



НАЦИОНАЛНА  
АСОЦИАЦИЯ НА  
РЕСУРСНИТЕ  
УЧИТЕЛИ - БЪЛГАРИЯ



Erasmus+

Project Erasmus 4V.I.P.

Activity 2  
Study on participation of  
visually impaired  
youngsters

National report

National association of  
resource teachers  
/NART/, Bulgaria

The Activity 2 is necessary for collecting proper information that will represent a basis for establishing the project's deliverables and also to help us accomplish the technical part of the project in a proper way.

The main focus of the research is oriented:

- On the actual level of inclusion and participation of visually impaired youths in the learning motilities;
- The participation of visually impaired youths in the community;
- The participation of visually impaired youth in the NGO environment;
- The available support for integration of visually impaired youth;
- The level of sharing information about European learning opportunities through NGO's, schools, info points to the target groups.

The target group for the survey is represented by:

- Responsible institutions for education that include visually impaired youths,
- Youth NGOs,
- Schools that are working with visually impaired,
- Local authorities responsible for assuring accessibility of visually impaired in the urban area,
- Visually impaired youth and members of their families.

In Bulgaria overall 138 questionnaires were collected:

- 48 by young people with visual impairments,
- 50 by people without disabilities,
- 20 by NGOs offering services and activities to young people,
- 20 by public institutions

Two Focus Group Discussions took place in June and July 2016 at the premises of the National association of resource teachers in Sofia, Bulgaria. The composition of the first FG was 10 young people with visual impairments ages 15 – 30 and the second one by 9 representatives of NGOs offering services and projects for young people.

## Section 1 - Opinion of people with visual impairments regarding Civil Services and local/international opportunities for learning or volunteering

### *From Questionnaire 3 - First section - Opinion of people with visual impairments regarding Civil Services*

#### **Q3**

The percentage of VIPs who have been in contact with Civil services is 30.4%

The 5 most accessed services are Health and safety, Leisure activities, Disabled facilities grants, Council tax and housing benefits and Car park management.

The 5 least accessed services are Planning enforcement and applications, Building regulation, Waste management, Housing and Homeless. No VIPs who have taken part in the survey have used these services in the last 5 years.

#### **Q4, Q5**

Most of the staff was aware of the VIP's impairment (70.8%). However, 33% of the VIPs report that the staff of civil services made adjustments taking into account their impairment. Only 26.3% of the adjustments were appropriate.

#### **Q6, Q9**

26% of VIPs assessed their experience as very good. The majority (48%) reported good experience. There are VIPs who rated their experience as poor (22%) and 4% think that the services they received in their area are very poor.

The number of VIPs who feel they have the same chances accessing Civil Services as anybody else is equal to the number of people who think they don't have the same chance. 77% of VIPs

don't feel that the civil services provided in their area take into account their needs. Most cited obstacles include: there is no trained civil officer to provide assistance; no Braille signs; the environment is not accessible; there is not enough information; difficulties in filling forms. Most VIPs have accompanying person to assist them when accessing Civil Services.

### **Q10**

In order to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people, VIPs suggest that Civil Services should train staff to assist, provide additional information and assistants for orientation, use Braille signs and relieve the bureaucracy.

### **Q11**

According to VIPs, Civil Services could provide trained assistants; introduce sound signalling and markings; provide more Braille signs inside the public buildings; put zoomers on the front doors; make environment more accessible; develop the infrastructure; provide staff for filling forms; staff trained to work with speaking programs; provide electronic forms instead of paper forms.

### **Q7**

Most VIPs (80%) prefer telephone as method for contacting Civil Services. The second most popular answer is via email (38%). Some 20% would like to communicate by post. Around 12% would use the Civil Services' website. 10% favour the SMS and text message communication.

*From Questionnaire 3 - Second section, regarding experience with learning opportunities and volunteering in your area.*

### **Q1**

47% of the surveyed were aware of the existence of European/international learning opportunities addressing youth. The most known was Erasmus+ programme.

### **Q2**

22% of the respondents have tried to participate in European learning opportunities.

**Q3**

Most VIPs were afraid that their disability would prevent them from fully participating. Some respondents were afraid that they would not be accepted by the others. For several people the topic was not interesting, others didn't want other participants to feel sorry for them not being able to do the same things as them. Another group reported mobility problems as obstacle for participation.

**Q4**

Almost 88% reported that their participation in a European learning opportunity was successful.

