

INCLUSIVE DIGITAL COMMUNICATION FOR YOUTH INFORMATION SERVICES

Where to begin?

Karolina Kosowska
Training and Membership Officer
karolina.kosowska@eurodesk.eu
Eurodesk Brussels Link

eurodesk



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the European Union



EURODESK

Eurodesk aims to create bridges in Europe and open up international opportunities to all young people, regardless of background or situation in life.

1 AWARENESS

We see that many are not aware of the various programmes out there – from a paid internship abroad to taking part in volunteering projects, all costs covered.

2 POSITIVE IMPACT

An experience abroad can have a massive positive impact on your life, and we believe Europe needs the involvement of young people.

3 FREE OF CHARGE

This is why we operate with a network of youth workers all over Europe to reach out and provide you with neutral, free of charge, and verified information on all financial support programmes for going abroad and having a voice in Europe.

THE GUIDE

What is Eurodesk **Guide on Inclusive Digital Communication for Youth Information Services**?

Aims to support all those
working with/for young people

in **designing more inclusive and accessible** youth information and propose guiding principles and case studies to improve little by little their outreach to a broader audience.



THE GUIDE

In today's ever-changing world, fostering inclusivity has emerged as a **critical goal** for societies, organisations, and communities alike. While many people strive to treat others with respect and fairness, **true inclusion is not automatic**. Despite our best wishes,

**INCLUSIVITY DOES NOT
OCCUR NATURALLY**

It requires persistent and **deliberate efforts**. There are many reasons for this: deeply ingrained implicit **biases**, societal **conditioning**, **fear** of the unfamiliar, **power** dynamics, and the unconscious **perpetuation of privilege**. Even with the best intentions, well-meaning individuals may exclude certain people without meaning to.

Achieving genuine inclusion requires ongoing work, self-awareness, and a willingness to challenge the status quo.

WHERE TO BEGIN?

In order to navigate the path towards more inclusive youth information, it is essential to understand the **key concepts** of:

→ **DIVERSITY**

→ **EQUITY**

→ **INCLUSION**

→ **BELONGING**

These terms, while interconnected, have distinct meanings and implications.

MATCH DEFINITION & MEANING

- [] refers to the variety of differences among people, such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, socio-economic background, religion and abilities. A diverse institution recognises and values these differences, striving to create an environment where people from all walks of life can contribute their unique perspectives and experiences.
- [] is about ensuring fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all individuals while identifying and eliminating barriers that have prevented the full participation of marginalised groups. This concept goes beyond equal treatment and addresses the systemic imbalances and biases that may exist within an organisation, aiming to create a level playing field for everyone.

TERMS: Belonging // Inclusion // Equity // Diversity

MATCH DEFINITION & MEANING

- [] is the process of creating an environment where all individuals feel valued, respected, and able to fully participate in an organisation's activities and decision-making processes. [] is about ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to contribute their skills, knowledge, and perspectives, without expecting them to compromise their identity.
- [] is the emotional experience of feeling connected, accepted, and valued by others. It goes beyond inclusion, capturing the essence of Mary McGuire's quote: "[] is dancing as if no one is watching." When people feel a sense of [], they are more likely to be engaged, motivated, and committed to the organisation, leading to improved performance and overall success.

TERMS: Belonging // Inclusion // Equity // Diversity

1 ACTIONBOUND

Time for a Team Challenge!



ACTIONBOUND

- 1.** Open the **Actionbound** app.
- 2.** Select "**SCAN CODE**" (the top, right corner).
- 3.** **Scan** this **QR code** with the Actionbound app.
- 4.** Start Bound.
- 5.** Add: **the name of your team, (nick)names** of your team members & **agree** to the terms, conditions and the privacy policy of this Bound.



READY? LET'S GO!

2 PRINCIPLES OF INCLUSIVE DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

Today, we will explore the seven principles that the Eurodesk network strives to uphold in their information and communication practices. Together we will discover how these principles pave the way for inclusive communication.



