



Project ERASMUS+ Number: 2022-2-HU01-KA220-HED-000099410

Title: “The development of the innovative educational method of ACCESSIBLE tourism in Central Europe” – ACCESSIBLE.

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Good practices in accessible tourism in Poland

Examples of good practice regarding accessible tourism activities in Poland are diverse and include:

- 1) institutional activities at the country level (**Ministry of Sport and Tourism**) and region level (**Wielkopolska Tourist Organization**),
- 2) tourist guides to the most popular urban tourist destination in Poland, which is Krakow (“**A Guide to Krakow for Tourists with Disabilities**”), tourist information about the availability and facilities on tourist trails (“**Karkonosze for Everyone**”, **Piast Trail in Greater Poland**),
- 3) tourist attractions (**Invisible Street in Poznań, Brama Poznania ICHOT [Poznan Gate], Museum of the First Piasts in Lednica, Museum of the Archdiocese of Gniezno**),
- 4) open spaces, such as parks and sensory gardens (**Spatial Orientation Park in Owińska**),
- 5) an event aimed at educating integration and social inclusion, organized periodically by the community of people with disabilities (OzN) during **the International White Cane Day**.

The Ministry of Sport and Tourism (MSiT) in Poland promotes accessible tourism in the context of social tourism as “a priority in the activities of tour operators, travel agencies

and tourist information points”. The Accessibility Plus 2018-2025 Program is being developed on a national scale, focused on universal design of public space, products and services in terms of architecture, information and communication. This program is included in the activities of the Polish Tourist Organization and Regional and Local Tourist Organizations. Accessibility is understood as the possibility of independent and independent use of: tourist attractions, information (guides, maps, information points), transport and communication in tourism, routes, paths, tourist trails, and catering, accommodation and sanitary infrastructure.



Fig. 1. Program of the Ministry of Sport and Tourism in Poland - accessible tourism
Source: <https://www.gov.pl/web/sport/turystyka-dostepna-dla-wszystkich> (access: 28.12.2023)

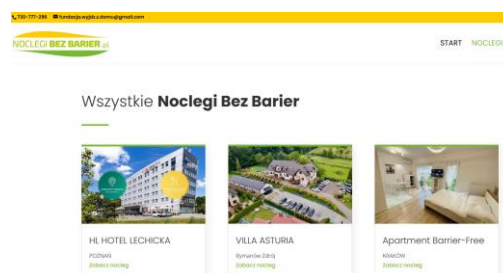


Fig. 2. Accommodation Without Barriers portal
Source: <https://noclegibezbarier.pl/noclegi/> (access: 28.12.2023)

„Tourism for people with special needs” („Turystyka osób ze szczególnymi potrzebami”, 2023, Fig. 1) – according to the Ministry of Sport and Tourism, over 4 million Poles (14%) are PwD, and people aged 60+ constitute approximately 10 million people, i.e. 25% of the Polish population. The purchasing power of seniors is growing - by 2035, its share in the total value of purchases will increase to 37%. MSiT recommends a guide titled: “Textbook: Tourism for



people with special needs. Guide for tour operators, travel agencies and tourist information points” (Fig. 3).

Fig. 3. Textbook: Tourism for people with special needs. Guide for tour operators, travel agencies and tourist information points, 2023, Source: <https://www.gov.pl/web/sport/turystyka-dostepna-dla-wszystkich> (access: 28.12.2023)

The MSiT website also includes a list of examples of good practices and solutions, including a database of guides,

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standards, guidelines, references to legal acts, programs and portals containing data on the availability of e.g. accommodation facilities (Fig. 2.)

Since 2020, the **Wielkopolska Tourist Organization (WOT)** has been conducting free training in the field of accessible tourism on the e-learning platform, addressed to all people professionally involved in tourism (Fig. 4). The training is addressed both to employees directly serving customers, as well as to managers and people making strategic decisions. Each course ends with a test verifying the acquired knowledge, and the training participant who obtains a positive result receives a certificate. Users can return to the course content any number of times - to supplement or verify information. The platform also offers full flexibility in acquiring knowledge, so there is no time limit in which the entire training must be completed.

