



**visits4u case studies:**

**Matera Per Tutti**

**Matera, Italy**

## Matera per Tutti

### Matera, Italy

Title: Designing Accessible Guided Tours

#### Description

Matera is a city and a province in the region of Basilicata, in Southern Italy. It is the capital of the province of Matera and the capital of Basilicata from 1663 to 1806. The town lies in a small canyon carved out by the Gravina.

Known as "la Città Sotterranea" (the Subterranean City), its historical centre "Sassi", along with the Park of the Rupestrian Churches, is considered a World Heritage Site by UNESCO since 1993.

Less than 70 years ago, thousands of people in the city were living in dwellings with no natural light, ventilation, running water or electricity. Over the following decades, Matera has developed and completely rebranded itself, becoming a cultural and historic landmark of the region and a rapidly growing tourism destination. In 2014 it was nominated as one of Europe's Capitals of Culture for 2019.

#### **Becoming inclusive:**

##### **1. Description**

The project "Matera per tutti" aims at allowing everybody to access the cultural, artistic, historical and naturalistic local heritage. Still today in Matera there are places, goods and services that many disabled people, elderly people, families with babies, people with food and environmental allergies - in a nutshell - people with a range of access requirements, cannot enjoy due to architectural, sensory and cultural barriers.

After a long and in-depth study and experiences from the field, SassieMurgia's tourist guides are able to offer guided tours and additional services that satisfy a wide range of needs. In accordance with the principles of social inclusion and valorisation of diversity, the groups are composed of tourists who may or may not be disabled people. In the

perspective of further expanding access to our worth visiting places, goods and services, by involving the local community, SassieMurgia carries out actions and projects in cooperation with citizens, organizations and public bodies.

## 2. Description of steps taken, changes and progress

### **Guided tours:**

Behind the “Matera per Tutti” guided tours there is a complex teamwork that involves tourist guides, Italian Sign Language interpreters, manual wheelchair and powerchairs rental, attendants (for blind people or people who use manual wheelchairs): we promote and sell the tours all together in order to lower costs and to maximize profit.

### **Public / community projects:**

In order to lower costs, it is essential to address through the same project every need - oriented intervention. For example, if I decide to remove architectural barriers from a street, I will remove sensory barriers too so that deaf and blind people can move around freely and in a safe way. In this way, I can make the street accessible to everyone and at the same time I can save money by avoiding additional interventions on it. These are the reasons why we always suggest solutions that meet the largest number of needs.

## 3. Main stakeholders / actors

Since the beginning of the “Matera per tutti” project (2012), the team have been cooperating with:

- **Matera 2019 committee** in order to realize LIS (Italian Signs Language) translation of some contents of Materadio radio broadcast;
- **Csv Basilicata** in order to realize the first training course on accessibility in tourism;

- **Murgia Madre association** to offer need-oriented services for international events such as Matera Ballon Festival and Dies Natalis, the most important living nativity scene in the Sassi;
- **Ente Parco della Murgia Materana** (the public body that manages the natural park of Murgia Materana) to realize two videos with LIS information regarding historical, cultural, and natural aspects of the park;
- **C-Fara association** in order to design the first map representing worth visiting places, tourist services and accommodation accessible to people with disabilities (Materamare project).

## Results and Impact

### Benefits for the business and customers:

According to estimates of the European Commission Tourism and Cultural Instruments Unit, the tourist enterprises that invested in accessibility in the 2010/2012 triennium, got a 20% growth in average sales with a 25% average increase in tourist presences. For the third consecutive year, the growth in average sales of our guides is just a little bit lower than the above mentioned data. We are sure we will confirm these numbers for the next years. Simultaneously, the restaurants, hotels, means of transport and everybody who offers goods and services available to people with access needs are taking advantage of the increase in tourist visiting Matera thanks to SassieMurgia's for all guided tours and itineraries offer. Places, goods and services available to people with access requirements benefit everyone too: the same goes for tourists too. Some examples: a path without architectural barriers can be covered by a mother with a pushchair or by who is temporarily on a wheelchair; if the labels that describe an object exhibited in a museum are readable by people who are blind or who have low vision, they are more readable by people without visual impairments.

## Lessons learnt

Since always our way is full of obstacles: difficulty to work towards the same goals with different organizations, public and private institutions employees without specific training, the local municipality unfit to move with the times, incapability of using government or European funds.

Of course, they slow down our action, but at the same time, they have taught us to keep alternative solutions ready to use in case of necessity. We are more and more convinced that doing for everybody by constantly searching for most useful and beautiful solutions, is the best way to ensure a better life for everyone.

## Further information

SassieMurgia

[www.sassiemurgia.com](http://www.sassiemurgia.com)

Matera per Tutti project

<http://www.sassiemurgia.com/turismo-per-tutti-un-progetto-in-divenire/>

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