

The DEAP Compendium: A Collection of European Best Practices in Inclusive Arts and Youth Empowerment

DEAP – Nurturing Personal Development and Empowerment of Young People with Visual Impairment through Arts Education

Project No: 101185651-DEAP-ERASMUS-YOUTH-2024-YOUTH-TOG



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Introduction

This document serves as a specialized practical extension of the project "**DEAP: Nurturing Personal Development and Empowerment of Young People with Visual Impairment through Arts Education**" (Project No: 101185651-DEAP-ERASMUS-YOUTH-2024-YOUTH-TOG). While the main handbook provides the methodological framework, this Compendium offers a curated selection of **validated case studies** that demonstrate how inclusive arts and psychomotor training are successfully implemented across Europe.

Evidence-Based Inspiration: The purpose of this collection is to move beyond theory and provide youth workers, educators, and inclusion mediators with concrete evidence of "what works". Each case study included here has been chosen because it represents a shift from a medical model of disability—focusing on "what is missing"—to a **pedagogical model** that celebrates "what is present".

Diversity of Practice: Within this document, you will find a diverse range of initiatives categorized by their primary impact area:

- **Foundational Skills and Mobility:** Programs like the **ONCE Foundation** and **ICEVI Europe**, which focus on orientation, mobility, and the functional psychomotor foundations necessary for independence.
- **Multisensory Arts and Cultural Heritage:** Innovative models such as the **CARE EU Project** and the **Museum Sensory Tour**, which utilize clay manipulation and tactile museum itineraries to bridge the gap between art and accessibility.
- **Performing Arts and Expression:** Leading methodologies from organizations like **Touchdown Dance**, **Theatre EXIT**, and **Extant Theatre Company**, which reimagine dance and theatre as sensory and embodied experiences rather than purely visual ones.
- **Inclusive Infrastructure:** Specialized environments like the **Polo Tattile Multimediale** and the **Villaggio dei Suoni**, which demonstrate how multisensory architecture can support autonomous exploration and learning.

Target Audience This document is specifically designed for **practitioners and policy-makers** who require a benchmark of excellence for inclusive practice. It provides a roadmap for those looking to replicate successful models of "guided autonomy" and "youth-led participation" in their own local communities.

How to Use this Document Each entry provides a structured overview, including the provider, target group, goals, and—most importantly—the **impact and lessons learned**. This Compendium is a **complementary resource** to the DEAP Digital Platform, where you can find further multimedia documentation and interactive versions of these initiatives.

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Case Study 1: ONCE Foundation	4
Case Study 2: ICEVI	5
Case Study 3: CARE EU Project	7
Case Study 4: Museum Sensory Tour	8
Case Study 5: Touchdown Programme	10
Case Study 6: EU Beyond Access	11
Case Study 7: Theatre Exit	13
Case Study 8: Extant Theatre	16
Case Study 9: Polo Tattile Multimediale	20
Case Study 10: Arts Laboratories for Inclusion	22
Case Study 11: Villaggio dei Suoni	25

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Case Study 1: ONCE Foundation

Full Name	ONCE Foundation Orientation and Mobility Training Programme for Children and Young People with Visual Impairments
Year initiated/ended	1980s (formalised and continuously developed since; orientation and mobility services remain ongoing)
Provider	ONCE Foundation
Target Group	Children and young people with visual impairments (including blind and low vision participants), families, educators, and rehabilitation professionals working in inclusive education and youth development contexts.
Goal of the case study (what was the intended goal? Was it achieved? If not, why?)	The main goal of the programme is to support the development of independent mobility, spatial orientation, and functional psychomotor skills in young people with visual impairments, while also strengthening self-confidence, autonomy, and social participation. The programme aims to enable participants to move safely and independently in different environments (home, school, public spaces) and to build the physical and psychological foundations for active participation in education and community life. The initiative has been widely implemented and is considered successful in its core objectives, particularly in improving independent mobility and confidence. However, outcomes can vary depending on the age of onset of visual impairment, family support, and consistency of training.
Description (in a clear step by step approach)	• Assessment of mobility, orientation, and psychomotor abilities • Individual plan with personalised mobility goals • Basic psychomotor training (balance, posture, body awareness) • Orientation skills development using sound and tactile cues • Guided mobility practice in real environments • Gradual independence training in daily routes and tasks • Psychosocial support to build confidence and autonomy • Family/educator training to support consistent practice
Impact and validation and lessons learned	Impact: • Improved independent mobility and spatial orientation

	• Stronger body awareness and coordination • Increased confidence, autonomy, and participation Validation: • Professional observation and functional mobility assessments • Feedback from participants and families • Real-life performance in everyday environments Lessons learned: • Early intervention improves psychomotor outcomes • Overprotection limits independence development • Consistent practice across environments is essential • Psychomotor development is closely linked to empowerment
Access details (website, contact info) and related resources developed (What training manuals, guidelines, technical fact sheets, posters, pictures, video and audio documents, and/or Web sites have been developed?)	Website: https://www.once.es/

Case Study 2: ICEVI	
Full Name	ICEVI Europe resources for inclusive education and functional skills development for children and young people with visual impairments
Year initiated/ended	Ongoing network (ICEVI Europe established in 1985; resources continuously updated)
Provider	ICEVI Europe (International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment – European region)
Target Group	• Children and young people with visual impairments • Teachers, youth workers, rehabilitation specialists • Inclusive education professionals

Goal of the case study (what was the intended goal? Was it achieved? If not, why?)	The aim of ICEVI Europe resources is to improve educational inclusion, functional independence, and developmental skills, including orientation, mobility, and psychomotor development, for learners with visual impairments. It supports professionals in adapting learning environments and methods to ensure participation, independence, and equal access to education and youth activities.
Description (in a clear step by step approach)	- Knowledge development for professionals - Training and guidance materials on visual impairment and inclusive education. - Focus on functional skills training - Includes orientation & mobility, daily living skills, and sensory development. - Psychomotor development support - Emphasis on: • body awareness • spatial orientation • movement confidence • tactile and auditory learning strategies - Inclusive education adaptation tools - Strategies for adapting classroom and non-formal learning environments. -Capacity building for educators/youth workers - Workshops, conferences, and professional development materials.
Impact and validation and lessons learned	Impact: • Improved professional competence in inclusive education • Better adaptation of learning environments for visually impaired learners • Stronger focus on functional independence and psychomotor development • Increased awareness of non-visual learning approaches Validation: • Academic and practitioner uptake across Europe • Use in teacher training programmes and rehabilitation contexts • Conference-based dissemination and peer-reviewed contributions Lessons learned: • Functional skills (mobility, orientation, body awareness) are essential for empowerment • Inclusion requires trained staff, not only adapted materials • Psychomotor development must be explicitly embedded in education systems • Cross-sector collaboration improves outcomes (education + rehabilitation + youth work)

Access details (website, contact info) and related resources developed

(What training manuals, guidelines, technical fact sheets, posters, pictures, video and audio documents, and/or Web sites have been developed?)

