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# INCLUDED

Promoting Inclusive Employment in the GLAM Sector  
through Open Innovation



**INCLUDED**

## **Result 4.6 – Guide for Inclusive Employment in the GLAM Sector**

Elaborated by VINCO

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## 1. About the project

“INCLUDED - Promoting Inclusive Employment in the GLAM Sector through Open Innovation“ is an Erasmus+ project which promotes social inclusion and aims at improving the outreach to people with fewer opportunities, especially people with disabilities, in particular people with Autism spectrum disorder (ASD), through a proactive, open innovation approach for inclusive employment in the Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Museums (GLAM) sector.

INCLUDED addresses labour inclusive recruitment in the GLAM sector, as these cultural institutions are considered agents of social change and thus should set the example of an inclusive society, shape the future of the sector but also guiding societal changes and nurturing social inclusion. People with disabilities are among those first excluded from the labour market and the INCLUDED project seeks to disrupt this trend, through reversing the paradigm in the GLAM sector first.

The INCLUDED transnational consortium: Vinco (Austria), SYNTHESIS CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND EDUCATION LIMITED (Cyprus), Brainplus GmbH (Austria), ACADEMY OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP ASTIKI ETAIREIA (Greece), EURELATIONS GEIE (Italy), Asociacija MINTIES BITĖS (Lithuania).

Visit the INCLUDED project website:

<https://included-project.eu>



## 2. About this document

This document is the conclusion of two years of work in the INCLUDED project. **It aims at naming recommendations for action to foster social inclusion in general, and inclusive employment in specific in the European GLAM sector.** It meta-evaluates, and brings together theoretical findings of a systematic literature review, primary research in the partner countries, and practical relevant results in the form of policy recommendations obtained from numerous Living Lab activities in Austria, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, and Lithuania.

Of course, the **primary target group are GLAM institutions** (Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Museums) as “lighthouses” for inclusive employment. These cultural institutions are considered agents of social change and thus should set the example of an inclusive society, shape the future of the sector but also guiding societal changes and nurturing social inclusion. People with disabilities are among those first excluded from the labour market. Therefore, the INCLUDED project looked for ways to disrupt this trend, through reversing the paradigm in the GLAM sector first. But also, other sectors like public administration should change their employment strategies towards more inclusive approaches.

These guidelines should support these processes by naming simple but effective ways how to

### 2.1 Methodology

The methodology follows a common structure and common quality standards in scientific work. It bases on meta-evaluating and interpreting the main findings of theoretical and practical aspects of this project, covered by two work packages: WP2- Development of framework for Inclusive Employment in the GLAM sector embedded in an open innovation ecosystem paradigm; WP4 - Designing forward looking centres to foster inclusive employment in GLAM institutions.

#### **WP2- Development of framework for Inclusive Employment in the GLAM sector embedded in an open innovation ecosystem paradigm**

Work Package 2 aimed at setting up context for the research, using the background information that is essential to determine the requirements, gaps, and needs for inclusive employment in the GLAM sector. This work package set the tone for the whole project in terms of its methodological approach to research and practice.



This was through collecting and interpreting existing interventions through network meta-analysis in the partner countries, and the EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030.

In detail, the methodology used in the comprehensive report on inclusive employment in the GLAM sector follows a structured, multi-phase approach integrating qualitative and quantitative research methods. It provides a strong foundation for policy recommendations (see chapter 4) aimed at fostering inclusive employment in the GLAM sector.

The implemented methodology in work package 2 can be summarised as follows:

- Literature review: Systematic review of existing studies, policies, and legal frameworks related to inclusive employment.
- Case Studies: Real-world examples of inclusive employment practices in GLAM institutions.
- Statistical Data Review: Analysed employment rates, policy effectiveness, and labour market trends using data from Eurostat, ANED, and EU-SILC.
- National reports: Five national reports (Austria, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Lithuania) were compiled. They based on: Semi-structured interviews (with HR decision-makers in GLAM institutions and individuals with disabilities); surveys (distributed online across the partner countries).
- Comparative Case-Study Design: Used to identify similarities and differences across national contexts.
- Meta-Analysis: Combined findings from national reports to extract key patterns.

All these intensive desk research and research activities led to results which were published in two main documents:

- **Comprehensive report & GUIDE for inclusive employment in GLAM**
- **Executive summary**

Both documents are available in English, German, Greek, Italian and Lithuanian, and are uploaded at the project-website and further platforms like ResearchGate. They will also be uploaded at the Erasmus+ Results Platform.



