



# ACCESSIBLE TOURISM, HOLIDAYS FOR EVERYONE

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# EYSET

Empower Youth organizations through  
Social Entrepreneurship in Tourism

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## THE IMPORTANCE OF INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE ACCESSIBLE TOURISM

Over the past few years, there has been an increasing emphasis on promoting accessible tourism across Europe. Accessible tourism aims to adapt the tourist infrastructure to cater to the needs of People with Disabilities (PWD). Many consider this accessibility to be a right. For the European Union<sup>1</sup>, it is a social responsibility that enables everyone to enjoy tourism and enhances their quality of life. Furthermore, accessible tourism presents a growing business opportunity for the European tourism sector. By making simple adjustments to infrastructure, providing accurate information, and understanding the needs of PWD, the number of visitors that cities and businesses receive each year can be directly impacted. However, beyond its economic potential, accessible tourism should be viewed as a right to freedom of movement for PWD. It expands travel opportunities, promotes social inclusion, and enhances everyone's ability to understand the needs of PWD.

Given these facts, it may appear logical for everyone working in the tourism sector to make these changes, as they bring about more opportunities. Unfortunately, the current reality in the field is quite different. Accessibility for PWD is often disregarded in the tourism industry. A glaring example can be found in Paris, one of the world's most visited cities. Despite having a public transportation infrastructure capable of moving millions of citizens and tourists daily, Paris lacks the necessary accessibility for most PWD. This is evident in the city's metro system, where only one line is accessible for PWD (pictured below).



<sup>1</sup> [https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/sectors/tourism/eu-funding-and-businesses/funded-projects/accessible-tourism\\_en#:~:text=Evidence%20shows%20that%20making%20basic,the%20enjoyment%20of%20all%20tourists.](https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/sectors/tourism/eu-funding-and-businesses/funded-projects/accessible-tourism_en#:~:text=Evidence%20shows%20that%20making%20basic,the%20enjoyment%20of%20all%20tourists.)

To address this lack of accessibility in the tourism industry, accessibility audits have become increasingly useful in recent years. Accessibility audits evaluate how accessible an organization's products and services are. They assess the accessibility of various tourist locations, including metro stations, restaurants, museums, monuments, hotels, and more. These audits are invaluable for PWD as they provide a guarantee of accessibility, allowing them to plan vacations around accessible places and businesses. Apart from the benefits for PWD, these audits can also serve as a great opportunity for young entrepreneurs to engage in the tourism industry. Therefore, it is crucial to provide training for those seeking opportunities to contribute to an inclusive industry accessible to all.



Several projects and NGOs have been established to foster accessible tourism. In Spain, PREDIF (the state platform for people with physical disabilities) has taken significant steps in this area by creating a dedicated department for promoting accessible tourism for all. One of their projects focuses on providing training for young people to become accessibility auditors<sup>2</sup>, particularly targeting young individuals with disabilities. The program, known as "Uno a Uno, POEJ-2019"<sup>3</sup>, offers an 18-week course designed specifically for young people aged 16 to 30, with the main objective of integrating them into the labor market within the tourism sector. This initiative aims to cultivate advocates for accessible tourism and entrepreneurs in the field. Participants receive training to become consultants who analyze various environments, including urban and natural settings, accommodation facilities, and restaurants, in order to assess and suggest improvements. This training program has been recognized as a best practice in the field and has been adopted by other organizations.

In addition to national efforts, organizations throughout Europe are promoting accessible tourism not only within their respective countries but also at the European level through projects like EYSET. The EYSET project serves as a platform for different organizations from all over Europe, working to promote accessibility for PWD in the tourism industry while also encouraging employment opportunities for young

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.tur4all.com/news/predif-clausura-la-formacion-de-audidores-as-de-accesibilidad-para-jovenes-con-discapacidad>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.tur4all.com/news/predif-publica-la-guia-de-experiencias-turisticas-accesibles-del-proyecto-uno-a-uno-poej-2019>



individuals with and without disabilities. The project aims to develop specific and practical tools to facilitate business opportunities in the field of accessible tourism. Such initiatives are crucial in inspiring young people to become entrepreneurs in an industry that should be accessible to everyone.