Website: <https://www.icevi-europe.org/>

- conference proceedings and research papers
- inclusive education guidelines
- functional vision / blindness education frameworks
- training materials for educators and rehabilitation specialists
- publications on orientation & mobility and independent living skills

Case Study 3: CARE EU Project

Full Name	Blended mobility of learners C2
Year initiated/ended	October 2024
Provider	Partnership Care Erasmus project, This case study summarizes the CARE - C2 Sardegna training mobility, an initiative focused on inclusive artistic creation through clay manipulation for visually impaired (VI) individuals.
Target Group	VI Learners youth, youth workers, educators, VI experts, Ceramic Experts.
Goal of the case study (what was the intended goal? Was it achieved? If not, why?)	To foster social inclusion and artistic expression for visually impaired participants by developing an "International Artcraft." The program aimed to integrate non-formal learning with tactile workshops, enabling participants to move from creative ideation to the physical realization of a ceramic work (hands-on manipulation, glazing, and coloring).
Description (in a clear step by step approach)	The structured rotation between Group A and Group B ensured that all 77 participants received both theoretical/creative stimulation and practical workshop time, culminating in the delivery of certificates and a final evaluation. In specific: Phase 1: Integration & Onboarding (Sunday): Initial ice-breaking and non-formal activities at Hotel Califfo to build trust among the diverse groups. Phase 2: Ideation & Tactile Initiation (Monday): While one group engaged in "Creative Thinking" sessions, the other began "Hands-on" clay manipulation, focusing on the sensory experience of the material. Phase 3: Creation & Skill Development (Tuesday): Deepening the work. Participants utilized their senses (workshop "Use Your Senses") to translate abstract ideas into physical shapes with the support of potters and VI experts.

	Phase 4: Sensory Inspiration (Wednesday): A field visit to the "Sound Garden" (Pinuccio Sciola Museum) provided external sensory stimuli, linking the auditory experience of stone/sculpture to their own clay work. Phase 5: Refinement & Finishing (Thursday): Completion of the "International Artcraft" through glazing and coloring. A dedicated feedback session ("Touch and Feel Feedback") allowed for a tactile review of the progress. Phase 6: Professional Exchange & Evaluation (Friday - Saturday): Sharing best practices between international experts on improving tactile experiences, followed by a final evaluation and reflection on the learning journey.
Impact and validation and lessons learned -For successful cases: what was the impact, how it was validated) -For challenges what obstacles prevented success, what went wrong etc	Impact: The program successfully created a "bridge" between different European organizations. Participants reported increased confidence in their artistic abilities and improved interpersonal skills through the mixed-group dynamics. Validation: Validation was achieved through: • The Final Product: Completion of the glazed ceramic artcrafts. • Certification: Formal recognition of the skills acquired. • Peer-to-Peer Learning: The "Sharing of Best Practices" sessions confirmed that the methodologies used by lerfop, Ardmore, and others were effectively transferred to the trainers.
Access details (website, contact info) and related resources developed (What training manuals, guidelines, technical fact sheets, posters, pictures, video and audio documents, and/or Web sites have been developed?)	https://youtu.be/HMILPXfwpg0

Case Study 4: Museum Sensory Tour

Full Name	The Museum Sensory Tour allows visitors to experience the artworks through touch: it is a journey into the world of art
Year initiated/ended	Ongoing (Aligned with the 2006 UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and ICOM "Key Concepts of Museology").

Provider	CITISLAB (Laboratory for Accessible and Multisensory Solutions).
Target Group	* Persons with visual impairments (blind and partially sighted). Persons with hearing or cognitive disabilities. General public ("Design for All") seeking a multisensory cultural experience.
Goal of the case study (what was the intended goal? Was it achieved? If not, why?)	Intended Goal: To transform the museum from a place of "Do Not Touch" into a space of "Forbidden Not to Touch." The goal is to guarantee the right to culture by creating multisensory itineraries (visual-tactile-auditory) that connect the museum to its urban and landscape context. Achievement: Yes. The objective is achieved by integrating physical tactile supports with interactive technologies, allowing for a deep "aesthetic understanding" even in the absence of sight.
Description (in a clear step by step approach)	Context Analysis: Identifying the scenario—either a "Connection Itinerary" between multiple institutions in a town or a "Single Museum Itinerary." Reception & Orientation: Installation of sustainable micro-architectures (Integrated Landscape) powered by solar panels. These serve as info-points where visitors can charge devices and explore a Tactile Map of the entire itinerary. Museum Entry: Placement of a Tactile Totem or Tactile Table at the entrance, featuring a 3D model of the building and a floor plan to help the user build a "mental map" of the spaces. Itinerary Development: Strategic placement of specific tools based on the importance of the artworks: Tactile Tables/Panels: For detailed exploration of specific masterpieces. Tactile Plaques: For quick orientation and essential information. Technological Integration: Use of an App supported by Beacons or NFC technology to provide precise audio descriptions that guide the hands during tactile exploration. Contextual Dialogue: Designing the museum path to maintain a dialogue with the outside world (landscapes and views), ensuring the museum is not an "impenetrable container" but part of the environment