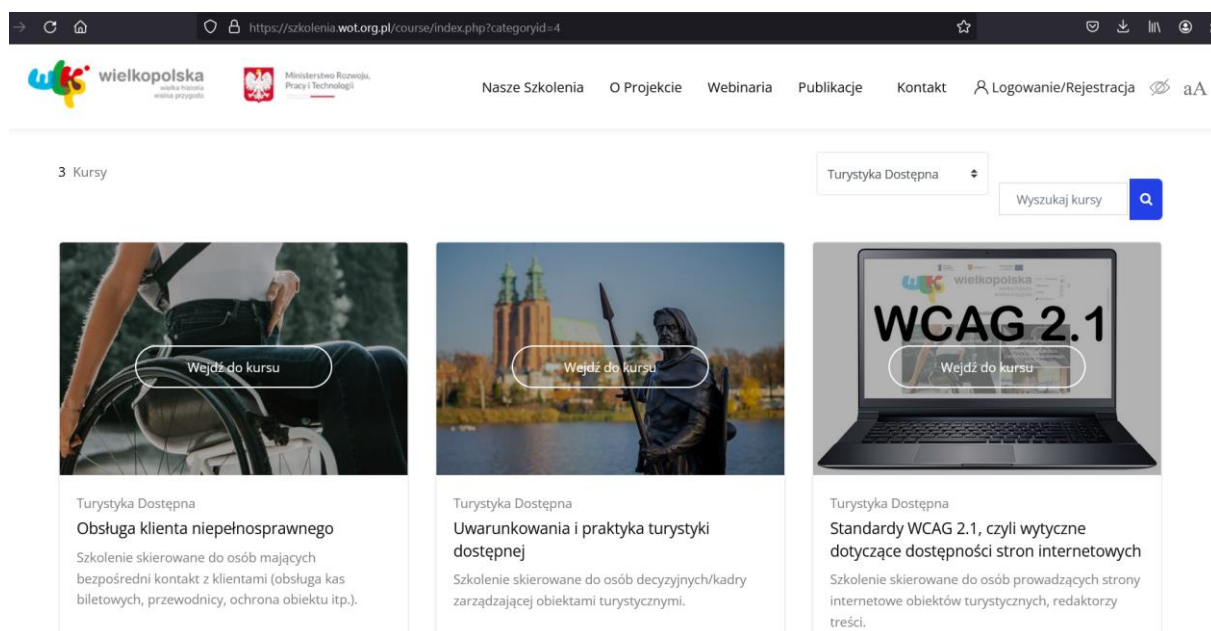


Fig. 4. Accessible tourism - a free e-learning course addressed to the tourism industry
Source: <https://szkolenia.wot.org.pl/> (access: 17.01.2024)

The courses were prepared by a professional team of trainers. Its members included practitioners and scientists specializing in a given field. This guarantees quality and compliance with the latest knowledge. Additionally, it is possible to use additional materials: webinars, conferences and manuals (Fig. 5). The WOT e-learning platform was created as part of the implementation of a public task entitled: "Improving the safety of tourist services for PwD in the Greater Poland Voivodeship", co-financed by the Ministry of Development, Labor and Technology in 2020.

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Fig. 5. „Accessible tourism” manual – recommendations for the tourism services sector.

Source: https://www.wot.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/WOT_Turystyka_dostepna.pdf (access: 28.12.2023)

“A Guide to Krakow for Tourists with Disabilities”

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(Fig. 6) is a compendium of knowledge on the accessibility of the main attractions for people with disabilities. Its second edition, released in 2023, was expanded to include the Nowa Huta route and made available in 4 language versions (Polish, English, French and Russian). The publication can be obtained free of

charge from the Department for the Issues of Persons with Disabilities of the Department of Social Policy and Health of the Krakow City Hall, as well as at municipal tourist information points, and can also be downloaded from the website and via QR as an application for mobile devices.

