



UK Partner UCAN Productions

Vision Workshop Report

This report outlines the process of designing and delivering drama workshops for visually impaired young people and activities delivered by UCAN Productions www.ucanproductions the UK partner of the VISION Erasmus + Project.

Summary Outcomes

All those who were involved in the project regarded this project to be an absolute success. Many of the young people reported increased confidence and improved well-being and have, since the end of the project, kept in touch with other participants from all the other partner countries.

UK Statistics

As well as the 15 visually impaired young people who took part in the final workshop in Palermo, the total number of attendances for the project was 259 with 126 individual participants involved in the Multiplier Events.

UCAN Productions Background

UCAN Productions is an award winning creative and performance arts organisation for blind and partially sighted young people and their friends. UCAN stands for Unique Creative Arts Network and is the only organisation of its kind in the UK. Incorporated in 2005 as a Cooperative the organisation began with a core membership of 12 this has now grown to over 600 members.

UCAN prides itself on the ability to work in partnership with many organisations including The Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB) and The Royal National College for the Blind (RNC) where UCAN is currently delivering a module of the performance arts course. UCAN has a highly skilled and professional Board of Directors and all those employed by UCAN are Arts Professionals.

At the centre of all UCAN's work is the Young People's Steering Committee, (YPSC) which is made up of our visually impaired core membership.

UCAN was introduced to the VISION Erasmus+ project by RNIB (Royal National Institute of the Blind).

UCAN Productions Safeguarding Process

Before organizing any activities with the Children, Young People or vulnerable adults every aspects of the potential participants' safety was taken into consideration. All those in direct contact with visually impaired young people must have successfully completed Visual Awareness Training and held a current DBS check. All volunteers were trained and supervised at all times.

It is vital that all staff and volunteers have previous training and have read and studied the UCAN Safeguarding Policies. An online register of those who have attended training is kept on file by UCAN. Before each workshop it is decided who will be the overall designated person responsible for the safety of all those attending and who people should go to in the case of an emergency or if they have any concerns about the participants welfare.

Identifying Participants:

UCAN Productions mostly work with two defined groups of Visually Impaired children and young people in main stream education and those supported by specialist teachers in a general school setting and those who attend a special school. The latter are usually visually impaired young people with additional needs and/or disabilities.

As well as delivering separate workshops for these defined groups, and for the purpose of the VISION project, UCAN decided for the first time to bring these two groups together under the title of Maggie's Club.

Promoting the Project:

In order to identify and engage potential participants UCAN promoted the project through networks such as:

Cardiff University School of Optometry and Vision Science

QTVI's (Qualified Teachers of Visually Impaired)

Royal National College for the Blind, in Hereford

Other Partner organisations such as Wales Council for the Blind and RNIB

Methods for Promotion

Social Media

Websites

Professional News Letters

Own website and Facebook pages

Consent Forms for Workshops and for Travel to Palermo

In order to safely design and deliver a workshop it is vital to know as much about a potential participant as possible. In order to collect the information a consent form is sent out to the parent/carer or guardian before the event. This is usually followed up by a phone call, as it has proved highly

beneficial to speak directly to those responsible for the participant. Many parents are not happy to disclose all their child's disabilities on paper. Copy of consent form attached.

Training the Volunteers

It has proved extremely worthwhile for UCAN to involve volunteers in all our activities as they play an important role in helping the professional trainers keep the participant safe. As with all staff and arts trainers training in Visual Awareness is a requirement of all our volunteers.

Preparing for Workshops

Knowing the abilities, ages of participants in advance has been very helpful in the planning process. It is particularly helpful in making sure that all activities are age appropriate and the duration of the workshops suit the physical abilities of the participants.

Venue

When choosing a room or venue to hold a workshop for visually impaired young people it is very important to consider access by public transport, how accessible the whole building is in terms of stairs, lifts and bathroom facilities. The acoustics of a workshop space is also very important because of noise pollution e.g. other workshops being run close by or traffic noises have been found to be very disruptive and difficult for the participants. Where appropriate and with the assistance of our visually impaired members we often mark potential hazards with high visibility/contrast tape. The lighting in a venue is also very important and probably one of the most difficult thing to get right for all participants, simply because of the different kinds of visual impairments. For example two of our participants see much better in the dark whilst the majority of our other young people find natural bright light more useful. UCAN has always worked on the premise that when in doubt we should always ask the participants what works for them.

