EU.FOR.ME Project

Tourist training for a wider target

Training needs analysis

Tourism for All Concept

EVERYONE SHOULD BE ABLE TO TRAVEL TO THE COUNTRY, WITHIN THE COUNTRY AND TO WHATEVER PLACE, ATTRACTION OR EVENT THEY SHOULD WISH TO VISIT.

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1. TRAINING NEEDS

1.1 Methodological premise

In this section, in light also of the information reported in the previous chapters, the training needs emerging from the Project EU FOR ME investigation will be described. Before describing in detail the characteristics of the activity and the instruments used to identify the training needs, for a greater comprehension of the information reported below some synthetic indications about the function of the Needs Analysis must be supplied.

Even though in the last decade Needs Analysis has assumed a key role in planning lines of intervention both in the training area and in the management of active labour policies, at the same time earning recognition as an essential element for socio-economic development, it is an "instrument" defined and structure to a limited extent.

The training needs analysis revolves around complex and significant concepts such as training and training needs.

In the training process[1] the needs analysis is configured as a "first activity" aimed at the acquisition of useful and credible data and information to continue in the planning of training experiences (definition of general and specific oObjectives, identification of the targets, structuring of contents, choice of educational methods) and subsequently in the realisation of the training intervention itself[2].

It seems necessary to clarify the concept of "training need" which, albeit not having – at least not in the most recent literature on the subject - a unequivocal definition, is prevalently described as a gap, a lack to be filled, the distance

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[1] Circular training process phases: needs analysis , planning interventions, planning activities, carrying out the training intervention, verification of results.

[2] G. Quaglino, P. Carrozzi, *Il processo di formazione. Dall'analisi dei bisogni alla valutazione dei risultati (The training process. From needs analysis to the evaluation of the results)*, Franco Angeli, Milano, 2004

between the skills possessed by the subject and the skills necessary to effectively and efficiently carry out the activities within specific work processes.

The training need, therefore, is closely related, both to the professional figure that the subject covers and to the set of skills required by the company (and/or, in the macro-dimension, by the industry) to carry out the work activities. The training need is, therefore, a describer of the status of relations between the individual and the organisation and as a consequence i san indicator of a "system of needs" that a specific company, or as in our case, a sector, manifests as a gap to be filled when faced with changes in the reference market or special requirements of the users of a service or product (for example tourists with specific needs, representatives of a market which is not yet understood and whose needs are not yet fully satisfied).

As a consequence, the training need is configured as a potential area for the activation of training: knowledge of the training need allows the training planner to design a personalised and effective intervention.

Training needs can be[3]:

- **explicit**, expressed by the subjects representing the demand or the offer of the labour system;

- **evident**, products of change in the labour market (change determined by regulatory innovations, product innovations, etc.), but not always expressed by the company/sector/territory;

- **latent,** requirements from the business world but which have no response in the labour offer;

- **potential** which can be found through a medium/long term analysis of the labour market.

Another feature of the needs analysis is the *dimension of the object observed*. A need can, in fact, be defined:

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[3] E. Catarsi, T. Cini, *Progettare Formazione. Manuale per il progettista del sistema della formazione (Planning training: Manual for the training system planner)*, Edizione Cerro, Pisa, 2003

- by a **single subject**, individual training needs from an empowerment viewpoint;
- as part of a specific **organisation/company**, organisational analysis which must keep in mind the objectives, resources, internal and external climate, work processes, activities, roles;
- with reference to the **territory**, analysis of the elements which describe certain capabilities and potentials for development in an area and as a consequence the training needs in the territory being examined;
- as part of a specific **production line/sector**, analysis of the labour processes, of the activities, and professional figures which characterise a specific sector and represent elements necessary for identifying training needs.

For a complete needs analysis that corresponds as closely as possible to reality, even if the object observed is changed certain principal areas of analysis remain constant, albeit assuming a different importance and weight; these include:

- the companies,
- the needs expressed by workers,
- the new market orientations/requests,
- the training offer of the sector investigated.

As far as the procedures and instruments of the investigation are concerned, as emerges from the research conducted by the European Foundation for Management Development (1973- 1974), no shared reference "models" exist for needs analysis.

It is commonly agreed that the phases of exploration and the instruments used must be specifically correlated to the objects observed and to the specific purposes of the analysis. This allows one to concentrate the investigative activities in order to gather information that is quantitatively and qualitatively useful in the definition of the training needs.

The methodological outline, described synthetically, allows one to entirely comprehend the goals and the specific characteristics of the Training Needs Analysis activities of this project.

