Zero Project Innovative Practice 2018 on Accessibility

# Buddy service for jointly attending cultural events

# Germany – "Inklusion muss laut sein" (“Inclusion must be loud”)

## Summary:

### “Inklusion muss laut sein” is a German non-profit organization founded in 2015 that runs a European-wide ‘buddy service’ for persons with disabilities. The organization originally developed from an online music magazine called *New Metal Media*, which provided information about accessible cultural events, such as concerts and music festivals, and is now part of “Inklusion muss laut sein.”

### The buddy service allows persons with disabilities to inform themselves about the accessibility of various venues and to enjoy events accompanied by a like-minded companion. In both 2015 and 2016 approximately 450 people with various disabilities have used the service, and 500 in 2017.

## Problems Targeted:

### Persons with disabilities are rarely visible in public life. Physical barriers are the main reason, which often makes it impossible for people with disabilities to participate in cultural events, such as concerts, festivals, theatre performances, and cinema visits.

## Solution, Innovation, and Impact

### “Inklusion muss laut sein” operates a European-wide network of volunteers who accompany persons with disabilities to various cultural events and provides information about accessible venues online. Thanks to the vast engagement of these volunteers, the service can be offered free of charge.

### Through the website [www.i-m-l-s.com](http://www.i-m-l-s.com), persons with disabilities can make an appointment with a buddy in countries including Austria, Belgium, Germany, The Netherlands and Switzerland, who will then accompany them to the chosen event. Before booking an appointment, the person using the service can inform her or himself on the accessibility of the venue as well as find barrier-free accommodations and travel information, if needed.

### “Inklusion muss laut sein” also helps in building lasting relationships between persons with disabilities and their buddies by carefully matching the personalities and interests of the partners. The service not only allows persons with disabilities to participate in public life and create new relationships, it also helps to increase awareness of the needs of people with disabilities on the part of event organizers.

## Outlook, Transferability, and Funding:

### Co-operations with well-known festivals, such as Germany’s “Wacken Open Air,” has not only contributed to attracting new volunteers but also to raising awareness among event organizers, who in turn introduce changes to their venues to make them more accessible.

### The project can be easily transferred to other cities or countries. In fact, it has already been replicated by the Disabled Persons Association Greiz (*Behindertenverband Greiz*) in Germany; and the Austrian project Aeon Tickets – an online ticket shop specialising in meeting the needs of persons with disabilities – has approached “Inklusion muss laut sein” for advice and expertise.

### Currently, volunteers make up 85 per cent of the work carried out in Germany. In 2016 the organization received private donations of 5,000 EU in addition to 15,000 Euro of the organization’s own funds.

## About the Practice at a Glance:

### Name of Innovative Practice: Buddy service for jointly attending cultural events

### Organisation: "Inklusion muss laut sein" (“Inclusion must be loud”)

### Country of Implementation: Germany

## Facts and Figures:

* The organization currently has a network of some 1,500 volunteers.
* In 2015 and 2016 buddies accompanied 450 persons with disabilities
* In 2017 buddies accompanied 500 persons with disabilities

## Contact:

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### [www.i-m-l-s.com](http://www.i-m-l-s.com/)

## Links and Further Reading:

### [Youtube Link (German)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=995POtzmn2g)

## Quote:

“It is great that there are people like you, giving persons with disabilities the chance to take part in any kind of event with the feeling of belonging. I thank you for this.”

– Joachim Arendt, beneficiary