

Module 2



LU 10 – Handling unforeseen situations

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LU Objectives:

1. Identify possible critical situations which may happen in any service of the Tourism Service Chain
2. Learn how to react and to whom to refer to for the possible solutions
3. Make trainees aware of the interconnections among the various components of the Tourism provisions





Everyone is involved

Many things may go wrong or create unforeseen situations which might cause problems to Customers, when travelling.

Travellers with specific access needs have additional possibilities that those events become challenges to their trip, leading to discomfort, danger and unsafety.

Both the travellers and the service providers are involved and cooperation between them is essential to solve the problems





Everyone is involved

The basic concept is that

A SOLUTION MUST BE IDENTIFIED

A quality Tourism offer will never say: Sorry there is nothing we can do!





The Tourism Service chain

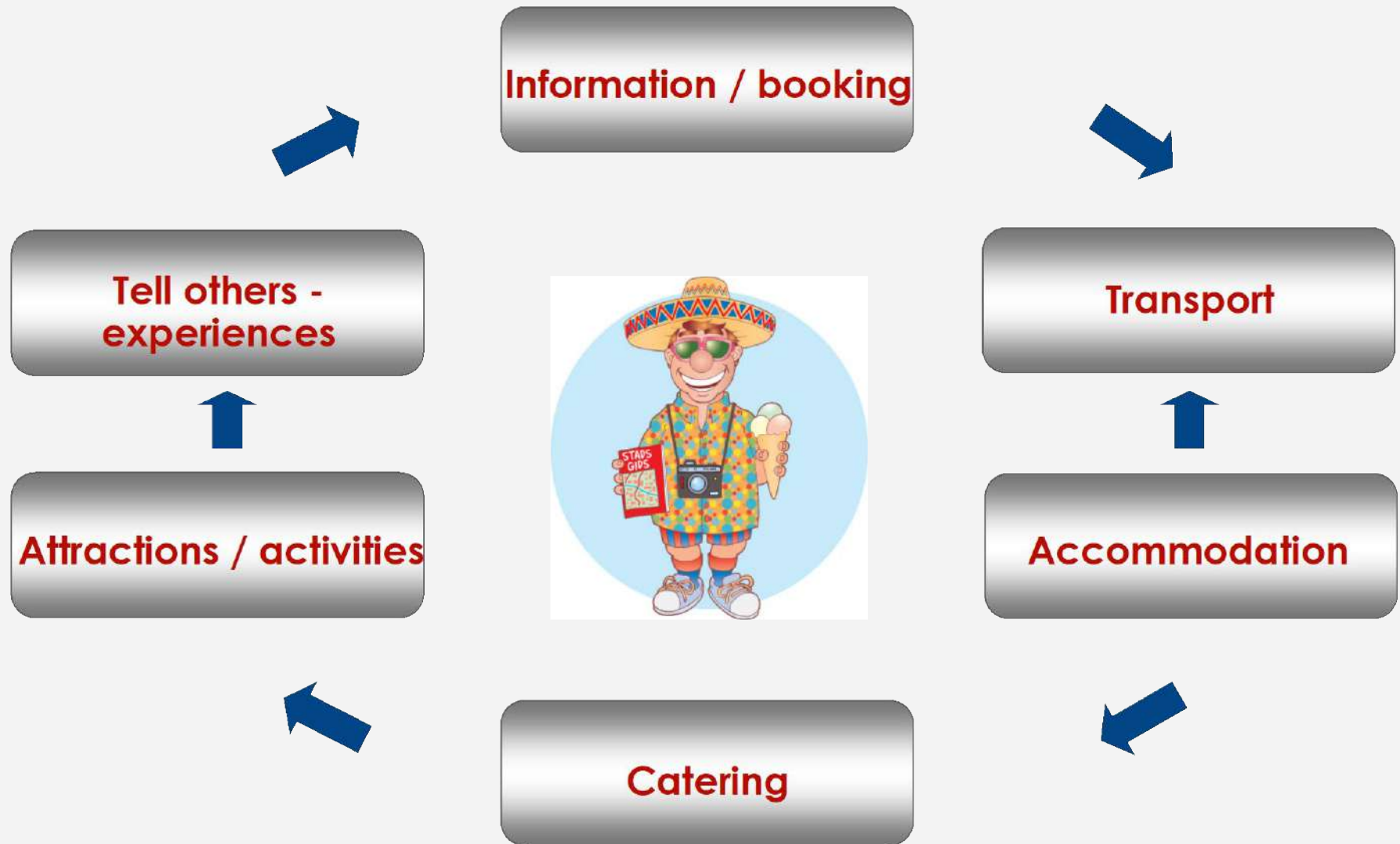
It is important to recall the concept of the Tourism Service Chain and how the accessibility of each element can influence the Visitors' journey.