Impact and validation and lessons learned	Impact: The democratization of art. The visitor is no longer a passive subject but an autonomous explorer capable of navigating a "controlled space." It creates a bridge between physical perception and aesthetic appreciation. Validation: Validated through the use of clear graphics and texts (Easy-to-read) and the successful implementation of the "Tactile Tables" (e.g., at the Diocesan Museum of Brescia), which allow for diverse levels of information depth (via QR Codes or NFC).
Impact and validation and lessons learned -For successful cases: what was the impact, how it was validated) -For challenges what obstacles prevented success, what went wrong etc	Success Factors: Multisensoriality (touch + audio + sight) enhances learning for everyone, not just those with disabilities. Precise audio descriptions are essential to "educate the touch" and provide context to what is being felt. Challenges: The main obstacle is the traditional museum culture of "security and conservation" which often views touching as a risk. The lesson learned is that cultural accessibility is a human right, and with correct calibration (multisensory tools), conservation and inclusion can coexist.
Access details (website, contact info) and related resources developed (What training manuals, guidelines, technical fact sheets, posters, pictures, video and audio documents, and/or Web sites have been developed?)	https://citislab.it/itinerari/itinerari-museali/

Case Study 5: Touchdown Programme

Full Name	Touchdown Dance Programme
Year initiated/ended	2014 – ongoing
Provider	Touchdown Dance (United Kingdom)
Target Group	People who are blind or visually impaired, inclusive groups (blind and sighted participants)

Goal of the case study (what was the intended goal? Was it achieved? If not, why?)	The goal was to develop an inclusive dance methodology accessible to people with visual impairments, removing reliance on visual demonstration and promoting multisensory learning. The programme also aimed to increase participation, confidence, and creative expression. → The goal was successfully achieved, and the method is now used internationally.
Description (in a clear step by step approach)	1. Introduction to participants and verbal orientation to the space 2. Warm-up focused on body awareness and sensory activation 3. Teaching movement using verbal instructions, rhythm, and touch 4. Use of tactile connection and partner work 5. Improvisation exercises guided by imagery and sound cues 6. Group activities to develop spatial awareness and interaction 7. Reflection and feedback session
Impact and validation and lessons learned -For successful cases: what was the impact, how it was validated) -For challenges what obstacles prevented success, what went wrong etc	• Participants showed increased confidence, independence, and engagement • Demonstrated that dance can be taught effectively without visual demonstration • Highlighted the importance of clear verbal communication and tactile feedback • Validated through workshops, participant feedback, and international dissemination
Access details (website, contact info) and related resources developed (What training manuals, guidelines, technical fact sheets, posters, pictures, video and audio documents, and/or Web sites have been developed?)	Website: https://touchdowndance.co.uk Developed resources include: • Inclusive dance methodology guidelines • Training workshops and educational materials • Videos and documentation of practice • International knowledge-sharing sessions

Case Study 6: EU Beyond Access

Full Name	Europe Beyond Access
Year initiated/ended	2019 – 2023

Provider	European consortium of cultural organizations (e.g. Onassis Stegi, Holland Dance Festival, Skånes Dansteater, Sadler's Wells and others)
Target Group	Disabled artists (including visually impaired), dance professionals, audiences, cultural institutions
Goal of the case study (what was the intended goal? Was it achieved? If not, why?)	The project aimed to increase visibility, opportunities, and professional development for disabled artists in dance and theatre, and to remove structural barriers in the performing arts sector. It also focused on: • supporting international careers of disabled dancers • improving accessibility in performances and institutions • building audiences for inclusive work → The goal was successfully achieved, with large-scale European collaboration and measurable outputs.
Description (in a clear step by step approach)	Identification of barriers in the performing arts sector Selection and support of disabled artists and productions Organization of international performances and tours Development of accessible formats (audio description, touch tours) Training and knowledge-sharing among partner organizations Audience development and awareness campaigns Evaluation and dissemination of results
Impact and validation and lessons learned -For successful cases: what was the impact, how it was validated) -For challenges what obstacles prevented success, what went wrong etc	• Increased visibility of disabled dancers across Europe • Strengthened professional opportunities and mobility • Demonstrated that inclusive dance can be high-quality and internationally relevant • Validated through performances, audience engagement, and institutional partnerships
Access details (website, contact info) and related resources developed (What training manuals, guidelines, technical fact sheets, posters, pictures, video and audio	• Website: https://www.europebeyondaccess.com • Resources developed: ○ Reports and documentation on inclusive performing arts ○ Accessible performance practices (audio description, touch tours) ○ Professional development opportunities for artists ○ International networking and knowledge-sharing

documents, and/or Web sites have been developed?)

Case Study 7: Theatre Exit

Full Name	<i>Theatre EXIT - Inclusive Theatre as a Space for Artistic Expression, Social Participation, and Empowerment</i>
Year initiated/ended	2016
Provider	Theatre Exit is a Polish inclusive theatre company based in Kraków, established in 2016 by Maciej Sikorski within the activities of the Catholic Association of People with Disabilities and Their Friends "Klika". The organizational and fundraising side of Theatre Exit's work is supported by the Fundacja Budzenie Pasji. The ensemble brings together people with different types and degrees of disabilities, including actors with visual impairments, cerebral palsy, and intellectual disabilities, as well as professional artists and musicians.
Target Group	The main target group of Theatre Exit includes persons with disabilities and non-disabled artists working together in a shared creative process, as well as wider audiences exposed to inclusive artistic practice. In the context of this module, the case is particularly relevant for young people with visual impairments, youth workers, theatre educators, facilitators, and cultural professionals interested in accessible and socially engaged theatre.
Goal of the case study (what was the intended goal? Was it achieved? If not, why?)	The main goal of Theatre Exit was to create a professional artistic space in which persons with and without disabilities could work together as equal creators, using high-quality theatrical means, live music, and strong artistic direction. The initiative sought not only to produce performances and films, but also to build an inclusive community based on mutual support, dignity, and the recognition of inner potential. This goal has largely been achieved. Since its establishment, Theatre Exit has developed a consistent artistic identity, created numerous performances and theatrical film projects, and demonstrated that inclusive theatre can be both artistically ambitious and socially transformative. The company has also shown that people with disabilities, including those with complex support needs, can actively participate in demanding artistic work and contribute meaningfully to the cultural field. From the perspective of the DEAP project, Theatre Exit is also an important example because of its collaboration in international theatre workshops held in Poland, where