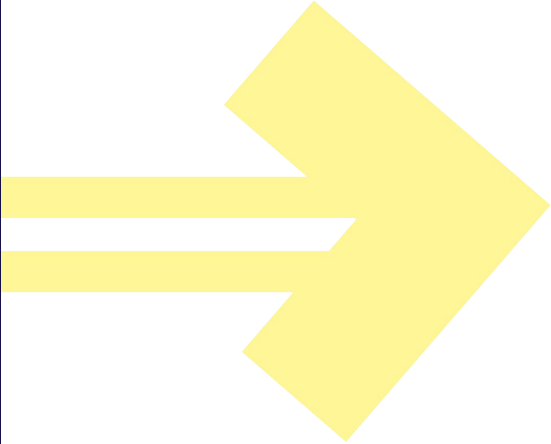
PRINCIPLE 1

An **inclusive communication strategy** sets the foundation for change and improvement.

By recognising the need for improvement, an organisation acknowledges that there may be biases or gaps in its current communication practices that exclude some of their target audiences and that by taking a **proactive and intentional approach**, they can address those issues.

PRINCIPLE 1

We shouldn't be scared of the word "**strategy**", which may sound a bit intangible. In reality it's about **mapping our goals**, our **audiences**, looking at the **channels** that we communicate with and our internal communication. **It's simply planning:**

- 
- **Where** do we want to go?
 - **Who** do we want to involve?
 - **Who is missing** in our activities/events?
 - **What** do we want to achieve?
 - **How** are we planning to get there?

PRINCIPLE 1

An **inclusive communication strategy** provides a **framework** for transforming our motivation into action and is a drive to implement change and create a more inclusive communication culture. It doesn't need to be complex and **it's also not set in stone**; it can be adapted and adjusted as we go along.



The plan on how to communicate better and share information so **that everyone feels included** should match the organisation's beliefs and build a positive and supportive environment within the organisation, while also externally supporting their inclusive image.

PRINCIPLE 1

Create and follow your own inclusive information and communication strategy.



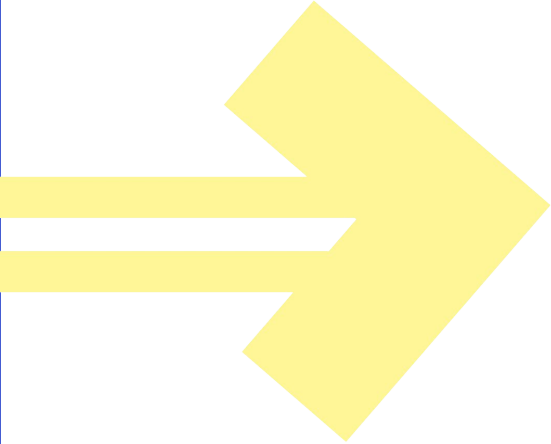
PRINCIPLE 2

Your communication strategy must begin by
identifying your target audience.

While it's tempting to say **our audience is "everyone"** this vague answer is insufficient. To select the best communication channels and tailor your content, you must understand the specific needs and characteristics of the audience, particularly those who are often overlooked. This is especially crucial in digital communication, where the **consequences of exclusion are less visible** and may result in the underrepresentation of diverse groups in your activities.

PRINCIPLE 2

If you don't have a clear understanding of your audience, you must ensure your communication is highly accessible and caters to the diverse needs of young people from all backgrounds.



There isn't a single definitive list of all the groups that are at risk of social exclusion, and any attempt to create one will inevitably have limitations and may not be accurate in every context.

Nevertheless, it is **crucial to consider the various groups** that may require additional attention when designing youth information activities. We encourage you to **reflect on your awareness** and as a starting point for defining your audience and understanding their communication barriers.