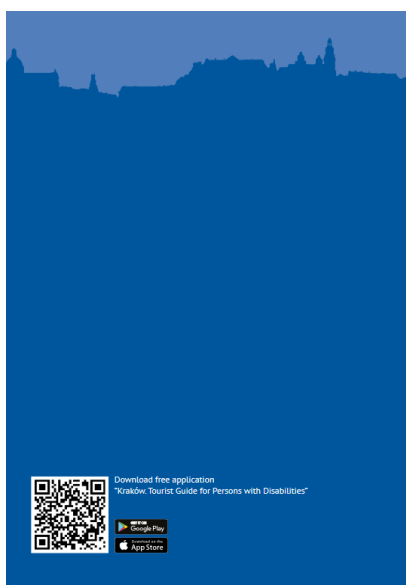
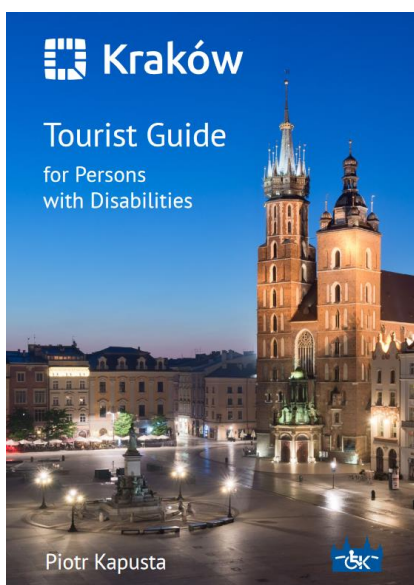


Fig. 6. “A Guide to Krakow for tourists with disabilities” – free to download in paper form, PDF and application for mobile devices, Source:

https://www.krakow.pl/bezbarrier/aktualnosci/202398,60,komunikat,krakow_dla_turysty_z_niepełnosprawnością (access: 28.12.2023)

The Piast Trail is one of the main cultural trails in Poland, related to the history of the first royal dynasty – the Piast dynasty. In 2019, the local government of the Wielkopolska Voivodeship commissioned an analysis of its accessibility for health care centers (motor, visual, hearing), seniors and families with children in all (33) facilities of the Piast Trail in the

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Wielkopolska Voivodeship. The purpose of the audit was not to collect current knowledge about the availability of individual attractions on the trail. A catalog of criteria for assessing the accessibility of facilities was developed, based on which each tourist attraction was assessed and described in an information card posted on the trail's website. The material prepared by experts is a reliable source of information for tourists and all people visiting the Piast Trail facilities. It also includes recommendations for facility owners regarding useful, universal amenities (Fig. 7.)



Fig. 7. The Piast Trail
Source: szlakpiastowski.pl
(access: 28.12.2023)

“**Karkonosze for All**” is a project implemented in Polish-Czech partnership, on the Polish side developed by the Karkonosze Sejmik of PwD (KSON). KSON employees tested tourist trails and places available to PwD on the Polish side of the mountains and in the nearby foothills: tourist trails, tourist attractions and for competitive tourism (Fig. 8).



Fig. 8. Path to the Szklarka Waterfall in the Karkonosze National Park, adapted to the needs of wheelchair users
Source: photo by A. Zajadacz

Invisible Street (Poznań, ul. Matejki 53) is a place that can be visited in absolute darkness, and the guides are blind people. You can experience not only moving around the street without the aid of sight, but also traveling on a tram and sensory experiences (through smell, touch). The guide explains how blind people function in everyday life (Fig. 12). You can also take part in workshops explaining facilities for blind and visually impaired people, such

as: Rubik's cube (Fig. 9), board games (Fig. 10), tourist guides with convex (relief) drawings and a reference scale, such as a human figure placed in each lower right corner of the page (Fig. 11).