	inclusive artistic practice became a space for intercultural exchange, learning, and empowerment.
Description (in a clear step by step approach)	The work of Theatre Exit is based on a carefully structured yet deeply human artistic process. First, the company creates an inclusive working environment in which actors with and without disabilities collaborate as members of one artistic team. The focus is not on separating participants according to ability, but on identifying and using each person's strengths, talents, and forms of expression. Second, the creative process is built around professionally designed theatrical productions. Theatre Exit develops performances and films that combine live acting, live music, shadow theatre, symbolic imagery, and strong emotional storytelling. These artistic means are not simplified for accessibility, but rather reimagined so that different performers can contribute authentically. Third, the company fosters deep interpersonal relationships within the group. The ensemble is not only a production team, but also a supportive community in which participants accompany one another in everyday artistic and personal life. This relational dimension is central to the theatre's inclusive philosophy. Fourth, Theatre Exit extends the impact of each artistic event beyond the performance itself. After performances and screenings, the creators regularly engage audiences in conversations, reflection, and dialogue, allowing viewers to better understand the themes of the work and the value of inclusive artistic collaboration. In some cases, workshops are also included, making the audience part of the creative and educational process. Finally, the theatre invites collaboration with professional artists from different artistic disciplines and pays close attention to the visual and symbolic coherence of its productions, posters, and communication materials. This reinforces the message that inclusive art is not a marginal practice, but a serious and valuable contribution to cultural life.
Impact and validation and lessons learned	The impact of Theatre Exit can be observed on several interconnected levels: artistic, social, educational, and personal. At the artistic level, the theatre has demonstrated that inclusive performance can maintain high aesthetic and professional quality while remaining rooted in accessibility and social meaning. The use of shadow theatre, live music, and symbolic storytelling has created a distinctive artistic language that is both accessible and emotionally powerful. At the social level, Theatre Exit has challenged stereotypes about disability by presenting actors with disabilities as full artistic partners rather than passive beneficiaries of support. This has helped reshape audience perceptions and foster greater openness toward inclusion in culture. At the personal level, participation in the theatre has supported performers in building confidence, communication skills, emotional expression, and a sense of belonging. For

	actors with disabilities, including visual impairments, the theatre has become a space of visibility, agency, and meaningful contribution. From an educational point of view, the case confirms that inclusive theatre works best when accessibility is approached not as a technical add-on, but as a core artistic and relational principle. It also shows that support and autonomy must go hand in hand: participants should receive the guidance they need, but always in ways that reinforce independence and dignity. An important lesson learned is that inclusion in theatre requires time, trust, and consistency. Strong artistic outcomes emerge when participants are treated seriously, expectations remain high, and the environment is built on mutual respect rather than pity or overprotection.
Impact and validation and lessons learned -For successful cases: what was the impact, how it was validated) -For challenges what obstacles prevented success, what went wrong etc	The success of Theatre Exit can be validated through its sustained activity since 2016, the number and diversity of its productions, the continuity of its artistic team, and the public engagement generated by performances, screenings, and post-performance discussions. The theatre has built a recognizable model of inclusive artistic practice in Poland and has expanded its impact through films, workshops, and public dialogue. Its value is also validated qualitatively through the visibility it gives to performers with disabilities, the emotional and reflective response of audiences, and its ability to maintain meaningful cooperation between artists of different backgrounds and abilities. In the DEAP context, the collaboration in international workshops in Poland additionally confirms its relevance as an inspiring practice for inclusive arts education. For challenges: what obstacles prevented success, what went wrong, etc.? One structural challenge is the lack of a permanent, stable venue throughout much of the theatre's existence. Working across different spaces may have created logistical and organizational difficulties. Inclusive theatre also requires significant emotional, organizational, and financial investment, especially when working with diverse access needs and professional artistic standards simultaneously. Another challenge concerns the broader social context: stereotypes about disability and the frequent underestimation of inclusive art can make funding, recognition, and mainstream visibility more difficult to secure. Nevertheless, Theatre Exit appears to have addressed these barriers through consistency, artistic quality, and mission-driven collaboration.
Access details (website, contact info) and related resources developed (What training manuals, guidelines, technical fact sheets, posters, pictures, video and audio documents, and/or Web sites have been developed?)	Theatre Exit can be accessed through its official communication channels and direct contact with its team. The organization maintains an active online presence, providing information about performances, projects, and ongoing activities. Website: https://teatrexit.pl/ Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/teatrexit/ Contact persons:

	- Maciej Sikorski – Director / Artistic Director / Theatre Founder ✉ m.sikorski@teatredit.pl ☎ +48 530 719 801 - Kamil Padlikowski – Press Officer ✉ kamil.padlikowski@gmail.com ☎ +48 534 185 122 - Paweł Rajda – Webmaster ✉ p.rajda@teatredit.pl Theatre Exit has developed a variety of artistic and educational resources supporting its inclusive approach, including: - live theatre performances combining shadow theatre, live acting, and music - theatrical film productions with strong narrative and symbolic structure - post-performance discussions with audiences - workshop-based formats integrating artistic creation and participation - audiovisual materials available online (recordings, poetic interpretations, documentaries) - visual communication materials (posters, promotional content) with a strong and coherent artistic identity These resources provide valuable inspiration for educators and practitioners working in inclusive arts and can serve as examples of how to combine artistic excellence, accessibility, and social impact within one integrated model.
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Case Study 8: Extant Theatre

