team of at least 2 sign language interpreters is required due to the demanding nature of the task, especially if the event lasts a long time and/or requires technical expertise.

1.4 BREAKS WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS

Persons with deafblindness needing a clear-speech (Voice) translation would not have been able to fully participate due to the technical setup, including the time constraints given. The lack of interpretation breaks during discussions would not allow for feedback from the deafblind individual. This also applies to tactile sign interpretation. A steady pace and interpretation breaks to allow the participant to catch up and respond is imperative.



Moreover, there have been times when a meeting has gone on for more than half an hour without a break. In order for interpretation to take place under good conditions, a break is necessary every half hour.

Recommendation: Allow time for interpretation, questions and clarifications. Breaks are appreciated during long meeting hours, for instance, 5 minutes breaks every half hour. Due to the tiring nature of online meetings, this break can also benefit all participants. A short discussion between the organizer and the interpreter to ensure that the meeting runs smoothly is appreciated.

1.5 FURTHER CONSULTATION WITH EUD AND WFDB IS NEEDED

A consultation with EUD and WFDB throughout the whole organizational process and from the beginning concerning accessibility would have avoided some pitfalls. For future workshops, these two organisations should be consulted and involved when appropriate to ensure accessibility and inclusion.

Recommendation: Contact and involve Mark Wheatley (mark.wheatley@eud.eu), Frankie Picron (frankie.picron@eud.eu), Lucia D'Arino (projects@wfdb.eu) for any matters related to accessibility

2 SECOND SHAPES WORKSHOP

2.1 POSITIVE POINTS

- Subtitles were good
- Most speakers explained the graphs and diagrams being shown on screen in a very descriptive manner
- Interpreters and transcript were good
- Breaks were much appreciated

2.2 THINGS TO BE IMPROVED

During the event:

- Interpreters' screen was too small (feedback was already provided in the accessibility report)
- In some presentations, there were graphs and diagrams that were extremely small on screen, with poor contrast
- Lack of moderator/leader in subgroups made it complicated for the debate to get going
- There were issues with the interpreters, which were either missing due to confusion with sessions or had poor internet connection, making participation and communication impossible
- Slides with question/task was not available when breaking into smaller discussion groups

Recommendation:

- Consult and involve EUD and WFDB in the process, right from the beginning
- Secure interpretation as soon as possible and ensure this service will be available, together with transcript
- Share accessibility report with every partner involved in the organization of the workshop
- Ensure interpreters screen is big enough
- Prep speakers in advance regarding accessibility and ensure presentations are accessible beforehand
- Consider including a leader/speaker when breaking into subgroups
- Include a slide which can be shown when breaking into subgroups so the task to discuss is clear

3 SHAPES WEBSITE

There has been a general lack of accessibility of the website, especially when using a screen reader.

3.1 READABILITY

Much of the text published on the website is not readable using a screen reader. A clear example is the page on [Dialogue Workshop 1](#). Lack of alternative text. Poor colour contrast, amongst others. You can find see what other issues the website has [here \(Web Accessibility Check Results\)](#).

Recommendation: Develop and create website with the support of companies/experts that are specialized in digital accessibility. Use Web Accessibility Check Results to follow-up level of accessibility and bear in mind that accessibility for people with disabilities will benefit everyone equally (positive site experience, comfort).

3.2 “CONTACT US” FORM

This is not a *sine qua non* condition but, as far as possible, it would be interesting to offer the possibility to send content in sign language via *contact us* form.

Recommendation: If the possibility to send content in sign language via contact us form exists, EUD can assist the SHAPES team to process in, for example, translation/response in Sign Language.

3.3 CONTENT ACCESSIBLE IN SIGN LANGUAGE

At this stage, we can imagine that the site is still under development. It would be positive to set an example by putting online a short content accessible in sign language which summarizes the SHAPES project. But



it is, for example, not necessary to translate all the content into sign language.

Recommendation: EUD has the necessary equipment to produce a quality sign language video and would be happy to assist in this task. Contact Mark.wheatley@eud.eu, Frankie.Picron@eud.eu for assistance.

3.4 COMMUNICATION TOOLS AND PROMOTION MATERIALS

Several communication tools produced and used are not accessible. These issues have already been raised with those in charge and have either been amended or are in the process of.

- The official flyer of the project: Graphs are inaccessible. Headings and subheadings are not properly introduced. Poor of colour contrast and missing alternative text for images and logos.
- Social Media: Missing alternative text for images in Facebook and Twitter
- Report deliverable in Work Package 2: Poor colour contrast and missing alternative text for images and logos. Wrong reading order has been set.
- Report deliverable for 5.1: Missing alternative texts and therefore not fully accessible. Language was not in line with the CRPD.