#### **WP4 - Designing forward looking centres to foster inclusive employment in GLAM institutions.**

The practical goal of this work package was to develop creative synergies through design and implementation of Living Labs, embedded in open innovation principles, which facilitated interaction between different stakeholders, the key beneficiaries and the public, to make use of existing or new spaces and advocate for equal access and non-discrimination for inclusive employment in the GLAM sector.

A Living Lab is an open innovative approach to research and development that involves real-world environments and users in the co-creation, testing, and validation of new technologies, products, or services to create sustainable impact. Living Labs emerged as a tool to bridge the existing gap between innovative solutions and end-users' real needs. (healthcarelivinglab.cat, 2022) Therefore, Living Labs are taken to proffer a methodical, technological, and spatial framework that establishes some kind of real-life setting with a strong focus on user-centric research and design. Living Labs should gain pragmatic solutions, adjustments, and compromises which have impact on real life. (Pentzold/Rothe/Bischof, 2023)

In the INCLUDED project, the establishment of Living Labs focussed on supporting inclusive employment in the GLAM sector at a local and/or regional level. These interdisciplinary expert groups should act as forward-looking centres and elaborate joint strategies and measures fostering inclusive employment. Joint value to all involved actors is the key to success.

The results of all the national Living Lab activities in Austria, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, and Lithuania were documented in national reports. Finally, all these findings were meta-evaluated by using the method of qualitative content-analyses based on Kuckartz & Rädiker (2024). This method focusses on defining criteria in the findings and deriving narrative results based on these criteria.

The main results of work package 4 were published in the following document:

- **INCLUDED Transnational Policy Paper**

This document is available in English, German, Greek, Italian and Lithuanian, and is uploaded at the project-website and it will also be uploaded at the Erasmus+ Results Platform.



### 3. Theoretical findings

The findings of all research activities in work package 2 must be considered for developing guidelines for inclusive employment in the GLAM sector as the main objective of this document.

#### **Work integration of persons with disabilities**

Work life inclusion of people with disabilities depends on active engagement of two sides – employees as well as employers. In all partner countries, numerous players like associations and public bodies actively work in the support of people with disabilities and existing legal frameworks are designed in way that they support employers in hiring them.

There is a need of improving the side of the employers in the cultural sectors towards more diversity and inclusion. Public job centres, municipalities or other public bodies at a local and regional level which are already cooperation partners of GLAM institutions should be activated as cooperation partners in inclusive recruitment.

All these institutions do have the needed know-how, contacts, personal and technical infrastructure at their disposal to support GLAM institutions in searching the right staff for the right job, in the following onboarding phase and finally, during the whole time the respective person is employed.

The most important for a successful recruiting process is a well-planned and conducted pre-staggered needs assessment and job matching. During this phase, GLAM institutions should be in close contact with bodies supporting people with disabilities to find the right person for the right job (e.g., labour market service, organizations in the support of disabled people). This step reduces further complications, reduces existing prejudices (see qualitative interviews) and creates motivation for all involved parties – the employer, the staff, and the employee with a disability.

The results of work package 2 underline that this so important guided and structured recruitment process doesn't exist in all analysed countries and institutions. Although the legal framework in all countries would allow additional financial and non-financial support for all these measures GLAM institutions don't use it because of existing prejudices ascribable to bad experiences because of unstructured recruitment processes in the past.



## **Organisational characteristics of the GLAM sector in terms of work integration**

The GLAM sector is characterized by some unique attributes which support social inclusion. These institutions mainly are (1) non-profit organizations, (2) funded by the public, and (3) places of social interaction. Therefore, institutions in the GLAM sector should fulfil the three requirements in a well-balanced way: (1) Connect people with disabilities to the general labour market; (2) Provide opportunities to support the inclusion of people with disabilities in the labour market; (3) Support those who suffer from severe disabilities and have the largest distance to the labour market.

Especially institutions in the GLAM sector are characterized by organizational specifics which would support the integration of people with disabilities. Because of national legal requirements, most of the buildings in the GLAM sector are barrier free. Therefore, workers can directly work in the rooms of the institution and no business trips or other mobilities are needed. Finally, people with disabilities don't have to change their workplace and can collaborate with other employees or under the guidance of job coaches who are funded by the government in many of the analysed countries.

Institutions in the GLAM sector do have the possibilities to create individual working contracts which allow flexible working for people with disabilities. Finally, many job profiles in the GLAM sector are characterized by repeating processes which don't change.

For all these reasons, institutions in the GLAM sector are 'perfect' employers for people with disabilities and need to be forced by regional and federal governments to hire a certain percentage of people with disabilities.

