



# All Areas Access

Guidelines for more accessible venues to d/Deaf audiences.

Project Partners



**BEIT COMPANY**  
CULTURE & ENTERTAINMENT



accesso  
cultura  
access  
culture



ASSOCIAZIONE  
DI CATEGORIA  
LIVE CLUB E FESTIVAL  
ITALIANI

Community Partners



Co-funded by  
the European Union

# Contents

## Overview

Live music and d/Deaf people

## All Areas Access

### A mock-up for accessible venues

- Our project in 3 steps
- Participation and feedback of the community

## How did we do it?

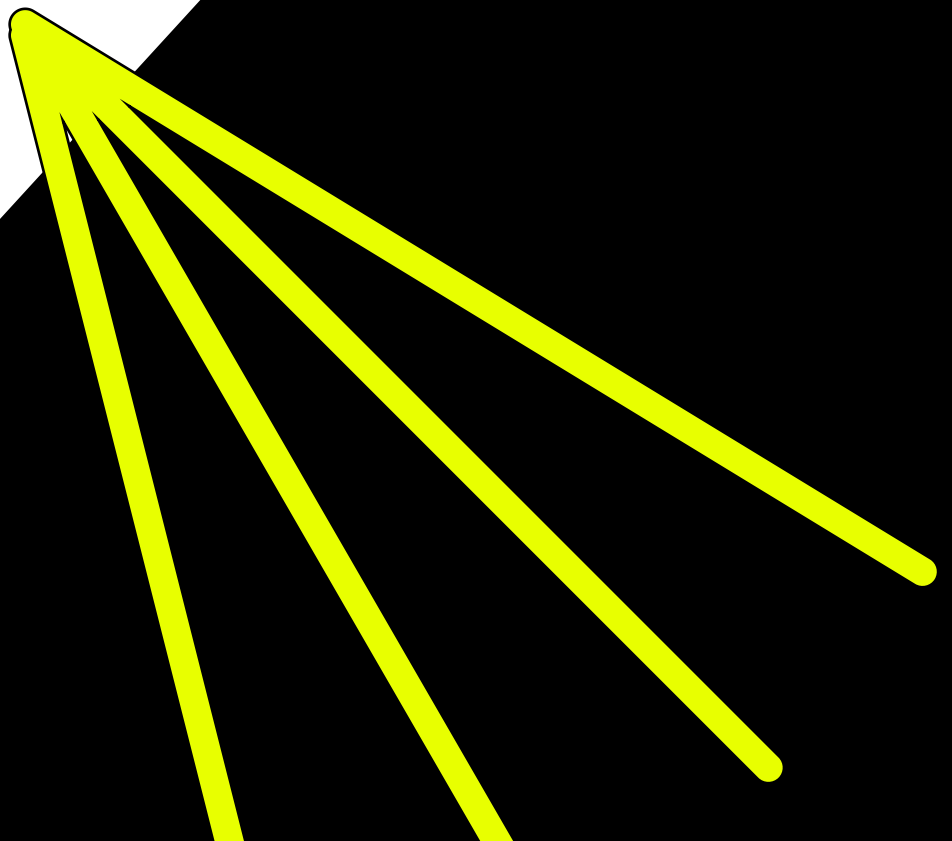
### Case Study

- Accessible shows
- Accessible venues

## Take action now!

- Know the steps you can take to make your show and/or venue more accessible

## Contacts



# Overview

## Live music and d/Deaf people


In the terminology of live events “AAA = Access All Areas” has a meaning that we all know: it indicates a valid pass to access all production areas of a concert. The name of this project here, “All Areas Access”, indicates the desire to overturn the concept.

What if we extend All Areas Access passes to our audiences as well?

**How many people could truly access all spaces?**

**What elements are we missing?  
Are we doing something wrong?**

We realize that our work and commitment to create concerts, festivals, tours, and exhibitions is useless to some people. When we design and create a live music event, different groups of people remain excluded from the experience, when, instead, there could be ways of participating, even as protagonists.




