World Council of Churches

Inclusive and Accessible Communication for All Guidelines:

Communications from the WCC should be inclusive and maintain high accessibility. Inclusive and accessible communication contributes to creating a more inclusive WCC and realizing the human rights of all persons, including persons with disabilities.

The WCC audience is international, and it is important to appreciate the diversity that comes with this through inclusive, accessible communication. The foundation of successful inclusive, accessible communication is understanding your audience. Don't rely on what you think you know; involve/consult persons with disabilities on their communication needs and how they can be met.

Inclusive, accessible communication is a continuous journey and calls for small steps. Some changes may take longer but will eventually deliver positive outcomes.
While some aspects of inclusive, accessible communication will incur no cost, others will. Always consult the director of communications on any aspect that will incur a cost.

1. Online information

Website
The WCC website should conform to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). WCAG 2.2 is scheduled to be published in 2021.

- Include alternative text for images; description of data represented on charts, diagrams, and illustrations; labels for form controls, input, and other user interface components.
- Enable/activate text re-sizes according to user preference on the website.
- Ensure colour contrast between foreground and background is sufficiently strong.
- Links should make sense by themselves (e.g. no instances of links that just say "Click here" or "More...").
- It is still considered best practice not to publish anything smaller than the equivalent of Arial 12 pt.

News items
- Do not mention someone's disability unless it is essential to any story.
- Use people-first language (persons with disability- language used in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities). There are some exceptions. For example, when referring to persons who are blind, we can say either "blind persons" or "persons who are blind", and the same applies to deaf or deafblind persons. If in doubt, you should ask the person or group how they choose to identify or EDAN.
- Avoid using terms like differently-abled, challenged, and handi-capable - considered condescending euphemisms; offensive language such as mad, freak,

psycho, retard, lame, imbecile, crazy (unless quoting direct Bible passages); descriptions of persons with disabilities as "courageous" or "brave" or as having "overcome" their disability are patronizing and should be avoided. Words like "inspirational" or "superhuman" dramatize/sensationalize disability.
- Avoid abbreviations and jargons. Use plain English, clear headings, short sentences.
- Raise the visibility of the voices of persons with disabilities in news items.
- Text is ranged left or left-aligned.
- Text is unjustified for even space between words.

Social Media
- Use alt-text options as much as possible, especially when the image contains information that complements the written text of the post.
- Avoid abbreviations that can be difficult to interpret.
- In general, use as simple language as possible.
- Give space to topics that are relevant for persons with disabilities.
- Include persons with disabilities in quotes and illustrations of other topics, too.
- WCC should make sure persons with disabilities in its constituency can make their voice heard in social media.
- Offer social media training via EDAN.
- Involve persons with disabilities in social media campaigns.
- Offer support for those wishing to join a campaign as necessary.

Videos
For video files displayed online that do not have captioning and/or audio description, provide a word document (or accessible PDF) transcript of the video, or at least make it known that a transcript is available on request. Consider providing international sign (World Federation of the Deaf) for the deaf and hearing impaired.

2.Printed information
- On request by print-impaired persons, provide printed information in the following alternative formats: large print/ audio/ accessible PDF. Have a statement informing readers of this…… "this publication is available in the following alternative formats: large print, accessible PDF and audio."
- Use plain English, clear headings, short sentences, avoid jargon, plain sans serif font, minimum of 12-point type size, text left align.
- Include pictures and diagrams where appropriate.
- Avoid using UPPER CASE, underlining and *italics.*
- The best practice is to print on matt or satin non-reflective paper.
- Maintain significant colour contrast between the text and the background.

4.Introduce sign language as one of the WCC languages
Recommendation to consider sign language as one of the interpretation languages during WCC events such as in-person meetings and webinar productions. It is recommended to use international signage used by World Federation of the Deaf.

The communication officer responsible, in consultation with the director of communication and EDAN, to establish how their communication works could be more inclusive.

Remember:

Inclusive communication is designed to reach as broad and diverse an audience as possible with accessibility for different groups built in and part of the core communication.

Accessibility means providing alternative means (formats or options) to access what's on offer if the 'standard' offer is not accessible. It ensures that persons with different communication needs can access your communications and that there are no barriers that prevent this.

If you have any questions about these guidelines, please email Marianne.Ejdersten@wcc-coe.org

Approved 27 May 2021 by Marianne Ejdersten, WCC Director of Communication