Risk Assessment

Once the venue and participants had been identified a risk assessment was drawn up to ensure that all risks to all those attending had been identified and minimized.

Below is a Table of Activities

Date	VISION Activity	Number of Attendances	Number of participants (new)
5.12.2015	Maggies Club	24	24
12.12.2015	Workshop at Victa UK	12	12
13.12.2015	Workshop at Victa UK	12	
1.1.2016	Workshop at RNC Hereford	10	10
23.1.2016	Maggies Club	15	6
19.2.2016	UCAN P2 workshop	20	20
26.2.2016	UCAN P2 workshop	15	
27.2.2016	Maggies Club	12	4
4.3.2016	UCAN P2 workshop	18	
18.3.2016	UCAN P2 workshop	20	
19.3.2016	Maggies Club	11	2
16.4.2016	Maggies Club	7	
18.5.2016	VISION Sharing Event	58	47
21.5.2016	Maggies Club	14	
18.6.2016	Maggies Club	11	1
15 events	Total number of attendances	259	126

Appendices of Documents created to support the project;

1: Case Study: Comments from Participants

2: Copy of Letter of Consent

3: Code of Conduct

4: V.I.S.I.O.N Practitioners' Guide to Fluid Interpretation

5: Health & Safety Review for V.I.S.I.O.N. Project week 2016

Appendix 1

Case studies: Direct feedback from participants:

I would like to say..... The workshops were incredible, there was a range of different approaches from different practitioners, all unique and showing different techniques and ways of working, also the individuals I met were all incredible people....

I met some fantastic people in Palermo, some British, some Italian and some Bulgarian. It was a truly fantastic opportunity and I'm so grateful for everything. I learnt so much to do with culture, lifestyle and theatre.

Everyone was so willing to learn and share about their experiences, about visual impairment, about their cultures. It was a fantastic time.

From the moment we arrived and met up with everyone from UCAN was made to feel as if we were part of something that we knew was going to be so so so special, the first morning when we met all the other children, organizers, practitioners, we became part of something that is out of this world, we became a family, there was no need to worry about the languages spoken being different, there was no barrier. All the workshops were amazing and so much time had gone into them, so they got the best out of everyone. The opportunity for us to take part in this amazing project for us to make great new friends, be part of a different culture is an experience that will stay with us forever and ever. Angharad from the bottom of her heart wants to thank everyone who made this possible and inviting her to take part (I would like to ditto this too).

It was amazing to work with so many different practitioners who teach in very different ways. Interacting with everyone daily was amazing and the week was just fantastic overall.

It was brilliant to meet so many new people and learn so many new things. I thought it was amazing to see everyone with different visual impairments working together, having fun and learning about the culture.

Appendix 2

Letter of Consent - Participants/guardian for VISION Project 26.03.16 - 02.04.16

In the circumstance that the participant is under the age of 18, this form must be completed and signed by their parent/guardian.

Name:	Surname:
Date of Birth:	Address:
Postcode:	Phone:
Next of kin/parent/guardian's name and address: Name - Address -	Next of kin/parent/guardian's telephone number (day AND night): Daytime - Nighttime-
Doctor's name, address & phone number: Name - Address - Phone -	Details of any disabilities, medical conditions e.g. Visual Impairment, Epilepsy
Allergies:	Details of medication and how it is taken:
Is the participant insured for travel within the EU?	Dietary requirements:

I understand/ I have ensured that my child understands the information for his/her safety and the importance of following instructions

Yes / No

I give permission for any photographs or videos taken during this project to be used for publication and/or publicity

Yes / No

I have ensured that my/my child's insurance policy;

- covers at least £2 million in medical cover
- covers any **pre-existing** medical conditions (check for EXCLUSIONS in the policy)
- all/any medical conditions **are declared** (and covered for)
- covers up to £3,000 in cancellation
- covers **from and including 26/03/16 to and including 02/04/16**
- covers up to £1500 in baggage/belongings

STATEMENT - I acknowledge receipt of and understand the information above regarding the VISION project and am happy for my child to participate in any activities or events.

Participant/Parent/Guardian's Name.....

Signed..... Date

Relationship to Participant (if applicable i.e. mother, father)

.....

Appendix 3

Code of Conduct Declaration for Participants of VISION Project 26.03.15 - 02.04.15

As a participant of the VISION Project 2016 representing UCAN, I adhere to comply with the code of conduct as stated below throughout the entirety of the trip.

Participants will be required to:

Stay in designated venues at the designated times.