Fig. 9. Invisible Street.
Rubik's Cube for the blind
Source: photo by A. Zajadacz



Fig. 10. Invisible Street.
Game for the blind
Source: photo by A. Zajadacz

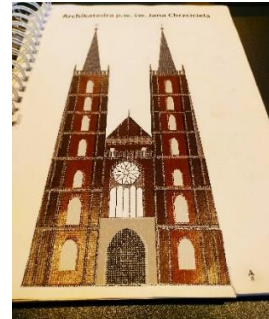


Fig. 11. Travel guides with relief drawings and reference scale (human figure)
Source: photo by A. Zajadacz

The Invisible Street also offers the Whispering Theater (Fig. 13.) - performances performed live in complete darkness and received only in the audio sphere.

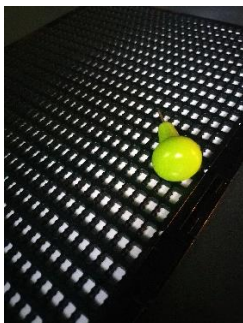


Fig. 12. Braille tablets
Source: photo by A. Zajadacz

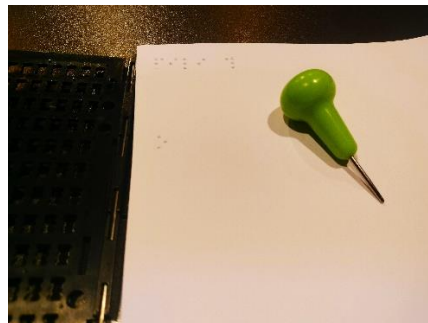


Fig. 13. "Whispered Theater" poster
Source: photo by A. Zajadacz

The Sound Panorama of the Łazarz Housing Estate (the part of Poznań where the Invisible Street is located) is available on the Invisible Street website. Panorama is a project financed by the Department of Culture of the City of Poznań and includes an interactive audio map with the most characteristic places of the district. To listen to the recordings, simply click on any marker on the map (Fig. 14).

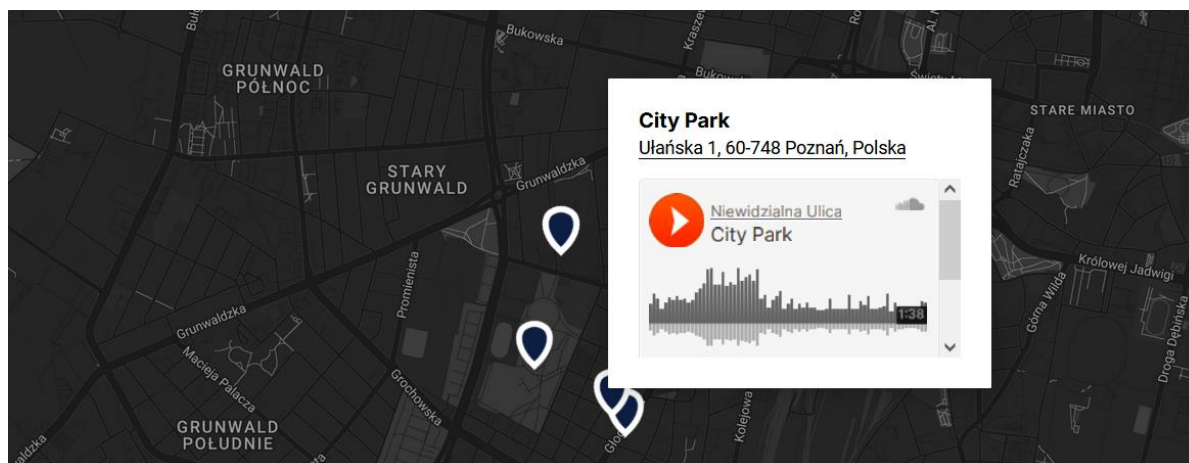


Fig. 14. Invisible Street - Sound Panorama of the Łazarz Housing Estate
Source: <https://niewidzialnaulica.pl/panorama-dziekowa-osiedl-lazarza/> (access: 28.12.2023)

Brama Poznania ICHOT [Poznan Gate] (ul. Gdańska 2, Poznań) is a modern, multimedia heritage interpretation center. Compared to other tourist attractions not only in Poznań, Greater Poland, but also in Poland, it is one of the facilities well adapted to the needs of people with disabilities, the elderly and visitors with children (Fig. 15).