In 2021 the World Health Organization estimated that nearly **two hundred million people in Europe had some degree of hearing loss**. This number represents **25% of the total European population** and is expected - despite the current overall population decrease - to surpass 230 million individuals by 2050. The social model of disability - which contrasts with the medical one - considers that the issue is not a person's impairment, but rather our society's organization, which takes into account only the needs of some, leaving others to fend for themselves.

Do d/Deaf\*  
people like  
music?  
Do they go to  
concerts,  
shows or  
festivals?

\*deaf people (small d): people who identify as having a hearing disability, might use hearing aids or have a cochlear implant.

Deaf people (capital D): people whose mother tongue is sign language; they do not see themselves as people with a disability, but rather as members of a linguistic minority, of a community with its own culture.

# The answer is Yes!



**d/Deaf people have specific musical tastes and favorite artists.**

**And maybe you didn't know that... d/Deaf people can also be djs, rappers, musicians, performers and other music professionals.**

However, despite the hard work, artistic research, and amount of personal effort, these shows are often of no value to them.

**Because, when designed, the shows do not take their needs into account.**

Our project was born from the contradiction of seeing a small group of d/Deaf people at some of our concerts, knowing that our job is to put that noise that we somehow call music on stage, while realizing that this group of people couldn't truly enjoy the experience. Our job, thus, evaporated in a fog of silence.

And, besides the music, what is it that makes the experience of a concert enjoyable?

**The chance to be with the people we love, the opportunity to share the experience.**

This project made us realize that excluding d/Deaf people from live music means shunning them from what is first and foremost a social experience.

**It is this awareness that brought All Areas Access about.**

# It is this awareness that brought All Areas Access about.

# All Areas Access

## A Mockup For Accessible Venues

AAA - All Areas Access is a European project that aims to bring d/Deaf people closer to musical events.

Co-funded by **Creative Europe**, it involves **Ausgang (IT)**, **Beit Company (BE)**, **Acesso Cultura (PT)** and **Keep On Live (IT)**.

Started in February 2023, the project is simultaneously taking place in Italy, Belgium, and Portugal, and will end in July 2024.

The project unfolds in three phases:

# 1

## Study

Identifying problems faced by d/Deaf people while attending concerts.

# 2

## Mock up: Artistic residency and live concert

Testing possible solutions.

# 3

## Dissemination

Sharing and expanding the network of accessible clubs in Europe.

