Funded by the European Union

The way we communicate

‘The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities[1].’

The way we communicate must reflect these values. This document outlines our commitment to accessible and inclusive communication throughout the implementation of the CIRCLE2 project.

Project No: 2022-1-LT01-KA220-VET-000085809
https://circle2learning.eu/

1 Article 2 of the Treaty of the European Union

Key words and principles

Communication

Communication is inherently complex, making it difficult to define its precise starting and ending points. Communication models offer valuable simplifications by visually representing key aspects of the interaction. However, even the most sophisticated models cannot fully capture the richness and dynamism of real-life communication.

Within the scope of our work we analyse and will use, at different level in the project, models two (interaction model) and three (transactional model).

1. **The transmission model** presents a simplified view of communication as a linear process. In this model, the sender actively transmits information to a passive receiver, overlooking the dynamic and interactive nature of communication.

2. **The interaction model** of communication views communication as a dynamic process where participants exchange messages and provide feedback. Unlike the linear transmission model, the interaction model emphasizes the two-way nature of communication.

The project is designed to interact with the users (teachers, trainers, tutors and students) as:
- it foresees a testing phase and the collection of feedbacks
- it forsees interactive contents and tools to let the users create their own contents.

3. **The transactional model** recognizes that communication plays a crucial role in shaping our social realities. Through communication, we not only exchange information but also build relationships, form communities, and construct our understanding of ourselves and the world around us.

This model of communication will be applied in:
- WP2 as regards, specifically, the implementation of the interviews to professional working in the project sectors;
- in WP3, as regards, specifically, the creation of a network of interest around the project and during the multiplier events.

Accessibility in communication

Accessibility means that something can be used, reached, entered, engaged with, or obtained by all people, including those with disabilities. It's about creating an inclusive environment where everyone has equal access and opportunity.
It is an interdisciplinary concern, relevant to engineers, designers, educators, healthcare professionals, and many others. This diverse field encompasses various perspectives and approaches. While multiple frameworks exist for applying accessibility, we will mainly refer to the scope of our work. The principles of UD (Universal Design) will serve as our theoretical foundation, which we will adapt to fit the unique requirements of CIRCLE2 project.

The concept of UD is a very broad concept and refers to the “design of products and environments that can be used by all people, to the greatest possible extent, without the need for adaptation or specialized design”.
For a long time, the priority fields of application of the UD principles have been those of architecture and product design but gradually these principles have established themselves in different sectors, including those of training and information: designing from a perspective of accessibility for all means to design effective information and communication tools as potentially universally accessible.

Within the scope of our work the seven principles of UD can be applied as follow.

1. **Equitable use**: this principle is stated when the information is transmitted in such a way that it can be used by the widest possible number of target groups (people with sensory, or motor or intellectual disabilities, people with limited technical abilities).

2. **Flexibility in use**: this principle is stated when the information transmitted adapts to a wide range of individual preferences and abilities (example: possibility of choosing the language; presence of alternative text to describe the images).

3. **Simple and intuitive use**: this principle is stated when the information transmitted is easily understandable, regardless of experience, knowledge, language skills or user’s concentration level.

4. **Perceptible Information**: this principle is stated when the information transmitted is perceptible by the user, regardless of the environmental conditions or the user’s sensory abilities (example: presence of subtitles in videos; possibility to adjust the contrast when reading a web page; presence of alternative text to describe the images).

5. **Tolerance for Error**: this principle applies when the information is transmitted in a way or ways that minimize the risks and the negative and accidental consequences of unwanted actions (example: instructions that provide both voice and visual information).

6. **Low physical effort:** this principle is stated when the information transmitted can be perceived efficiently and comfortably with a minimum effort (example: possibility of controlling the speed of video playback).

7. **Size and Space for Approach and Use**: this principle is stated when the information transmitted is perceptible regardless of the body size, the posture and the mobility capacity of the person (example: video projections that ensure full visibility for all participants in in-person meetings).