PERSONA 2 Mario

mental health issues or emotional difficulties

Mario was diagnosed with anxiety and depression, one year and a half ago, following a suicide attempt, but he hasn't told any of his friends for fear of being bullied if they find out. His grades in high school are suffering, and sometimes he skips classes to smoke a joint with a classmate. He is eagerly looking forward to doing Interrail with his friends after their graduation, but his mother has warned him that if he fails to pass all his subjects, she will not allow him to go.

DEMOGRAPHICS

- 17 years old
- Male
- From Barcelona, in Spain
- Currently going on dates with people he met on Tinder
- High school student
- Planning to go on the Interrail trip this summer

INTERESTS

- Meets his friend to smoke a joint in an attempt to forget about his problems
- Likes watching Twitch streamers during the afternoons.
- Enjoys creating music with his DJ controller.

WANTS AND NEEDS

- He wants to fit in and feel cared for by others.
- He aspires to become an influencer and build a career in that field.
- He needs to improve his grades in order to be able to apply for the Interrail trip this summer.

FRUSTRATIONS

- Sometimes, he feels misunderstood by everyone.
- He believes he lacks talent and struggles with low self-esteem.
- He may miss the most significant event with his friends, the Interrail trip.

SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKS/ ACCESS TO INFORMATION

- He uses TikTok, Instagram, and Twitch, and stays informed by following influencers and accounts on those platforms.
- He uses Spotify to discover cool music and find inspiration.

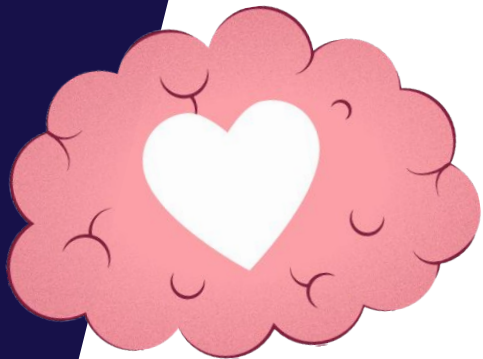
EU/YOUTH PROGRAMMES/VOLUNTEERING

- He participated in a week-long exchange with Italian students last year.
- He attended a presentation about the Erasmus+ programme at his high school but didn't pay much attention.
- His sister volunteers at the local shelter, and sometimes he attends the events they organise to support her.

TASK: Please identify 3 possible digital communication barriers.

PRINCIPLE 2

Understand your audience and be aware of communication barriers.



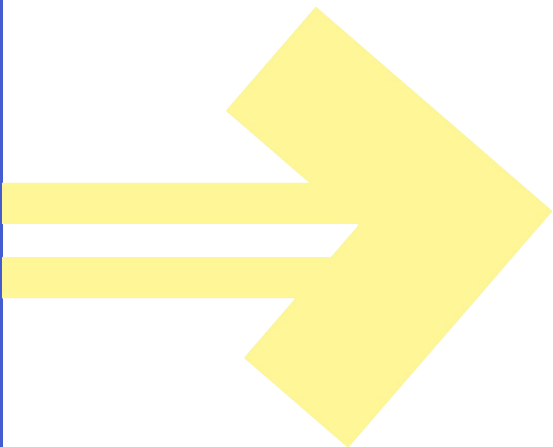
PRINCIPLE 3

As we often say,
information is power.

Indeed, the empowerment of young people can often start with just a single piece of information. **How do you ensure that the information you communicate is designed to meet the needs of audiences who are usually marginalised or underrepresented?**

PRINCIPLE 3

Let's consider what we should be communicating in an ideal state where our communication is fully inclusive. Essentially, the information we share should **inspire real changes in the lives of all young people.**



The range of information offered should **be tailored to meet the specific needs of the community and effectively respond to those needs.**

TASK

Inclusive information should strive to bring about social change, regardless of the scale. Whether we're supporting an individual with a mobility opportunity, or launching communication campaigns to raise awareness on important social issues for the community, each action holds its own importance. In an inclusive environment, every bit of information shared can be a stepping stone towards making a meaningful difference.