Recommendations:

- Ensure digital documents and information is accessible before made final and public
- Regularly consult and involve WFDB and EUD, as well as experts in accessibility
- Ensure language used and activities are in line with the CRPD

4 CHECKLIST TO ENSURE ACCESSIBILITY – MITIGATION RISKS

4.1 DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY

- ✓ Adding alt text descriptions to images (applied for social media: Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- ✓ Using sufficient color contrast
- ✓ Captioning video files
- ✓ Allowing the option to turn off animation, which can affect people with seizure disorders
- ✓ Designing to support simple navigation and logical site structure

4.2 ACCESSIBLE MEETINGS

Put together by the European Disability Forum

4.2.1 Before the meeting issues to be addressed include:

- ✓ Make sure website or online registration form for the event is accessible.
- ✓ Registration form should ask for contact information and further information about accessibility needs
- ✓ Personal assistant (e.g. for some meetings the assistant might need to register as well to get access to the venue)
- ✓ Interpretation needs, including sign language, speech-to-text (captioning), or audio description
- ✓ Accessible parking space.
- ✓ Make sure there is an accessible route (without steps or with ramps/ lifts etc.) from special parking spaces to the accessible entrance.

- ✓ Includes: Venue of the meeting (mention the accessible entrance when this one differs from the principal entrance), Transport information (public transport schedules, adapted transport schedules/contact details), Location of reserved parking places, Prepare spare copies in braille, large print, and in accessible electronic format.
- ✓ Provision of documents in accessible formats (such as large print, braille, easy to-read versions, or accessible electronic format)
- ✓ Try to make sure the venue has a silent room available (for people with sensory sensitivities)
- ✓ Ensure there are enough places reserved for persons with disabilities at the front of the room, aisle seats, near the exit and for wheelchair users.

Programme

- ✓ Organise the programme so that breaks are scheduled at appropriate times.
- ✓ Breaks should last at least 20 minutes along, and should be taken approximately every 90 minutes.

Allow time for interpretation, questions and clarifications

- ✓ The organiser should ensure that times are adhered to.
- ✓ Since many persons with disabilities need to plan, for example, transport to and from events, resting times, or take medication with food, sticking to the schedule is important and respectful.
- ✓ Distribute the programme in accessible formats, ideally ahead of time.
- ✓ Allow sufficient time for discussion and questions as well as for interpretation.

Documents

- ✓ Send meeting documents and practical details in advance.
- ✓ If there is a change of programme on short notice, you can ask local blind persons' organisation or library to print them if needed.

4.2.2 During the Meeting



- ✓ One or two people should be available at arrival and departure to welcome and guide the participants to the conference room.
- ✓ During longer events it can be useful to have a help desk.
- ✓ Avoid assumptions regarding the disability of the participant and always consult their specific and individual needs and accessibility requirements beforehand and during the meeting
- ✓ Check if the participant has or needs any assistive devices to facilitate communication or participation
- ✓ Brief the security guards and staff of the venue about the needs of the participants with disabilities so that also they are ready to assist if required.
- ✓ When the person is there, address and face her or him directly.
- ✓ Be as natural and polite as possible as you would be with any other person.
- ✓ If it seems appropriate suggest you may be able to assist, but wait until the offer for help is accepted before doing anything, and listen carefully.
- ✓ **People with reduced mobility:** Make sure beforehand that the corridors and the meeting room are free from obstructions and well lit, Be at the main entrance on time and offer help to open the doors and to get over the steps, Be informed about the location of accessible toilets and what the evacuation procedures are in the event of an emergency. Only push a person in a wheelchair if you have the person's permission, and avoid too sudden or quick manoeuvres.
- ✓ **People with visual impairments (including persons with deafblindness):** Always speak first. Introduce yourself and other persons clearly, explaining where they are in relation to the person. Say the person's name when you start a conversation so that he or she knows that you are talking to him or her. Before shaking hands, let the person know that you are about to do so. Always advise the person that you are leaving, so that he or she is not left talking to an empty space. If the person wants you to assist him or her in getting around, guide rather than lead. Ask the person how he or she would prefer to be guided (e.g. by the elbow, shoulder, etc.) if there is no personal assistant or interpreter guide present. Let him or her know when you are approaching steps or obstacles. Try to make sure in advance that the corridors and the meeting room are free from any obstacles. Be ready to give a brief description of the 'geography' (shape, size and windows) and contents (furniture and people) of a room. Warn about possible dangers in a new environment, for example, very hot radiators. To help a person to sit down,



just place his/her hand on the back of the chair. Explain where the toilets can be found. Always address the person directly, not the assistant.