Keep an open-mind and positive attitude towards other VISION groups throughout the trip.

Keep to timetabled activities i.e. be ready to leave the school/hotel at the designated time

Attend every day of the VISION projects, unless medically unwell.

Participants Must Not:

Leave the presence of UCAN/VISION

Get into any vehicle with anybody unknown to the UCAN group

Appendix 4

VISION Practitioners' Guide to Fluid Interpretation

In order to achieve maximum success in communication of the VISION workshops so that each participating child is linguistically included, it has been decided that each workshop will be translated simultaneously to whichever language required. The interpreters/translators have been allocated to work with the same workshops throughout the five sessions. The allocations have been chosen as follows:-

Practitioner	Interpreter 1	Language to be interpreted from/to	Interpreter 2	Language to be interpreted from/to
1.Dinos - English	Mali	From English into Italian	Zori	From English into Bulgarian
2. <i>Aleksander</i> - English (or Bulgarian)	<i>Alex & Ina</i>	<i>From/into English into/from Bulgarian</i>	<i>Luca</i>	<i>From English into Italian</i>
3. Berny - English	Daniela	From English into Italian	Ivelina	From English into Bulgarian
4.Casimiro - Italian	Valerio	<i>From Italian into English</i>	Nadia	<i>* From Italian into Bulgarian</i>
5.Tsveta - English (or Bulgarian)	<i>Tsveta & Konstantin</i>	<i>From/into English into/from Bulgarian</i>	Marco	<i>** From English into Italian</i>

** In the meeting in Hereford it was decided that the Bulgarian Practitioners would interpret their own workshops into English themselves, so only require an interpreter to translate from English into*

Italian.

***If you are a Bulgarian Practitioner it is recommended that you give directions **first** in Bulgarian and **then** in English, so that the Italian interpreter can translate into Italian as soon as the English directions are given. If you are not comfortable with interpreting your workshops into English yourselves, please contact a member of the organisational team.*

Appendix 5

Health & Safety Review for V.I.S.I.O.N. Project week 2016

The week in Palermo promises to be an exciting experience for everyone, so to make sure the children get the best experience (and the adults don't have any added stress!), and to avoid any accidents or injuries, we need to make sure we make the building and spaces are as safe as possible.

General Precautions

There are hazards that fully-sighted people may not even consider problematic, as Nicola showed us in her presentations, so here we have put together an overview of some of the hazardous features of the building and how we can ensure they become less dangerous.

Visually impaired young people are especially prone to accidents in spaces that are new to them, so we must ensure that the children are given a guided tour of the spaces we will be using at the beginning of the week - and that they are accompanied on journeys between them.

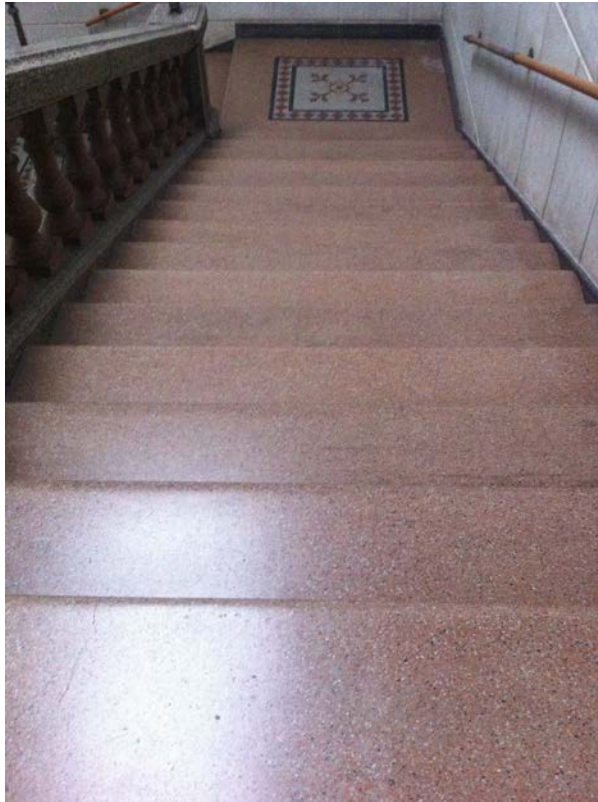
Being a historic building, there are various features that will potentially cause safety issues to visually impaired children, but naturally cannot be removed or adjusted. Here are some examples with solutions to decrease the hazards.