TASK: Using a web browser, search for a poster that you think communicates its message effectively to its audience. Once you find a good example, take a screenshot of it and upload the screenshot to the app.

example





PRINCIPLE 3

Focus on what you
communicate.

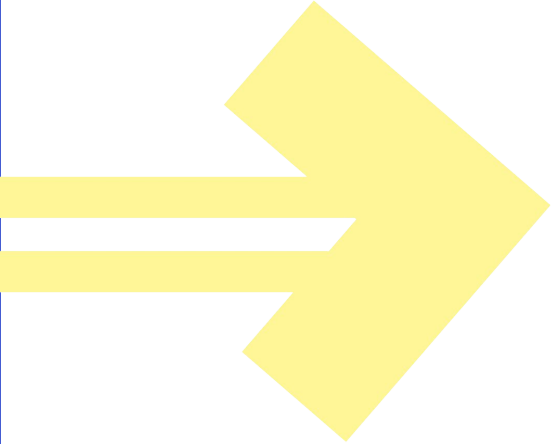
PRINCIPLE 4

**Inclusive language is a
conscious form of communication.**

It is a complex issue, and there are still discussions around what is "allowed" and what is not. It is possible that the same word for one person will be a source of pride, and for others offensive. **A lot depends on the national context**, and inclusive language cannot be literally translated.

PRINCIPLE 4

We can compare learning an inclusive language to **studying** a foreign language. By getting to know an inclusive language, you're **opening the door to another world for yourself** and once you're more familiar with it, **three things happen**:

- 
- You are able to **describe the world in all its diversity**.
 - You let a **different perspective** into your thinking.
 - **You're creating space for people who previously had no voice** to express themselves and self-define.

TASK

As youth information workers, we can keep on creating these spaces in language, where all young people feel seen and invited to contribute because, by broadening the norm, we are making space for everyone to fit in it.

TASK: I bet you will agree that the right choice of words plays a key role. Your task will be to **decide which word sounds more inclusive.**

PRINCIPLE 4

Be inclusive with
your language.



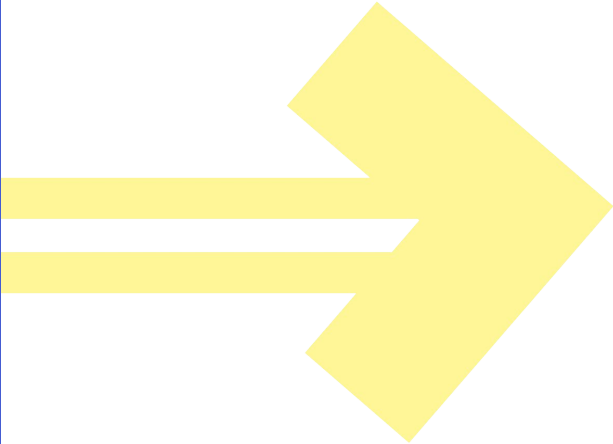
PRINCIPLE 5

In today's digital age, it is essential to **ensure** that online youth information **content is accessible to all,**

regardless of their abilities or circumstances. There are **several barriers** young people may encounter when accessing online content, including visual impairments, hearing impairments, motor impairments, cognitive impairments, speech impairments and sensory sensitivities.

PRINCIPLE 5

Additionally, some young people may have limited digital literacy, limited access to technology, or limited internet access, further hindering their ability to engage with online resources. To **address these challenges**, it is crucial to:



Adopt a **user-friendly approach** when creating and sharing online content.

TASK



TASK: Provide meaningful and descriptive alternative text (imagine description) for the image above.

The alt text should convey the essential information or purpose of the visual for users who cannot see it, such as those using screen readers or with visual impairments. Ensure that the alt text is concise, yet adequately describes the content or function of the visual.

TIPS: Be descriptive / Keep it brief / Include relevant details / Avoid phrases like "image of" or "picture of" (screen readers typically announce the presence of an image)

PRINCIPLE 5

Make your content
more accessible.