**Q5**

VIPs did not succeed in such activities because they didn't have financial resources necessary for participation and there were no relevant assistive technologies provided.

**Q6**

In terms of personal development, respondents report better communication skills and increased self-confidence. In terms of accessibility – developed independence in mobility. VIPs made new friends, acquaintances and contacts.

**Q7**

37% of the surveyed were aware of the existence of different NGOs in their local community offering volunteering opportunities for youngsters.

**Q8**

Only 5% of the respondents have tried to volunteer in such NGO.

**Q9**

VIPs did not try to volunteer because they were afraid that their disability would prevent them from fully participating; the topic was not interesting for them; they were sure NGOs would not need people with disabilities; they didn't want their presence to complicate other's participation; they didn't have enough free time.

**Q10**

50% of the VIPs who have tried to be a volunteer for an NGO succeeded.

**Q11**

VIPs who did not succeed reported negative attitude towards their disability from the ones they were in contact with; they didn't have the financial resources necessary for participation and they didn't have the skills required for participation.

**Q12**

In general, respondents found the experience positive and very useful. VIPs reported some stereotypes and prejudices from NGO staff and the other participants. Youngsters who have participated in youth exchanges and trainings report very good learning outcomes, new contacts and increased confidence. Some report environment accessibility as the greatest obstacle for participation.

**Q13**

According to the surveyed, the most appropriate channels for communicating the availability of learning and volunteering opportunities are TV/Radio; School; Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.); Infopoints; Email; NGOs and Specific websites, e.g. Municipality website. To assist in development of useful skills, NGOs should organize trainings about body language, soft skills, communication, IT and foreign languages courses.

**Q14**

In order to offer better volunteering or learning opportunities to VIPs, local NGOs should provide assistive technologies to assist in participation, make opportunities more accessible; make participation more affordable for people with disabilities; promote the opportunities better; have a more positive attitude towards people with disabilities.

Participants with visual impairments need electronic reading devices, more accessible environment (Braille signs, markings, tactile floors and zoomers) to help them fully participate.

To create a more comfortable environment, NGOs should become more aware of VIPs' needs and specifics and train their staff to assist.

### **Q15**

The most interesting learning/volunteering opportunities reported were Local/International trainings in the topics IT, social competences, professional competences, foreign languages, photography, literature, music, sport, media and arts. The second most popular were Leisure activities in the topics music, biking, festivals, TV formats, dances – folk and modern, IT, chess and socialization. The third most popular opportunity was European Youth Exchanges in the topics social education, psychology, communication competences and exchange with other youngsters with visual impairments. Regarding the Volunteering for cause, respondents indicated as desirable topics support for visually impaired people and support for youth with fewer opportunities. VIPs are interested to participate in Local/International workshops and Charity events.

VIPs suggested focus groups of youngsters with visual impairments should be created and used as a survey tool for their needs regarding participation in non-formal education activities. An online platform which connects youth workers and VIPs should be created for promoting opportunities and communication.

## Section 2 Correlation between the opinion of people with visual impairments and situation of Civil Services

For public institutions (questionnaire 1)

### **Q1**

80% of institutions report they are accessible for people with mobility and physical disabilities, such as ramps and accessible environment. 50% report that they offer support for people with hearing disabilities. 95% of the institutions say that they can successfully assist person with learning difficulties as well as person with speech and language difficulties. For people with visual impairments, only 55% of institutions report availability of assistance.

### **Q2**

Information material available in appropriate format (Braille, large print, etc.) – 35%

Appropriate lighting – 35%

A properly structured space (including signs in Braille, tactile floors, removing potential obstacle, etc.) – 20%

Electronic reading devices – 20%

Specialized staff ready to assist – 60%

### **Q3**

Mobility and physical - 80%

Hearing – 65%

Learning – 95%

Mental and emotional health – 95%

Speech and language – 95%

Visual – 70%

**Q4**

95% of institutions claim they have a policy for serving people with disability with priority.

**Q5**

68.4% of the surveyed stated they have a policy for evaluating the efficiency and quality of the support offered to people with disability, e.g.:

Trainings and team work; Providing information, public control, work transparency; specific requirements for recruitment; All-year round meetings and training with parents, trainings with child and his/her parent; Architectural environment, educational and social inclusion in the kindergarten; Ramp, service rooms, psychologist, speech therapist and special educational needs teacher; Controlling, work meetings, questionnaires, annual plan, reports. Feedback to parents, communication with schools, exam results questionnaires, 6-month meetings and plans evaluation system  
ABLLES

**Q6**

61% of the institutions have taken measures to combat staff's negative perceptions, stereotyping and prejudices of people with disabilities, e.g.:

Meetings and conversations; Work meetings, seminars; explanations; organizing campaigns about people with different symptoms; providing information, events; monthly meetings; Actions according to the Work Law; trainings, sharing good practices; standards for customer service; Ethic code, internal regulations, standard for providing social services.