Example: dark corridors

Solution: lights to be left on in corridors, at ALL times.

Example: marble staircase with light glare and monotonous colour that makes it difficult for visually impaired people to recognise they are stairs, and the difference in depth between each step.

Solution: fluorescent tape horizontally places on the edge of each step, and vertically between the stairs and banisters/wall. Children to be encouraged to use the banister as a mobility aid when using the stairs.



Example: shutters extending beyond the edge of the wall.

Solution: where possible and where there is a major space between the shutter and the wall, shutters should remain shut and electric lights be used for lighting. If there is a need to open the shutters for ventilation, the children should be walked around the room so that they are aware of the hazard. The central area of the room should then be used only.



Example: white radiators on white walls - could be camouflaged for visually impaired children.

Solution: fluorescent tape to be stuck to the outlines of the radiators.



Specific Precautions

There are some specific hazards in specific rooms so here are some basic blueprints of the spaces that we will probably be using in March, with specific hazards and solutions listed beneath.

Colour coding:

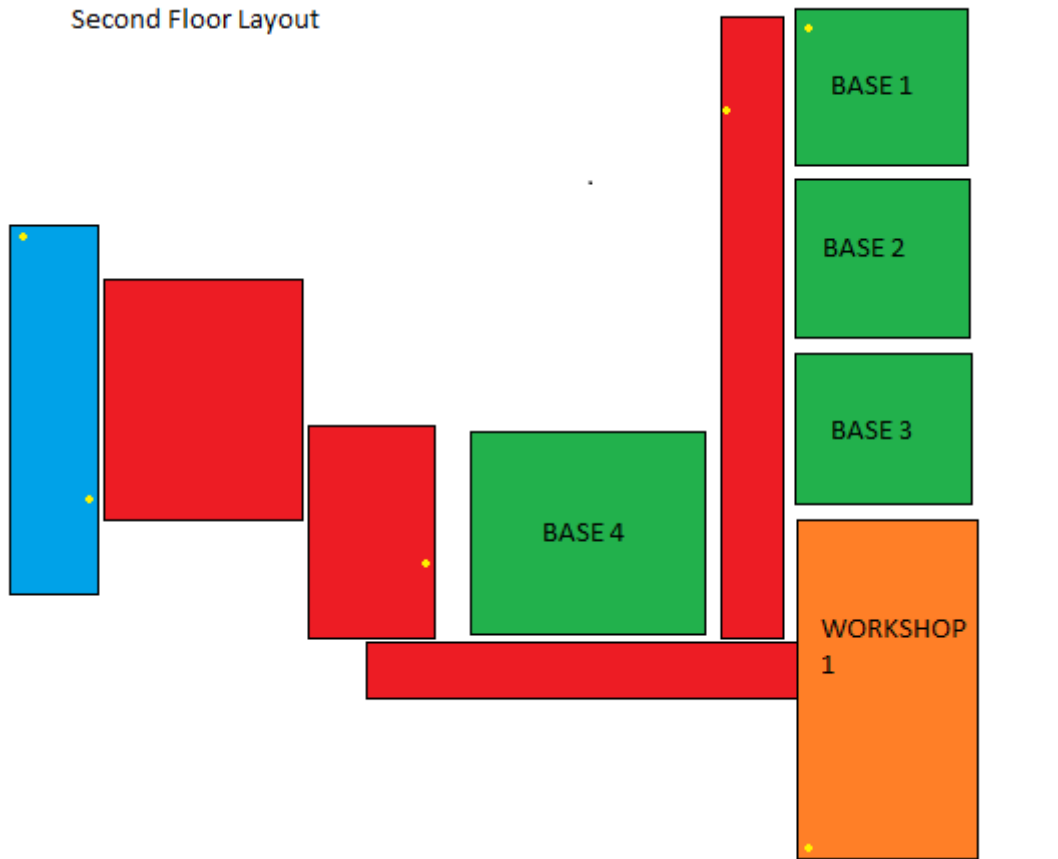
Orange: Workshop spaces

Green: Base room spaces

Red: Corridors

Blue: Staircases

Second Floor Layout



Base Room 1

Hazard: In the left, back corner there were some unattached electricity sockets and wires.

Solution: These need to be taped and covered with duct tape.

Corridor (Along Base Rooms 1/2/3)

Hazard: Being a narrow corridor, open shutters will be particularly hazardous.

Solution: Shutters need to be kept shut at all times, with the lights switched on at all times.