Full Name	Extant Theatre Company - Leading Practice in Sensory and Accessible Theatre for Visually Impaired Participants
Year initiated/ended	1997 – ongoing
Provider	Extant Theatre is the UK's leading professional performing arts company dedicated to creating theatre by and for visually impaired artists. Established in 1997, the organization focuses on developing innovative and inclusive theatre practices that challenge traditional visual dominance in performance. Extant works at the intersection of art, accessibility, and education, producing performances, training programmes, and research-based methodologies that support the participation of visually impaired individuals in the arts sector. The

	company collaborates with theatres, cultural institutions, and educators across the UK and internationally.
Target Group	The primary target group of Extant Theatre includes visually impaired artists, performers, and participants, ranging from young people to adults. The organization also works with educators, facilitators, and cultural professionals, supporting them in developing inclusive practices. In the context of the DEAP project, this case study is particularly relevant for: • young people with visual impairments • youth workers and theatre facilitators • educators implementing sensory theatre approaches • organizations interested in accessibility in arts and culture
Goal of the case study (what was the intended goal? Was it achieved? If not, why?)	The main goal of Extant Theatre is to create equal opportunities for visually impaired individuals in the performing arts, both as creators and audiences. The organization aims to remove barriers to participation by developing innovative methods of accessible theatre that go beyond traditional adaptations. This includes redefining theatre through sensory, audio-based, and immersive approaches, ensuring that visually impaired participants can fully engage with and contribute to artistic processes. This goal has been successfully achieved and continuously developed. Extant has become a recognized leader in accessible theatre, influencing both artistic practice and accessibility standards within the cultural sector. Through its productions, training programmes, and research initiatives, the organization has demonstrated that inclusive theatre can be both artistically innovative and socially impactful.
Description (in a clear step by step approach)	The work of Extant Theatre is structured around a comprehensive and integrated approach to inclusive performance. First, the organization develops theatre productions that are designed from the outset to be accessible. Rather than adapting finished performances, accessibility is embedded in the creative process. This includes the use of audio description as a creative tool, spatial sound design, and sensory storytelling techniques. Second, Extant implements structured training programmes for visually impaired participants. These programmes focus on building skills in acting, movement, voice, and spatial awareness, while also supporting confidence and

	professional development. Participants are encouraged to explore their own artistic language and take active roles in the creative process. Third, the organization develops and promotes innovative methodologies, such as “sensory theatre” and “aesthetic of access”, where accessibility becomes part of the artistic expression rather than an external addition. This approach challenges traditional hierarchies in theatre and opens new possibilities for inclusive performance. Fourth, Extant engages in research and knowledge-sharing activities. The company collaborates with universities, cultural institutions, and practitioners to develop and disseminate best practices in accessible theatre. It also provides training for theatre professionals, supporting the wider sector in becoming more inclusive. Finally, Extant ensures that its work reaches diverse audiences through performances, workshops, and public engagement activities. This contributes to raising awareness and changing perceptions about visual impairment in the arts.
Impact and validation and lessons learned	The impact of Extant Theatre can be observed at multiple levels: artistic innovation, social inclusion, and sector-wide transformation. At the artistic level, Extant has developed new forms of theatre that challenge the dominance of visual perception and expand the language of performance. By integrating sound, touch, and spatial awareness into the core of theatrical expression, the organization has created a distinctive and influential model of sensory theatre. At the social level, Extant has significantly increased the visibility and participation of visually impaired artists. It has demonstrated that individuals with visual impairments can not only participate in theatre, but also lead, innovate, and shape artistic practices. At the educational level, the organization has contributed to the development of inclusive methodologies that can be applied in workshops, training programmes, and youth work contexts. Its work provides valuable inspiration for projects such as DEAP, particularly in relation to empowerment, autonomy, and creative participation. A key lesson learned is that accessibility should not be treated as a technical requirement, but as a creative opportunity. When accessibility is integrated into the artistic process, it enriches the experience for all participants and audiences.
Impact and validation and lessons learned	For successful cases: what was the impact, how it was validated? The success of Extant Theatre is validated through its long-term activity, its recognition as a leading organization in accessible theatre in the UK, and its

-For successful cases: what was the impact, how it was validated) -For challenges what obstacles prevented success, what went wrong etc	influence on both artistic and institutional practices. The organization has developed numerous productions, training programmes, and partnerships, demonstrating the sustainability and relevance of its approach. Its methodologies have been adopted and referenced by other organizations, confirming its role as a pioneer in the field of inclusive and sensory theatre. The impact is also visible in the increased participation of visually impaired individuals in performing arts and in the growing awareness of accessibility within the sector. For challenges: what obstacles prevented success, what went wrong, etc.? One of the main challenges faced by Extant Theatre relates to the broader structural barriers within the cultural sector, including limited funding for inclusive arts and the persistence of traditional, visually-oriented approaches to theatre. Additionally, implementing innovative accessible practices requires time, resources, and continuous training, which may limit scalability. There is also an ongoing need to balance artistic experimentation with accessibility requirements. Despite these challenges, Extant has successfully navigated these barriers by maintaining a strong mission, building partnerships, and continuously developing its methodologies.
Access details (website, contact info) and related resources developed (What training manuals, guidelines, technical fact sheets, posters, pictures, video and audio documents, and/or Web sites have been developed?)	Website: https://extant.org.uk/ Extant Theatre has developed a wide range of resources supporting inclusive and sensory theatre practice, including: • professional theatre productions designed with integrated accessibility • training programmes and workshops for visually impaired participants • toolkits and methodological frameworks for inclusive theatre • research outputs and publications on accessibility in performing arts • educational materials for facilitators and cultural professionals • public engagement events and knowledge-sharing initiatives These resources provide valuable guidance for educators and practitioners seeking to implement inclusive theatre approaches and can be directly applied in projects such as DEAP.

