Recommendations on national, international and multidisciplinary cooperation

TACTICOS

KA201 Strategic Partnership Project

2022-1-NL01-KA220-SCH-000085654

Lead partner: Royal Dutch Visio

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VERSION CONTROL

Version 0.1	Originated by	Philippe Belseur	on 14/07/2025
Version 0.2	Revised by	Aukje Snijders	on 21/07/2025

INTRODUCTION

A smooth cooperation between professionals in VI education and experts in the production of tactile documentation is essential for the successful development of high-quality tactile illustrated books for blind and partially sighted children. Deliverable 2.7 of the Tacticos project focuses on this cooperation and presents a set of recommendations for improving the collaboration between these key actors throughout the design and production process.

To support these recommendations, a survey was conducted among project partners. The survey invited them to reflect on their experiences working together in the project, using a SWOT framework (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats). The questions focused specifically on the added value of both the multidisciplinary and international dimensions of the project. Additionally, participants were asked to comment on the benefits of collaboration between printing houses and teachers, as well as with specialised institutions for the blind and partially sighted.

It is important to emphasise that this report does not address the technical or content-related requirements for tactile books — those have already been covered in the dedicated Tacticos guidelines. Instead, this report aims to capture the process-related aspects of collaboration: how experts from different backgrounds work together, where they complement one another, and what conditions help or hinder this cooperation.

The Tacticos partnership is a multi-disciplinary team consisting of:

- Tactile documentation providers / printing houses (Dedicon and LDQR)
- Professional organisations /service providers and educational institutes supporting students at school in mainstream or in specialised frame (VYV3, Visio, Spermalie)

This context enables us to provide recommendations that take into account the full range of situations existing for visually impaired youngsters, in relation to their needs — for example, tactile documentation that supports teachers' pedagogy in mainstream education, or tactile books produced in numbers around specific themes in specialised settings.

The insights shared by the partners — both tactile production experts and professionals working directly with children — form the basis for this deliverable, and help to strengthen future interdisciplinary collaboration in the field of accessible reading and learning materials.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Here the questionnaire submitted to the partners:

1. ***For setting up recommendations on the development of tactile documentation for blind children, we need to collect your feedback concerning the multidisciplinary approach added-value.***

- What are the Strengthens of the multidisciplinary approach?
- What are the weaknesses of the multidisciplinary approach?

- What are the opportunities of the multidisciplinary approach?
- What are the threats of the multidisciplinary approach?

2. ***For setting up recommendations on the development of tactile documentation for blind children, we need to collect your feedback about the international approach added-value.***

- What are the Strengthens in the international approach?
- What are the weaknesses in the international approach?
- What are the opportunities in the international approach?
- What are the threats in the international approach?

3. ***What is the benefit of working between printing houses and teachers?***
4. ***What is the benefit of working between printing houses and specialised institutions for blind and partially sighted?***
5. ***Your other comments***

THE RESULTS

REPORT ON THE MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH IN THE PROJECT

What are the strengths of the multidisciplinary approach?

- Learning about various approaches for professionals on different backgrounds and working for different clients gives a benefit and more high quality to the production of outcomes.
- Learning from different disciplines is an added-value for professionals.
- New perspectives in the development of outcomes, with the social, economic and cultural differences.
- Both involvement of users and teachers/therapists to meet real-world needs in users' environment.

What are the weaknesses of the multidisciplinary approach?

- Language barriers is an issue sometimes and time consuming due to this problem of language barriers. Especially because of the time to understand each other when we need to explain, and to demonstrate our point of views.
- Cooperation a bit complex sometimes due to different working cultures as e.g.: work of partners in relation with the expectations planned in the beginning, work in relation with deadlines.

- The non-efficient relation between the expertise of professionals in relation with tasks required in work packages.
- Change of staff in organisations because of the duration of the project, which makes the cooperation more difficult.
- The multidisciplinary team makes the interest and priorities sometimes different between professionals if the goals are not strictly defined at the beginning of the project.

What are the opportunities of the multidisciplinary approach?

- New perspectives of working lead to real innovation.
- To work between specialists of VI and printing houses.
- The multidisciplinary approach.
- Learning new techniques, approaches for better deliverables.

What are the threats of the multidisciplinary approach?

- Inflexibility: not understanding or accepting new approaches
- Unbalance of input: allowing certain methods to dominate
- Impossibility to find a common way and this approach needs more time for doing it
- Time consuming because of debate

All partners state that beyond the threats, there are more opportunities

REPORT ON THE INTERNATIONAL APPROACH IN THE PROJECT

What are the strengths of the international approach?

