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perspectives of visitors with specific learning disorders**

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STUDIE/ARTICLES

INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION IN ART MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES THROUGH THE EYES OF GENERATION Z: PERSPECTIVES OF VISITORS WITH SPECIFIC LEARNING DISORDERS

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ABSTRACT/ABSTRAKT:

Inclusivity has become a key principle shaping the development of art museums and galleries worldwide. While efforts have been made to make cultural heritage accessible to diverse audiences, these institutions continue to face challenges in adapting communication and environments for individuals with specific learning disorders. This study examines the perceptions of Generation Z visitors, with a particular focus on those with learning differences such as dyslexia. Combining semi-structured interviews and eye-tracking research, it analyzes digital communication channels, gallery spaces, and visitor decision-making in the Czech and Slovak context. The findings highlight barriers related to text readability, spatial orientation, and digital design, alongside examples of inclusive practices from international institutions. The article outlines current limits and opportunities for inclusive communication and offers recommendations for enhancing accessibility in art museums and galleries, relevant not only for visitors with specific learning disorders but also for wider audiences.

Inkluzivní komunikace v muzeích umění a galeriích očima generace Z: Perspektivy návštěvníků se specifickými poruchami učení

Inkluzivita se stává klíčovým principem formujícím rozvoj muzeí umění a galerií po celém světě. Přestože se tyto instituce snaží zpřístupnit kulturní dědictví různorodému publiku, stále čelí výzvám při přizpůsobování komunikace a prostředí osobám se specifickými poruchami učení. Studie se zaměřuje na vnímání generace Z, zejména na návštěvníky s poruchami učení, jako je dyslexie. Prostřednictvím polostrukturovaných rozhovorů a výzkumu oční kamerou analyzuje digitální komunikační kanály, galerijní prostředí a rozhodovací procesy návštěvníků v českém a slovenském kontextu. Zjištění poukazují na bariéry související s čitelností textů, prostorovou orientací a digitálním designem, ale také na příklady inkluzivních přístupů z mezinárodního prostředí. Článek shrnuje limity a příležitosti inkluzivní komunikace a nabízí doporučení pro zvýšení přístupnosti v muzeích umění a galeriích, využitelná nejen pro návštěvníky se specifickými poruchami učení, ale i pro širší publikum.

KEYWORDS/KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA:

museum – inclusion – accessibility – communication – social media
muzeum – inkluze – přístupnost – komunikace – sociální média

Introduction

Museums and cultural institutions are increasingly recognized as agents of change in contemporary society.¹ They are not only spaces of preservation and education but also play a vital role in fostering social cohesion and contributing to a more just, equitable, compassionate, and interconnected world.

The environment of a museum itself can have a powerful impact on an individual's mental well-being. Museums are often associated with positive experiences: learning, inspiration, or calmness, making them particularly well-suited to support mental health and emotional well-being. Camic and Chatterjee² have even proposed museums as appropriate venues for

¹ MURAWSKI, Mike. *Museums as Agents of Change: A Guide to Becoming a Changemaker*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021, pp. 1–10.

² CAMIC, Paul M. and CHATTERJEE, Helen J. Museums and art galleries as partners for public health interventions. Online. *Perspectives in Public Health*. 2011, vol. 133, no. 1, pp. 66–71. Available from: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1757913912468523>. [accessed 2025-05-19].

health-related programs, noting their potential to reduce anxiety, increase positive emotions, and diminish social isolation. Such outcomes may also translate into improved physical health.

However, despite this potential, various barriers prevent many individuals from accessing and benefiting from what museums have to offer. These barriers, both visible and invisible, can be environmental, communicational, technological, attitudinal, or symbolic. For instance, physical inaccessibility, such as lack of elevators or accessible restrooms, is only one aspect; transportation to the institution itself can also pose a challenge, not only for individuals with permanent disabilities but also those with temporary limitations, such as parents with strollers or people recovering from injuries.³

Building on the need for inclusive practices in cultural institutions, this article introduces *Museums Without Barriers*, an initiative aimed at enhancing accessibility for visitors with specific learning disorders (SpLDs), particularly dyslexia. This effort represents one of the first targeted steps within the Czech museum landscape to address the needs of this often-overlooked audience. The project explores the unique challenges faced by individuals with SpLDs in museum settings, such as difficulties with text-heavy displays, complex navigation, or

overstimulating environments, and responds with a multifaceted framework grounded in current research and best practices. Central to the initiative is the creation of multi-sensory exhibits, interactive tools, trained staff, and the use of dyslexia-friendly typography, all designed to reduce cognitive barriers and foster meaningful engagement. By outlining the design, implementation, and evaluation of the project, this study offers both practical insights and a model and recommendations for accessible visual communication. Ultimately, *Museums Without Barriers* aspires to contribute to a more inclusive and enriching museum experience, affirming museums' potential to serve as agents of social change and lifelong learning for all visitors, regardless of their learning differences.

In the Czech context, discussions of inclusion and accessibility have traditionally focused on individuals with visible disabilities – physical or intellectual. Less attention has been given to other groups, such as people with SpLDs or those experiencing temporary limitations. Yet inclusive design benefits all. As Eikhaug and Gheerawo⁴ argue, the essence of design lies in addressing social problems. When museums adopt these principles, they avoid catering exclusively to one group while excluding others.

In the Czech Republic, the discourse on inclusion in galleries is still emerging and is often driven not by the institutions themselves, but by external actors: primarily NGOs, educators, or individuals with personal experience in the field of special needs. These third-party initiators play a pivotal role in setting inclusive practices into motion, particularly in the

context of temporary exhibitions, school group programming, or collaborative community projects. While some Czech galleries have begun to reflect on the accessibility of their content, few have adopted a long-term, strategic commitment to inclusion embedded into their institutional identity.

In contrast, inclusive communication in museum and gallery practice has been evolving more robustly across various countries. Institutions abroad have recognized the importance of not only eliminating physical and sensory obstacles but also of transforming the ways in which content is mediated, interpreted, and designed to serve a wider range of visitors. As Miglietta⁵ suggests, the work toward accessibility is not a static goal but an ongoing process involving research, interventions, and experimentation. Accessibility must be understood as a holistic concept: one that encompasses the multiplicity of visitor identities, experiences, and learning preferences. In this context, diversity is not only about acknowledging individual differences but also about designing systems that inherently accommodate them.