Case Study 9: Polo Tattile Multimediale

Full Name	Polo Tattile Multimediale (<i>Multimedia Tactile Centre</i>), including the Museo Tattile “Borges” (<i>“Borges” Tactile Museum</i>), developed by the Stamperia Regionale Braille (<i>Regional Braille Printing House</i>) in Catania
Year initiated/ended	The Polo Tattile Multimediale (<i>Multimedia Tactile Centre</i>) was inaugurated in March 2008. In 2011, it launched the Polo Tattile Itinerante (<i>Travelling Tactile Centre</i>) with support from the Regione Siciliana (<i>Sicilian Regional Government</i>).
Provider	Stamperia Regionale Braille ETS (<i>Regional Braille Printing House – Third Sector Entity</i>) – Unione Italiana dei Ciechi (<i>Italian Union of the Blind</i>), Catania Telephone: +39 095500177
Target Group	The initiative is explicitly addressed not only to blind and partially sighted visitors, but also to sighted visitors, schools, and the wider public. This is one of its strongest features: it is not a segregated service but a shared cultural environment designed to foster accessibility, awareness, and social integration through multisensory museum practice.
Goal of the case study (what was the intended goal? Was it achieved? If not, why?)	The intended goal was to extend the work of the Stamperia Regionale Braille (<i>Regional Braille Printing House</i>) beyond production services and create a cultural and social meeting point for knowledge, awareness, information, and integration. The guided-visit pages describe the experience as one that invites reflection on visual disability and on cultural and social integration. The Museo Tattile “Borges” (<i>“Borges” Tactile Museum</i>) adds a more specific objective: enabling access to art, monuments, and beauty through touch, Braille-labelled objects, and three-dimensional models, including monuments of Sicily.
Description (in a clear step by step approach)	The Polo Tattile Multimediale (Multimedia Tactile Centre) of Catania was inaugurated in 2008 as the natural extension of the long-standing work of the Stamperia Regionale Braille (Regional Braille Printing House) in the social and cultural inclusion of blind and partially sighted persons. Its activities had already included the transliteration of texts into Braille, Large Print, and electronic formats, as well as the development of accessible design solutions and specialised museum resources. The initiative was established as a permanent cultural and accessibility hub inside a historic eighteenth-century building on Via Etnea. The first phase of the initiative consisted of creating a space that would function simultaneously as a cultural venue, an accessibility centre, and a meeting point between knowledge and diversity. From the outset, the provider framed the Polo (Centre) not simply as a museum, but as a broader ecosystem in which access to art, information, and assistive resources could be combined within a shared environment open to both visually impaired and sighted visitors. The second phase involved structuring the visitor experience around guided access to different thematic areas. The provider’s public materials show that the Polo includes the Museo Tattile “Borges” (“Borges” Tactile Museum), the showroom Frammenti di Luce (Fragments of Light), the Giardino Sensoriale (Sensory Garden), and the Bar al Buio (Dark Bar), thus creating a progressive multisensory itinerary rather than a single isolated exhibition room. This

	organisation transforms the visit into a layered experience in which tactile exploration, sensory awareness, cultural mediation, and practical accessibility knowledge are interconnected. The third phase centred on the tactile mediation of art and heritage. Within the Museo Tattile “Borges” (“Borges” Tactile Museum), visitors can explore works and models produced by the Stamperia Regionale Braille (Regional Braille Printing House), including tactile representations of major monuments and heritage sites such as the Teatro Massimo Bellini (Bellini Opera House) in Catania, the Valle dei Templi (Valley of the Temples) in Agrigento, Stonehenge, the Colosseum, and other cultural landmarks. In this way, the museum transforms visually based heritage into an experience accessible through touch, spatial perception, and guided interpretation. The fourth phase expanded the educational and practical dimension of the experience through the showroom Frammenti di Luce (Fragments of Light). According to the provider, this space offers a wide range of tools to support the autonomy of blind and partially sighted persons, including books, didactic aids, devices for personal and domestic autonomy, games, and information technology equipment. The showroom is conceived not only as an exhibition area, but also as a place where teachers, parents, and visually impaired users can explore, test, and access assistive materials. This significantly broadens the scope of the initiative, moving from cultural access alone to practical support for education and everyday autonomy. The fifth phase consisted of consolidating the Polo (Centre) as an evolving cultural platform. More recent materials produced by the provider document the opening of additional spaces such as the Sala Frazzetto (Frazzetto Room), dedicated to tactile contemporary art. This shows that the museum offer has expanded over time and that the institution continues to enrich its tactile collection with new works considered particularly suitable for tactile enjoyment because of their forms, textures, and details. The sixth phase extended the initiative beyond the fixed site through public programming and outreach activities. The provider reports recurring events such as Una Domenica al Museo (A Sunday at the Museum) and, from 2011 onward, the creation of the Polo Tattile Itinerante (Travelling Tactile Centre), launched following positive visitor feedback. This demonstrates that the project evolved from a permanent centre into a broader model of dissemination and public engagement around accessible culture. Overall, the Polo Tattile Multimediale (Multimedia Tactile Centre) can be described as an integrated model of accessibility and cultural mediation, in which tactile interpretation of heritage, multisensory environments, assistive technologies, and public awareness are combined within a coherent and permanent institutional framework.
Impact and validation and lessons learned -For successful cases: what was the impact, how it was validated) -For challenges what obstacles prevented success, what went wrong etc	The initiative demonstrates impact at multiple levels: cultural access, educational support, and public awareness. At the level of cultural accessibility, the tactile museum enables blind and partially sighted users to access artistic and architectural heritage through touch, spatial exploration, and guided mediation. This represents a shift from passive accessibility measures to an active and autonomous form of cultural participation. At the educational level, the integration of tiflodidactic materials (<i>materials designed for the education of blind and visually impaired learners</i>) and assistive technologies within the same environment extends the impact beyond the museum visit. The availability of tools for learning, orientation, and daily autonomy supports both users and professionals such as teachers, educators, and families, creating a broader ecosystem of support and knowledge transfer. A third level of impact concerns awareness and social perception. By opening the experience to mixed audiences, the Polo (Centre) facilitates encounters between visually impaired and sighted visitors, contributing to a more inclusive understanding of disability and to the