1.2 Training Needs Analysis in Project EU. FOR. ME.: goals, methodologies and instruments

For Project EU FOR ME – Tourism Training for a Wider Target, the Needs Analysis served in planning a training action destined for **Trainers specialised in the topics of "tourism for all"**.

The "context", within which the general and specific objectives of the entire joint action are pursued, has been the ***object of observation*** for the definition of the Needs Analysis.

The information gathered through the training needs analysis , therefore, will be necessary elements in planning a training path for trainers who will have to conduct activities to fill the skill gaps present in the sector being examined and at the same time have allowed us to draw a picture of the whole which has allowed the research team to understand the "state of the art" of "tourism for all" and detect indicators of knowledge about and awareness of this topic.

The way of conducting the training needs analysis and the related instruments have been designed and realised keeping in mind three important aspects of the object under observation, and those are:

- the needs of tourists with special needs;
- the tourism supply system;
- the training offer for the tourism industry

Training needs could not, in fact, be identified by gathering information exclusively regarding the skill gaps of sector operators because:

➢ as mentioned in the methodological premise, training needs analysis activity cannot leave out of consideration a "focus" on new market orientations.

In this case the tourism demand determines strong changes and specifically the requirements of tourists with special needs supply essential indications of the characteristics of a training intervention dedicated to a figure which must help tourism operators to acquire the skills indispensable to offer a "tourism for all product";

➢ the training path to be planned foresees as its direct targets not the operators but subjects able to train tourism operators in the topics of accessibility. As a consequence the field of research was not limited to specific professional figures of the tourism production line, the object of the investigation was the skills lacking in the various professional figures operating in the various types of tourism companies;

➢ to be effective, the training activity in question must "position itself" in the panorama of training offer responding to gaps in tourism training, such an analysis is also necessary to reach one of the goals of the project: to develop and test training modules on the topics of the accessibility of the tourism product, of welcoming the disabled client and of the preparation of products suited to the target identified.

In correspondence to the three "aspects" we have identified:

✓ as fare as the requirements of tourists with special needs are concerned: specific needs in the various phases of travel and skills ought in tourism operators;

✓ in the area of the tourism supply system: the main structural and organisational features of businesses that operate in the are of "tourism for all", the main reasons for "resistance" of businesses that do not offer "tourism for all", and, especially, professional training needs to offer a quality product/ service (in terms of skills to strengthen, requests for specific professional figures, opinions on the training activity offer);

✓ regarding the training offer: the gaps in the current tourism training programmes on topics related to accessible tourism.

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To gather the information listed above, the following survey instruments were fine tuned:

- Focus Group of young persons with disabilities and the related Guidelines/grid for conducting the debate;
- Focus Group with sector operators and the related Guidelines/grid for its realisation. Wherever it was impossible to organise a Focus Group, the research groups conducted interviews with a grid of questions following the fields indicated in the guidelines for the focus groups;
- Census and analysis of the training offer and related guidelines for conducting this.

The instruments indicated above have been described in previous documents, nevertheless it would be opportune in this context to provide motivations for the choice.

The **Focus Group**, qualitative social research technique – understood as an interview of a homogeneous group of persons – allowed us, through guided debate, to gather information on a specific topic avoiding the factors of "conditioning" that can interfere in other research techniques, such as, for example, in structured or semi-structured interviews.

The Focus Group method was fully applied for the survey that involved the young disabled persons.

The Focus Groups among operators held in the countries of the project partners, because of concurrence with Tourism Fairs and the work commitments of the operators, in some cases took place through individual telephone interviews.

This difficulty in organising research and study meetings among operators was also encountered in other research projects. In fact the persons who manage tourism businesses, generally family-run or small/medium sized businesses, are busy for the greater part of the day and have difficulty delegating their activities.

In this action the research teams who could not involve the tourism operators in a Focus Group prepared a grid of interviews with items corresponding to the questions indicated in the Focus Group guidelines. The number of operators who

responded to these interviews corresponded to the number of participants established for the focus groups.

In the Focus groups, through the roles of the moderators and observers, it was possible to investigate the topic in depth through a debate which, especially at the moment of the concluding reflections, allowed us to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the real and the potential "tourism for all" both on the part of the demand and the offer.

The instrument of the interview allowed us to gather prevalently quantitative data. The characteristics of the persons involved were a strength of the investigation instrument, in fact each partner managed to involve subjects who broadly represented the reality studied. The participants were determined according to the characteristics, shared and indicated in the support grid, believed to be important in relation to the topic discussed and the topics of the research.