A notable example is the *Museum for Everyone: Innovative Practices in Accessibility and Inclusion* initiative, co-launched by UNESCO and the Chinese Museums Association. This project highlights the efforts in physical accessibility, digital accessibility, and inclusive education.⁶ These case studies

³ HAMBLIN, Kate A. and HARPER, Sarah. *The UK's Ageing Population: Challenges and Opportunities for Museums and Galleries*. Online. Oxford: University of Oxford, Oxford Institute of Population Ageing, 19 April 2016. Available from: <https://www.ageing.ox.ac.uk/publications/view/304>. [accessed 2025-05-19]; YILDIZ, Zeynep. Understanding the Role of Socio-Technical Infrastructures on the Organization of Access for the Mixed-Ability Collaborators. Online. In: *Proceedings of the 24th International ACM SIGACCESS Conference on Computers and Accessibility*. New York: ACM, 2022, pp. 1–6. Available from: <https://dl.acm.org/doi/10.1145/3517428.3550410>. [accessed 2025-05-19].

⁴ EIKHAUG, Onny and GHEERAWO, Rama (eds.). *Innovating with People: Inclusive Design and Architecture*. Oslo: Design and Architecture Norway, 2018, pp. 25–40.

⁵ MIGLIETTA, Anna Maria. Il museo accessibile: barriere, azioni e riflessioni. The accessible museum: barriers, actions and thoughts. Online. *Museologia scientifica nuova serie*. 2017, vol. 11., pp. 11–30. Available from: <https://www.anms.it/upload/rivistefiles/464f12f5c5e22f2121f17a1faf35c7d4.pdf>. [accessed 2025-05-19].

⁶ Call for Good Practices | Museums for Everyone: Innovative Practices in Accessibility and Inclusion: UNESCO and Chinese Museums Association (CMA) are seeking innovative practices of universal accessibility among Chinese

underscore the global commitment to creating museums that are accessible to all, regardless of physical or cognitive abilities.

One of the most referenced models of inclusive design and communication globally is the Tate Britain visual story, which explores alternative ways to convey visual content to people with visual or cognitive impairments. Tate also actively involves disabled artists and co-curators in exhibition development, ensuring that inclusive practice is not an afterthought, but a fundamental curatorial strategy.⁷ In the United States, the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum has developed an accessible exhibition toolkit, including features such as dyslexia-friendly fonts, tactile graphics, and simplified language guides.⁸ These elements support not only visitors with specific learning disorders (SpLDs) but also wider audiences who benefit from clear, multi-modal communication.

In Italy, the Museo Tattile Statale Omero in Ancona serves as an exemplary case of multisensory inclusion.⁹ Originally designed for blind and visually impaired visitors, the museum has become a pioneer in tactile learning environments, often cited in European research as a model of universal design.

museums. Online. In: *UNESCO*. 2024. Available from: <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/call-good-practices-museums-everyone-innovative-practices-accessibility-and-inclusion>. [accessed 2025-05-19].

⁷ Tate Britain visual story. Online. In: *Tate*. 2025. Available from: <https://www.tate.org.uk/visit/tate-britain/visual-story>. [accessed 2025-05-19].

⁸ Accessibility at Cooper Hewitt. Online. In: *Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum*. 2025. Available from: <https://www.cooperhewitt.org/accessibility-at-cooper-hewitt/>. [accessed 2025-05-19].

⁹ VANNUCCHI, Virginia. The Museo Tattile Statale Omero of Ancona: A virtuous example of accessibility in museums. Online. In: *Medium*. 2022. Available from: <https://kiculture.medium.com/the-museo-tattile-statale-omero-of-ancona-a-virtuous-example-of-accessibility-in-museums-af596d348085>. [accessed 2025-05-19].

Similarly, in the Netherlands, the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven integrates inclusive interpretation techniques such as “slow looking”, participatory tours, and emotion-based mapping to accommodate diverse cognitive styles. These methods foster active engagement among younger visitors, particularly from Gen Z, who often respond more positively to dialogical and experiential formats than to the passive consumption of information.

Despite these international advances, Generation Z remains a largely underserved audience in many cultural institutions, especially when it comes to visitors with specific learning disorders such as dyslexia, ADHD, or sensory processing differences. While Gen Z is often characterized as digital-native, visually literate, and socially engaged, it is important not to overgeneralize their capabilities or preferences.¹⁰ In practice, many young visitors from this demographic face difficulties navigating text-heavy exhibitions, decoding layered interpretive materials, or maintaining focus in overstimulating environments. Research suggests that Gen Z visitors with SpLDs are rarely addressed as individual visitors with unique needs. Instead, they are most often reached indirectly (through school visits or group programming) where their individual needs are often diluted in a “one-size-fits-all” educational approach.¹¹ There are already several promising examples of museums successfully engaging

¹⁰ ADEMOLU, Edward. Appreciating *dyslexic* thinking in qualitative research: reflections and recommendations for culturally competent, neuro-inclusive academia. Online. *Higher Education*. 2022, vol. 90, pp. 131–156. Available from: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10734-024-01314-x>. [accessed 2025-05-19].

¹¹ PARK, YuJune and LAM, Caspar. Reclaiming relevance: How museums can captivate Gen Z and Alpha in a digital-first world. Online. In: *Arts Professional*. 2025. Available from: <https://www.artspromotional.co.uk/magazine/feature/reclaiming-relevance-how-museums-can-captivate-gen-z-and-alpha-in-a-digital-first-world>. [accessed 2025-05-19].

Generation Z. For instance, the Weisman Art Museum in Minnesota has actively involved Gen Z audiences in shaping the future of museums. Through participatory initiatives, young people are encouraged to express their ideas and expectations, fostering a sense of ownership and connection to the museum. This approach has helped create a more inclusive and responsive environment for younger visitors.¹²

Additionally, museums are increasingly turning to social media platforms like TikTok to connect with Gen Z. By producing engaging, short-form content, institutions can capture the attention of younger audiences, making cultural experiences more accessible and relevant. This digital approach aligns with Gen Z’s preferences for quick, interactive, and visually appealing content.

As Miglietta¹³ and others argue, museums must shift their perspective from viewing inclusion as reactive accommodation to a proactive act of understanding and responding to the diversity of learning styles, motivations, and challenges that shape the museum experience. Effective audience engagement strategies must be tailored not only to the institution’s mission and content, but to the specific needs of its visitors, especially those who are at risk of being excluded. There is no universal formula for engagement; successful models require ongoing research, dialogue, and adaptation.