All the elements are connected by a logical thread, operational and behavioural, that makes them a whole.





M2 LU 10 - Handling unforeseen situations





Each element has to guarantee

to each other:

integration

accessibility

expertise

comfort

QUALITY





The customer

Tourists with access needs normally plan well in advance their trips and have repeated contacts with all the agents (staff or websites) who can provide information and reassurance about the accessibility conditions of the destination as a whole and on the components of the trip (transport modes, accommodation, sightseeing, food, medical and technical support, emergencies etc.)





Pre-requisites to quality and good service

The main assets of a tourism product are the human resources who provide the service.

Managers and employees are all involved in assuring quality in any element of the tourism service chain.

In any element there might be situations which require a specific knowledge in order to prevent or correct major problems which may occur.





Pre-requisites to quality and good service

Everyone working in the tourism sector and in every component of the Tourism Service Chain should:

- Be fully trained and aware of all the requirements of tourists with specific access needs and how these requirements influence the service they are providing
- Know the sequence of the Customer's journey (what is coming before and after), understand the interconnections among the various services and check that all required conditions are provided





Pre-requisites to quality and good service

- Have the contacts of any service which might give support in emergencies (Hospitals, Police, equipment provisions, assistance etc.)
- and clarify the conditions for their interventions (Immediate response or within ...hours/days)
- Check with Customers if the envisaged solutions to emergencies are acceptable for them





What to do if...

Booking the trip

Travel agent:

- be aware of the accessibility conditions of all the services included in the booking and of alternatives
- Secure that minimum times for requesting services are observed
- Provide contacts of all local agents
- Strongly suggest to the customer to subscribe a «cancellation insurance» and a «medical insurance»





What to do if...

Booking the trip

Self made bookings:

- Booking sites must show the customer with access needs all the accessibility features of the elements that the buyer wishes to include in his booking
- Booking sites must identify the contact Dept./person responsible in case of uncorrect information
- Insurance must be strongly suggested as a means to prevent unforeseen problems
- Booking platforms should be accessible (WAI- W3C)





Unforeseen situations

Some services are not accessible

The local reference of the Travel Agent must:

- Identify a different facility suitable for the Customer
- Identify a local service provider with appropriate offer
- Be prepared to cover cost differences
- Authorize refunds/compensation if the alternative is not acceptable





Ground transport

Trains, buses, taxis, vans, tourist coaches are all means likely to be used by customers with access needs.

Operating Companies:

- must provide comfortable and accessible access to all of them to everyone
- must include all communication means to inform passengers during the trip (visual and vocal announcements, clear signposting)
- must train ground and travelling staff on assistance to customers with specific access needs and on how to deal with unexpected or emergency situation.





Unforeseen situations

Some services cancelled, delayed, not usable

The Transport Companies must:

- Check the usability of alternatives
- Reprotect the passenger on the first available run
- Select another means of transport
- Be prepared to cover cost differences
- Authorize refunds/compensation if the alternative is not acceptable





Accommodation

Hotel rooms are booked well in advance and the accessibility features should have been checked by both the travel agent and the customer himself.

The facility must be used by the customers with access needs in all its internal services (breakfast, conference room, swimming pool, spa etc.) and equipment.

In peak periods the availability of rooms is reduced if not in a «sold out» situation.

The number of «accessible» rooms represents normally a small percentage of the total offer of each facility.





Unforeseen situations

- The booked room has been sold to another customer and there is no more availability
- The lift is out of order
- It is not possible to use the hotel facilities since:
 1. The accessibility information provided by the hotel were not correct
 2. The customer requirements were not understood





Unforeseen situations

What to do:

- Offer a superior accommodation in your facility free of charge and check its usability with the customer
- Check alternative hotels for their availability and CONFIRM accessibility features
- Be prepared to sustain the additional costs, if any
- Examine and have the alternatives approved by the customer





Food requirement and intolerance

Some of the hidden disabilities include tourists with specific dietary requirements and/or food intolerance (Diabetes, celiac, etc.)

Make sure that menus contain the description of all ingredients of the dishes and the allergens.

In case of someone having a strong allergic reaction to food :

- Call a nurse/doctor
- Be ready to organise a transfer to the nearest hospital
- Check the validity conditions of any Health insurance
- Inform any contact person that the Customer had told you about





Sightseeing

Visiting the tourist attractions of a destination is an essential part of any vacation. However some issues may become critical «on the spot» and solutions have to be identified without delay.