- ✓ **People with hearing impairments (including persons with deafblindness)** : Find out how the person prefers to communicate – signing, lip reading or captioning. In case of captioning with a screen, make sure that the screen is big enough and that people who need it can easily see it. Sign language interpreters should be in front of the people they interpret for or well visible to them. If the person prefers lip reading, face him or her (make sure he/she is looking at you) and speak in a normal, clear and steady way. Do not shout or exaggerate your mouth movements but use your facial expressions to emphasise your meanings. Make sure your face is in the light and do not put your hands in front of your mouth. Be ready to repeat yourself or rephrase a sentence if necessary. Some words are more difficult to interpret and so it may be useful to try different words. Keep distractions such as background noise to a minimum (avoid background music in the hall and in the conference room during breaks)
- ✓ **Persons with deafblindness:** Avoid the assumption that specific reasonable accommodations and accessibility measures, addressed at hard-of-hearing, deaf and/or blind persons, will meet the needs of persons with dual sensory impairments (Deafblindness). For instance, blind individuals with some residual hearing may prefer clear-speech interpretation over tactile sign language. While a deaf individual with residual vision may prefer tactile sign language over traditional signing due to narrow field of vision. These preferences may also differ depending on circumstances at any given time or place, including their personal preferences. Therefore, individual considerations must be taken into consideration throughout the whole process, based on a dialogue/consultation with the individual in question.
- ✓ **People with intellectual disabilities:** Avoid lengthy written instructions or plans and diagrams on paper. If possible, accompany the person to where he/she has to go. Write down your name and telephone number for the person. For completing forms, check if the person needs assistance. more than reading and writing, there might be an issue of understanding. Provide forms in multiple languages, since many people with intellectual disabilities do not speak foreign languages. Try to break down complex information into chunks and keep language simple and logical. Keep distractions such as background noise to a minimum. Give the person time to react and reply. Speak to the person in a normal, natural way. Don't take offence at unusual attitudes or reactions of the person. Explain where the toilets can be found.

- ✓ **Persons with speech impairments:** Be patient, give them the time to speak, and let them finish their sentences before replying. If you do not understand, do not pretend to, but tell them that you haven't and ask them to repeat.
- ✓ **Persons with psychosocial disabilities:** Psychosocial disabilities, or mental health problems, as they are more commonly known, are invisible and can affect anyone. These people may sometimes experience difficulties coping with daily life and the tasks and the interactions it brings. Meetings can be a source of stress and can trigger panic, distress, or claustrophobia. Some persons may feel more comfortable being accompanied by a friend, family member or assistant, for emotional support. If the person is distressed, respond to him/her in a calm and polite way – try to see the person and not just the problem. If a person mentions that he/she has a psychosocial disability, take it seriously and treat the person with respect. At the same time, some people might prefer not to share their experiences and should not be forced to do so. Offer assistance if the person seems confused, overwhelmed or distressed.

Calmly answer any questions the person might have; the information may be important to reassure him/her.

Note: Each person is different and cannot be categorised. The explanations above are for guidance only, please check with the participant directly what he/she needs or prefers.

Speakers

- ✓ Inform speakers about the accessibility needs of the participants.
- ✓ It is important that speaking times and schedules are adhered to.
- ✓ Have speakers talk directly into the microphone.
- ✓ Anyone intervening/commenting should present themselves by name every time they speak. Have speakers read what it says on the slides and describe pictures.
- ✓ Check if the speaking arrangement is accessible. Speakers may need a ramp to get onto the stage, or the removal of a chair for a panel discussion.

Presentations

- ✓ All presentations should be in accessible formats and given to participants and sign language interpreters in advance.
- ✓ The content of the presentations should be clear, concrete, and easy to understand.
- ✓ Ensure basic accessibility of PowerPoint Presentations:
 - o Never use a picture as background for the text.
 - o Make sure text and background have sufficient contrast.
 - o Try to put one sentence on one line.
 - o Use a maximum of two fonts.
 - o Use a large font.
 - o Avoid block capitals and italics.
 - o Do not use animations.
- ✓ If videos are being used ensure that they are subtitled and give an audio description if no words are spoken in the video.

Advice on how to ensure accessibility for everyone, including persons with intellectual disabilities:

- ✓ Use simple, straightforward language.
- ✓ Avoid abstract concepts.
- ✓ Use short, everyday words.
- ✓ Avoid jargon.
- ✓ Address the reader in direct, personal and respectful ways.
- ✓ Use practical examples.
- ✓ Use short sentences that cover only one main idea each.
- ✓ Avoid negations.
- ✓ Use active verbs.
- ✓ Keep punctuation simple.
- ✓ Repeat words rather than finding complex synonyms.



