

Tourism for all 2008

The goal of the project is to popularize the active way of spending free time through tourism and touring among disabled people. The project, realized in 2008 by Polish Country-lovers Society, covered the creation of a data base with tourist objects available to disabled people. Project considered cataloguing and verification of objects' data gathered with the use of interviews performed directly in the facilities. Afterwards, the data was placed in an all-Polish data base.

Actions were performed during 10 months in all 16 voivodeships.

In the framework of the project additional promotional actions were undertaken. Materials prepared during the project are a compendium of knowledge about availability of tourist objects in Poland. Actions included in the project comprise:

- object questionnaires for volunteers. The questionnaire allowed for correct identification of object availability for people with different disabilities.
- brochure 'Disabled tourist' concerning tourism of people with different degree of disability.
- poster "Tourism for all", showing through its substantial content, that tourism is not only for healthy people but also for the disabled.
- leaflet with a CD "Tourism for all", on the CD we can find whole data base of objects accessible for disabled people. Objects in the data base are divided into groups. Groups are named according to voivodeships in which a facility is located. Printed leaflet contains only chosen information and links to more detailed information.
- post conference publication 'The role of sightseeing and tourism in life of disabled people'.

In this publication we can find papers presented during the conference. Conference participants presented their statement on possibilities of rehabilitation of disabled people through tourism and sightseeing. This position was also presented in the publication.

5017 objects were found during project realization. All objects are accessible for people with different disabilities. Data base of objects comprises 1578 lodging places, 1857 gastronomic objects, 234 tourist agencies, 126 transport companies, 825 cultural objects, 234 sport facilities, 106 national and landscape parks including public gardens. In the data base we can also find 57 tourist routes. All these objects can be found on a web page www.turystykadlawszystkich.pl . The goal of this web page was to create a complex and reliable data base of tourist objects available for disabled people in Poland. Before this data base was created there was no other complex source of that kind of information and that was

the main reason to undertake this project. The goal was to popularize the aim of the project and the role of active tourism in life of disabled people in the society.

Project coordinator - Jolanta Śledzińska

Warszawa, 2008-11-25

Additional information about the project from voivodeship coordinators. Their own opinions about the project.

Opinions about project and it's realization from chosen voivodeships coordinators

Małgorzata Pawłowska Project Coordinator 'Tourism for all' – Podlaskie voivodeship

I think that the idea and realization of the 'Tourism for all' project by Main Board of Polish Country-lovers Society, is really important in increasing disabled people touristic and sightseeing activity. I do not know any other activity focused on disabled people so much and to such an extent.

During gathering information in facilities not adapted for disabled people, familiarizing with project goals made the staff determined to overcome architectonic barriers in order to make their objects accessible for disabled people (eg.: build ramps, etc.). The project was a helpful tool in making the administrators of buildings aware of the disabled people problems.

I believe that the project continuation is essential for keeping web site www.turystykadlawszystkich.pl up to date. Development is the best solution to encourage people to visit this web site.

Promotion of the project's results is very important. This can be achieved by publicity of the mentioned web site through National Disabled Persons Rehabilitation Fund and it's voivodeship departments, through marshal office and different types of foundations and societies. Universities and science centers should also be committed to project's promotion. Objects described in the data base of www.turystykadlawszystkich.pl should also place a link to this data base on their web sites.

I believe that the next edition of the project should be broadened by different tourist attractions like historical monuments, environmental objects (necessarily with pictures). Maybe it would be worth to put a special graphical mark in the next edition of Polish Sightseeing Canon to indicate places accessible for disabled people.

Being a part of 'Tourism for all' project has special meaning for me. I've met great

people and gathered new experience.

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Paulina Świerk Project Coordinator 'Tourism for all' – Pomorskie voivodeship

A couple of words about the project: The idea was great. Detailed information about facilities regarding accessibility, activities for disabled people is most important. All this information can be found on the web site. Of course leaflet is helpful but, address + icon indicating accessibility of object for disabled people, can be seen in most tourist portals. The idea of the project was accepted with enthusiasm. Everyone who entered the web site www.turystykadlawszystkich.pl was impressed with how detailed all the descriptions of the objects are.