In the case of the Focus Group dedicated to the analysis of the needs of tourists with disabilities a significant representation of the specific needs was reached, moreover their "companions" were also involved. Regarding the investigation of the operators, in most cases all types of tourism firms were represented (hotel and non-hotel hospitality, food service, transportation and travel intermediation, Tourist Information and Welcoming Offices) and the category associations were also involved in the debate.

The instruments of the investigation used allowed us to go in depth into specific topics in a relatively brief period of time, dictated by the programming of the planning activity, and to gather information that could be easily understood and processed by the researchers.

As far as the **analysis of the current training programmes** on the topic of accessible tourism are concerned, a "census" was made of the training products following a specially formulated grid of listings and analysis, even in relation to the time available and to the need to share the methodology among the partners.

The various forms of training offer were the object of the analysis, specifically:

- University courses;
- Higher training activity / post-graduate Masters;
- Training interventions financed by the Public Administration and/or by the ESF conducted in 2004 or underway.

The research team has identified and described, in the support document to the research, the purposes, research methodologies and reporting method (for the description of the above mentioned elements see the document: "Study of training systems").

At the end of this activity each partner drew up a research report containing, besides a list of the products existing and of the subjects and/or topics regarding tourism for all, also a quantitative (based on shared indicators) and qualitative analysis.

The research teams found the information by consulting sources such as educational programmes (found at the Internet sites of the Universities or at their educational secretariats), data bases, training programmes (through the competent public administrations), programmes drawn up by individual lecturers (directly contacting the professor responsible for the chair).

The quantitative- qualitative information, systematized by each partner in the interim reports after various research "moments", were compared and are container in the synthetic document.

1.3 The characteristics of the tourism sector

In order to permit an integrated interpretation between the training needs emerging from the research and the professional figures vectors of these needs we must propose a synthetic description of the tourism system, specifically of the types of businesses composing the production line itself with focus on the characteristics of the product and consequently of the professional figures.

The description presented below does not pretend to be exhaustive, rather the intention is to offer some elements of interpretation to relate the skill gap found

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with the various types of firms in the production line and as a consequence with the production processes and the professional figures.

The tourism system is composed of: a **public sector** (in turn composed of "support services" such as, for example, local agencies, public tourism organisations, etc); a **private sector** (understood as companies that offer support services: for example specialised press, private schools, etc); the **producers** of a service/product. With this last definition we intend the different types of businesses in the production line, specifically:

- vectors (that is, transportation operators: air, sea, rail, road);
- hospitality businesses (both hotel and non-hotel hospitality businesses)
- food service businesses (which includes operators of collective and commercial food services).

The so-called **distributors**, that is the channel through which a product or service is distributed from its production sources to the potential consumer, also ate a part of the tourism system. Among the traditional distributors we cite the tour operators, travel agencies, incoming travel agencies; among the new channels we have instead the web, digital TV, etc.[4].

An important element of the tourism system is represented by the "consumers/clients" who strongly influence production, since to date they are characterised by a marked capacity for critical choice of the offer strongly connected to the characteristics of the tourism product/service.

The tourism service is highly complex: it is abstract, intangible, and for the intangibility itself of the product the image becomes a characteristic of quality. Instrumental goods are certainly a necessary condition for the production of tourism services, but it is the way in which the relationship between persons is approached and managed that qualifies and gives content, even economic, to the production and sales of the services.

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[4] O. N. Fiorucci, *Il sistema turistico,* educational material produced for the training course "Manager dei processi formativi" Assisi, 2005

Also the tourism product is consumed immediately, in fact often the production process is carried out at the same moment as consumption.

As a consequence professionalism in the tourism sector is characterised essentially by the "presence" and by the "physicalness" of its operators; the moment of contact between the operator and the client strongly influences the quality of the product.

Professionalism, therefore, is understood as the fundamental attitude of maximum perception and helpfulness towards the persons/clients.

The consumer attributes great importance to the product/service and often identifies it with the persons who create and represent it. As a consequence the professionalism of human resources, as a central element for the definition of the quality level of the production, cannot be limited to mere possession of technical-professional skills, but must be integrated with the ability to perceive needs and the necessities of the users[5].

To clarify what has been written above, by "skill" we mean Knowledge, knowing how to be, and knowing how to do. Skills are further distinguished, in the literature on the subject, into:

- **basic skills**, considered fundamental requirements to guarantee the employability of the person (to have access to the work force) and personal development. These are independent of the concrete operational processes in which the worker is involved in carrying out his or her job. Therefore these are skills common to all the professions, commonly recognised as new "rights of citizenship" in the labour market and in society. These basic skills are fundamental to face change;

- **transversal skills**, include the characteristics and the individual processes that come into play when a person reacts to a request from the work environment but these are not connected to a specific work activity;

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[5] S. Poeta , *L'analisi dei fabbisogni formativi e professionali del settore turismo*, Franco Angeli, Milano, 2000

- **technical – professional skills**, directly connected to the conduction of professional activities or in any event connected to certain work processes (operational and technical know how).