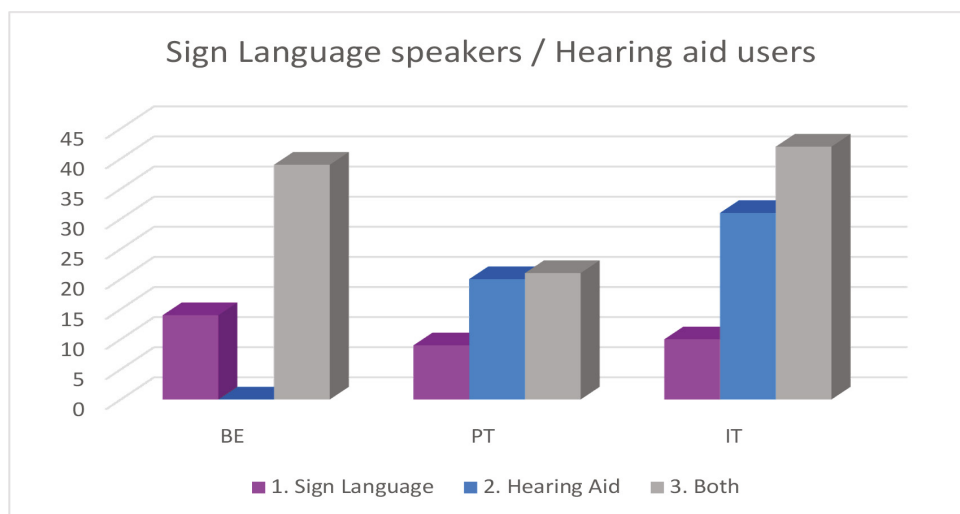
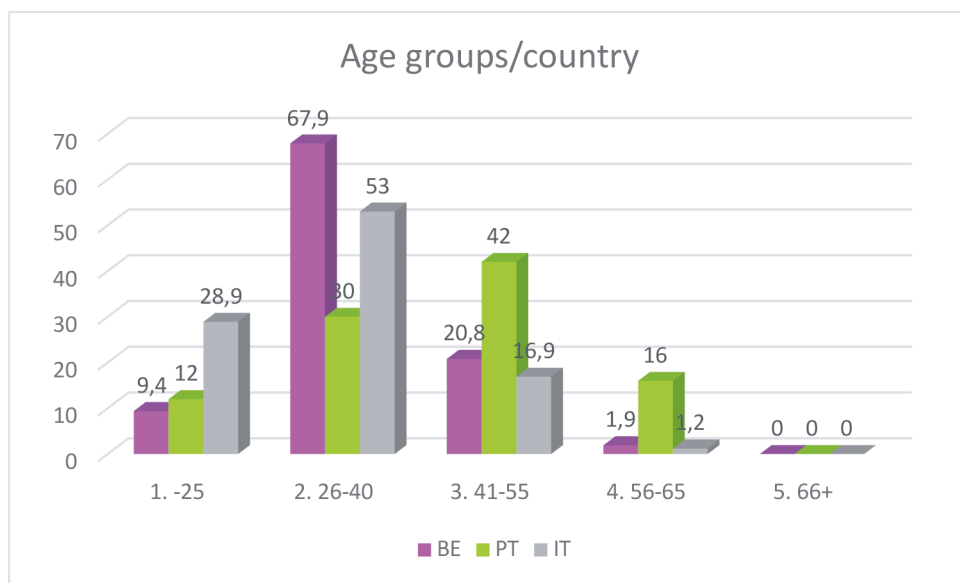


# The Study

Three partners of the project – **Ausgang (IT)**, **Acesso Cultura (PT)** and **Beit Company (BE)** surveyed d/Deaf people who attend concerts, either frequently or rarely.

**The aim was to understand how d/Deaf people experience these events, what types of services they would find useful to improve their accessibility, and suggestions for future implementations and improvements.**

## 200 d/Deaf people interviewed



# Plurality of relations with music and varied needs during a concert

At the end of the questionnaire, people could share anything else they wished regarding their relationship with music.

Some survey responses:

"What does music mean to me? Music knows how to make my heart open, expressing myself as a free spirit. Not only through vibrations but with the heart."

"Through vibrations, I can relax; it helps me clear my mind."


"I've been listening to music since I was little, especially electronic music. I'm a fan of DJs."

"I use Spotify or Shazam to translate and follow lyrics... and sometimes, when no one sees me, I translate them into LIS. (Italian Sign Language)"

"I really like listening to music, I've tried all kinds of technology: the vibration vests, the loop system, and the subtitles sporadically, they were the best places I've been and I've been able to enjoy these experiences a lot."







**“Music, for me, is relaxing. It depends on the sounds, sometimes gentle and other times more stimulating and energetic. It's hard to explain, but I love music very much.”**

[Argentina Cirillo, International Sign and Italian Sign Language performer and Deaf dancer]

# What did we discover?

- **The lack of accessibility makes music unattractive to many d/Deaf people**
- **d/Deaf people relate to music in many different ways:** because they are curious, because of friends or relatives, or because they lost their hearing at a later stage in life and find themselves deprived of something they had participated in before, to name a few.
- **d/Deaf people are perfectly aware of what makes a music event more accessible** and have different recommendations to make.
- **d/Deaf people are not a homogeneous group.** Services appreciated by some (i.e. sign language or vibrations), might not be considered essential by others. Promoters should be aware of the full spectrum of services and provisions that can make a music event more accessible.
- **Social media is the main channel used** to share information on accessible events. It is also the most accessible channel.

Take a look at the survey's results.