Will disabled people enter and use the web site? I think they will. It's worth to spread the effects of our reports, because now the project has ended and we can observe its effects. Contact with disabled people associations was not considered. Those associations have different types of antipathy and sympathy to some certain institutions. And we had fresh look and big determination to fill questionnaires. Nobody encouraged me! Mrs. Spigarska from National Museum in Gdańsk, described in my report, said that at the beginning of the year they suggested to one of the most popular associations, the creation of a sightseeing route for blind and partially-sighted people in the museum. In response she heard that the effort is too big and there is no need for such a route if only a couple of people a year will use it. I do not have to add that she felt helpless. What have I benefited from the project? I've met many new people. I want to make an inventory of all places in Gdańsk. Of course I will only consider their accessibility for disabled people. I think I can cope with it. The project was a great idea and people who already announced the end of Polish Country-lovers Society could see that they were wrong. A couple of words about me: I am the fourth generation in my family that lives in Gdańsk. My city determined my personal and professional life (I graduated from a speech therapy department). I hope that citizens of Gdańsk will start to care about the place they live in. And I hope they will spread good words about Gdańsk all over the world.

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Wojciech Święch - Project Coordinator 'Tourism for all' – Małopolskie voivodeship

I'm disabled. I work in a department where I give information to disabled people. I am aware that the knowledge about possibilities stimulates people to take actions. Disabled people are often considered as non-active and dependant on others. In reality they can be

independent, only when their environment stops considering them as people with some limitations. Architectural barriers are in some way artificial. They result from non-rational thinking about formation of surrounding environment. From this point of view project 'Tourism for all' has shown that hostels, gastronomical and cultural objects should be widely available. They are supposed to be friendly to every one- and it's not only about emphasizing accessibility of the facilities for the disabled. Everyone has the right to take part in social life thus it is an artificial creation of divisions. If this way of thinking becomes more popular, divisions between tourism of healthy and disabled people will become less visible. Popularization of active way of spending free time among disabled people should not be the only aim of the project. In reality people with verified disability, sense even bigger need of getting to know the world. This happens due to common opinion that disabled people are helpless and so they want to fight with this stereotype through action. They have willingness but the problem is with obtaining correct information (almost all of us have problems with finding ourselves, for example, in the Internet). This is why information gathered during the project will be very helpful. This project also shows that businessmen treat disabled people as serious clients. Further actions should change mentality of people responsible for tourism development. Facilities accessible for disabled people are worth nothing when they are built only because of law regulations – building regulations or financial encouragement from different institutions. Common availability should be something natural.

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Piotr Niewiadomski, Project Coordinator 'Tourism for all' – Łódzkie voivodeship

Many Poles cannot imagine how a disabled person, coping with many impairments, can perform tourism. It is time someone in our country thought about showing these people how they can spend their free time. Tourism provides people with many psychophysical benefits. Volunteers working with data acquisition have come across big admiration about the project performed by Polish Country-lovers Society. Self-criticism about building accessibility has been often seen among building administrators. This gives hope for different view at creating the infrastructure, so the facilities will be available for everyone. This kind of project is the first in the country so it should be supported by many institutions. Situation in Poland should become like in western Europe where people can take part in group or individual tourism regardless of their disability degree.

A volunteer is a more valuable verifier than a building administrator. The information obtained from a building administrator can simply be different from reality. We can imagine the disappointment of people getting to a hotel when they see something different from the

description presented on a web site or hotel brochure. I believe that a disabled person would be the best verifier. Healthy people look differently at facilities. A blind person or a person moving on a wheelchair perceives the facilities differently. Verification and keeping the data base up to date is an important part of this project. It cannot be like an encyclopedia because it will lose its sense of existence.