

ICT for Information Accessibility in Learning

**European Agency for Development in
Special Needs Education**

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Disability and the Digital Divide

- People with disabilities are at risk of being doubly disadvantaged if their access to appropriate ICT is not supported
- They risk becoming one of the main groups experiencing the growing digital divide
- In addition, if some of their basic needs that could be addressed through the use of adaptive technology are not met, they risk further social exclusion



Accessible Information Provision for Lifelong Learning

- Acronym 'i-access'
- 1 year Agency project
- March 2011 to February 2012
- supported under the Lifelong Learning Transversal Programme, Key Activity 1: Policy Co-operation and Innovation
- Experts from 21 Agency member countries



Guiding Principles

Rights Principle: Access to information is a fundamental right - it empowers learners and facilitates their participation in society. This access must be provided in the earliest phases of learning and accompany a learner throughout their lifetime.

Structural Principle: It is vital that any policy or recommendation does not regard technology as an end in itself. The systemic factors that determine the use of tools for lifelong learning must be recognised and considered.

All-Inclusive Principle: Accessible information provision needs to be considered in its widest interpretation to include people with all forms of disabilities and/or special educational needs.

Synergy Principle: Accessibility benefits users with disabilities and/or special educational needs and may often benefit all users.



Recommendations

1. Raising awareness about accessible information for lifelong learning as a rights issue. Policy makers, organisations and professionals in lifelong learning, ICT specialists, people with disabilities and/or special educational needs and their families and support networks should be made aware of learners' rights to accessible information provision.



Recommendations

2. A multi-stakeholder approach based upon cooperation and information exchange should be taken. Highly specific policies focused upon single interest group issues alone cannot achieve the provision of accessible information for lifelong learning. Policies must be developed and then implemented based upon the principle of a multi-stakeholder approach.



Recommendations

3. Issues around accessible information provision should be covered in the education of all professionals involved in lifelong learning. ICT can contribute to effective access to learning opportunities only if all professionals in lifelong learning are educated in the use of ICT as a tool to enable equal opportunities in education.



Recommendations

4. Issues around accessible information provision should be covered in the education of ICT and media professionals. Educating media and ICT specialists on the impact of disabilities and/or special educational needs on people using ICT, it is possible to develop more accessible technology from design to production and avoid later work to make the finished product more accessible.



Recommendations

5. Accessibility should be a guiding principle for procurement of all goods and services. Goods or services should only be purchased from organisations that fully account for accessibility issues.



Recommendations

6. Research should be promoted in order to develop an evidence base for future policy design, implementation and evaluation. Long-term research efforts in this area should inform policy-making, monitoring and evaluation and should aim to identify areas for future development and work.



Recommendations

7. Compliance to policy should be systematically monitored. Monitoring of compliance can only be encouraged at present, but should be extended. Compliance with accessibility policy is monitored on an international level for signatories of the UNCRPD (2006), but currently not all countries provide these annual reports. In the long term monitoring of compliance to accessibility policy should be mandatory at the national level.