[www.allareasaccess.eu](http://www.allareasaccess.eu)

How did  
we do it?



# All Areas Access GOES LIVE

## Case Study



Getting to know the issues faced by d/Deaf people when attending a concert and, therefore, identifying the services they would like to find in a venue, we took action.

Two trial concerts were held in **December 2023** to implement innovations that were identified as useful to improve the experience of live concerts for d/Deaf people.

# Innovative measures tested

Take note and use this checklist to understand what actions you could implement to make your venue more accessible to d/Deaf people.



|  <b>SHOW</b>  |  <b>VENUE</b>  |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Full concert experience with International Sign or national sign language</b></p> <p>★★★★★</p> <p>★★★★★</p>                                  | <p><b>Staff trained to welcome and communicate with d/Deaf people</b></p> <p>★★★★☆</p> <p>★★★☆☆</p>   |
| <p><b>Captions</b></p> <p>★☆☆☆☆</p> <p>★★★☆☆</p>   | <p><b>Internal and external communication</b></p> <p>★★★★★</p> <p>★★★☆☆</p>   |
| <p><b>Technological innovations</b><br/>Vibrating vest, Wi-Fi connectivity for cochlear implants and/or hearing aids</p> <p>★★★☆☆</p> <p>★★★★☆</p> | <p><b>Simplified menu for bars and food services</b></p> <p>★★☆☆☆</p> <p>★★★☆☆</p>  |
| <p><b>Key</b></p> <p>★ <b>Expertise and know-how</b></p> <p>🐷 <b>Budget</b></p>  | <p><b>Socializing area</b><br/>Illuminated area within the concert hall or near the bar to facilitate communication</p> <p>★★☆☆☆</p> <p>★★★☆☆</p> |

# Innovative measures tested

## Full concert experience with Sign Language



The show featured Sign Language performer and Deaf dancer Argentina Cirillo, the internationally-renowned electronic Belgian band KRANKk and the extraordinary talent of gala dragot, the 18-year-old Belgian singer who, with her magnetic stage presence, conquered people's hearts as the 2020 winner of The Voice Kids in Flanders.

During the preparation of the show, we tried to go beyond the simple concept of *translating* a show into Sign Language. In the first place, we decided to **position the Sign Language performer in the center of the stage as well**, and not on the side as usually seen, in order for the audience not to have to decide whether they will concentrate on the singer or the Sign Language performer. This allowed for full enjoyment of the show and cast aside the alienating effect of having to look the side of the stage, a common practice which only leads to missing out on what is going on in center stage.

In this way, starting from the design phase, we were able to create a show that took into account the audience's different needs, to get a real inclusion.

The lighting design was created to emphasize the forms and faces of the artists on stage, keeping the usual movement of the lights seen during a show.

**Very positive feedback about the Sign Language performance was collected at both concerts.**

# Captions



## Vibrating vests

Not all deaf people know sign language. Thus, we also used captions (surtitles)\* for all the performances: in Brussels, English captions for the Sign Language poet Tonja (opening act), and also for KRANKk and gala dragot's songs. Both were projected on stage, using center alignment. In Monk, Italy, Italian subtitles for deaf rapper Brazzo (opening act) were used, and both Italian and English subtitles for the band in the higher part of the back of the stage, center aligned, again integrated with the visuals. Subtitles for the songs were made by the band.

The captions of the opening act were made by creating SRT files with Happy Scribe (paid tool)

\*The lyrics of the songs performed by KRANKk and gala dragot are all in English. English can be a barrier for many people (both deaf and hearing), for this reason the show in Rome also added subtitles in the local language.

The vibrating tool tested during the All Areas Access project is the vibrating jacket. It consists of six or more oscillators that translate audio signals into haptic feedback\*, allowing the user to feel the music on the body via vibrations. In total, eight vests of a more recent version of the product were used/purchased; while in Brussels, an extra eight vests were made available by Deaf Rave.

\*Haptic feedback is the use of physical stimuli, like vibration patterns, to simulate tactile experiences.