- Various cultural perspectives and historical differences for more innovation
- To learn about different solutions for same situations, according to different perspectives
- Different publishing techniques which enrich the outcomes
- To enrich the experiences and expertise of professionals by learning new methods, new approaches, etc.

What are the weaknesses of the international approach?

- Differences in cultures, education and resources can create big challenges for producing outcomes.
- Language barriers especially for understanding a specific topic.
- In addition with Culture barriers like work expectations, comprehension of the context, etc.

What are the opportunities of the international approach?

- The exchange of innovative ideas as well as teaching methods and assistive technologies to conduct joint research and rich outcomes.
- Building strong networks and encouraging more collaboration for innovation and outcomes.
- More cost-effective deliverables with international approach.
- Inspiration of other ways of doing giving more rich outcomes

What are the threats of the international approach?

- A potential lack of standardisation according to rules, resources, priorities of each country.
- Problem of communication taking more time and effort.
- Taking care of all the constraints leads to inefficiency in the outcomes.
- Less involvement of partners due to many barriers (cultural, linguistic, etc.)

What is the benefit of working between printing houses and teachers?

- To combine both expertise for the benefit of visually impaired students: needs and technics combined for the end-users
- To increase the didactic quality of the reading material
- A good balance between the needs and the production

What is the benefit of working between printing houses and specialised institutions for blind and partially sighted?

- To combine the expertise of both (printing houses and specialised institutions) to increase the quality.
- To be aware about the needs of end-users and the know-how on various techniques and products.

Other and free comments

- Good collaboration between all the partners even if time was missing for deeper outcomes.
- Strong relationship between the partners for the development of the book “a long journey”.
- Difficulty to work by teams. It was due to the difference between the partners on the use of this tool.
- Strong progress and discussions during the transnational meetings – Physical meetings make the project improving faster.
- The change of staff for some partners is real life in projects. It made some chaotic results due to the lack of transfer of knowledge.
- The commitments of partners were different and so, there were sometimes a very unbalanced workload between them.

CONCLUSION

The findings from this evaluation underline the value of sustained cooperation between producers of tactile books and professionals in the education of children with visual impairments. While challenges such as language barriers, differences in work culture, and varying pedagogical approaches are real, the benefits of combining complementary expertise far outweigh the difficulties.

To support effective and long-term collaboration between publishers, production centers, and educational professionals, the following structural recommendations are proposed:

1. Acknowledge and respect each other's expertise
Successful cooperation begins with mutual recognition: educational professionals bring insights into learning needs, child development, and curriculum goals; tactile book producers contribute technical knowledge, materials expertise, and production constraints. Collaboration is strongest when both parties are viewed as equal partners.

2. Co-develop tactile books with shared ownership
Rather than a hand-off process (educator designs – producer executes), tactile book development should be a co-creative process from the very beginning. Publishers should involve educators in early design phases, and educators should remain engaged through prototyping and testing. This strengthens both educational relevance and usability.

3. Create shared design and production frameworks
Working together to define shared reference points — e.g. for tactile legibility, age-appropriate complexity, balance between text and image — can reduce misunderstandings and streamline future cooperation. These frameworks can build on existing guidelines, but should allow flexibility to respond to local contexts and needs.

4. Invest in communication and translation between disciplines
Misunderstandings often stem from differences in terminology or assumptions. Setting aside time to explain one another's choices, and using visual/tactile prototypes or reference materials during meetings, can greatly improve clarity and alignment.

5. Prioritise feedback from children and educators
Tactile books should be tested not only for production quality, but for real-world usability in the classroom or home environment. Feedback from teachers, parents, and children should guide revisions and inspire future design decisions.

6. Commit to continuity and knowledge sharing
Long-term impact requires continuity. Organisations should invest in documentation of collaborative processes and ensure that expertise is shared within their own teams — not just concentrated in one individual. Partnerships benefit from maintaining contact beyond a single project cycle.

7. Build networks across countries and sectors
International exchange between publishers and educators provides valuable inspiration and innovation. Participating in European networks, open repositories, or shared platforms can

strengthen capacity, accelerate learning, and ultimately improve access to high-quality tactile books across regions.

By following these recommendations, producers and educators can establish sustainable and effective partnerships that lead to better tactile books — books that are not only technically well-made, but truly support learning, imagination, and inclusion for blind and partially sighted children.