¹² WISNESKI, Sam. Gen Z Envisions the Future of Museums. Online. In: *Weisman Art Museum*. 2021. Available from: <https://wam.umn.edu/gen-z-envisions-future-museums>. [accessed 2025-05-19].

¹³ MIGLIETTA, Anna Maria. Il museo accessibile: barriere, azioni e riflessioni. The accessible museum: barriers, actions and thoughts. Online. *Museologia scientifica nuova serie*. 2017, vol. 11, pp. 11–30. Available from: <https://www.anms.it/upload/rivistefiles/464f12f5c5e22f2121f17a1faf35c7d4.pdf>. [accessed 2025-05-19].

Methodology

This study serves to provide a closer look at the approaches and barriers to the introduction and implementation of inclusive measures in Czech galleries. It aims to analyze inclusive elements in the marketing communication and spatial layout of Czech galleries in relation to the needs and expectations of Generation Z, specifically those with perceived learning disorders. The research focuses on the extent to which galleries in the Czech Republic are able to fulfill the principles of inclusion in the areas of communication and physical accessibility, and how these aspects are reflected by visitors from Gen Z, who represent an important target group for potential visitors to cultural institutions.

The research team therefore aims to answer four main research questions:

- *How does the decision-making process work, what factors and communication channels influence Generation Z when visiting galleries, and what obstacles do they perceive?*
- *How can museums and galleries adapt their websites and Instagram profiles to meet the needs of (not only) Generation Z with specific needs/learning disabilities?*
- *What communication channels do Czech and Slovak galleries use and what inclusive elements do they apply in them?*
- *What inclusive elements are being used by Czech and Slovak galleries and museums in their spaces, and how are they being implemented?*

The following methods were used to answer the research questions:

Semi-structured interviews and eyetracking research with 16 students of artistic

or pedagogical fields (2 male, 14 female). At the beginning of the interviews, six participants reported having a diagnosed specific learning disorder (mostly dyslexia and dysgraphia). Each interview lasted between 30 and 50 minutes and took place in a quiet room of the Gočár Gallery in Pardubice during the exhibition *Nový pokus o maximální přiblížení KE 3171 O 96 | Interpretace zátiší*. The interviews followed four main research questions but remained flexible to allow participants to elaborate on their experiences and motivations. Topics included:

- decision-making factors when visiting museums and galleries;
- barriers to visiting;
- evaluation of websites and social media of galleries;
- preferred forms of communication and presentation.

The conversations were audio recorded with informed consent, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed using open coding. Two members of the research team independently coded the transcripts, then discussed and consolidated recurring categories into thematic clusters (e.g., digital communication, spatial orientation, text readability). This process allowed us to identify both common patterns and individual differences, particularly between respondents with and without learning disorders.

In parallel, we employed Tobii Pro Glasses 2 to observe how participants interact with digital communication tools. Respondents were asked to complete tasks such as:

- finding information about a current exhibition on the gallery's website;
- locating practical information (opening hours, ticket prices);
- navigating the Instagram profile of the gallery.

The recordings captured fixation points, scan paths, and average time spent on elements of interest. The raw data were processed in Tobii Pro Lab software. The analysis focused on the intuitiveness of navigation, the clarity of visual hierarchy, and the effect of design elements (contrast, typography, image–text ratio) on attention and comprehension.

Research sample and its limits

The research sample was specific and unbalanced: 14 women and 2 men, all studying in artistic or pedagogical fields with a specialization in art education. This profile naturally presumes a stronger connection to the art world and possibly greater motivation to visit museums and galleries. While this focus allowed for in-depth exploration of experiences among participants already oriented towards visual culture, it also limits the generalizability of the findings.

Future research could benefit from involving a more diverse sample, including students of technical fields or pupils from upper grades of primary schools, who also belong to Generation Z but may approach art museums and galleries with different expectations, motivations, and barriers. Such comparisons would allow for a more nuanced understanding of how inclusive communication strategies resonate across subgroups of Gen Z, not only those with prior exposure to art education.

This dual approach – triangulating self-reported experiences from interviews with objective visual behavior from eye-tracking – provides a richer understanding of both the subjective and observable aspects of visitor interaction.

The second part of the study used interviews with 12 representatives of galleries and art museums to

determine their readiness for inclusion. The aim was to identify motivations, reasons, and perceived barriers to the implementation of inclusive communication in their environment in order to meet the needs of target groups (specifically those with learning disabilities).

Results

Generation Z – perceptions and experiences of visiting art museums and galleries

To understand the current situation and find out what Generation Z expects from cultural institutions, one cannot solely rely on observation or one's own assumptions based on theoretical knowledge in the field of working with individuals with specific learning disorders. As a key aspect aimed at identifying specific experience and needs, 16 semi-structured interviews with young people from Generation Z who have experience visiting museums and galleries, many of them reporting having specific learning disorders, were carried out. Generation Z is confronted with an abundance of social media and information channels. It is an action-oriented generation, capable of rapidly creating, responding to, and sharing content in the digital space. However, some members of this group show little interest in real-time programming.¹⁴ The question remains, how do they perceive visits to galleries as well as online platforms?

Decision-making factors and motivation of Gen Z

The research conducted at the Gočár Gallery in Pardubice included 2 male and 14 female participants. The group was specific in terms of their

field of study, which was oriented toward the arts or pedagogy, with a specialization in art education. As previously noted, six participants reported having been diagnosed with specific learning disorders, namely participants P2*, P4*, P11*, P12*, P13*, and P16*. International studies have shown that students or individuals with an arts education tend to have a deeper interest in art.¹⁵ For Generation Z, this relates to enhancing both personal and professional development, which may often lead to more frequent visits to galleries and museums. They tend to prefer programs in which they are actively engaged, rather than attending merely as passive visitors.

Out of the sample of 16 respondents, only one reported visiting gallery spaces on a weekly basis. Most respondents visit galleries rarely or only a few times per year. Respondent P16* mentioned visiting galleries less frequently but in greater numbers at once, such as 2–3 in a single day during a trip to Prague. Overall, the respondent visits approximately 5 to 10 exhibitions per year.