**NOTE:** After the test concerts, Woojer Vests have been implemented in both venues, meaning d/Deaf people can book them to attend any scheduled concerts.

# Lola

This innovation was tested only at MONK Roma

An app that puts hearing aids and cochlear implants in direct communication with the mixer, allowing an already processed, equalized, and volume-controlled audio signal to be transmitted in real-time, with customizable volume.

**NOTE:** Survey results from Portugal showed that 100% of those using hearing aids or having a cochlear implant deem the audio induction loop as a highly necessary service. The audio induction loop (or earring Loop) provides a magnetic, wireless signal that gets picked up by the hearing aid when it is set to 'T' (Telecoil) setting. **This technology, however, is still very expensive and is not easy to implement within the spaces considered (live music venues and clubs).**

# Simplified menu

for bars and food services

The bar/restaurant area is often very crowded and noisy. By creating QR codes linked to the menus, people had time to study them. This allowed them to communicate with bartenders/waiters in a simpler and faster way.

# Socializing area

During concerts the hall lights are always low, which makes communication difficult for d/Deaf people, as visibility is minimal. We provided an illuminated area (which would not disturb the light design on stage) where people could chat and continue to attend the concert or where they could decompress if the sensory stimuli were disturbing.

# Trained staff

to welcome and communicate with d/Deaf people

Basic training was provided to the staff of both locations, in all departments that usually come into contact with the public during an event, in order to offer tools that allowed them to interact with the d/Deaf audience smoothly, while in a state of mutual relaxation. The workshops did not focus so much on learning sign language, but rather on removing barriers due to mutual inadequacy when communicating through a different language, extrapolating this concept from the disabled-able-bodied relationship. The goal was to remove any embarrassment in relation to both customers and staff, offering everyone the opportunity to start an interaction with a smile.

# Internal and external communication

Project communication was developed taking into account the needs of d/Deaf people to easily and comprehensively access the concert's audiovisual information. Video and graphic promotional tools were produced to better meet the needs of d/Deaf people. The graphic layout is clear and with a simple style, avoiding the overlap of text and images, using only one font (Proxima Nova), and not using capital letters (which create problems with readability). For better linguistic accessibility, the website has been developed in all 5 languages involved in the project (English, Italian, French, Flemish, and Portuguese) as well as International Sign. In each section of the website, videos in International Sign can be found.

Eight videos with subtitles and sign language were produced for the promotion of the project.

**All the content was subtitled (on all social media platforms and on YouTube).** d/Deaf interpreters and professionals were involved in the production of the videos for each partner language: Italian, Portuguese, Flemish and French.

**NOTE:** Many of the promotional videos in Sign Language have been made thanks to the collaboration with young Deaf professionals and activists of the CGSI (Deaf Youth Group Committee) of Rome and ENS Italy (Italian National Agency for the Deaf).

## Learn about European deaf communities

Some useful links:

 **European Union of the Deaf**  
[www.eud.eu](http://www.eud.eu)

 **EUDY - European Union of the Deaf Youth**  
[www.eudy.info](http://www.eudy.info)

If you already know local d/Deaf associations, get in touch to find out what you can do together.

## Tips for creating content

Use **Happy Scribe** or free apps to subtitle videos that contain speech;

If you create content with Sign Language, **enter the transcript in the subtitles or post captions;**

**Always give complete information,** do not take anything for granted;

**Opt for images and videos instead of content with lots of text.**



# Participation and appreciation of the community

The events also make it possible to **collect audience feedback** regarding the implemented solutions and their experience of the show itself.

We gave out a **questionnaire after the concerts** to see if the **innovations were useful** and what was the level of approval for the concert.