## **Cooperation**

The GLAM sector is well connected with other relevant players and can be described as an ideal 'springboard' for people with disabilities to other actors in different social and economic sectors. Existing contacts and cooperation exist with many institutions in the GLAM sector itself and outside, like educational institutions, social institutions, civil society organizations and disabled persons' organizations, public authorities at national, regional and local level – and many more. These huge and interdisciplinary networks at different levels foster including people with disabilities in all parts of our society.

## **Education and training**

Improving the employability of people with disabilities is crucial in terms of inclusive employment in the GLAM sector. Therefore, a very important part of successful workplace inclusion are all kinds of staff trainings for people with disabilities. These can be done before hiring a person or during the onboarding process by internal as well as external trainers. Also volunteers or job coaches on a voluntary base can be found for the purpose of training



people with disabilities. Generally, in all partner countries, these trainings can be financed by using public financial support.

Trainings for people with disabilities should focus on communication skills, social skills, safety, conflict management. Finally, the most important issue is to offer trainings on all aspects of digitalization which plays a crucial role in the modern GLAM sector.

In this regard, it's also recommended to do common trainings for the whole staff of a GLAM institution which has also massive positive effects on the social interaction within the respective institution. After completing staff trainings, final officially recognized certificates which do exist in almost all analysed countries would be seen as a quality criterion of a GLAM institution. Finally, they can be seen as common senses of achievement which strengthen the internal team spirit.

### **Career advancement and promotion opportunities**

Besides trainings, GLAM institutions should be able to offer various opportunities for advancement and promotion within the respective institution. This part is strongly connected to the educative aspects mentioned above. It needs permanent training opportunities to create an internal flow of qualification. Older employees can get a 'better' job, and younger ones overtake their former ones. By this measure it's possible, to create an internal circle of qualification.

People with disabilities can take responsibility for teams and they need future perspectives to be an active part of a GLAM institution for years. This measure generates motivation and a better social integration in the team.

To sum it up, inclusive recruitment in the GLAM sector is a matter of missing willingness in the GLAM institutions themselves to hire persons with disabilities. There is still a massive need for awareness raising and especially training for all involved parties. Besides improved education and training, modern digital technology plays a crucial role in supporting people with disabilities on their way into the labour market. Modern ICT supports people with all kinds of disabilities and are a must for almost all job profiles. Also the GLAM sector is rapidly changing towards being digital and accessible. Therefore, the trainings should focus on digital literacy and communication in the digital era to create an environment which allows more inclusion and diversity in the European GLAM sector.

## 4. Practical findings

Practical findings base on the meta-analysis of all Living Lab activities conducted in the partner countries Austria, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, and Lithuania. As mentioned in chapter 2, Living Labs build an open innovative approach that involves a broad variety of people from different sector, even people with disabilities themselves, in the co-creation, testing, and validation of new technologies, products, or services.

The policy recommendations in the INCLUDED policy paper focus on four key areas to foster inclusive employment in the GLAM sector: Framework Conditions, Education, Organization, Cooperation, and Society. These recommendations are based on findings from Living Labs across Austria, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, and Lithuania. Finally, five areas related to inclusive employment could be defined which are related to the following aspects: (1) Framework conditions; (2) Education and training; (3) Organizational Changes in GLAM Institutions; (4) Cooperation & stakeholder engagement; (5) Shifting Social Mindsets.

### **Framework Conditions**

Decision-makers in politics and public administration at different levels must create stronger legal frameworks for inclusive employment. National employment strategies must be changes to close the gap between education and the labour market. Especially Social Cooperative Enterprises (SCEs) should be financially and structurally supported to facilitate work integration. For instance, institutions hiring people with disabilities should receive financial support and tax reductions.

In general, job coaching and career guidance should be extended across all European countries. This can lead to the creation of new job profiles tailored to individuals with disabilities, particularly in the GLAM sector. Finally, social workshop programs should be expanded to provide pathways to regular employment.

### **Education and training**

It needs more training facilities and career support. Therefore, training centres should be available in every region to support the transition from education to employment. These centres need well educated and trained adult educators with special training in job coaching, career guidance, and CV writing.

Also, VET plays a crucial role in this aspect, and diplomas from special vocational schools should be fully integrated into national qualification system, and internship and



apprenticeship programs for people with disabilities should be introduced in the GLAM sector.

Finally, the role of personal assistants for people with disabilities must be strengthened, and employment procedures (e.g., job postings, interviews, psychometric tests) must be adapted in terms of educational and didactical aspect for accessibility.

### **Organizational changes in GLAM institutions**

GLAM institutions are places with a low distance to people with disabilities. Therefore, the GLAM sector should focus more on Inclusive Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Institutions should implement internal inclusion policies and clear, easy-to-understand documents for employees. Workspaces in GLAM institutions should meet accessibility standards, including architectural and technological accommodations.