Responses clearly indicated that the most common motivation for visiting galleries was personal interest and a desire to stay informed about current developments in the art world. Other factors influencing attendance included the topic of exhibitions and the participating artists. Gen Z seeks meaningful content, personal connection, and opportunities for participation.

Information-Seeking Behaviors of Generation Z

The research findings further indicate that participants

primarily obtain information about exhibitions through social media, especially Facebook and Instagram, as well as via printed flyers distributed at school or in public spaces. Approximately half of the respondents reported using Facebook and Instagram to search for exhibition-related content, while personal recommendations accounted for about one-third of the responses. Respondent P12* mentioned using TikTok to discover exhibitions; however, the other participants did not report using it for this purpose. These results support existing studies¹⁶ that highlight the preference of Gen Z for such tools (particularly Instagram) when it comes to staying informed.

Respondents report actively searching for information on websites, social media, or specialized review platforms such as *Artwall* and *Revolver Revue*. These findings clearly indicate that Generation Z prefers digital information platforms over printed brochures. No notable differences were observed among respondents diagnosed with dyslexia in this regard. Even though respondents rarely visit galleries and museums, this does not necessarily mean they follow these institutions on their communication channels. As respondent P13* noted: *“I like exhibitions, but I don't really focus on it that much, or I'm just not that interested.”* Nonetheless, the research showed that for Generation Z social media plays an important role as a way of getting informed about exhibitions and cultural events. Young people actively seek information about galleries and exhibitions on these platforms, following profiles of both institutions as well as local events. Facebook is considered useful for its clarity in

¹⁴ Generace Z vládne on-line světu a technologiím. Online. In: *BusinessIT*. 2024. Available from: <https://www.businessit.cz/cz1/generace-z-vladne-on-line-svetu-a-technologiim.php>. [accessed 2025-05-19].

¹⁵ BOWEN, Daniel H. and KISIDA, Brian. The Fine Art of School Engagement: How expanding arts education affects learning, behavior, and social-emotional growth. *Education Next*. 2023, vol. 23, no. 3, pp. 48–54.

¹⁶ FAVERIO, Michele and SIDOTI, Olivia. Teens, Social Media and Technology 2024. Online. In: *Pew Research Center*. 2024. Available from: <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2024/12/12/teens-social-media-and-technology-2024/>. [accessed 2025-05-19].

presenting events and for visually engaging posts. Visually appealing content is perceived as more accessible and easier to understand. However, Gen Z participants are aware of algorithmic behavior, noting that the content they react to prompts platforms to show them similar posts. This observation was explicitly mentioned by respondents P1 and P12*.

Generation Z – Expectations and Barriers to Visiting

The responses suggest that each individual has different expectations when visiting galleries, which can be summarized into several key themes: acquiring new information related to the exhibition and artists, gaining new ideas and stimuli for reflection, seeking inspiration, and experiencing emotions. This highlights the importance of clear communication from galleries about what visitors can expect from an exhibition.

When deciding whether to visit a gallery, one of the most frequently mentioned concerns was the presence of large crowds. For this reason, participants often avoid guided tours or exhibition openings. As P13* explained: *“I don’t really enjoy it when someone guides me through, because it doesn’t leave the same impression as when I experience it on my own. Then I just hear someone telling me things about it, but I don’t really enjoy it as much.”* They expressed being overwhelmed by too many simultaneous stimuli, which limits their ability to interpret the exhibition due to a lack of calm and focus. Some participants also worry they will not understand the exhibition or take away the intended message of the artist.

Another frequently mentioned concern involves graphic design elements. These include font size,

poor lighting, the placement of labels (e.g., not aligned with the artwork), dense text blocks, or visually unappealing typefaces. Participants P13* and P9 also mentioned challenges with spatial orientation, both within the gallery and navigating the city.

Suggested improvements include using larger, legible typefaces, good lighting, and concise, clearly structured texts. Clear and consistent wayfinding within the gallery is also essential. Such adjustments are particularly beneficial for visitors with dyslexia and can significantly improve their overall gallery experience. Two out of six participants with a diagnosed learning disorder specifically recognized these features as helpful. As P13* shared: *“I thought the layout was fine in terms of clarity, but I actually preferred the texts on the walls because they were more concise. They helped me understand the work better. But when I got to the longer panel, it felt a bit overwhelming. I would probably shorten it even more. There was just too much small text to read, which really didn’t work for me.”*

A key consideration is accessibility of exhibitions, both physical (time availability, free admission) and cognitive. Barriers may include poor spatial orientation, illegible or overly dense textual content, or information overload. These issues are especially relevant for individuals with specific learning disorders. As one participant with dyslexia (P11*) noted: *“I’d be put off by an exhibition that had only large blocks of text – more text than actual art.”* As to the exhibition layout, they further added: *“I want the spaces to feel pleasant. Like, in terms of how the things are arranged. When they’re too crammed together and there are too many people, it’s not great, but when they’re too far apart, then it also feels awkward to walk through the whole area.”*

Gen Z shows interest in art but tends to prefer active rather than passive forms of engagement. The research also shows that Generation Z primarily obtains information through digital platforms, especially Instagram and Facebook. Galleries should offer diverse forms of experience – from quiet exhibitions to interactive programs – and clearly communicate what visitors can expect.

Findings from Eye-Tracking Research on Generation Z

As previously mentioned, Generation Z primarily searches for information through social media or websites. Therefore, the eye-tracking survey focused on identifying elements that either motivate or discourage members of Generation Z (specifically those with learning disabilities) from visiting museums and galleries. The study analyzed the Instagram profile and website of the Gočár Gallery, available at www.gocarovagalerie.cz. In contrast to earlier statements, responses to the initial question – “Where would you look for information first?” – showed that half of the participants pointed to the website. Five respondents mentioned Facebook, while only three named Instagram.

The website’s homepage provides basic, up-to-date information about current events at the gallery. On average, visitors spent 23 seconds on the homepage. Most initial eye fixations were directed towards the top of the screen, where a prominent introductory image visually attracted the most attention. Most users attempted to scroll the homepage, indicating that this functionality is intuitive and expected. When scrolling was not possible, it led to frustration and made navigation more difficult: *“It really bothers me that I can’t scroll down.”* The least engaging element was the section at the bottom of the page regarding the

gallery's governing body, suggesting it was less attractive or important to them. One respondent with dyslexia (P13*) had the following comments on the homepage: "It feels really bright to me. It seems like there's not much there, like in terms of text. For a gallery, I'd expect maybe a preview or something from past exhibitions." In general, more than half of the participants were able to navigate away from the homepage within 30 seconds, which may indicate an efficient and user-friendly website design.