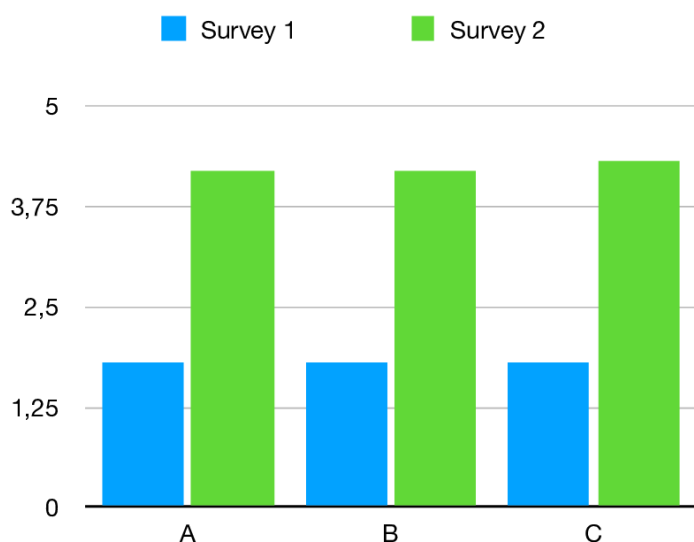
In the survey carried out in the first phase (Study phase / "Survey 1"), interviewees were asked to rate **"To what extent are these issues addressed in clubs at the moment?"** on a scale of 1 to 5, the following three macro-areas of a club's services:

**A - Promotional content accessible for d/Deaf people**

**B - Staff able to communicate with d/Deaf people**

**C - Shows with more engagement for d/Deaf people**

We then asked them the same question at the end of our events ("Survey 2").



We recorded a significant improvement: in "Survey 1", d/Deaf respondents said that they rarely found accessibility services, giving a rating of 1,8 on a scale from 1 to 5 for all three points.

In "Survey 2", points A and B were rated 4,2 and C 4,3, **which means our protocol reached a very high score of improvement in making the venues more accessible.**

# Here is some feedback collected during face-to-face interviews right after the test concerts

“ This night was very important because in my opinion it helped people a lot, especially the deaf, to find something to be able to live their daily lives to the fullest, in particular with the help of Sign Language and subtitles and with other measures that help to better understand what was said and to hear the music. Especially for deaf people it was very important to get to hear what they don't hear. ”

“ Hearing people are used to listen to concerts and music, while for the deaf this was truly an opportunity. For us, experiencing these vibrations of the music is something we have never been able to do. It was an event that I really enjoyed, it was beautiful. ”

“ Finally, for the first time! For years and years, there has never been anything like this. This was a (memorable) occasion together with all my deaf friends, my wife, and several couples who called me to be here. We deaf people were able to participate in this event, and till today deaf people were not considered in these events. Hearing the music, feeling the vibrations, gave me a great joy. ”

“ I had a lot of fun, too bad it ended early, I wanted to have even more fun. ”

Creating a show that is accessible to d/Deaf people, involving also the presence of a Sign Language performer (like Argentina Cirillo was for All Areas Access), requires working in advance, starting at the stage of the artistic production. It is a complex work and it involves investment.

The change we wish to see involves many stakeholders, not just the managers of live music clubs. More frequent demand by the artistic direction of the clubs for performances accessible to the d/Deaf is one of the necessary elements, but it is not enough to achieve a structural change.

The process will not be influenced by a single music club, it involves different stakeholders: artists, management, booking and record companies. While other measures allow each club to act independently, this requires a structural change of perspective in the deal show.

Want to start making your venue,  
concert, or festival more accessible?