Job descriptions in GLAM institutions should be reshaped and should be flexible and tailored to individual strengths. In this regard, GLAM institutions should collaborate with disability organizations to create employment programs.

Also, leadership teams (e.g. managers, HR-managers, team leaders, etc.) must receive inclusion training to promote diverse hiring practices and inclusive employment should be strongly embedded in institutional policies.

### **Cooperation & stakeholder engagement**

Governments, public administration, education, NGOs, and private companies – all involved stakeholders – should create joint strategies for inclusive employment. This could lead to the establishment of inclusive job platforms that connect people with disabilities to opportunities. Employers must be aware of the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities and Mentorship and job coaching should be made widely available to facilitate workplace integration.

Of course, institutions hiring people with disabilities should be monitored and held accountable for maintaining inclusive practices. Finally, social enterprises and businesses should receive legal incentives to prioritize inclusivity.

### **Shifting social mindsets**

The final policy recommendation affects the whole society. Society must challenge stereotypes by promoting real success stories of people with disabilities in the workforce. Employers, HR teams, and the public need sensitization programs on inclusion.



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People with disabilities should be directly involved in decision-making processes that affect and support them on their way to the regular labour market. Governmental advisory boards could support these change processes and should include representatives with disabilities to shape all these policies.

The process of shifting mindsets must start in the family. Also, schools and workplaces must actively challenge misconceptions about disability and employment. All these programs should focus on building confidence and social integration for employees with disabilities.

To sum it up, the policy recommendations as the practical findings of the INCLUDED project highlight systemic changes needed at national and institutional levels to embed inclusivity into the GLAM sector. While legal frameworks and financial incentives play a crucial role, cultural change and public awareness are equally important for long-term success. The GLAM sector is uniquely positioned to lead by example in inclusive employment, transforming workplaces and shaping societal attitudes.

## 5. Guidelines for inclusive employment in the GLAM sector

The following Guidelines represent the findings of the whole INCLUDED project in terms of comprehensive theoretical and practical activities implemented during the lifetime of the project. They should be taken into account by ALL GLAM institutions all over Europe to change their structures and behaviour toward social inclusive employment.

The GLAM sector plays a crucial role in shaping cultural narratives and promoting social values. As institutions dedicated to knowledge, preservation, and public engagement, GLAM organizations have the potential to become exemplary models of inclusive employment. However, despite the existing legal frameworks and social initiatives aimed at fostering workplace diversity, people with disabilities—especially those with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and other developmental challenges—continue to face barriers in accessing and maintaining employment in the sector.

To bridge this gap, existing structures must be adopted, focusing on structural reforms, inclusive hiring practices, workplace accommodations, and long-term support systems. The following recommendations outline key measures in simple but effective bullet points that GLAM institutions, policymakers, and stakeholders can implement to ensure a truly inclusive employment environment.

The following model visualises the seven INCLUDED steps for GLAM institutions in Europe:



Figure 1: 7-step-model on inclusive employment for European GLAM institutions



## 5.1 Policy & leadership commitment

The foundation of inclusive employment lies in strong leadership and institutional commitment. GLAM institutions must integrate inclusivity into their core values by:

- **Adopting an inclusion policy:** Establishing a clear institutional framework that prioritizes the employment and career development of people with disabilities.
- **Appointing Inclusion Officers:** Designating personnel responsible for overseeing inclusivity measures and ensuring their implementation.
- **Setting measurable goals:** Establishing hiring quotas, tracking progress, and setting clear targets for creating accessible and diverse workplaces.
- **Ensuring compliance with regulations:** Aligning employment policies with national and EU disability employment laws, ensuring that legal rights are upheld.

**By embedding these principles at the leadership level, GLAM institutions can set a precedent for inclusivity across the sector.**

## 5.2 Inclusive recruitment & hiring practices

Creating accessible pathways to employment is crucial for increasing the participation of people with disabilities in the GLAM sector. Therefore, GLAM institutions should consider the following measures:

- **Revise job descriptions:** Use clear and inclusive language, emphasizing an organization's commitment to diversity and accessibility.
- **Diversify hiring methods:** Provide multiple application formats (e.g., online, video, in-person) to accommodate different needs.
- **Ensure accessible interviews:** Offer reasonable accommodations such as extended interview times, assistive technologies, and alternative assessment methods.
- **Engage in proactive outreach:** Partner with disability organizations, vocational training centers, and job coaching services to connect with potential candidates.