Fig. 15. Brama Poznania ICHOT [Poznan Gate]
Source: <https://bramapoznania.pl> (access: 28.12.2023)

Brama Poznania offers many events addressed to people with disabilities, the elderly and families with children. With children in mind, a separate audio guide tour path has been created, including fun elements and leading through yellow markers to places adapted for children. Seniors can visit the Gate with a guide in their age group, for blind people there are aids, tactical exhibition elements and audio description. All films have been equipped with translation in Polish Sign Language (PJM), at the checkouts you can also connect with a Polish Sign Language interpreter in real time via video transmission. The facility has an elevator and

an evac chair (an evacuation chair in case the elevator is out of order), and outside there is a lift enabling wheelchair access to the grassy beach by the river. During the tour, you can use comfortable seats, as well as portable, light chairs available at the entrance to the rooms (Fig. 16).

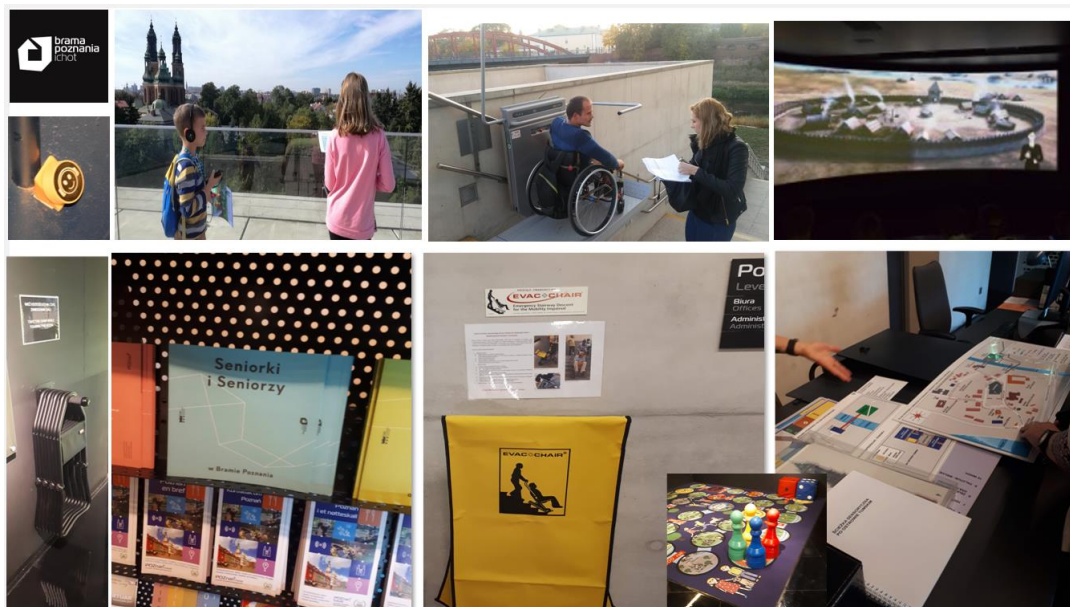


Fig.16. Brama Poznania [Poznan Gate] – examples of good practices in the field of accessibility
Source: photo by A. Zajadacz

All amenities, as well as events addressed to PwD, elderly people and families with children, have been presented in detail and in an accessible way (including PJM and audio description) on the website (Fig. 17).