Given the characteristics of the tourism product cited above, the professions of the production line are marked by the possession of evident transversal skills such as, for example, communications techniques, knowing how to work in a group, problem solving, etc.

The professional figures in the tourism industry can be divided principally into:

- persons in charge of the production of goods and services **not in direct contact with the clientele (back house)**

- persons concerned with the distribution of goods and services **in continuous direct contact with the clientele (front house).**

This distinction represents an abstraction used mainly for the analysis of the professions themselves, in fact among the characteristics that can be found in such professions we point out that:

- there is a strong de-specialisation of roles: the activities carried out by workers are often outside those foreseen by the role covered. The motivation of this phenomenon can be found in the average size of the businesses that make up the production line.

- There is a strong seasonality

- There is marked turn over

- The ability to work in a group is marked yet at the same time autonomy in managing one's role is required[6].

The production process in which the professional figures are positioned is represented by a cycle composed of seven phases:

> ➢ Start up, construction of the product

> ➢ Approach, first direct or in direct contact with the clients

> ➢ arrival, action to facilitate consumption of the product

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[6] Stefano Poeta, *L'analisi dei fabbisogni formativi e professionali del settore turismo*, Franco Angeli, 2000

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- ➤ welcoming, first contact
- ➤ purchase, direct contact
- ➤ consumption, enjoyment of the product/service
- ➤ departure /feedback, leave-taking of the client and fidelity actions.

The complexity of the tourism sector and consequently of the universe of the professions can certainly not be represented here. The importance that the sector assumes not only in the economy of a nation but also in the socio-cultural context is evident; this last aspect determines the need for a product/service responding to the needs of the client and guaranteeing an elevated quality.

Faced with an increasingly complex and competitive market, in a realty in which consumer-tourists request new and personalised tourism products, tourism businesses must provide the cultural, organisational and managerial innovation to support a suitable offer.

Amongst the emerging demand it is possible to find that of persons with special needs which, to date, have not found an adequate offer in response..

The testimony of persons with special needs has confirmed, in fact, what has emerged from recent research. Among the central points:

- the tourist with a disability is not considered and therefore, treated like a normal client;
- often tourism operators do nothing to make a vacation possible, it is the tourist who must find the solutions;
- little attention is paid to the free time of tourists with disabilities.

In this paragraph we intend to present and comment on the emerging training needs.

These have been identified by the research team through the realisation of the following steps:

a) analysis of the reports drawn up by each partner;

b) study of the syntheses (specifically: "An analysis of the needs expressed by the target of tourists with disabilities", "Study of training system");

c) comparison and identification of the correlations, if present, between the needs indicated by disabled tourists and the problems manifested by the operators;

d) identification of the skills lacking for each need and perception found.

This step was necessary because the subjects involved in the survey expressed their perceptions, not only in the form of skills expected or sought in tourism operators, but rather in terms of:

    - critical aspect, in the organisation and carrying out of the tour as far as the disabled tourist is concerned, and in the construction and sale of an accessible tourism product as far as the operators are concerned,

    - requirement of tourists with special needs

    - elements that make a structure or a place accessible

    - structural interventions and interventions in the business organisation necessary to offer an accessible tourism product.

We remind you that the gaps in skills (skills lacking), defined in the methodological premise of this report, represent in our case indicators of a "system of needs" manifested by the tourism offer in order to set going work processes and activities which allow the supply of an accessible tourism product.

e) definition, corresponding to the skills lacking that were found in the step described in point d), of the corresponding training needs, in this phase the potential areas in which to set up training to fill the gaps were identified;

f) verification of the existence, in the panorama of the training offer in the are of "tourism for all", of interventions aimed at satisfying the needs which emerged (the results of this activity will be summarised in paragraph 1.5).

We held it to be opportune to summarise results of the analysis described above by formulating the table printed below which, through a horizontal reading, allows the reader to gather the correlations found and, as a consequence, the logical path that led to the definition of the training needs.

It is clear, also in light of what has been said in the methodological premise, that to the needs of the disabled and to the impressions of the operators more than one lacking skill will correspond, because the satisfaction of needs and the overcoming of difficulties require that various work activities be set in motion, as a consequence the training needs indicated in the individual cells in the last column of the table are heterogeneous.

Therefore training intervention has been designed by constructing training units that respond to training needs referring to the same areas of activity.