Workshop 1

Hazard: The Statue

Solution: For his own safety (!), the statue should be removed and kept in a room not being used.

Corridor (Next to Base Room 4)

Hazard: Low cupboards with sharp corners.

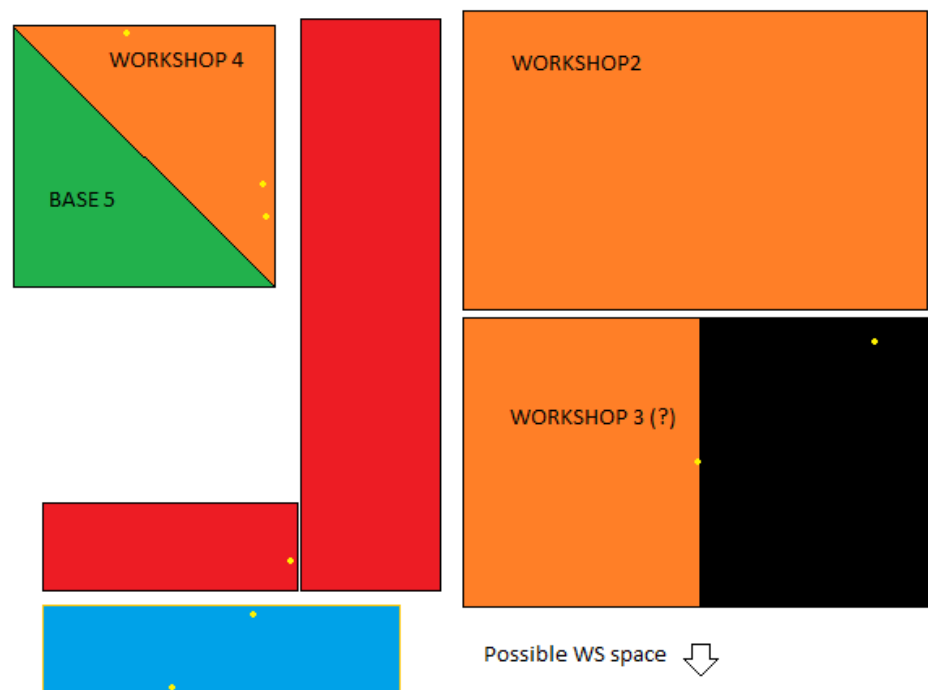
Solution: We need to make sure all corners are softened by using foam/bubble wrap and tape, it would also be a good idea to use fluorescent tape along the edges so they stand out more.

Staircase

Hazard: Doors

Solution: The doors need to be open at all times throughout the week, ideally with a person stood to help guide the children during the times they will be moving around the building (before lunch, between workshops, etc).

First Floor Layout



Workshop 4

Hazard: Low and high standing cupboards

Solution: Softening corners with foam/bubble wrap and tape is absolutely necessary. Ideally the whole kitchenette area would be screened off with large fabric/cardboard screens.



Hazard: Door onto balcony/balcony - outside there is an electricity box and relatively low walls.

Solution: Gate behind window should be locked throughout workshop periods.

Workshop 3

Hazard: We were uncertain whether this room would be available for workshops, but if so the main hazard is that there is a small passage between two rooms, which could easily make spatial awareness very confusing to visually impaired children.

Solution: The second part of the room should be screened off, and only the first part (in orange) used for workshops.

Corridors & Staircase

Again, in the corridors the lights should be kept on, and the doors always left open preferably with somebody present during moving times.

The stairs leading from the ground floor to the first floor are particularly hazardous as the colour is faint and each step can seem undefined even for fully-sighted people. Here it is very important that children are

accompanied and are told to walk slowly while moving between the two floors, and of course that fluorescent tape is used to define the steps/edges.

Ground Floor

In the case that the 'theatre room' (used on the first day in November) is used for workshops, it is very important that the area with steps is prohibited from use during workshops. This can be done by using fluorescent tape to cordon off the area.

Conclusion

When to Take Precautions

Naturally the Institute needs to be as safe as possible *before* the children arrive for the week of workshops. Anyone who is willing to take on this responsibility can contact Nicola for more details on how to safeguard the children as much as is possible.

A list of what to purchase/acquire before the workshop week:

Duct tape
Soft material (foam/bubble wrap)
Screens if possible
Fluorescent tape

Certain things such as fluorescent taping is likely to need to be replaced throughout the week due to wear and tear, so this should be bought in abundance.