	reduction of stereotypes. The multisensory nature of the experience allows sighted users to engage with non-visual modes of perception, reinforcing empathy and awareness. Validation of impact is supported by the long-term continuity of the initiative, active since 2008, the expansion of its activities, including the launch of the itinerant version in 2011, and the ongoing enrichment of its collections and services. The provider explicitly refers to positive feedback from visitors as a driver for further development. However, no detailed public documentation of quantitative impact indicators or formal external evaluation reports was identified. The main lesson learned is that accessibility can be transformed into a central cultural methodology when it is integrated into the design of the experience and supported by institutional continuity. The combination of tactile mediation, educational resources, and assistive technologies creates a replicable model of inclusive cultural infrastructure. A second lesson concerns the importance of coupling cultural access with practical tools for autonomy, thereby extending impact beyond the cultural domain. The main limitation lies in the limited availability of publicly accessible evaluation data, which reduces the capacity to benchmark outcomes and demonstrate impact in quantitative terms. Future development would benefit from structured data collection on visitor profiles, learning outcomes, and long-term engagement.
Access details (website, contact info) and related resources developed (What training manuals, guidelines, technical fact sheets, posters, pictures, video and audio documents, and/or Web sites have been developed?)	Access is provided through the dedicated websites of the Polo Tattile (<i>Tactile Centre</i>) and the Stamperia Regionale Braille (<i>Regional Braille Printing House</i>), with telephone booking and online visit reservation. Publicly visible resources include the website itself, guided-visit pages, image galleries, descriptions of the tactile museum, descriptions of the showroom, and the accessible-aids catalogue. The showroom page also documents the in-house development and testing of tiflodidactic materials (<i>educational tools for blind and visually impaired users</i>) and tiflotechnical materials (<i>technical and assistive tools for blind and visually impaired users</i>), such as globes, tactile maps, Braille writing tablets, maths supports, instructional games, and assistive technologies.

Case Study 10: Arts Laboratories for Inclusion

Full Name	Performing Arts Laboratories for Inclusion (<i>Integrated Theatre, Body Expression and Choir Labs</i>), implemented within the project Non vedo differenze. Benessere e autonomia (<i>"I Do Not See Differences. Well-being and Autonomy"</i>)
Year initiated/ended	2017 - ongoing
Provider	Istituto dei Ciechi – Opere Riunite "I. Florio e F. ed A. Salamone" (<i>Institute for the Blind – "I. Florio and F. & A. Salamone" Unified Institutions</i>), Palermo

	Address: Via Angiò 27, 90142 Palermo, Italy Email: info@istciechipalermo.it Telephone: +39 091 540324 Website: www.istciechipalermo.it
Target Group	The laboratory is explicitly addressed to persons with visual disabilities of all ages enrolled at the institute. The institute also states that up to 30% of beneficiaries may be visually impaired persons not enrolled in the structure.
Goal of the case study (what was the intended goal? Was it achieved? If not, why?)	The initiative aimed to promote personal development, autonomy, and social inclusion of visually impaired individuals through an integrated set of performing arts laboratories combining theatre, body expression, and vocal expression. The programme was designed to strengthen communication, emotional expression, body awareness, and relational competences by activating non-visual channels such as movement, voice, rhythm, and gesture. It also aimed to compensate for limitations in imitation-based learning by providing structured environments for experiential and embodied learning. The initiative was successfully implemented as part of the institute's educational and rehabilitative programme.
Description (in a clear step by step approach)	The initiative was developed within the project Non vedo differenze. Benessere e autonomia (<i>"I Do Not See Differences. Well-being and Autonomy"</i>) as an integrated performing arts pathway combining theatre, body expression, and choral practice. The three laboratories were designed as complementary environments addressing different dimensions of non-visual communication and personal development. The programme starts from a shared methodological assumption: in the absence of visual imitation, visually impaired individuals require structured opportunities to develop expressive, relational, and perceptual competences through alternative channels such as movement, voice, and embodied interaction. The Laboratorio espressione del corpo (<i>Body Expression Laboratory</i>) focuses on the body as the primary instrument of perception and communication. Activities are centred on guided movement, spatial exploration, and sensory awareness, allowing participants to build a conscious relationship with their body in space. Through tactile cues, rhythm, and physical exercises, participants develop coordination, posture, balance, and the ability to orient themselves and interact with others physically and expressively. The Laboratorio dell'arte del coro (<i>Choir and Vocal Expression Laboratory</i>) works on voice as a tool for identity, communication, and group cohesion. Through breathing techniques, vocal exercises, and collective singing, participants learn to modulate their voice, recognise rhythm, and synchronise with others. Choral practice creates a strong sense of belonging, as individual voices contribute to a shared sound, reinforcing listening, timing, and mutual adaptation. The Laboratorio dell'arte teatrale (<i>Theatre Arts Laboratory</i>) integrates these elements into structured dramatization. Theatre is used as a space for narrative construction, role interpretation, and emotional expression. Participants engage in storytelling, role-play, and dialogue, learning to manage communication in interaction with others. Particular emphasis is placed on gesture and social expressiveness, which are explicitly trained due to the reduced opportunity for observational learning. A key feature of the programme is the progressive integration of the three laboratories. Movement developed in body expression supports stage presence in theatre; vocal training enhances communication and performance; theatrical interaction reinforces both bodily and

	vocal expression. This creates a coherent learning pathway in which skills are transferred and reinforced across contexts. The laboratories also function as structured social environments. Participants are required to cooperate, respect timing, take turns, and adapt to group dynamics. This makes the activities not only artistic but also deeply educational, as they simulate real-life interaction patterns within a guided and supportive setting. Overall, the initiative can be described as a multisensory, embodied learning model, where theatre, movement, and voice are used as interconnected tools to develop autonomy, communication, and social participation in visually impaired users.
Impact and validation and lessons learned -For successful cases: what was the impact, how it was validated) -For challenges what obstacles prevented success, what went wrong etc	The initiative generated impact through the combined development of three interrelated competences: communication, body awareness, and social participation, each reinforced through the integration of theatre, movement, and vocal expression. At the level of communication, participants improved their ability to express themselves verbally and non-verbally. The combination of dramatization and choral work strengthened voice modulation, clarity of expression, and communicative intent. The structured use of dialogue, rhythm, and collective singing supported more confident and effective interaction in group contexts. At the level of body awareness, the body expression laboratory contributed to improved spatial orientation, coordination, and control of movement. Participants developed a more conscious use of posture, gesture, and physical presence, which are often underdeveloped in the absence of visual feedback. This had a direct effect on autonomy and confidence in both movement and interaction. At the social level, the programme created a consistent environment for practicing relational dynamics. Activities required cooperation, turn-taking, synchronisation, and mutual listening, leading to stronger group cohesion and increased participation. The collective dimension of theatre and choir, in particular, reinforced a sense of belonging and reduced social isolation. Validation of the initiative is reflected in the coherence and continuity of the integrated approach within the institutional programme. The alignment between objectives, methodologies, and activities demonstrates a structured and intentional pedagogical model. However, no publicly available quantitative indicators, formal assessment tools, or external evaluation reports were identified. The main lesson learned is that the integration of multiple performing arts disciplines produces a stronger and more holistic impact than isolated interventions, as movement, voice, and theatre reinforce each other in the development of non-visual competences. A second lesson is that embodied and multisensory approaches are essential for supporting learning and participation in visually impaired users.
Access details (website, contact info) and related resources developed (What training manuals, guidelines, technical fact sheets, posters, pictures, video and audio documents, and/or	Website: www.istciechipalermo.it Access is provided through the institutional channels of the Istituto dei Ciechi (<i>Institute for the Blind</i>), including direct contact and participation in activities. Publicly available resources include dedicated project webpages describing each laboratory: • Laboratorio dell'arte teatrale (<i>Theatre Arts Laboratory</i>) • Laboratorio espressione del corpo (<i>Body Expression Laboratory</i>) • Laboratorio dell'arte del coro (<i>Choir and Vocal Expression Laboratory</i>)