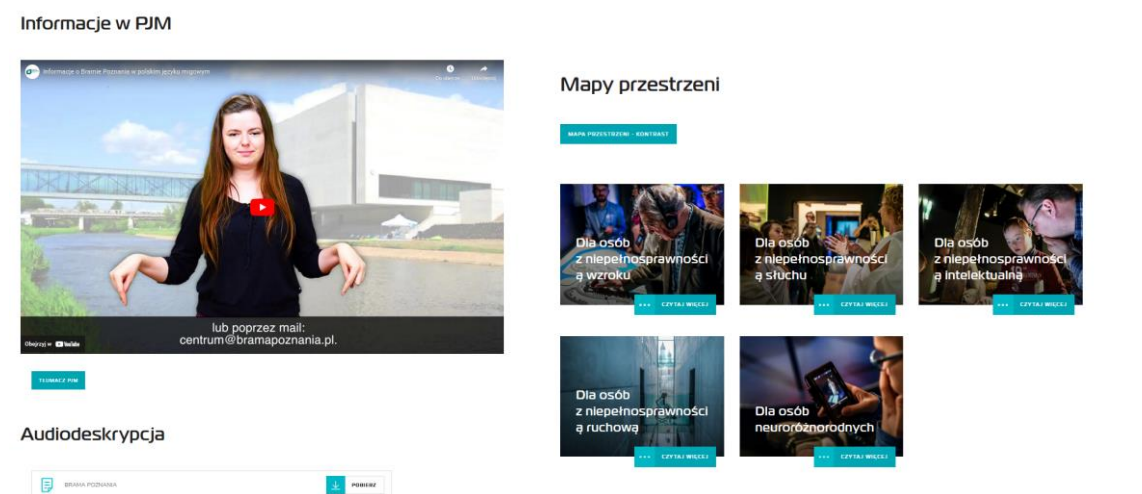


Fig. 17. Brama Poznania - information on the website regarding accessibility, including: in Polish Sign Language and audio description. Source: <https://bramapoznania.pl/dostepnosc> (access: 28.12.2023).

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Brama Poznania has won many competitions related to accessibility. In 2016, it received the title of Accessible Municipal Cultural Institution in Poznań. It was awarded the Golden Roar in the Innovation category in the Accessible Poznań 2019 competition, and in 2020 the title of Accessibility Leader 2020 in the Public Space category.

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The Museum of the First Piasts in Lednica (Dziekanowice, Lednogóra) is a good example of making historical places available both outdoors, in buildings, including the historic buildings of open-air museums, and through the organization of integration events (Fig. 18).



Fig. 18. Museum of the First Piasts in Lednica, Source: <https://www.lednicamuzeum.pl> (access: 28.12.2023)

The Museum provides comprehensive services. During the ferry crossing to the island of Ostrów Lednicki, employees help wheelchair users enter the ferry. The paths are gravel, paved, and there are ramps leading to the huts with exhibits. The boards at the exhibitions were placed at a height and at an angle convenient for reading by people in wheelchairs, and there were viewing places for rest in a mutisensory environment by the water, next to fragrant flowers (Fig. 19).

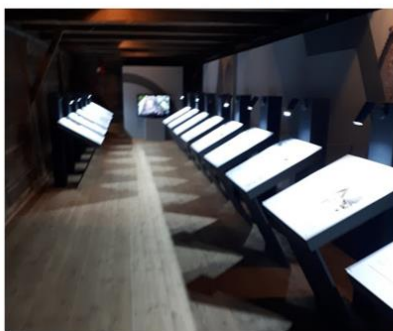


Fig. 19. Museum of the First Piasts in Lednica - good practices in the field of outdoor amenities in Ostrów Lednicki
Źródło: photo by A. Zajadacz

The historic architecture of the cottages in the open-air museum in Dziekanowice uses a simple solution of portable ramps that level thresholds. This allowed to avoid interference with the original structures, and at the same time allowed people in wheelchairs to overcome stairs and thresholds (Fig. 20).



Fig. 20. Museum of the First Piasts in Lednica - good practices in the field of amenities in the historic architecture of the open-air museum in Dziekanowice
Source: photo by A. Zajadacz

All outdoor facilities have light, portable seats, eagerly used by visitors (Fig. 21).



