



visits4u case studies:
Aosta Valley Handicraft Museum
Aosta, Italy

Aosta Valley Handicraft Museum

Aosta, ITALY

Title: A Small Museum in a Small Region for Universal Accessibility

Description

In Aosta Valley, the smallest region in Italy, in the north-west, close to France, you can find a small museum rich in knowledge: the Traditional Aosta Valley Handicraft Museum (MAV - Museo dell'Artigianato Valdostano di Tradizione).

The museum doesn't want to be nostalgic: it promotes the works of the people living on the territory (mainly artisans) and preserves carefully the handicrafts patrimony that the community used to do. We can say that MAV connects the role of guardian of memory to cultural promotion, educational impulse and research activities aimed to create some opportunities for participation and exchange with actual community and craftsmen.



Becoming inclusive:

1. Description

Opened on January 24th, 2009, the museum is near the famous medieval castle of Fénis. The museum is composed mainly by two exhibitions: the permanent one and the temporary one. The first part is the result of the careful research work that MAV curators did: they purposely match the most ancient objects dated eighteenth and nineteenth century to the modern and timeless set-up. This exhibition is divided into 6 main areas: material, indoor, outdoor, children's corner, socializing and poetry. At the end of the path there is the area dedicated to temporary exhibitions: here you can find the object created and exposed nowadays by the artisans during the most famous fair in Aosta, Saint Orso's fair.

2. Description of steps taken, changes and progress

From its opening, the museum is interested in the accessibility for people with disability.

- There are no architectural barriers: different categories of users are able to enjoy the spaces of the museum in an independent way.
- The museum organizes activities and practical laboratories for people with mental health issues.
- The raw materials at the beginning of the path can be touched: blind and visual impaired people can easily visit and really enjoy the museum.
- The rooms of the museums and the walls are dark, but point of lights are placed in order to indicate the Sign Language interpreters were to stand. In each area there are explanation texts adapted for deaf people.
- From this year, the museum has videos in Italian Sign Language explaining the visit path and the main objects symbol of the Aosta Valley handicraft.



4. Main stakeholders / actors

- MAV - Traditional Aosta Valley Handicraft Museum
- People with disabilities and their associations
- Schools from Aosta Valley, France and Piedmont

Results and Impact

The main result on which it's important to think of is the fitting of a totally accessible environment for ever, not only for a period or an event: this is the real awareness that museum curators can design their events to be accessible right from the beginning, instead of «adapting» them later on.

Lessons learnt

The resolution of problems about access (not just physical but cultural), participation (raise people awareness about the importance of the accessibility to culture) and representation allow the real democratic use of cultural heritage.



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Further information

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