Note
Regarding the meetings we refer to the guidelines W3C guidelines available at the following link: https://www.w3.org/WAI/teach-advocate/accessible-presentations/

The basic rules for fostering accessibility

The project team commits to take care of the rules for accessibility elements in designing the project contents. Here are a few basic ones.

1. Organizing content so it has a logical flow just makes sense. Using chapters, headings, and sub-headings to organize a resource allows students to clearly see how the main concepts are related. In addition, headings are one of the main ways that students using a screen reader navigate through a chapter. This criterium will be considered in the design of the e-learning contents and in the design of the website.

2. Use links within content to point the user to additional information that is available at another location. Links between different parts of a book are also used to facilitate navigation.

3. Include subtitles and/or text transcript of the project implemented multimedia. In the selection of third-party videos, it is essential to prioritize videos that include transcripts.

4. Use font size and style ensuring that default font sizes are not too small.
Ensuring that text can be expanded on the website.

5. Image-based content. Where the image serve a functional purpose it is necessary to provide a text alternative that serves the equivalent purpose of the non-text material; where the image serves more of a decorative purpose it is useful to avoid unnecessary text descriptions; colour can't be used as the only visual means of conveying information.

6. Keep data tables as simple in structure as possible.

7. Provide enough contrast between foreground elements and background elements.

With regard to the specific content we will develop, we commit to using clear language and providing materials that can enhance the competences of our target audience. Our goal is to create content that is both informative and easily understandable.

Note

Here are some authoritative resources to consult throughout the project.

1. World Wide Web Consortium (W3C): develops international standards for the Web, including Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), which provide technical standards and best practices for making web content accessible to people with disabilities. https://www.w3.org/
2. Center for Universal Design: promotes the design of products and environments to be usable by the widest range of people, including people with disabilities and offers principles and guidelines for creating accessible communication materials. https://universaldesign.ie/
3. AccessibleEU: AccessibleEU is one of the flagship initiatives proposed by the European Commission Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030 https://accessible-eu-centre.ec.europa.eu/index_en
4. European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education https://www.european-agency.org/

Inclusivity in communication

In the context of communication, inclusivity means ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their background, abilities, or communication styles, can effectively participate in and understand the exchange of information. Inclusive communication aims to break down barriers and ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the exchange of information. An inclusive communication also ensures that everyone has equal representation.
Given our common understanding of the term inclusion, in designing the project contents and in communicating and disseminating the project results, we commit to take care of the following elements.

The basic rules for fostering inclusivity

- Use person-first language
- Use of gender-neutral language: the use of ‘he/she’ can address gender inclusivity,but its frequent use can disrupt the flow of the text and may exclude non-binary individuals. The goal is to demonstrate our commitment to gender-neutral communication, free from “grammatical extremism” and respectful of the individual.
- Avoid negative stereotypes or stigmatising language: aware of the influence of stereotypes, we strive to challenge them and promote an inclusive vision through this project.
- Use inclusive visuals: visuals play a crucial role in reinforcing inclusive language. Since visuals often have a stronger impact on audiences, it’s essential to depict diversity in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, disability, religion, sexual orientation, nationality, and other relevant factors. This helps ensure that everyone feels represented and included.
- Offer multilingual resouces.