**Q7**

No negative perception identified.

**Q8**

90% of institutions offer possibilities for people to report when they are subject to discrimination, stereotyping and prejudices, e.g.:

Report on mailbox, phone, website; having Internal regulations: Procedure of complaints, Rules for working with children, action to

violence, Assist children and parents tackle any problems concerning safety, dignity and health of children; Procedures against discrimination, fraud and irregularities; by conversation with the Principal; Written report to the Director; conversations, meetings with parents; report box, signalling to the Head and Deputy Head; mailbox for reports and complaints and information to the employer in written; Talks to the management; Facebook page of the authorities, police, etc. procedure for complaints, reception day; procedures for dealing with complains

### Section 3 Correlation between the opinion of people with visual impairments and organisations offering local/international opportunities for learning or volunteering

For NGOs (questionnaire 4)

#### **Q1**

20% of NGOs report they are accessible for people with mobility and physical disabilities, such as ramps and accessible environment. 27% report that they offer support for people with hearing disabilities. 67% of the NGOs say that they can successfully assist person with learning difficulties; whereas support for a person with speech and language difficulties – 50%. For people with visual impairments, only 16% of NGOs report availability of assistance.

#### **Q2**

Information material available in appropriate format (Braille, large print, etc.) – 15%

Appropriate lighting – 30%

A properly structured space (including signs in Braille, tactile floors, removing potential obstacle, etc.) – 15%

Electronic reading devices – 15%

Specialized staff ready to assist – 35%

#### **Q3**

Mobility and physical - 35%

Hearing – 30%  
Learning – 53%  
Mental and emotional health – 42%  
Speech and language – 42%  
Visual – 40%

#### **Q4**

75% of NGO claim that they have a policy for serving people with disability with priority.

#### **Q5**

35% of the surveyed stated they have a policy for evaluating the efficiency and quality of the support offered to people with disability, e.g.: feedback, questionnaire.

#### **Q6**

40% of the NGOs have taken measures to combat staff's negative perceptions, stereotyping and prejudices of people with disabilities, e.g.: training, supervision.

#### **Q7, which exists just in the original questionnaire, not in the on-line**

Any action taken in case negative perceptions were identified (this is also not in the on-line version) (in %, also with the examples).

Add also the conclusions of the focus group, question no. 5. Do you think that your regular target groups would be comfortable with involving VIPs in your current activity? How do you think they would react, integrate, etc.?

No negative perceptions were identified.

Discussion in the focus group with NGOs: In order to integrate VIPs in the group, good cooperation is a must. We should work towards overcoming the barriers. Typically developed people don't always know how to react or offer help. There is some

psychological barrier. Awareness campaign may help in dealing with these issues as well as some joint initiatives.

**Q7 (from the on-line questionnaire), equivalent to Q8 from the original questionnaire**

80% of NGOs offer possibilities for people to report when they are subject to discrimination, stereotyping and prejudices, e.g.:  
Turn to the media and report to the police; anti-discrimination procedure, mailbox for complaints; write in the NGO's Facebook group, via email.

**Q8**

From the surveyed, 85% offer learning opportunities accessible to people with disabilities, such as trainings, seminars, workshops, professional orientation classes, individual and group psychological consultations; webinars, support groups.

**Q9**

50% of the NGOs offer volunteering opportunities that are accessible to people with disabilities, such as EVS, volunteers from USA, international youth exchanges, translations, souvenir workshops, public events and webinars.

**Q10**

80% of NGOs offer leisure/free time spending opportunities that are accessible to people with disabilities, e.g. workshops, yoga classes, summer camps, excursions, walks in the nature, trainings, trips, camps, seminars, social rehabilitation.