Initial fixations were again concentrated on the top of the screen (see fig. 1), particularly on the first exhibition tab located in the top left corner (Element of Interest A in fig. 2). As shown in fig. 3, users' attention then followed a left-to-right reading direction. This confirms a natural visual scanning pattern aligned with users' reading habits.

The exhibition projects are organized according to time, which highlights the significant role of visual hierarchy and information placement on a webpage, as participants pointed out.

Users were able to locate the page of the exhibition in question (Element of Interest E in fig. 2) within an average of 5 seconds, which again points to the intuitive structure of the website. When assigned the task of finding this specific exhibition, the majority of respondents located the subpage within 5 seconds, suggesting familiarity with the website and clear navigation pathways. The remaining 6 participants took longer to find the exhibition, most likely due to carefully reviewing all available exhibitions to make sure they selected the correct one. This behavior is typical of users encountering the subpage for the first time and trying to confirm their selection by cross-checking information.



Fig. 1: Initial fixation points recorded on the Exhibitions page, indicating where user attention was first drawn upon page load

GG GOČÁROVA GALERIE Otevřeno: Út, Čt–Ne: 10.00–18.00, St: 12.00–20.00

Výstavy ▾ Vzdělávání ▾ Programy ▾ O galerii ▾ Pro návštěvníky ▾ Sbirka ▾
Přátelé a partneři GG ▾ Pro média ▾ E-shop ▾

ÚVODNÍ STRÁNKA > VÝSTAVY

Výstavy - Aktuální

Výstavy

Gočárova galerie v Automatických mlynech

Transmise

stálá expozice



prvek zájmu A

Výstavy

20. března - 9. června 2024
Dům U Jonáše

Dana Bartoníčková a Martin Žák:
WAXED



prvek zájmu B

Výstavy

20. března - 9. června 2024
Dům U Jonáše

Nový pokus o maximální přiblížení
KE 3171 O 96 | Interpretace zátiší



prvek zájmu E

Výstavy

20. března - 9. června 2024
Dům U Jonáše

RABBIT HOLE/Tereza
Severová: Přečist řeku pozpátku



prvek zájmu D

Výstavy

24. března - 13. prosince 2024

Disegno Auditivo



prvek zájmu E

Výstavy

20. dubna - 14. července 2024
Gočárova galerie v Automatických mlynech

Postprizma

Postprisma | Postprism
Vernisáž 20. 4. 2024



prvek zájmu E

Výstavy

20. dubna - 29. září 2024
Gočárova galerie v Automatických mlynech

GG Zevniř/ Gabriela Těthalová:
Apokatastasis



prvek zájmu E

The navigation experience on the exhibition's detail page was also evaluated. Eye-tracking analysis revealed three dominant patterns of visual attention based on the various elements of interest as shown in fig. 4. After fixating on element F, participants' attention most commonly shifted to elements B, F, and D, in that order. While element A was visually dominant, it received fewer average fixations than element B, D, E, and F. Elements G, H, and I were less noticeable, while element J attracted the least visual attention and also received the most negative feedback. These findings suggest that visitors primarily focus on key practical information, such as ticket prices and exhibition details, and are also visually drawn to the image on the page.

Participants intuitively showed a tendency to scroll vertically through content, on average making between 3 and 7 scrolls. The absence of scroll functionality led to mild frustration and a decrease in attention. *"I would appreciate it if I could scroll further down; this bar at the bottom really distracts me while reading."* This comment from a participant illustrates how the lack of scrolling can negatively affect the user experience.

Generation Z often prefers Instagram and TikTok over other social media platforms. One aspect of the gallery's Instagram profile that received negative feedback was the lack of a coherent visual style. Users first noticed the profile picture and the information in the bio, while the rest of the content was described as chaotic. In contrast to users without diagnosed learning disorders, respondent P13* remarked more positively: *"What caught my eye first was that the bio is somehow structured. [...] That's nice."*

The research findings also showed that when looking for information about current exhibitions, the

Fig. 2: Elements of interest identified on the Exhibitions page, highlighting the most visually engaging elements according to user gaze data