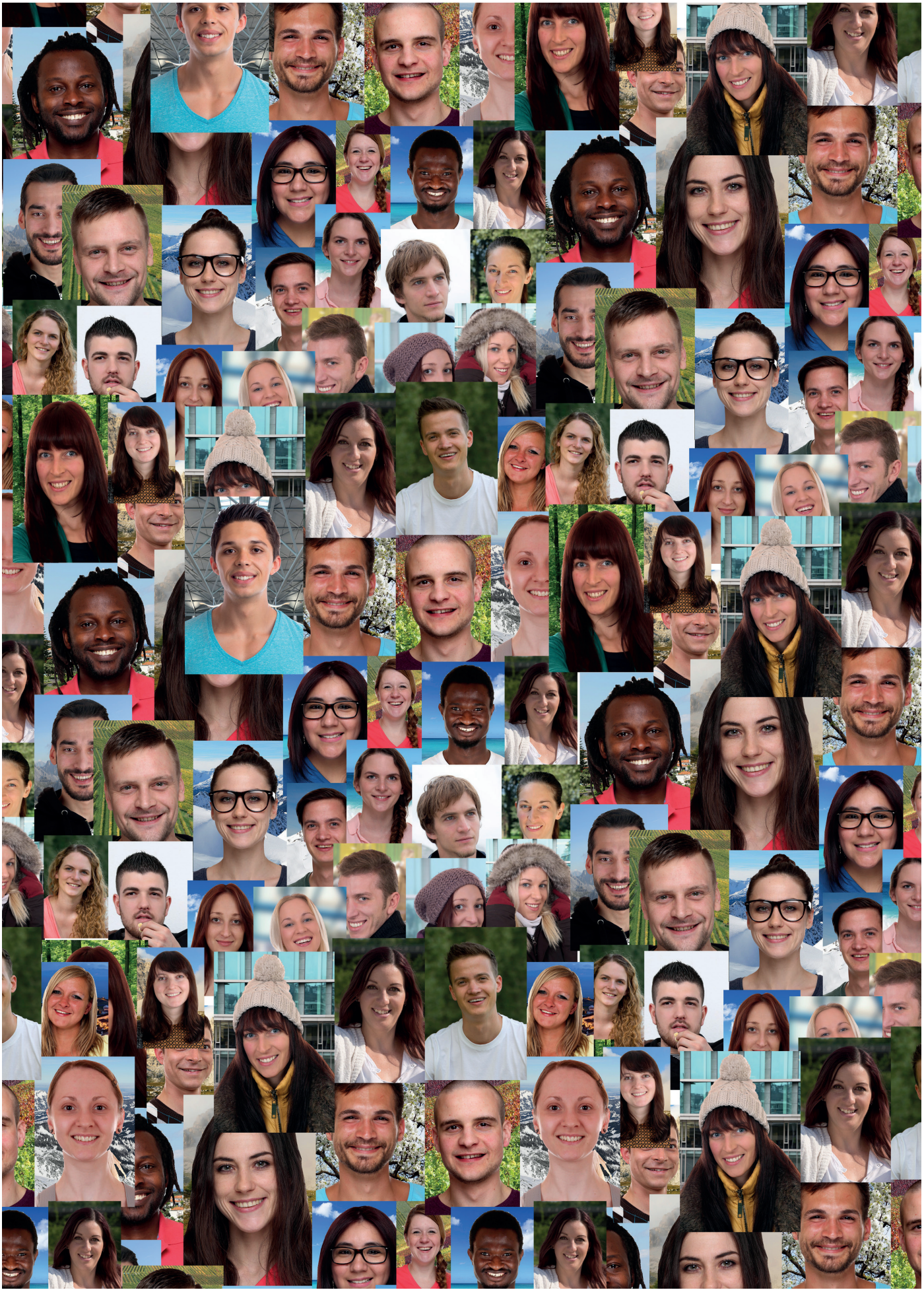
As a reference point in doing this, we will also refer to the list and definition of people with fewer opportunities as listed in the Erasmus+ guide (Version 1/2024: 28-11-2023):

- Disabilities
- Health problems
- Barriers linked to education and training systems
- Cultural differences
- Social barriers
- Economic barriers
- Barriers linked to discrimination
- Geographical barriers