Fig. 21. Museum of the First Piasts in Lednica - good practices in the field of mobile seats

Source: photo by A. Zajadacz

The museum organizes many events and integration workshops, including a cyclical event titled "Through the thresholds of folk culture" in the open-air museum in Dziekanowice. On this day, part of the open-air museum will become an open place for PwD movement, trained educators conduct both tours and integration activities. One of the most important goals of the event is to make the museum a place accessible to the widest possible audience. The event program is based on the principles of social inclusion. It is addressed mainly to people struggling with movement and vision problems and seniors (Fig. 22).

poniedziałek 15 lipiec 2019

8/08 PROJEKT „PRZEZ PROGI KULTURY LUDOWEJ”



ARCHIWUM

- Rok 2023 (104)
- Rok 2022 (125)
- Rok 2021 (126)
- Rok 2020 (96)
- Rok 2019 (136)
- Rok 2018 (142)
- Rok 2017 (109)
- Rok 2016 (118)
- Rok 2015 (94)
- Rok 2014 (83)
- Rok 2013 (88)
- Rok 2012 (98)
- Rok 2011 (122)

Fig. 22. Museum of the First Piasts in Lednica – Cyclical events – “Through the Threshold of Culture” Source: <https://www.lednicamuzeum.pl> (access: 28.12.2023)

In the Museum of the Archdiocese of Gniezno (ul. Kolegiaty 2, Gniezno), an example of good practices addressed to deaf and hard of hearing people are tour guides (Fig. 23), equipped with recordings in Polish sign language, regarding all the exhibits visited both in the museum, as well as the Gniezno Cathedral (the coronation place of the first rulers of Poland and the center of the cult of Saint Adalbert).

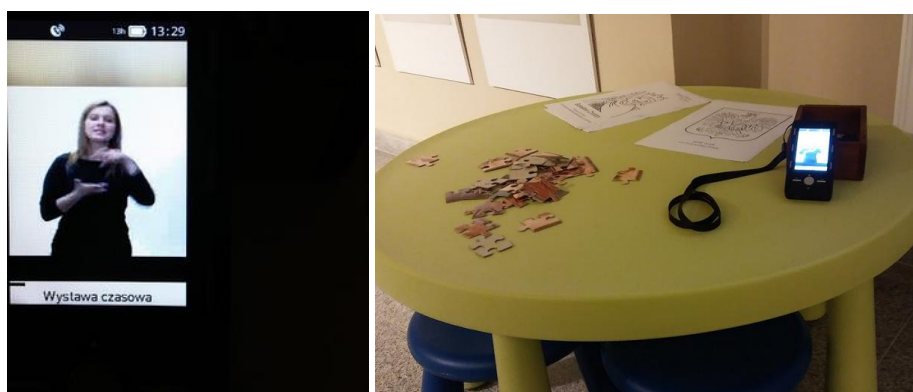


Fig. 23. A guide with PJM recordings in the Museum of the Archdiocese of Gniezno
 Source: photo by A. Zajadacz

On the Lech Hill website, a virtual tour of the main historical objects is available, as well as a catalog - Digital Collections of the Oldest Cathedral Treasury in Poland. People with mobility disabilities can drive directly to the entrance to the Museum of the Archdiocese of Gniezno, and there is a driveway to the Cathedral.

The Spatial Orientation Park was established in 2012 at a school for blind children (Special Educational Center for Blind Children, Plac Przemysława 9, Owińska). It serves mainly children and teenagers, but is also open to visitors during designated hours when there are no classes. It has an area of over 2.5 hectares and includes, among others: vegetable garden, recreation area, specially designed toys and teaching aids. The park is a safe space, designed with the participation of blind people. There is always a staff member at the entrance to help if needed (Fig. 24-25).

Elements that facilitate orientation in space include: a clear layout of paths - wide, gravel paths, narrow dirt paths with raised edges; different texture of the path surfaces (Fig. 26, Fig. 30); a playground for games and cycling surrounded by a guide for a wooden cart (Fig. 28); green zones with flower beds dominated by one species of vegetation; tips from other people - there is security in the garden, helpful if blind people visit it on their own, and blind people can work together with the gardener; sounds occurring naturally in the landscape: the sound

of water, the creaking of gravel, acoustic devices: stairs playing, sound amplifying cables; benches, tables; curbs (as guides); balustrades; the terrain is flat, does not require ramps; characteristic points that facilitate orientation in space - brick houses, a zoo, a gazebo, sculptures, taps with figurines of various animals (Fig. 26-28).