Within the structured table the contents of some cells related to the impressions of the operators are empty because they did not point out any problems or elements similar to the needs of the disabled.

The lack on the part of the operators of these elements in response to the specific needs emerging was interpreted as:

- a unawareness of the need;

- insensibility to the specific problem;

- conviction of having already satisfied the specific need

With relation to these elements it was in any event held to be opportune to indicate the training needs. The descriptive table can be found below, followed by an overall comment.

Needs of the disabled	Impression of the operators	Skills lacking	Training need
Operators are unable to give reliable information and to reply in a pertinent way to specific questions	Lack of knowledge of the needs of tourists with special needs and of the types of disabilities	Communications skills Problem solving skills Knowledge of disabilities Knowledge of the product offered	Communications techniques Problem identification and solving techniques Disabilities and specific needs Accessibility of products/services offered Instruments and methods for evaluating accessibility
Website difficult to access and with out-of-date information	Difficulty of the persons assigned to give information about the territory in gathering	Ability to promote & communicate the product/service offered even through Internet sites	Techniques for the selection and management of information Web marketing techniques

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	information and keeping it up-to-date	and other channels	Techniques for constructing accessible web sites

Needs of the disabled	Impression of the operators	Skills lacking	Training need
Need for reliable information about the accessibility of a territory, of means of transportation, of collateral sectors (free time, nature trails, etc)	Difficulty in proposing an integrated accessible product The territory where the structure is located is not accessible	Technical-professional skills inherent to the construction of accessible packages Knowledge of the reference territory Skills necessary for the creation of a collaboration between operators' associations and the associations representing persons with specific needs	Information sources and the services available for the construction of an accessible tourism product Marketing techniques for the promotion of an accessible product and territory Techniques for the construction and management of relations and collaborations with public and private actors of

			the territory for the construction of an integrated tourism product
Inaccessibility of structures, open spaces, sanitary services and a lack of adequate signage	Lack of knowledge about the requirements for making structures accessible Lack of knowledge of the reference regulations	Awareness of the concept of accessibility Knowledge of and the ability to abide by the regulations on the subject	Fundamental aspects of accessible tourism Legislative framework Accessibility evaluation criteria
Lack of communications devices suitable for the hearing-impaired		Knowledge of the instruments for making communications accessible	The principal means of alternative communications

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Needs of the disabled	Impression of the operators	Skills lacking	Training need
Little care in handling and look after the aids transported		Knowledge of aids Skill in problem solving and relationships	Aids and their safekeeping Communications techniques
Lack of equipment and specific aids (for example on beaches)		Knowledge of special needs	Disabilities and special needs
Lack of indications/safety devices in case of emergencies		Principles of safety in the workplace and fire prevention regulations Risk communication techniques	Safety in the workplace Connection between the regulations on the elimination of architectural barriers and fire-prevention regulations

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Needs of the disabled	Impression of the operators	Skills lacking	Training need
Inability to involve disabled persons on the part of recreation operators	Embarrassment in relations with tourists with special needs	Communications and interpersonal relations techniques Knowledge of specific needs	Techniques for welcoming and entertaining clients with special needs
Management of guided visits so that the disabled can participate	Lack of tour guides able to propose itineraries and guided visits accessible to all	Construction of accessible paths and destinations Knowledge of sign language	Special needs The territory Communications and relationship techniques Principles of sign language
Relationship skills	Difficulty in relating to a clientele with special needs	Skills for welcoming and handling clients Relationship skills	Techniques for welcoming and handling clients with special needs Communications and interpersonal relationship techniques

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Need to integrate the offer aimed at tourists with special needs with that existing in normal circuits	Difficulty in selling a service to destinations "addressed" to all clients	Education in accessibility	Raising the awareness of tourists

As can easily be understood from reading of the information in the table, there are still many gaps in the skills indispensable to produce and sell a "tourism for all" product.

The tourism operators involved in the research, pointed out how in the sector there is not yet a full awareness of the market segment represented by tourists with special needs, great part of the tourism offer does not consider accessible tourism to be an opportunity for economic growth.

The research partners appear to share a need for activities to raise awareness about this topic, actions understood above all as moments of dissemination of knowledge and skills that are unavoidable for the creation of accessible tourism.

The skills lacking are for the most part transversal to the various types of tourism business, further characterised according to the work processes of the business.

For example the need of the disabled to have precise and reliable information and the related lack of knowledge about special needs shown by the operators regards:

- hospitality businesses: information about the accessibility of the structure and the reference territory
- food service businesses: information about the accessibility of the structure and the composition of food (to respond, for example, to subjects with particular nutritional needs)
- vectors: accessibility of means of communications (transportation), ways of use, etc.
- travel intermediation businesses: in-depth information on the components of the tourism packages proposed.