**Q10**

Add also the conclusions of the focus group, question no.:

1. Do you have experience in working with visually impaired people? If yes, how was it? If not, what prevented you?

2. Do you know examples of activities addressing VIPs? What information do you have about them, their success, persons/entities organising them, etc.?
3. What support would you need for involving VIPs in your projects (related to their selection, their inclusion, methods, evaluation, etc.)?
4. Who from your organisation should be trained in working in VIPs (e.g. whole team, just one specific responsible, etc.)?
6. Can you foresee some services/projects that you could offer to people with visual impairments?
7. Can you foresee some services/projects that could not be adapted to involved people with visual impairments?
9. Are you aware of opportunities or methods you can use for including visually impaired young people?

36% of the NGOs already involve people with disabilities in learning/ volunteering / leisure activities, such as different charity events, improtheater, workshops.

In the NGO focus group, all NGOs had some experience working with people with disabilities.

Activities carried out included: visual art exhibition, adapted for visually-impaired people; tactile map with models of famous buildings in Bulgaria; one NGO offers courses for blind people; exhibition of digit photography, museum visits; project “Factory for ideas” in Vratsa about accessibility in the architecture of the Municipality; verbal descriptions of the metro stations in Sofia; description of the Museum in arts in Braille signs; in Ruse – workshop for hand-made cards, martnenitsas, Christmas gifts, and after that exhibition and market of the goods.

Lack of foreign language skills prevent some VIPs from participating in international activities offered by NGOs. At the same time VIPs have difficulties accessing English language

courses adapted for their needs. A lot of VIPs need to work on their body language and gestures as well as their soft skills – communicational abilities, personal habits and leadership traits. In order to offer better services, NGOs can organize focus groups to discuss their needs and better understand them. Moreover, they can add online readers on their websites and thus making them more accessible for people with visual impairments.

Usually the whole team should undergo some type of training for working with people with disabilities.

Some activities that could be offered to people with visual impairments include mobility and orientation techniques, communication skills trainings and online focus groups.

Almost all services and projects could be adapted for people with visual impairments, even visual arts.

NGOs explained some techniques that can be used when interacting with a VIPs, such as how to address them and how to assist them in mobility and orientation.

### **Q11**

According to the surveyed, the most appropriate channels for communicating the availability of learning and volunteering opportunities are

TV/Radio – 6%

School – 20%

Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) – 30%

Infopoints – 4%

Email – 20%

NGOs and Specific websites – 4%.

To get in touch easily with the target groups, NGOs should create face-to-face or online focus groups with youngsters discussing their needs and adaptations. NGOs should make their websites more accessible for VIPs.

## Section 4 Perception of people related to disability

Q5.

Sources of information about disability:

My studies 36%

Media and the Internet 26%

Work environment 26%

My personal need for information 25%

Seminars on Disability 14%

Co-workers with disability/ies 13%

Disabled friends or carers of people with disability/ies 6%

Voluntary occupation 5%

A disabled member in my family 5%

I am disabled 1%

Q6

Opinions on disability, by %

I would hang out with a disabled person 91%

If necessary, I could provide care and accommodation overnight for a disabled child. 80%

A disabled person is a punishment for his family 6.5%

A disabled person is unbearable burden to his family 6.5%

Disabled children should not be born 24%

Q8

Opinions on disability, by %

According to the surveyed, disability is:

Lack of accessibility 20%

Lack of supportive environment 24%

Psychological issues 29%

Loss of mental functions 35%

Loss of bodily functions 30%

Loss of sensorial functions 35%

Most respondents (84%) regard disability as a different way of life. 8% think disability is a problem, and another 8% think disability is a disease.

#### Q9

People feel uncomfortable interacting with people with disability because of:

Different way of life 18 %

Their need for assistance 5%

Their lack of competence 0%

Lack of knowledge about disability 12%

Lack of accessible places for hanging out/interacting 7%

Difficulty in interacting with them 22%

30% of people reported that they don't feel uncomfortable interacting with people with disabilities.

#### Q10

Phrase used when referring to disability. (in %)

When referring to disability, 71% use the phrase He/She is a person with..., while 29% say He/She suffers from...

#### Q12

People with disability are individuals of common people with their own personality and abilities (in %)

84% of the respondents agree that people with disability are individuals of common people with their own personality and abilities.

#### Q13

## Opinions on disability (in %)

32% agree that disabled have less productive capacity.

94% agree that the disabled are heroes who exceed their physical as well as architectural obstacles.

98% agree that people with mobility disabilities can work.

## Q14

Support that should be offered to the people with disabilities (in %)

86% agree that initiatives should be given by the State to encourage private enterprises to recruit people with disabilities.

92% agree that there should be introduced more flexible working conditions for persons who take care of a disabled person (eg. part time).