PRINCIPLE 6

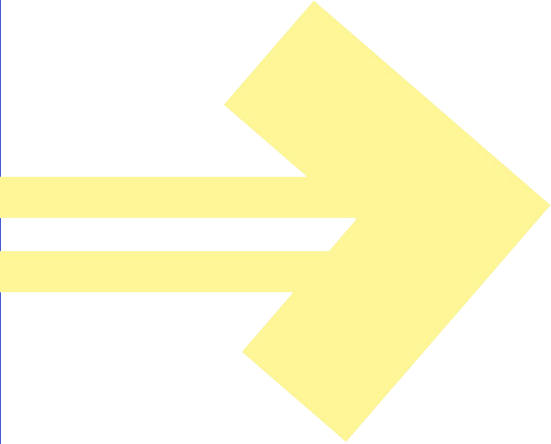
As usual, **there isn't a one-size-fits-all solution.**

There are many different ways we can communicate, each with its own uses, users and barriers to access. When deciding how we want to communicate and which channel to use, **we need to consider:**

- **Who** we're talking to,
- **What** we want to achieve,
- **How much information** we need to share,
- **How public** our message needs to be,
- **How formal** our message is,
- Any **limitations** with the method of communication,
- How **urgent** our message is, and
- Whether we **need to write it down** for records or for transparency.

PRINCIPLE 6

Adapting your text, pictures and documents for different communication channels requires a keen understanding of the unique characteristics and audience preferences of each platform. **Each communication channel has unique characteristics. What's well-received on one platform may not resonate on another.**

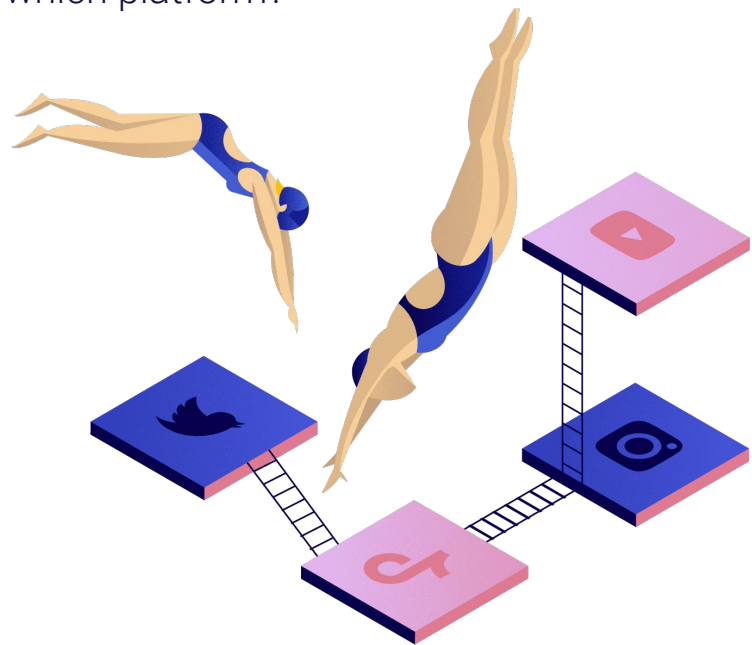
- 
- Instagram favours high-quality visuals, while TikTok thrives on short-form video content.
 - **Understand** what works on each platform **and adjust** your content accordingly.
 - **Tailor your text** to match the audience's preferences on each channel.

TASK

TASK: Which material was published on which platform?