- ✓ Do not assume your audience has previous knowledge about a topic.
- ✓ Try not to use metaphors or figures of speech.
- ✓ Avoid words from another language.
- ✓ Dialogues are more useful than traditional presentations.
- ✓ Leave time for questions.
- ✓ Allow for the use of Accessibility Cards:
 - o Audiences may show color-coded cards to the speaker to indicate that they understand what is being said. The cards should be in different shapes for blind participants.
 - o Green cards = participants agree with what the speaker is saying.
 - o Yellow cards = speaker should slow down.
 - o Red card = participants do not understand what the speaker is saying, and speaker should explain it again with simpler words.
- ✓ Let audience members introduce themselves briefly before asking a question.
- ✓ If a microphone is passed around, check whether the needs help holding the
- ✓ microphone.
- ✓ When a deaf sign language user takes the floor, remember to give the microphone to the interpreter and not the person who signs.

Additional Requirements

Breaks:

- ✓ For coffee breaks and lunches, make sure that low tables for wheelchair users (not only standing tables) are provided, together with some seats/chairs to rest for people that cannot stand for a long time.

Live captioning :

- ✓ an additional screen is required apart from the regular screen that displays the presentations. Make sure you check the space is big enough for two (or more) screens so that all participants can see both the presentations.

4.3 ACCESSIBLE ONLINE PARTICIPATION

Put together by the [Swedish Disability Rights Federation](#)

4.3.1 Before

- ✓ Always ask for accessibility and find partners, suppliers for cooperation to improve quality of services.
- ✓ Communicate information to participants well in advance, also about how to participate.
- ✓ Allow users to express requirements for remote participation at registration for the meeting.
- ✓ Include accessibility in the budget.
- ✓ Check and test that the communication tools are accessible.
- ✓ Make sure that staff and users can operate the tools before the meeting. Assign a special online moderator and technical support at the meeting.
- ✓ Provide training sessions to users, moderators and staff
- ✓ Provide instructions to presenters before the meeting.

4.3.2 During

- ✓ Make time in the beginning of the meeting to make sure everybody is familiar with the meeting procedure.
- ✓ Describe the context, room and participants.
- ✓ Encourage online users to use chat to communicate any problems during the meeting.
- ✓ Stick to the structure of the agenda, make sure all participants say their names every time they speak.
- ✓ Summarize discussions and every decision before moving on to the next agenda item.

4.3.3 After

- ✓ Communicate the real time text transcript from the meeting to all participants.
- ✓ Evaluate the accessibility by asking users.

- ✓ Share experiences on web and social media to increase knowledge and cooperation on how to improve the Right2Participation via Accessible Online meetings.



WFDB and EUD's feedback on SHAPES 3rd Dialogue Workshop

Positive aspects

- Consultation of WFDB on accessibility matters related to the workshop from the beginning
- Regular and long breaks
- Including heading and agenda in text in one of the event links
- Big sign language interpreter screen
- Short event (half a day rather than a full day)

Aspects to improve

- Agendas should be sent to participants beforehand via email, together with event links
- There were two different links to access the event, which could be confusing. One that could be found on the SHAPES website, where the sessions were shown side by side in English and Spanish, but the agenda was not accurate (break times) plus one couldn't access the chat, and another, which was sent via email twice to all participants, where it only showed the session and chat but no other information, such as title or agenda
- Include title/heading as text for screen reader users on the event link
- Some presentation slides were unreadable or inaccessible (poor contrast, too much text, or small font)
- Live transcript was automatic, meaning it was not 100% accurate
- Spanish sign language interpretation and Spanish live transcript was missing in the Spanish version¹
- Music during breaks can be very distracting
- Show break times on-screen so participants know when they should be back
- It would be preferred to be able to swap languages in the same link
- Speaker names should be shown when intervening
- Text said "pausa" (in Spanish) instead of "break"
- Lack of gender and ethnic diversity in the panel

Lessons learnt

- Speakers' slides should be reviewed beforehand to ensure they are accessible
- Agenda and links should be clear and sent beforehand
- Have a single link to an event which includes all relevant information in it
- Include at least live transcript if another language is also available
- Consider removing music during break times
- Human live transcript² is preferred to automatic
- Ensure that the platform used is accessible (Zoom and GoToMeeting preferred) and all features are working, including chat
- Ensure diversity in the panel

¹ International sign language, although accessible to persons with hearing impairments, is similar to spoken English. To ensure that we reach Spanish people, if that is still the objective, Spanish subtitles should be a minimum requirement and would be an accessibility feature for persons who are hard of hearing and/or people who became deaf at a later age whose needs are different from deaf people who communicate in sign language.

² E.g. : Velotypist