72% agree that there must be established vocational training schools for people with disabilities.

## Q15

Achievements considered to be possible for people with disabilities (in %, answers for one item/total answers X 100, like with Q5)

|                                | Mental Disability |             | Blindness |             | Deafness |             | Mobility Disability |             |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|----------|-------------|---------------------|-------------|
| <b>Work</b>                    | 72%               | (36 people) | 89%       | (43 people) | 89%      | (43 people) | 89%                 | (43 people) |
| <b>Study</b>                   | 70%               | (35 people) | 94%       | (47 people) | 94%      | (47 people) | 94%                 | (47 people) |
| <b>Get married</b>             | 44%               | (22 people) | 88%       | (44 people) | 92%      | (46 people) | 90%                 | (45 people) |
| <b>Have children</b>           | 28%               | (14 people) | 86%       | (43 people) | 90%      | (45 people) | 70%                 | (35 people) |
| <b>Lead an autonomous life</b> | 18%               | (9 people)  | 64%       | (32 people) | 82%      | (41 people) | 56%                 | (28 people) |
| <b>Have a good time</b>        | 64%               | (32 people) | 82%       | (41 people) | 88%      | (44 people) | 86%                 | (43 people) |
| <b>Have social</b>             | 62%               | (31 people) | 90%       | (45 people) | 90%      | (45 people) | 90%                 | (45 people) |

| life              | people)         | people)         | people)         | people)         |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <b>Travel</b>     | 68% (34 people) | 86% (43 people) | 92% (46 people) | 86% (43 people) |
| <b>Elect</b>      | 30% (15 people) | 82% (41 people) | 88% (44 people) | 88% (44 people) |
| <b>Be elected</b> | 6% (3 people)   | 50% (25 people) | 48% (24 people) | 60% (30 people) |

## Q16

Feelings related to a personal impairment (in %)

91% of the surveyed would feel insecurity if they would have to face an impairment; 90% would feel fear; 28% would feel willingness; 32% would be embarrassed.

## Q17

Opinion of offering support to people with disability (in %)

Main set-backs when wishing to engage in supporting people with disabilities (in %, answers for one item/total answers X 100, like with Q5, ordered descending)

73% of the respondents have considered offering support to people with disability. 27% haven't, because of:

Lack of time 43%

Lack of skills for offering support 28%

Did not know where to offer their services 21%

Were not comfortable in working with people with disability 3%

Found difficult to work with people with disability 3%

## Section 5 Conclusions

In Bulgaria there are more than 16 000 people with visual impairments.

Children with visual impairments who study in the two specialized schools in Sofia and Varna are 307 (for 2015-2016 school year). About 60 children study in mainstream schools supported by resource teachers and specialists for visual impairments. The children with visual impairments are taught under the program of general education. There are additional subjects which are orientation and mobility, tactile creativity, visual support and useful skills. Some VIPs apply and continue studying in higher education institutions but they face difficulties in finding employment after graduation. There are many prejudices and stereotypes which create obstacles for the young people in the work market.

Special technical aids contribute to partial compensation of the visual impairment. Social rehabilitation leads to strengthening mental health, self-esteem enhancement of the VIPs' confidence in own abilities

The complex and multifaceted process of integration of people with visual problems is complete when conditions are created to ensure employment for them. Unemployment among people with impaired vision in the economically active age exceeds 90%. At present, there are five companies, which have the status of specialized companies and are recorded in the Agency for Persons with Disabilities.

### Main findings of the study:

1. In the questionnaires for people with typical development, the surveyed report that their knowledge about disability derives mostly from their personal need for information, their studies and work environment. Generally, positive attitude towards people with disabilities is observed and the respondents report readiness to provide help. Most people

define disability as loss of mental, bodily and sensorial functions, while lack of supportive environment is not widely taken into account. Lack of accessible places is one of the main barriers for hanging out and interacting with people with disabilities. This corresponds to the VIPs' statements that environment is not well adapted for their needs. According to the surveyed, people with mental disability could achieve least in terms of family, leading an autonomous life and be elected, while people with visual and hearing impairments are believed to be able to achieve better in life.