Following the needs of the disabled emerging during the focus groups/interviews – which highlighted the importance of relations with the operators - the moderators tried to understand what weight the operators themselves attribute to the skills of the human resources of the structure.

It emerged that, although on the part of the tourism operators the accessible tourism product is identified prevalently with the accessibility of the structure and

the skills regarding "tourism for all" are not among the prerequisites sought in the phase of hiring personnel, the operators perceive the importance of the relationship between operator and tourist/client, therefore they recognise the lack of various skills necessary for handling relations with clients with special needs.

Therefore the "human factor" assumes an important role especially where the operator cannot guarantee the inexistence of barriers or elements of inaccessibility. In this case the ability of the worker to identify and resolve the problem is fundamental, especially through communications and exchange with the client, but this must necessarily be backed up by an elementary skill in the are of disabilities and special needs.

It can be deduced that the skills identified and detailed in the table undoubtedly assume value and specific characteristic seven in virtue of the professional figure.

The human resources assigned to front office roles (in direct contact with the clientele) are more aware of the communications and relationship skills gap.

Nevertheless, it is generally agreed that a tourism product can really be considered accessible only if the entire organisational structure knows and works to respond to the special needs of tourists.

To summarise, the training needs identified regard both the so-called transversal skills (interpersonal communications, problem solving techniques,) and the technical-professional skills (techniques for constructing accessible products - packages/itineraries/stays, techniques for the promotion and commercialisation of accessible products/services, knowledge of sign language, knowledge of the elements for making a structure accessible, etc.), and the basic skills such as, for example, safety in the workplace also in relation to the disabled client.

Without doubt it is essential, in order to develop the skills indicated above, that awareness the concepts of "accessibility" and "tourism for all" which are fully understood neither by the business operators nor by the territorial realities, be raised and that the concepts themselves be more clearly defined.. In fact, from an analysis of the needs it emerges that information and training interventions aimed at responding to the above-mentioned needs should have as their target users not

only operators of tourism businesses but also the public actors who offer "support services" to the tourism sector and who must necessarily enter into the philosophy of an accessible territory. In fact, a tourism product is not merely the service offered by a restaurant or by a hospitality structure but it is of necessity the set of attractions and resources that the reference geographical area offers.

"Tourism for all" presumes, therefore, a strong client orientation rather than product orientation. In this light the centrality of the consumer and his/her needs is recognised and as a consequence all those actions (enter into relations with the client, identify his/her needs, adapt the production processes and the product to the needs expressed) must be activated which allow businesses to offer a product responding to the various needs.

In order to set in motion a client oriented policy the business must receive the client's requests (or those of a target of clients) as spurs to learning and must be willing to learn continuously. This necessary condition determines the central role of the continuous training of operators.

1.5 Gaps in the tourism training offer

In line with what has been said above, the investigation of the needs, after identifying the skills gaps, calls for an analysis of the tourism training offer currently available in the area of "tourism for all".

The types of training offer analysed are:

- university courses
- advanced training /post-graduate master's programmes
- training activity financed by P.A. and by the ESF conducted in 2004 or underway.

From a comparison of the information reported by each partner it clearly emerges that the topic "tourism for all" is not dealt with in the training paths except for in isolated cases. This gap regards both the educational programmes of university

courses and those related to post-graduate master's studies. "Tourism for all", therefore, is neither a subject in itself nor a topic included in other teachings. This lack is even more serious in reference to post-graduate specialisation courses, in which the basic subjects are considered to have been already learned by the students and only qualifying subjects are considered.

The topics of "tourism for all", such as, for example, the accessibility of structures, an analysis of specific needs, techniques for relating to disable tourists, etc, are, therefore, absent from the educational programmes in the university offer or even that of truly rich and complete post-graduate tourism courses.

As far as the training courses financed in 2004 are concerned and among the activities still in course, the research has shown the limited presence of educational modules or topics inherent to "tourism for all".

Therefore the needs analysis has confirmed the hypothesis formulated in the planning stage, that is that the tourism training offer:

- is not prepared to train students and professionals in the topics of a broader tourism;

- in nearly all cases training activity aimed at understanding and technically evaluating the needs of the disabled is not foreseen;

- does not prepare students to welcome this target of clientele.