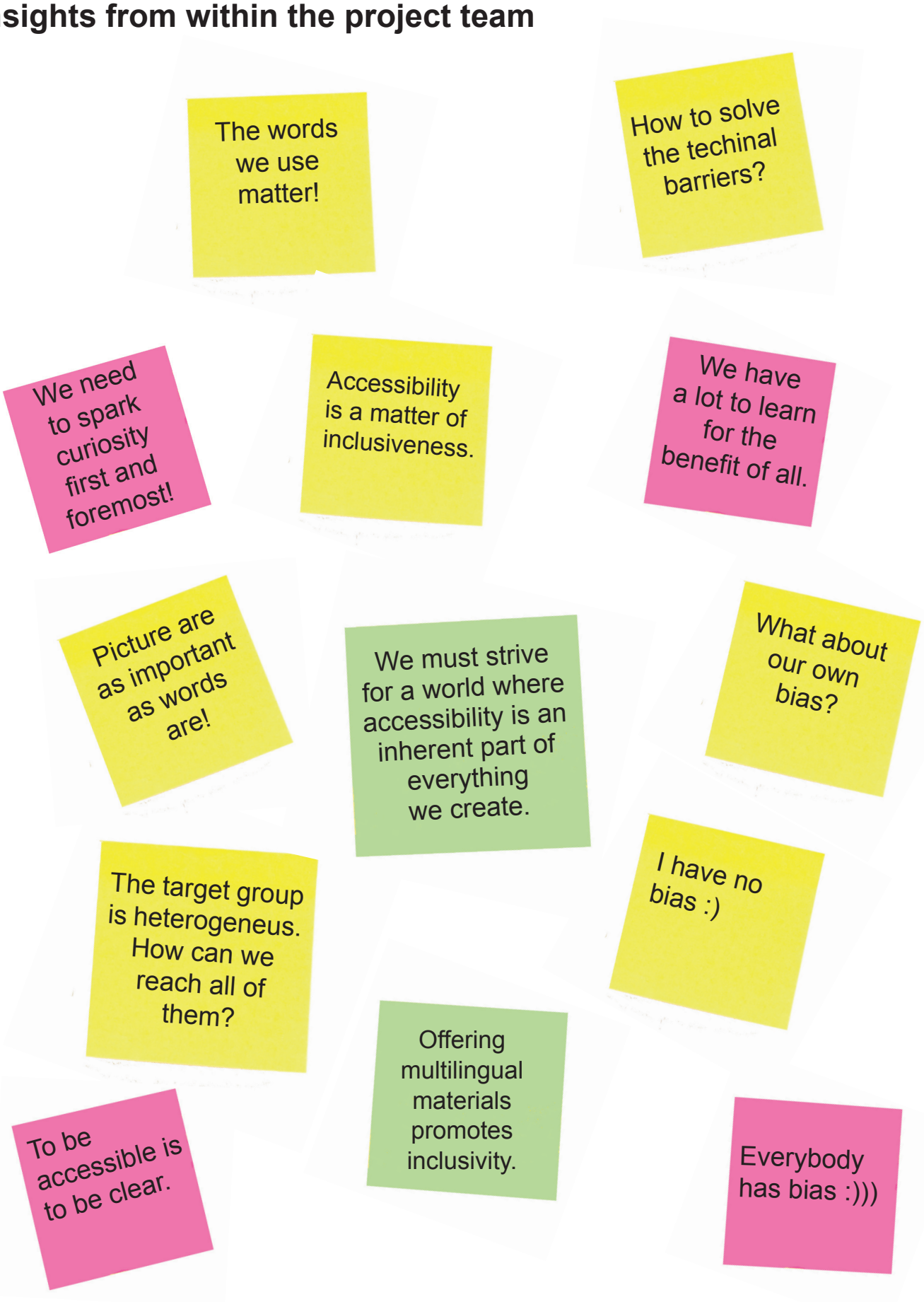
Note

Here are some authoritative resources to consult throughout the project.

1. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) https://www.unesco.org/en/inclusion-education/need-know#:~:text=UNESCO%20helps%20Member%20States%20develop,and%20programme%20design%20and%20delivery.
2. Compass: Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People https://www.coe.int/en/web/compass/



Insights from within the project team



Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the National Agency. Neither the European Union nor the National Agency can be held responsible for them.