2. Only about 30% of the surveyed VIPs have been in contact with Civil Services in the last 5 years. About one-fourth of them feel that their needs are considered in the services provided. From the institutions surveyed, about 55% state that they are accessible for people with visual impairments and provide support in terms of trained staff, assistive technologies, infrastructure, etc.
3. 50% of the people with visual disabilities that were questioned considered that they do not have equal access to public services, if compared to people with no disability, especially because of the limitations imposed by the disability itself, but also because of the perception of the people. 67% of the people who have responded consider that civil services in general do not take their disability into consideration while designing and delivering the services they are supposed to offer, showing a need for improvement.
4. 89% of the institutions declared that people with disability have the possibility to report when they are subject to discrimination, stereotyping and prejudices from the staff. Given also the perception of visually impaired young people regarding the quality of services that public institutions provide, it can be observed that these reporting methods have not reached their goal.

5. Many youngsters with visual impairments (53%) aren't aware of the opportunities for non-formal education and leisure time activities offered by NGOs in Bulgaria. These opportunities are not promoted enough.
6. The media and internet are the most used resources the people use for learning about the needs of people with disabilities.
7. Only 36% of the NGOs involve people with disabilities in learning/ volunteering / leisure activities, such as different charity events, improtheater, workshops.
8. 63% of the young people with visual impairments questioned said that they were not aware of any NGOs in their local community offering volunteering opportunities for youngsters. Just 36% of the organisations that were questioned are offering volunteering opportunities to people with visual impairments and another 25% plan to do this in the future. Still, 25% of the organisations are not interested at the moment in this topic.
9. Just around 5% of all people questioned tried to volunteer in an NGO and just 2.5% managed to do this. This is significantly lower than the national average among people with no disability. Main reasons for this are: fear that NGOs will not need or accept people with disabilities, fear of not being accepted or lack of skills needed for participation.
10. Overall, NGOs and institutions are not well prepared in terms of providing environmental adaptations and should work towards removing obstacles and providing Braille signs, tactile floors, etc. for VIPs. Institutions report that they have qualified staff ready to assist. At the same time, VIPs rate the adaptations they receive as 'not useful' and services as 'good' or 'poor'.

## Recommendations:

1. Institutions and NGOs should train their staff in order to combat stereotypes, prejudices and negative attitudes towards people with disability.
2. Employers should receive information about hiring VIPs. Some companies are hesitant to hire them because they don't have enough information.
3. Schools should provide professional orientation and teach more practical everyday skills to children with visual impairments.
4. In terms of infrastructure, institutions and NGO environment are not well adapted for VIPs. What needs to be done:
  - mounting sound indication of the entrances of the institutions;
  - Contrast color marking intersections and staircases;
  - Installation of tactile paving, marking the end of sidewalks, ramps at places associated with the movement of people with visual impairments;
5. More awareness should be raised about practical support and adaptations needed to ensure participation of VIPs in NGO activities. Youth workers should receive training about methods that they can use when working with youngsters with disabilities, such as the specifics of the visual impairments, how to use the assistive technologies, encourage respect for diversity, and adapt the materials according to the learning needs and special non-formal methods that can be used with VIPs.
6. More volunteering/learning/leisure opportunities that address young people with visual impairments are needed. There is a

need for more diverse activities involving visually impaired young people.

7. NGOs should use more channels to reach to as many young people with disabilities as possible, e.g. specific websites.
8. In order to integrate VIPs, good cooperation is a must. We should work towards overcoming the barriers. Typically developed people don't always know how to react or offer help. There is some psychological barrier. Awareness campaign may help in dealing with these issues as well as some joint initiatives.
9. The institutions and NGOs should have the necessary assistive technologies to ensure accessibility; to offer activities which are inclusive and accessible for everyone.

Recommendations for activities and services from NGOs according to the questionnaires and the focus groups:

- Carry out campaigns / events for sharing the opportunities that are provided for VIPs;
- Provide activities which are of interest of the visually impaired young people;
- Offer formal or non-formal learning opportunities that are accessible to people with disabilities;
- Raise the awareness of the staff making them more comfortable when working with people with disabilities;
- Connect the NGOs and the VIPs via focus groups, websites, etc.

The VIPs are interested in the following topics/activities:

- Local/international trainings – communication/ social skills, networking, employment skills
- Local/international workshops – Information technologies, foreign languages
- Leisure activities – sport, music, literature
- Local/international volunteering for a cause, volunteering for, working in organizations – charity; in support of people with visual impairments

\* Recommendation from VIPs is to make a specific page in an online platform where all of the VIPs will be part of and all of the opportunities will be shared with them.

Channels for communicating the opportunities for VIPs are:

- Social media (e.g. a Facebook group or page addressing young people)
- TV/Radio
- Schools
- NGOs offices and staff
- Specific websites