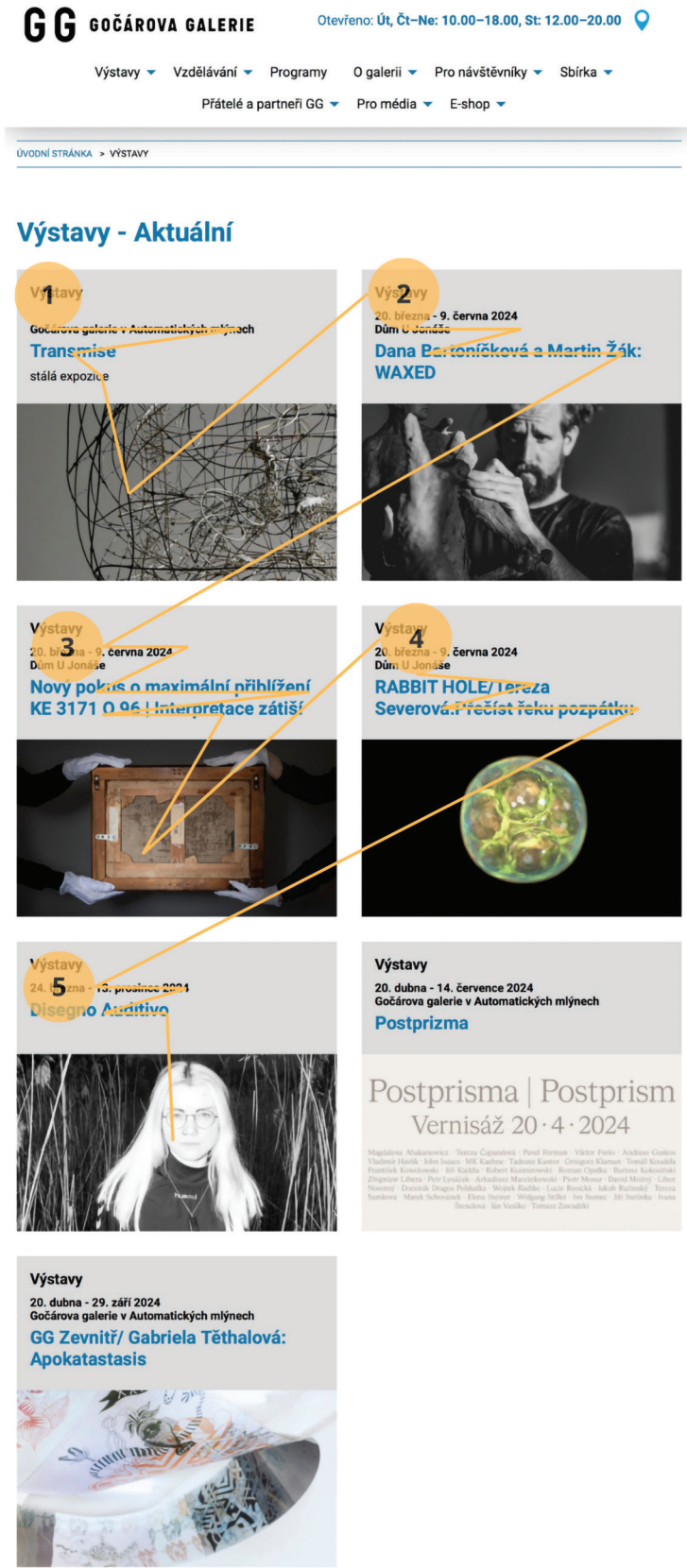


Fig. 3: Directional scan path of users on the Exhibitions page, confirming a dominant left-to-right reading pattern across content blocks

format of posts users most often relied on was text-based. More than half of the participants started by browsing through pinned posts, while about one-third navigated using the Story Highlights feature.

The visual appearance of the profile also emerged as a problematic element. Negative factors identified by participants include low legibility of certain text elements, inadequate size, and poor contrast with inappropriate background images.

When interacting with posts, users followed a typical reading pattern. After an initial quick scan-through, they focused on the visual element. They then returned to the text, but their interest rapidly waned, and most did not read beyond the second paragraph. Finally, attention shifted to the photo credit. This pattern suggests that users tend to scan text rather than read it in detail.

The research demonstrated that Gen Z prefers visually clear and structured digital environments on both websites and social media platforms when searching for information. Graphic posts are also popular, primarily due to the clarity and organization of the information. Users expect the ability to scroll, clearly legible texts, and logically organized information. Visual hierarchy and the ability to quickly orient oneself in the content are crucial. When using websites and Instagram, they particularly focus on initial visuals.

Findings from Qualitative Research: Interviews with Representatives of Art Galleries and Museums

As part of the study, qualitative research was conducted through individual qualitative interviews with representatives, typically from the education and marketing departments, of a total of 12 galleries and museums in the

GOČÁROVA GALERIE Otevřeno: 10.00–18.00, St: 12.00–20.00

Výstavy ▾ Vzdělávání ▾ Program **prvek zájmu H** Pro návštěvníky ▾ Sbirka ▾
Přátelé a partneři GG ▾ Pro média ▾ E-shop ▾

ÚVODNÍ STRÁNKA > VÝSTAVY > NOVÝ POKUS O MAXIMÁLNÍ PŘÍBLÍŽENÍ KE 3171 O 96 | INTERPRETACE ZÁTIŠÍ

NOVÝ POKUS O MAXIMÁLNÍ PŘÍBLÍŽENÍ KE 3171 O 96 | INTERPRETACE ZÁTIŠÍ **prvek zájmu A**

20. března - 9. června 2024

Út, Čt–Ne: 10.00–18.00 hodin
St: 12.00–20.00 hodin

Dům U Jonáše

Vstupné
plné 100 Kč
snížené **prvek zájmu B**
rodinně 200 Kč / max. 5 členů
a z toho musí být min. 1 dítě do 15 let

Kurátoři
Hana Lamatová a Marek Šobán




prvek zájmu C

prvek zájmu D


Nový pokus o maximální přiblížení KE 3171 O 96 | Interpretace zátiší
20. 3. – 9. 6. 2024 **prvek zájmu E**
Dům U Jonáše

Výstava je postavena na konceptu postupného seznamování se s uměleckým dílem. Téma zátiší rozvíjí tvořivě-kontextuálním způsobem a vybízí diváka k interakci a poznávání. Návštěvník se setká mimo jiné s multimediální instalací, **prvek zájmu F**, ale také si může užít kreativní zónu a sledování animovaného videa. Interpretaci fenoménu zátiší doplní výběr uměleckých děl ze sbírek Gočárový galerie i jiných institucí a ojedinělá kolekce obrazů malíře Jana Mikulky. Repríza výstavy Muzea umění Olomouc byla speciálně upravená a rozšířená na míru výstavním prostorům Domu U Jonáše a bude otevřená od 20. března do 9. června 2024.

GOČÁROVA GALERIE
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530 00 Pardubice

Přidejte se   

prvek zájmu J

 Gočárovu galerii zřizuje
Pardubický kraj

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Tento web používá k poskytování služeb a analýze návštěvnosti soubory cookie. Používáním tohoto webu s tím souhlasíte. **Rozumím**

Czech Republic and Slovakia. The interviews took place between October and December 2023. The selection of institutions was made through purposive sampling, with the criterion being experience in creating inclusive activities while serving a varied array of target groups. The surveyed galleries and museums focus their inclusion efforts on various groups of disadvantaged visitors. The greatest attention is given to visitors with visual and hearing impairments, as well as visitors with mental or physical disabilities, children with special needs or social disadvantages (children from children's homes and conflict areas), and seniors. Less focus is put on socially disadvantaged visitors such as minority groups or immigrants, and parents on parental leave.

The interviews revealed that visitors with specific learning disorders most often visit museums and galleries as part of school groups. There is little to no direct communication aimed specifically at them. Information about their specific needs is sometimes provided by accompanying teachers before the visit; in some cases, galleries inquire about this themselves when working with school groups. Some museums and galleries (e.g., Museum of Art and Design Benešov) regularly prepare programs for visitors with specific learning disorders. These activities are organized in cooperation with local non-profit organizations, which facilitate these accompanying programs or workshops for their clients. A representative of the Olomouc Museum of Art stated: "Every summer we regularly prepare a program for children on the autism spectrum. We have an active care center here for these individuals, which organizes a day camp, and they spend one or two days at the museum as part of it." In most cases, the demand for inclusive activities originates from a third party,

Fig. 4: Elements of interest identified on the exhibition detail page, illustrating which content elements most effectively captured user attention

typically a non-profit organization, a specific teacher, or similar actors.