**These strategies will help remove unnecessary barriers and encourage a broader range of applicants.**



## 5.3 Workplace accessibility & accommodations

A truly inclusive workplace goes beyond hiring—it ensures that employees feel supported, valued, and able to perform their duties effectively. Especially for GLAM institutions, the following aspects are crucial to support inclusive employment practices (although they are already implemented in some countries):

- **Enhance physical accessibility:** Upgrade buildings and workspaces to meet accessibility standards, including ramps, elevators, and adaptive workstations.
- **Provide technological support:** Implement assistive technologies such as screen readers, voice-to-text software, and ergonomic workstations.
- **Offer flexible work arrangements:** Allow for remote work, part-time schedules, and individualized work plans tailored to employees' needs.
- **Adapt job roles:** Use job carving—modifying roles to align with an individual's strengths and abilities.

**By prioritizing accessibility, GLAM institutions all over Europe can ensure that all employees, regardless of ability, can thrive in their roles.**

## 5.4 Training & awareness for inclusivity

Many barriers to inclusive employment stem from a lack of awareness and preparedness among employers and staff. GLAM institutions are ideal places for inclusive employment in Europe and especially these organisations should be “lighthouses” in this field by considering the following points:

- **Conduct sensitization programs:** Organizing workshops to educate employees on disability inclusion and workplace accommodations.
- **Train managers & HR teams:** Equipping supervisors with skills to support and manage diverse teams effectively.
- **Promote self-advocacy:** Encouraging employees with disabilities to communicate their needs confidently through mentorship and peer support programs.
- **Incorporate inclusive cultural programs:** Hosting exhibitions, talks, and public events that promote awareness and normalize diversity within the workplace.

**Education is key to dismantling stereotypes and fostering a culture of acceptance and respect.**



## 5.5 Career development & support systems

Employment must not only be accessible—it must also provide long-term growth opportunities. GLAM institutions should ensure that employees with disabilities have:

- **Mentorship & job coaching:** Access to support networks, job coaches, and career mentors to guide them in their professional journey.
- **Structured on-the-job training:** Programs tailored to different abilities and learning styles to enhance skills and performance.
- **Clear career progression paths:** Transparent promotion opportunities that ensure career growth.
- **Peer support networks:** Employee groups that provide a sense of community and shared experiences.

**Sustained support ensures that employment is not just an entry point but a long-term career pathway in the European GLAM sector and beyond.**

## 5.6 Collaboration & community engagement

Inclusive employment is not just an institutional responsibility—it requires collaboration across sectors as demanded by so many experts during the project's Living Lab activities. GLAM institutions should:

- **Partner with disability organizations:** Work with NGOs, government agencies, and vocational training centres to create sustainable employment pipelines.
- **Expand internships & apprenticeships:** Provide structured work placements to give people with disabilities hands-on experience in the GLAM sector.
- **Engage in public awareness campaigns:** Promote success stories, policy advocacy, and inclusive hiring benefits to shift societal attitudes.
- **Contribute to policy discussions:** Advocate for inclusive employment policies at national and EU levels.

**By strengthening cross-sector collaboration, GLAM institutions can drive systemic change and expand employment opportunities. They must establish strong cooperation networks and act as good-practice partners in the society.**



## 5.7 Monitoring, accountability & continuous improvement

To ensure progress, regular evaluation and adaptation of inclusive employment strategies is essential. Therefore, European GLAM institutions should:

- **Conduct accessibility audits:** Assess physical, digital, and structural accessibility regularly.
- **Track employment data:** Monitor hiring rates, retention, and career progression of employees with disabilities.
- **Establish feedback mechanisms:** Create safe spaces for employees to voice concerns and suggest improvements.
- **Continuously innovate:** Adapt strategies based on real-world insights and evolving best practices.

**Accountability fosters long-term sustainability, ensuring that inclusive employment is more than just a short-term initiative, especially in GLAM institutions all over Europe.**



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## 6. Conclusion: A call to action

The GLAM sector has the power to set an example for inclusive employment. By adopting clear policies, restructuring hiring processes, ensuring accessibility, and fostering a culture of inclusion, GLAM institutions can lead the way in creating equitable and diverse workplaces.

However, this transformation requires action—from policymakers, employers, and society as a whole. With the right commitment and strategic implementation, the GLAM sector can not only provide employment opportunities for people with disabilities but also champion a more inclusive and just society.

**By implementing these recommendations, European GLAM institutions can move beyond compliance and become true leaders in accessibility, diversity, and inclusion. The future of the sector depends on how effectively it embraces and nurtures all talent—regardless of ability.**

**That's why the project team implemented the INCLUDED project and worked very hard to support diversity and inclusion in the European GLAM sector.**



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