In light of the evident request for "tourism for all" and of the results of the training needs analysis, in order to fill the skills gap of the operators and the evident inadequacy of the training offer o the subject a professional figure has been identified, the *Trainer specialised in topics of accessible tourism*, who should facilitate the activities of information and training with operators and be able to propose training integrations for educational programmes. For this figure a training path has been proposed with a view to a response to the main needs emerging.

In the next chapter the possible effects in tourism businesses of the work of the *Trainer specialised in topics of accessible tourism* will be illustrated, together with the professional profile and the areas of "spendability".

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2. THE TRAINER SPECIALIZED IN TOPICS OF ACCESSIBLE TOURISM

2.1 Characteristics of the professional figure

For the tourism offer to place its attention on the demand means in the first place that it must consider tourists as persons, distinct identities who seek a humanised relationship with the business and the operator.[7] .

This determines an awareness that it is the tourists/clients who make the choice and that their interests will be directed prevalently toward offers that are coherent with their expectations.

In this light the training activities aimed at operators of the sector should develop a culture of the user thanks to which the technical-professional skills, put into act for specific work processes and activities, do not support simple standardised procedures but rather permit the operator to manage a tourism demand that is increasingly heterogeneous and able to choose.

With a view to increasing the operator's client orientation, the training actions aimed at raising the awareness and training on the topic of "tourism for all" must first of all respond to the specific training needs brought forward by this research and consequently propose new skills. Continuous training activities (that is, aimed at workers), while an important lever to enhance businesses and make them competitive, in the tourism sector do not receive proper attention from entrepreneurs/operators. This can be attributed to:

- lack of time to dedicate to training (especially for family-run businesses or small-medium sized businesses),
- the presence of self-made men, that is operators who learned their skills on the job and have a low educational level;
- diffidence on the part of the operators toward "academic" training;

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[7] G. Calvi, *Non più consumatori: solo clienti. Una sfida per il mercato (No more consumers, just clients. A challenge for the market)*, in Socialtrends n. 56, April 1992.

- the propensity to invest in activities that give immediate results, while training produces long-term advantages.

As far as university and advanced training is concerned, the research has brought to light the presence of training interventions prevalently centred on acquiring knowledge rather than skills (to know, to know how to do and to know how to be) and a lack of activities aimed at acquiring specific skills especially on "tourism for all".

To fill the gap between the needs of the operators, present and future, and the training offer it will be necessari to plan and and carry out training interventions for operators and propose training units to insert into the educational programmes of degree courses, masters and financed activities of advanced training.

To realise all of this, Project EU FOR ME calls for training activity aimed at preparing a professional figures to facilitate such interventions through the testing of training modules, designed by them, on the topics of the accessibility of the tourism product, of welcoming the disabled client and of the preparation of products suited to the target identified.

By comparing the information emerging from the needs analysis, of the current situation of "tourism for all", of the relationship between training and the tourism production line, the skills that the *Trainer specialised in the topics of accessible tourism* must possess have been identified.

Considering training as a decisive factor for the development of human resources and therefore of the business, the main characteristics that must be present in a training intervention on the topic of "tourism for all" have been identified:
- non-passive teaching methods, centred rather on the experiential aspects and the use of active methods (ex. simulations)
- contained timing centred on specific themes
- clear training language.

Given the characteristics listed above, the trainer is a consultant in support of learning oriented not only toward the individual but also to the organisation learning not limited to a single intervention, but continuous over time.

Therefore the tasks of the professional figure identified will be:

- see to it that training becomes an element integrated with the management of the organisation and of personnel;

- propose training activities that respond to the specific needs about "tourism for all" of the company/operators (differentiated according to the type of business);

- create learning environments using the workplace, the students' experience, the presentation of good practices, the use of training methodologies (self-learning, At-a-distance learning, etc)

- support the operators in complete knowledge of "tourism for all"

- evaluate the results of training and flank the workers in on the job experience.

Moreover, as called for in the project, students who attend the training course for *Trainer specialised in the topics of accessible tourism* will plan, through project work, modules on the topics of "tourism for all" which they will test themselves during training courses, professional laboratories and degree courses.

Below you will find a synthetic outline of the professional profile.

2.2 Professional profile chart

1. Name

Trainer specialised in the topics of accessible tourism

2. Description

 This is a technical specialist figure which works in the field of planning, promoting and realising training paths regarding the topics of "tourism for all" in the various compartments into which the economic-productive sector of tourism is divided (hotel, restaurant, entertainment, travel agency, etc.).

3. Functions, activities and tasks

S/he makes the tourism operators aware of "tourism for all" by preparing initiatives aimed at qualifying and up-dating personnel working in this field or who intend to do so.

Identifies the need for skills, related to "tourism for all", of the persons addressed by the training activity in relation to the type of firm, to the production processes and the professional figures involved.