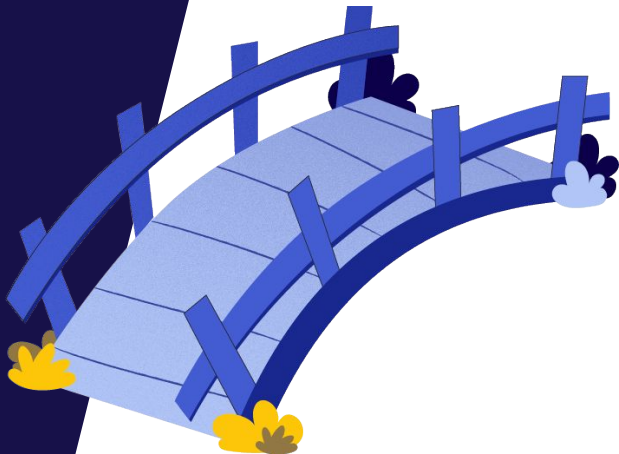
Answer:

- a) Facebook
- b) TikTok
- c) Website
- d) Instagram
- e) Youtube



PRINCIPLE 6

Use different channels to reach broadly.



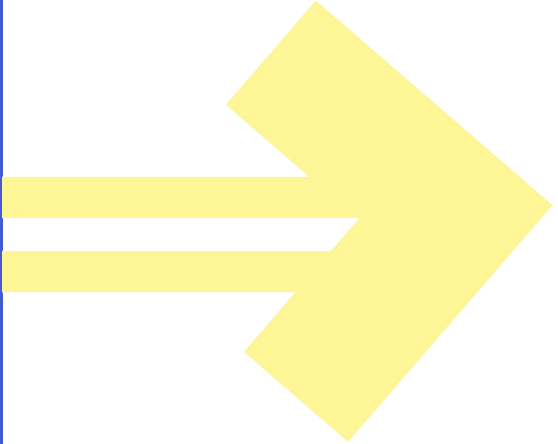
PRINCIPLE 7

Inclusive digital communication is
an **ongoing process.**

It requires **active learning, constant monitoring and adaptation** to effectively reach and engage diverse audiences. It was mentioned several times in the guide that giving clear answers in the field of diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) can be a challenge. The hidden behaviours that DEI discussions often focus on can be difficult to identify and address. Moreover, **the theory and understanding of DEI continues to evolve every day.**

PRINCIPLE 7

To ensure effective monitoring and evaluation of inclusive communication strategies, it is important to establish a **systematic approach**. This involves defining roles and responsibilities for collecting feedback, conducting evaluations and analysing data.



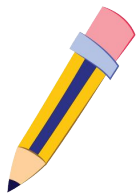
Regular evaluation meetings should be scheduled to assess the effectiveness of current strategies, identify areas for improvement, celebrate successes and set achievable goals for the next period. These meetings provide a valuable opportunity to **align efforts, share insights** and collectively **support the commitment** to inclusive communication.

PRINCIPLE 7

Keep monitoring and adjusting to your audience.



THE 7 PRINCIPLES



PRINCIPLE 1

Create and follow your own inclusive information and communication strategy.



PRINCIPLE 2

Understand your audience and be aware of communication barriers.



PRINCIPLE 3

Focus on what you communicate.



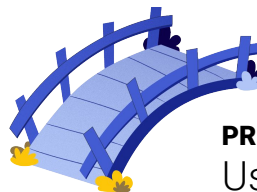
PRINCIPLE 4

Be inclusive with your language.



PRINCIPLE 5

Make your content more accessible.



PRINCIPLE 6

Use different channels to reach broadly.



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3 GUIDE ON INCLUSIVE DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

How to use this guide?



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE?

The guide is divided into two parts:

- **Part 1: Towards Belonging**

You will gain the foundational knowledge needed to understand the importance of fostering a sense of belonging.

- **Part 2: Principles of Inclusive Digital Communication**

Each principle begins with a “Time for Reflection”, followed by practical examples, tools and case studies from Eurodesk network.

To make the most of this guide:



Start with Part 1 to grasp the conceptual elements.

Dive into Part 2, engaging in the “Time for Reflection” sections, and explore practical examples and case studies.

Navigate based on your needs, using the table of contents and index.

Actively engage, take notes, and reflect on the provided questions for self-reflection.

Thank you for your attention!

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And now, reflection time! 🧐