# Take action now!

**One step at a time!**

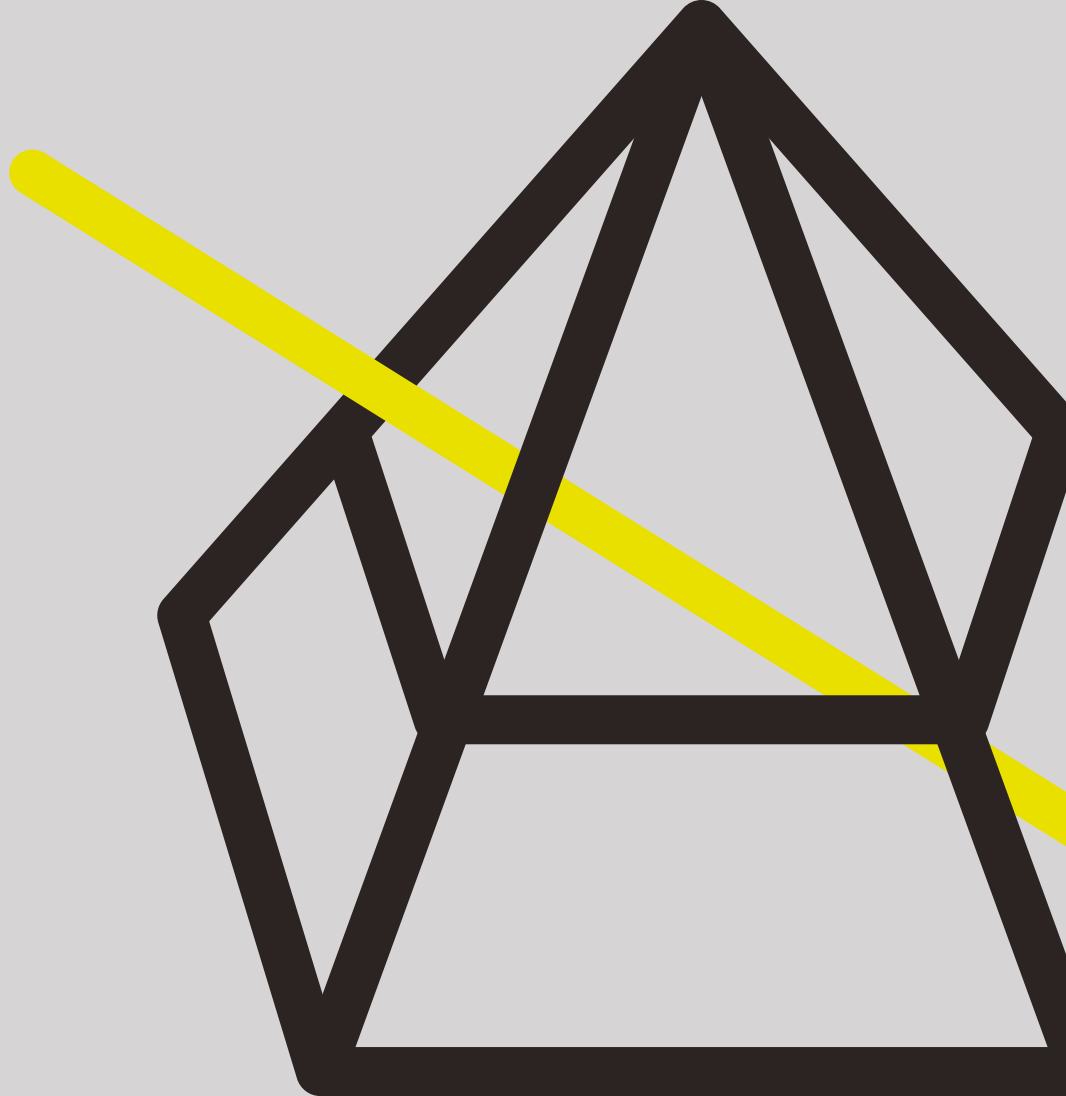
Know the steps you need to take to make your venue more accessible.  
Look at the measures checklist and see where you can start.

**If you found the project interesting and this document useful, let us know  
on social media using:**

**#allareasaccess** and **@aaaproject\_eu**

Share this document with other venues, promoters, bands, artists  
and put them in contact with us via our website found at:

[www.allareasaccess.eu](http://www.allareasaccess.eu)



[www.allareasaccess.eu](http://www.allareasaccess.eu)

**Project Partners**



**BEIT COMPANY**  
CULTURE & ENTERTAINMENT



accesso  
cultura  
access  
culture



ASSOCIAZIONE  
DI CATEGORIA  
LIVE CLUB E FESTIVAL  
ITALIANI

**Community Partners**



**Co-funded by  
the European Union**