Fig. 24. Spatial Orientation Park in Owińska - clear layout of paths
Source: photo by A. Zajadacz



Fig. 25. Spatial Orientation Park in Owińska - signs with descriptions of plants in Braille
Source: photo by A. Zajadacz

Tools for educating blind and visually impaired people in the Spatial Orientation Park in Owińska include: Braille signs (Fig. 25); a herb zone, a vegetable garden where you can plant and care for plants; blind people can pick vegetables and fruits and taste them (Fig. 29); a playground with educational toys, e.g. a globe (Fig. 31); numerous interactive toys, e.g. an earthen carillon or a special cage with a system of sound-conducting pipes (Photo 60); tactile graphics, sensory path. Sports equipment includes: a treadmill, a climbing wall, trampolines, swings, and a secured area for e.g. cycling (Fig. 28). The Park has taken care of small architectural elements, e.g. mini houses made of various materials: wood, stone, brick - enabling people to learn about the construction of houses by touch (Fig. 27).



Fig. 26. Spatial Orientation Park in Owińska - different surface textures of paths
Source: photo by A. Zajadacz



Fig. 27. Spatial Orientation Park in Owińska - diversity - shapes perceptible by touch
Source: photo by A. Zajadacz

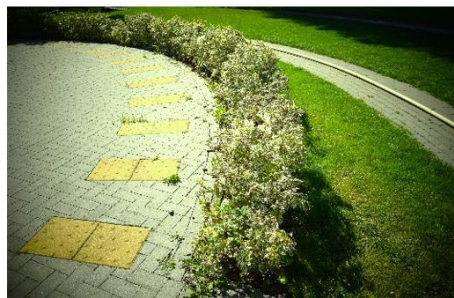


Fig. 28. Spatial Orientation Park in Owińska - a playground for games and cycling surrounded by a guide for a wooden cart
Source: photo by A. Zajadacz)



Fig. 29. Spatial Orientation Park in Owińska - zone of herbs, vegetables and fruits
Source: photo by A. Zajadacz



Fig. 30. Spatial Orientation Park in Owińska - narrow dirt paths with raised edges; different texture of the path surfaces
Source: photo by A. Zajadacz



Fig. 31. Spatial Orientation Park in Owińska - playground with educational equipment - globe
Source: photo by A. Zajadacz)

Elements for recreation and entertainment of blind and visually impaired people in the Spatial Orientation Park in Owińska include: benches; park vegetation, extensive playground with numerous toys and equipment; bridges, gazebo, zoo.

International White Cane Day, celebrated on October 15 since 1969, is intended to remind everyone of the needs of blind and visually impaired people. The aim of the campaign is to shape social attitudes based on openness, tolerance, empathy and understanding the needs of visual impairments. In 2023, its celebration, organized by the Special Educational and 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 European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

Educational Center for Blind Children in Owińska, took place at the Collegium Geographicum of the University of Adam Mickiewicz in Poznań. Presented, among others: history of the Center, nature of classes, teaching aids (Fig. 32-36). During the meeting, students and lecturers learned about, among others: Braille writing system and electronic devices supporting blind people. They could also play tactile chess and sound table tennis and see the typhlomap exhibition. The idea behind organizing the meetings is social inclusion through sharing knowledge and experiences in the field of universal design.



Fig. 32. White Cane Day. Teaching aids
Source: photo by J. Zwoliński



Fot. 33. White Cane Day. Sound table tennis
Source: photo by J. Zwoliński



Fig. 34. White Cane Day. Chess for the blind
Source: photo by J. Zwoliński



Fig. 35. White Cane Day. Braille writing
Source: photo by J. Zwoliński



Fig. 36. Learning spatial orientation
Source: photo by J. Zwoliński

The presented examples of good practices refer to the “three pillars of accessibility” related to universal architectural and information design, as well as developing appropriate competences of staff serving tourists. Moreover, they draw attention to the need to take systemic actions by institutions responsible for social and tourism policy at the national, regional and local levels, as well as education in the field of social inclusion and universal design.

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