



## We have consulted European inclusive education stakeholders & experts in sensory disorders to develop new tools December 2021

### About the *Open up* project

The *Open up* project aims at engaging formal and non-formal education professionals in the inclusion of young people with sensory disorders. It focuses on **developing the capacity of professionals working in mainstream schools and youth organisations** to ensure quality inclusive education for children and teenagers with visual and hearing impairments. To achieve this, the *Open up* project partners are co-developing, testing and evaluating 4 innovative tools tailored to this target group:

- An **accessibility guide** including practical information to better host young people with sensory disorders in your premises and engage them in educational activities
- A 3-days face-to-face **training programme** to become a 'resource(s) person' who has gained practical knowledge and interpersonal skills that can be applied and shared in any educational work environment
- An **e-learning platform** about inclusive education and sensory disorders
- A **joint statement** aiming at formulating recommendations for policy makers in the field of education to improve the quality of inclusive education in Europe

### Our methodology

First, *Open up* is based on a **bottom-up and participative approach** that consists of engaging inclusive education stakeholders and experts in sensory disorders in **local Multidisciplinary Boards (MDB) sessions**, held in 5 different EU regions, at different stages of the co-development, testing and evaluation of the innovative tools herein listed.

During the 2-years of this project, the *Open up* MDB board members are regularly consulted to share their experiences to constantly improve and fine-tune the project's outputs. The feedback received from the MDB sessions are transformed into a single transnational model adapted to national contexts and transferable in other regions.

The second important aspect of *Open up* methodology is the **development and promotion of the 'resource(s) person' profile** who supports young people with sensory disorders, both in formal and non-formal education settings. This hybrid role is easily accessible to any teacher or youth worker who wants to contribute to improve access to education for children and teenagers with sensory disorders.

### What have we done so far?

#### The Multidisciplinary Board members met twice in 5 EU regions

Since the early days of the project in fall 2020, the *Open up* project partners gathered their local Multidisciplinary Boards (MDB) members twice (mostly online due to COVID-19). For this, each partner organisation appointed one national project manager whose role was to identify and engage 10 specialists of the project theme and/or people acting for improving the inclusion of children and teenagers with visual or hearing impairment (our end-beneficiaries) in their local community, or people with visual or hearing impairment who are interested in contributing to make a positive change for themselves and their peers.

The first series of MDB sessions were organized in late 2020-early 2021. Based on a common model, our 5 project managers acted as moderators and facilitated half-a-day sessions aiming at:

- reporting back local initiatives for inclusive education that may already exist and/or be complementary to the future **accessibility guide**, define what is needed and the role of 'resource(s) person'
- Defining the needs of the trainees and trainers who will use the new **training curriculum**
- Reporting potential existing online tools and defining what is needed in the new **e-learning platform**

The 5 EU regions where we are implementing the MDB sessions are the following:

- Hauts-de-France, co-organized by associations La Vie Active (LVA) and Ouvrir Les Yeux (OLY)
- Andalusia (Spain), organized by Asociación de Personas con Discapacidad Verdiblanca
- The Balearic Islands (Spain), organized by Innovation Training Center (ITC)
- Nicosia (Cyprus), by INNOVADE LTD
- Zagreb by the Croatian Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (HSGN)

All these regions implement national public policies that result from the [EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030](#)<sup>1</sup> aiming at promoting inclusive education.



*Open up* contributes to make this change and the MDB board members are essential to ensure that the new tools that we are co-developing will answer the needs of mainstream schools and youth organisations.

The second series of MDB sessions were held in late September-early October 2021. It mainly aimed at presenting version 1 of our guide, training curriculum and e-learning platform. We have received positive feedback and detailed recommendations, on which we are basing our work on version 2 of the three outputs mentioned above. Their final versions should be ready to be live-tested face-to-face in Zagreb (Croatia) with 16 European teachers and youth workers in late February 2022 (if the pandemic allows us!).

<sup>1</sup> In fact, the previous [European Disability Strategy 2010-2020](#) was still in force when the *Open up* project was submitted in 2020.

### The *Open up* partners

- [La Vie Active](#), France (Coord.)
- [Ouvrir Les Yeux](#), France
- [Hrvatski savez gluhih i nagluhih \(HSGN\)](#), Croatia
- [INNOVADE LI LTD.](#), Cyprus
- [Innovation Training Center \(ITC\)](#), Spain
- [Asociación de Personas con Discapacidad Verdiblanca](#), Spain

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