All representatives of art galleries and museums consider websites to be the most important tool for communicating with visitors, particularly with older audiences who do not use social media. Nevertheless, the findings of the study suggest that websites are also an important communication tool for Generation Z, who frequently use them to search for information that is not available on social media.

Utilization of Inclusive Elements in the Communication Strategies

Inclusive elements in communication are most commonly employed by museums and galleries on their websites or social media platforms, typically in the form of alt text and captions. Some institutions also provide videos in sign language that provide an introduction to the cultural institution and its activities for visitors with a hearing impairment. The framework for the functioning and development of cultural institutions in the Czech Republic is governed by the Act on Public Cultural Institutions (263/2024 Coll.),¹⁷ which, however, does not directly address the implementation of inclusive elements. Institutions are encouraged to create accessible and inclusive environments for the general public. An example of such an initiative is a brochure published in 2016 with support from the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic, focused on working with visitors with specific needs in art museums. This publication provides methodological guidelines and examples of good practice for working with individuals

with physical, sensory, or mental disabilities, seniors, children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, and other groups.¹⁸

The most frequently used communication channels reported by the institutions were Facebook and Instagram, as well as their websites. All three channels are actively used by all the museums and galleries surveyed, forming the foundation of their public communication. A representative from 8smička notes: *“Both Facebook and Instagram are important to us, and although Facebook might seem outdated today, I don’t think that’s entirely true. We have different audiences on each platform, but both social networks actually work for us.”*

Czech museums and galleries use Facebook for posts and event promotion, mainly related to accompanying programs and exhibition openings. A representative from National museum in Prague notes that: *“The main reason for using Facebook is that, everything happens there, all the events, whereas only a fraction of the information can be posted on Instagram.”* Some institutions maintain secondary profiles alongside their main ones, dedicated to specific target groups (such as children’s programs or activities for educators and lecturers).

Some institutions use additional Instagram accounts to communicate with younger target groups (Gen Z), where the content and tone of voice are more tailored. More than half of the surveyed institutions use other social networks such as Twitter or Tripadvisor. None of them use TikTok for communication. On the other

hand, all surveyed galleries and museums have a YouTube account, but only some use it regularly. Less than half of the cultural institutions surveyed produce podcasts. About one-third of galleries and museums use LinkedIn.

If galleries and museums implement inclusive elements in their communication, it is primarily when creating content for their websites. However, none of the surveyed institutions currently have websites adjusted to this extent.

Utilization of Inclusive Elements in Art Gallery and Museum Spaces

The surveyed cultural institutions are mostly wheelchair accessible; however, this effort is often complicated by the architecture of the historic buildings they occupy. All representatives from the participating galleries and museums stated that their inclusive activities are not based on any formal strategies or general guidelines. Some galleries and museums provide haptic elements and resources for visitors with visual impairments or blindness. Audio induction loop systems, tactile guidance paths, or Braille labels are almost nonexistent in Czech museums and galleries. Adjustments aimed at improving readability have been implemented in some institutions for infographics and wayfinding systems, but such initiatives were mostly voluntary and applied intuitively. The graphic design of exhibitions and exhibit labels typically reflects the intentions of the curator or graphic designer, and it is not uncommon for aesthetics to be prioritized over readability. Our findings indicate that representatives of cultural institutions would appreciate guidance materials, training, or conferences to help them implement inclusive elements in their operations.

¹⁷ Zákon č. 263/2024 Sb. Zákon o veřejných kulturních institucích a o změně souvisejících zákonů (zákon o veřejných kulturních institucích). Online. In: *Zákony pro lidi*. AION CS, 2010–2025. Available from: <https://www.zakonyprolidi.cz/cs/2024-263>. [accessed 2025-05-19].

¹⁸ BRABCOVÁ, Alexandra; BĚLOHRADSKÁ, Jiřina; HAŠKOVCOVÁ, Lucie; KABRLOVÁ, Lucie; KUBELKOVÁ, Olga et al. *Práce s návštěvníky se specifickými potřebami v muzeích umění*. Online. Praha: Rada galerií České republiky, 2016. Available from: <https://www.ghmp.cz/artoteka/prace-s-navstevniky-se-specifickymi-potrebami-v-muzeich-umeni/>. [accessed 2025-05-19].

Most Czech galleries and museums address text size and typeface based on subjective judgment. The choice is usually influenced by the graphic designer, who coordinates typefaces for annotations and other texts to align with the overall visual identity of the event.

Discussion

None of the surveyed cultural institutions specifically target Generation Z individuals with specific learning disorders. However, some institutions are able to adapt their programs and activities when approached by primary and secondary schools. Galleries and museums collaborate with representatives of Generation Z (especially students of art universities) through internships, shadowing opportunities, or volunteering. Nonprofit organizations act as the main intermediaries between cultural institutions and visitors with specific needs. These organizations most commonly focus on visitors with visual or hearing impairments, as well as those with intellectual or physical disabilities.

Members of Generation Z have diverse expectations from galleries and museums: Some seek new ideas, stimuli, and inspiration, while others come with no specific expectations at all. What they share, however, is a desire to feel welcomed, to be part of the event, and to understand the context of the exhibition. This perception is quite subjective and therefore harder to influence directly, but it can be fostered through education and by selecting staff and curators who can significantly shape the overall visitor experience.

The attendance of galleries and museums among Gen Z is most influenced by their schedule and the specific topic of the event. Conversely, the main barriers to attendance are large crowds within

the gallery or museum and high admission fees. Visitors are also limited by inappropriate graphic signage and spatial confusion, along with elements such as inadequate text sizes, poor lighting, or unsuitable text layout.

The research findings indicate that visitors with specific learning disorders tend to visit museums and galleries more often in school groups rather than individually. Czech galleries and museums hardly communicate specifically towards this group, revealing significant potential for outreach and tailored communication targeting these visitors. All surveyed cultural institutions use their websites and social media channels (primarily Facebook and Instagram) as their main communication platforms. According to the research, social networks play a crucial role in how younger generations, especially Generation Z, acquire information about cultural events. Gen Z primarily seeks information about cultural happenings on social media platforms (notably Instagram and TikTok) and then looks for more detailed information on the websites of specific institutions. While Facebook remains the most widely used social network by galleries and museums, it is more popular among older generations (middle-aged adults). Nevertheless, the research confirms that traditional communication channels, such as posters, printed invitations and flyers, or outdoor advertising, still hold relevance today. Inclusive communication elements are most commonly implemented by Czech galleries and museums on their websites, as well as through alt text on social media. Some institutions also provide videos introducing their spaces and activities in sign language.