S/he relates evolutionary processes that concern the industry and its prospects for development with the skills inherent in "tourism for all".

S/he prepares and carries out training interventions responding to the initial training needs and to the reference organisational processes.

S/he selects and uses the principal educational methods and manages the learning group

4. Professional positioning

The trainer specialised in the topics of accessible tourism can find work with professional training centres, training agencies, structures which offer consulting services to tourism businesses and public agencies, Tourism Promotion Agencies (Aziende di Promozione Turistica - APT), tourism promotion consortia, Tourism Councillorships, Chambers of Commerce, within category associations as well as in the Human Resources Offices of large hotel chains, of food services, etc.

5. Skills

a) **Inherent to the tourism sector**

S/he is able to:
- Recognise the actors of the tourism system
- Identify the work processes of structures belonging to the various typologies of the tourism production line
- Understand the principia tourism service organisation models
- Interpret the reference territorial context
- Identify the opportunities of the territory/structure
- Analyse the tourism offer
- Analyse and identify the characteristics of the demand with particular attention to tourists with special needs
- Elaborate product/service promotion and communications strategies

Theoretical-technical skills

S/he knows
- the components of the national tourism system
- the structural and dynamic features of the national and regional tourism offer
- national and regional legislation for the sector
- the actors of the tourism system
- the main market trends
- the reference territory
- the tourism demand
- the territorial offer
- the principal marketing techniques
- the principal promotion and communications instruments

b) **Specific for "tourism for all"**

S/he is able to:
- Identify the elements of accessibility
- Recognise an accessible product/service
- Identify cases of excellence
- Recognise the various types of disabilities
- Respond adequately to the specific needs 4expressed by different types of clientele
- Evaluate the accessibility of a product/service

- Determine the needs of the client
- Construct packages responding to the requests of the client
- Calculate the price of a tourist package
- Sell a tourist package
- Make reservations
- Maintain relations with a tourist with special needs
- Welcome a disabled tourist
- Deal with and satisfy the requests of the tourist
- Gather and evacuate the accessibility indicators of a structure/service
- Diffuse and share the information and data gathered and processed
- Relate with the public and private actors of the tourism system0
- Create a tourism product for all
- Produce an accessible product

Theoretical-technical skills

S/he knows:
- The meaning of the term "tourism for all"
- The principal initiatives carried out in the area of "tourism for all"
- Trends of the sector
- The various types of disability
- The principal needs of tourists according to the type of disability
- National legislation regarding accessibility
- Barriers in relation to specific needs
- The principal techniques for constructing a tour package
- Instruments for promoting and commercialising tour packages
- Welcoming techniques
- Interpersonal communications techniques
- The principal accessibility indicators
- Data sources
- The dynamics of relations among the actors of the sector
- Tourism product packaging and commercialisation techniques
- The main components of a package
- The techniques for evaluating the accessibility of a package
- The principal techniques for evaluating the quality of a package

c) **Inherent to training**

S/he is able to:
- Identify the material and psychological needs of the group and of individual participants
- Strengthen the resources of individuals to create a positive group climate

- Recognise the distinctive characteristics of a group of learners
- Mediate conflicts
- Identify and analyse problems or critical situations and relating these to possible solutions
- Define objectives, possible actions to face and solve the problem found
- Predict possible outcomes and evacuate the consequences
- Use specific problem-solving techniques
- Identify alternative paths (curricula)
- Set up and decide on projects and action plans in unusual conditions
- Improve one's own learning strategies from experience in different contexts
- Understand the different needs of the learning adult
- Determine the training techniques and methods in relation to the public addressed
- Formulate a training intervention with educational methods suited to the students
- Use the principal training methods
- Organise and carry out training activity
- Formulate and apply methodologies, procedures, instruments and forms of verification of the training activity
- Structure and administer tests to evacuate results
- Correct the training action if elements are found that can affect its effectiveness
- Manage and handle texts, documents, tables and spread sheets
- Organise educational material for training interventions
- Use the Internet
- Use and manage instruments for At-a-distance learning

Theoretical-technical skills

S/he knows:
- The distinctive elements of group dynamics
- The main verbal and non-verbal communications techniques
- Techniques for handling conflicts
- Fundamental techniques for diagnosing problems
- Specific problem solving techniques
- The principal characteristics of learning adults
- The principal training techniques used in the Tourism sector
- The principal learning aids
- The techniques of micro planning
- Classroom management techniques
- The principal instruments for monitoring a training action
- The principal elements of hardware and software
- Programmes for preparing educational materials
- Essential instruments for data gathering and processing