Web sites have been developed?)	These pages provide descriptions of objectives, methodologies, and activities. No publicly available training manuals, formal guidelines, or structured evaluation reports were identified.
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Case Study 11: Villaggio dei Suoni

Full Name	Villaggio dei Suoni – Un Percorso Ludico, Didattico e Musicale (<i>Village of Sounds – A Playful, Educational and Musical Pathway</i>)
Year initiated/ended	Initiated in 1997 - ongoing
Provider	Istituto dei Ciechi – Opere Riunite “I. Florio e F. ed A. Salamone” (<i>Institute for the Blind – “I. Florio and F. & A. Salamone” Unified Institutions</i>), Palermo Address: Via Angiò 27, 90142 Palermo, Italy Email: info@istciechipalermo.it Telephone: +39 091 540324 Website: www.istciechipalermo.it Project design entrusted to Gaspare Vassallo and C&V Progetti (<i>engineering and design firm</i>)
Target Group	Blind and partially sighted individuals, particularly children and young learners involved in educational and rehabilitative pathways.
Goal of the case study (what was the intended goal? Was it achieved? If not, why?)	The initiative aimed to create a structured multisensory environment combining play, music, and tactile exploration to support cognitive development, sensory activation, autonomy, and social integration of persons with visual impairments. The project was designed to reduce physical and social barriers through a purpose-built environment that enables learning through non-visual interaction. It was implemented as a permanent educational space within the institute.
Description (in a clear step by step approach)	The Villaggio dei Suoni (<i>Village of Sounds</i>) was conceived as a purpose-built multisensory environment within the premises of the Istituto dei Ciechi (<i>Institute for the Blind</i>) in Palermo. The project originated from the institution’s educational mission to support the development and integration of visually impaired individuals through sensory-based learning. The first phase consisted of identifying a suitable outdoor area within the institute. A long and narrow green space adjacent to the sports field was selected in order to create a clearly defined and continuous pathway. The spatial configuration was intentionally designed to support orientation and to guide users through a structured experiential route. The second phase focused on the pedagogical and architectural design of the environment. The project was based on the principle that learning and integration for visually impaired users can be strengthened by activating residual senses, particularly touch and hearing. The environment

	was therefore designed from the outset to be accessible, rather than adapted after construction. The third phase involved structuring the pathway as a continuous multisensory journey. The route was conceived as a progressive sequence in which movement through space corresponds to cognitive and sensory exploration. Each section of the pathway introduces new stimuli, encouraging users to interact, discover, and learn through direct experience. The fourth phase consisted of installing large-scale interactive sound structures and tactile elements. These installations were designed to be easily activated through touch and movement, producing sound as immediate feedback. Their size, materials (such as wood and metal), and strong sensory characteristics were chosen to maximise engagement and facilitate perception through non-visual channels. The fifth phase introduced orientation and accessibility features within the space. The pathway was marked by a continuous coloured curb to guide movement, and entry points were designed to be recognisable. Planned accessibility tools included tactile maps and Braille information panels, allowing users to understand the layout before engaging with the environment. The sixth phase incorporated thematic educational elements through tactile panels and symbolic sections based on natural elements such as earth, water, and sky. These sections combined textures, colours, and shapes to support associative learning and cognitive development. The final result is a fully integrated multisensory environment in which sound, touch, movement, and spatial organisation work together to support autonomous exploration, learning, and participation.
Impact and validation and lessons learned -For successful cases: what was the impact, how it was validated) -For challenges what obstacles prevented success, what went wrong etc	The initiative generated impact through its spatial and sensory design, enabling visually impaired users to interact autonomously with the environment and strengthen orientation skills, spatial awareness, and sensory perception. The combination of tactile and sound-based elements supported cognitive development and experiential learning, allowing users to understand cause-effect relationships and engage actively with the environment. The thematic organisation of the space contributed to associative learning and conceptual understanding through non-visual stimuli. The environment also supports social inclusion by allowing shared use by visually impaired and sighted users, facilitating informal interaction and reducing barriers between groups. Validation of the initiative is primarily based on its structured design and its integration within the educational framework of the institute. No publicly available quantitative data, user statistics, or formal evaluation reports were identified. The main lesson learned is that accessibility is most effective when it is embedded in the design of the environment rather than added as an adaptation. The project demonstrates the value of multisensory architecture as an educational and inclusive tool.
Access details (website, contact info) and related resources developed (What training manuals, guidelines, technical fact sheets, posters, pictures,	Website: www.istciechipalermo.it Access is provided through the institutional channels of the Istituto dei Ciechi (<i>Institute for the Blind</i>), including direct contact and on-site visits. Publicly available resources include detailed online descriptions of the project, including its educational objectives, spatial design, materials, and sound installations.

**video and audio
documents, and/or
Web sites have been
developed?)**

The available documentation functions as a descriptive and technical reference of the initiative.
No separate public training manuals, formal guidelines, or evaluation reports were identified.