Interviews with Generation Z representatives reveal that when

communicating with this group, it is necessary to consider and actively remove potential barriers. The most significant of these include poor readability of certain textual elements, font size, and low contrast against unsuitable backgrounds. Additionally, the amount and clarity of text must be taken into account, as these factors influence reading speed and the overall comprehensibility of texts on both websites and social media platforms. While these guidelines should be applied for all visitors, they are fundamental for visitors diagnosed with learning disorders. The eye-tracking survey confirmed that the first few seconds after content loads on a website or social media post are the most crucial. The visual elements used and their attractiveness determine the level of visitor attention. When a disjointed visual style, excessive amount of text, or unclear content is present, users may be discouraged from further exploration and information acquisition.

Representatives of the surveyed galleries and museums perceive the greatest barriers to inclusion as insufficient staff training, limited capacities (personnel, time, space), and inadequate funding. Salary conditions often do not sufficiently motivate employees of these institutions. Galleries identify the greatest need in educating their staff on inclusion, particularly curators and graphic designers. Inclusion efforts would also benefit from study materials or handbooks containing recommendations and good practices for implementing inclusive measures. According to gallery professionals, mutual cooperation and sharing of good practices, common especially abroad, are also essential.

Conclusion

Inclusion in museums and galleries is currently one of the key topics in cultural policy, aimed at ensuring

equal access to cultural heritage for all visitors regardless of their individual needs. Special attention is given to Generation Z, characterized by digital literacy, a preference for visual communication, and participatory forms of engagement, while a significant portion of this population faces specific learning disorders. The present study is based on qualitative research using semi-structured interviews, with the goal of identifying differences in needs and barriers between representatives of Generation Z with and without specific learning disorders during visits to museums and galleries. The research sample consisted of students in artistic and pedagogical fields, some of whom were diagnosed with dyslexia or dysgraphia. The analysis was complemented by interviews with representatives of Czech and Slovak galleries and museums on the topic of inclusive marketing communication within these organizations.

Generation Z primarily obtains information through digital channels, notably Instagram, Facebook, and websites, where visual clarity, brevity, and comprehensibility of messages are crucial. Individuals with specific needs are particularly sensitive to the quality of the digital environment – they prefer larger typefaces, higher contrast, simple language, and intuitive scrolling. They negatively perceive chaotic visual layouts, rapidly changing captions, and inconsistent graphic styles.

Creating accurate and authentic expectations based on videos, behind-the-scenes photos, or insights from exhibition creators appears to be highly important.

In museum and gallery settings, “physical evidence” has the potential to significantly enhance visit predictability, one of the key factors influencing anxiety and stress among people with

learning disabilities. An important tool in this regard is so-called social stories: detailed visit guides presented as accessible documents (e.g., PDFs, websites, or videos) that describe the entire visit step-by-step – from parking, entering the building, locating cloakrooms or storage areas, reception, elevators, to orientation within exhibition halls, quiet zones, restrooms (including wheelchair accessible and baby changing facilities), resting areas, and options for feedback.

An example of good practice in this area is the Museum of Brisbane, which systematically creates these social stories not only for individuals but also for school groups and educators, enabling them to effectively plan their visit, including details such as meeting points, routes between exhibition sections, key landmarks, and rest areas.¹⁹ This approach not only reduces stress levels for visitors with specific needs but also enhances comfort and clarity for all visitors, including families with children, school groups, and those facing language barriers. Inclusive design once again proves its strength here – what is created to support one group typically improves the experience for everyone.

The introduction of similar social stories could serve as an inspiring example of good practice in the Czech context as well, potentially contributing to greater openness and accessibility of cultural institutions. However, as revealed during interviews with representatives of Czech museums and galleries, the implementation of such tools often encounters obstacles such as a lack of expert capacities, funding, and interdisciplinary

cooperation. Creating high-quality guides requires time, knowledge of the target groups’ needs, and experts in inclusive design and digital communication. Such requirements can be challenging for smaller institutions to meet without external support or a more systematic institutional framework.

General obstacles include poor spatial orientation, high visitor numbers, inadequate graphic signage, and unclear information about exhibitions, which affected all research participants. Specific barriers for people with special needs are evident in poor text legibility (small size, low contrast, unsuitable typefaces), information overload, difficult orientation, and the fast pace of digital content presentation, all of which significantly influences visitor comfort and the educational potential of the visit.

Recommendations for future actions:

- Optimization of digital communication

Ensure visually clear, concise, and comprehensible messaging across digital platforms, with an emphasis on legibility, a clear visual hierarchy, and intuitive scrollability tailored to the needs of individuals with specific learning disorders.

- Implementation of inclusive features

Use legible typefaces, larger text size, high-contrast visuals, clear signage, multisensory elements, and offer a dark mode option. Minimize distracting pop-up windows and ensure the use of easy-to-read text formats.

- Staff training

Regular training in inclusion, the sharing of good practices, and the development of methodological

¹⁹ MoB Social Story – Museum of Brisbane. Online. In: *Museum of Brisbane*. 2025. Available from: <https://www.museumofbrisbane.com.au/visit-us/access/mob-social-story/>. [accessed 2025-05-19].

materials will strengthen staff competencies and improve service quality.

- Participation of young visitors

Actively involve young audiences in the creation of content and programming to enhance their sense of ownership, engagement, and belonging.

- Collaboration with NGOs and schools

These entities can serve as key partners in reaching and supporting visitors with specific needs, helping to build sustainable and inclusive engagement strategies.

- Regular accessibility audits

Conduct regular evaluations of both physical and digital accessibility to identify weak points and strategically plan improvements, with attention to the varying needs across visitor groups.

A comprehensive analysis shows that although both groups within Generation Z share similar motivations and expectations, individuals with specific learning disorders face significantly greater obstacles in communication, navigation, and the overall experience of visiting. Implementing the proposed measures will enhance the comfort and accessibility of museums and galleries for all young visitors and contribute to greater openness and social responsibility within cultural institutions.

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