

Article #3

Baking without barriers: the VIPS VIBES project promotes the inclusion of visually impaired workers

Through the Erasmus+ project VIPS VIBES – The inclusion of visually impaired people in the bakery sector, efforts are being made to make bakeries more inclusive workplaces, providing new job opportunities for people with visual impairments. Funded by the European Union, the project brings together partners from Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy and Cyprus, united in their mission to develop new methods to make the bakery sector more accessible.

A digital accessibility toolkit

A key outcome of the project is the Digital Training Toolkit, a comprehensive guide designed for both visually impaired bakery assistants and employers. The kit offers practical advice, training strategies and a curated selection of assistive technologies that can transform the workplace into a safe, efficient and inclusive environment.

The goal is twofold:

- To provide visually impaired workers with the skills and tools they need to do their jobs independently.
- To provide bakery mentors and colleagues with the knowledge they need to create and maintain accessible, safe and welcoming workplaces.



From tactile markers to glasses with artificial intelligence

The toolkit offers a wide range of solutions, both simple and innovative:

- Adapted tools such as tactile markers, coloured safety tape and Braille or large-print labels for ingredient containers.
- PC software such as ZoomText, JAWS and NVDA to help read recipes, manage inventory or use point-of-sale systems.
- Specialised hardware, including talking scales for bakeries, tactile rulers and liquid level indicators for accurate and safe handling of ingredients.
- 3D printing applications to create tactile maps of the work area and Braille-labelled utensils.
- Mobile and AI-based tools such as Be My Eyes, Envision AI, Seeing AI and OrCam MyEye, which offer real-time object recognition, scene description and recipe reading.

Guidelines for inclusive mentoring

Another pillar of the project is to train people already working in bakeries to make the environment more inclusive. The guide provides bakery mentors with strategies for:

- Keeping work areas organised and free of hazards.
- Label and arrange equipment in a consistent manner.
- Provide clear and accessible communication.
- Encourage independence while ensuring safety.

These practices not only improve workflow, but also foster mutual respect and understanding among staff.

Success stories

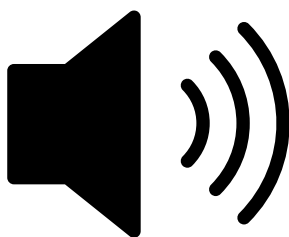
The toolkit also features testimonials from visually impaired people who have seen their careers flourish in bakeries and inclusive environments. These success stories demonstrate that with the right adaptations and attitudes, barriers can be removed and opportunities created.



Building a more inclusive future

The VIPS VIBES project proves that inclusion is possible with the right measures in place. By integrating assistive technologies and inclusive training into the baking industry, the initiative is setting a precedent that other sectors can follow.

 To avoid missing any information about the project, follow the project website:
<https://vipsvibes.eu/>



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