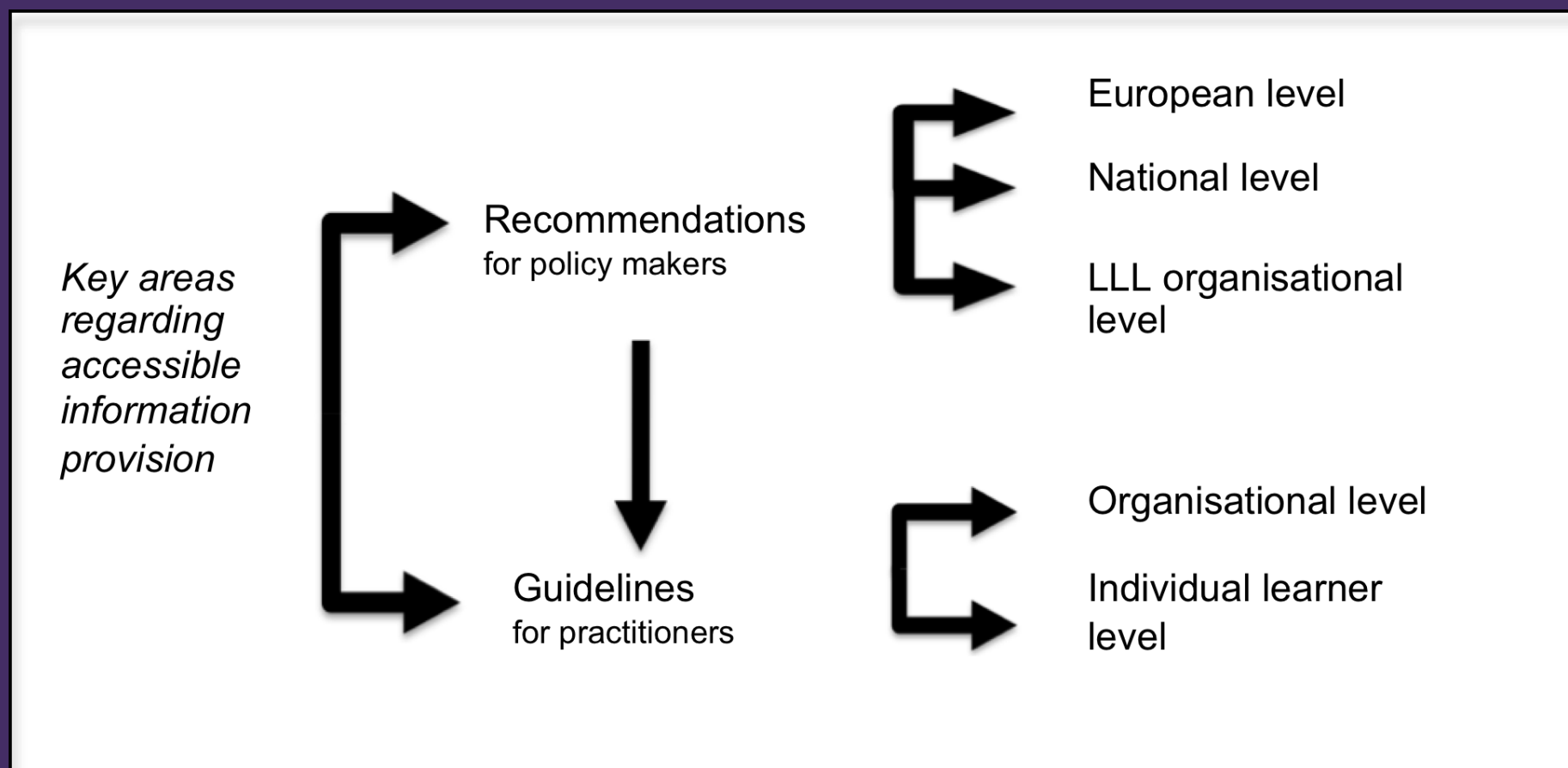
Project Outputs

- Project web area <http://www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/i-access/>;
- Conference report and all conference materials <http://www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/i-access/i-access-conference>;
- i-access recommendations report <http://www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/i-access/i-access-files/i-access-report.pdf> and summary translated in 21 Agency languages; <http://www.european-agency.org/publications/flyers/i-access-summary-flyers/i-access-summary-flyers>;



Development of Guidelines

Build on i-access recommendations



ICT for Information Accessibility in Learning

Network of partners including:

1. European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education
2. DAISY
3. European Schoolnet
4. Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs
5. International Association of Universities
6. UNESCO



ICT4IAL objectives

1. Knowledge exchange and networking
2. Developing and trialing of practical guidelines
3. Reflection and evaluation upon implementation
4. Validation of guidelines
5. Dissemination and exploitation of results



ICT4IAL Guidelines

Elements of Information:

- .**Text** accessibility
- .**Video** accessibility
- .**Image** accessibility
- .**Audio** accessibility

How information is rendered and delivered:

- Mixed elements
- Web based accessibility
- Printed material



ICT4IAL Guidelines

For each category the guidelines describe:

- .What are the main challenges?
- .What is needed for this element to be accessible?
- .What resources can support making this information accessible?
- .Exemplars of accessible information



More information

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