Every service provider involved in the organisation of the trip will be responsible for its specific competencies.





Unforeseen situations

- The Tour Company doesn't show up
- The tourist coach is not accessible for mobility impaired persons
- Access to the monuments/museum/ archaeological area is difficult/ not possible
- A tourist is left behind in the group and there is no possibility to reach him (People with hearing impairments)
- The visiting path is too long and tiring





Unforeseen situations

What to do

For problems related to access:

- All agents organising the visit **MUST** check the accessibility situation before including the sight/s in the Tour; identify alternatives and inform the Customer of the modified programme
- If the sight is a tourist **MUST**, identify alternative tools for the visit (Virtual reality, mock-ups etc.)
- Inform the Customer of the Tour path fatigue and identify together more comfortable alternatives
- Give prior instructions to the group on meeting points/procedures if they get lost





Unforeseen situations

What to do

For problems related to no-shows and accessibility of the transport:

- Make sure that the Tour Agency will either send a substitute or be ready for refund.
- Have an accessible taxi available to allow tourists with mobility impairment to follow the coach and participate to the visit.





Health problems

Tourists normally take with them all the medicines/drugs they might need during their trip.

In case of someone getting ill:

- Call a nurse/doctor
- Be ready to organise a transfer to the nearest hospital
- Check the validity conditions of any Health insurance
- Inform any contact person that the Customer had told you about





Injuries and accidents

In case of injuries or accidents during the stay, in sightseeing trips etc.:

- Call a doctor or an Ambulance
- Keep the customer calm
- Do not try to treat him/her unless you have been trained for First aid procedures
- Check the validity conditions of any Health insurance





Safety emergencies

In case of any emergency caused by fire, gas leaks, earthquakes, floods etc. which might require the Customer evacuation:

- Call immediately the Firemen or any other specific body deputed to people safety
- Keep the customer calm and instruct to wait for the «official» rescue team
- Do not perform any action to help them out of the facility as this might be against the law and lead to legal consequences





Equipment and spare parts

Customers using assistive devices normally travel with their own equipment.

These are subject to some risks:

- Can be damaged in air transport or during the trip
- Can break during the use
- May run out of electric power
- May run out of spare parts





Equipment and spare parts

What to do

Any agent of any element of the Tourism Service Chain who is notified of a technical problem with the Customer equipment must:

- Provide an in-house replacement, if available
- Have a list of mechanics who are specialised in assistive devices and spare parts
- Have a list of Companies who rent equipment for mobility and/or comfort of the person
- Check timings for repairs or delivery





Service animals

Many tourists with access needs are helped by a service animal to perform their daily activities, to move around and maintain their independence.

Assistance animals are thus essential for their comfort and should be allowed to get in any place, indoor or outdoor, public or private.

This right is also granted by law.





Service animals

Unforeseen situation

- Managers of tourist facilities ban the access to the service animal of their guests (Hotels, restaurants, bars, shopping areas, retail shops etc)
- Transport companies (Buses, trams, underground) do not accept them onboard their vehicles
- Museums or other cultural facilities forbid their entrance
- Other customers complain about the service animals presence





Service animals



With some exceptions!





Service animals

What to do

Customers:

- Complain to the facility management
- Call the Police
- File a complaint with the Tourism Offices of the area

Service providers (Hotel staff, tourist guides, bus drivers, ticket agents of museums, cinemas, sport facilities etc.):

- Give notification in advance to the facility manager
- Explain that the Law specifically authorize Service animals to get in
- Explain to other customers that a Service animal is not dangerous, is fully trained and will not cause any casualties





Natural disasters or political unrest

Unexpected natural disasters or sudden political unrests, riots, demonstrations may cause a lot of stress to a customer with disabilities.





Natural disasters or political unrest

What to do

Travel agents:

- Offer a change of the itinerary
- In emergency situations organise the return trip as soon as possible
- Check the conditions of any insurance of the customer being applicable
- Get in touch with the Embassy or Consulate of the customer for organizational support

Tourist office

- Provide continuous updated information on the situation and a risk evaluation
- Support the tourism service providers for the safety and well-being of the customer





Stay connected

Possible problems

- No WIFI connection in the hotel
- Some instant messaging platforms are not accepted in the destination country
- Roaming costs are excessive

Actions

Customer:

- Check before leaving
- Identify alternatives
- Search for «Tourist offer phone cards»

Facility Manager/Owner:

Offer internal facilities (executive office) free of charge



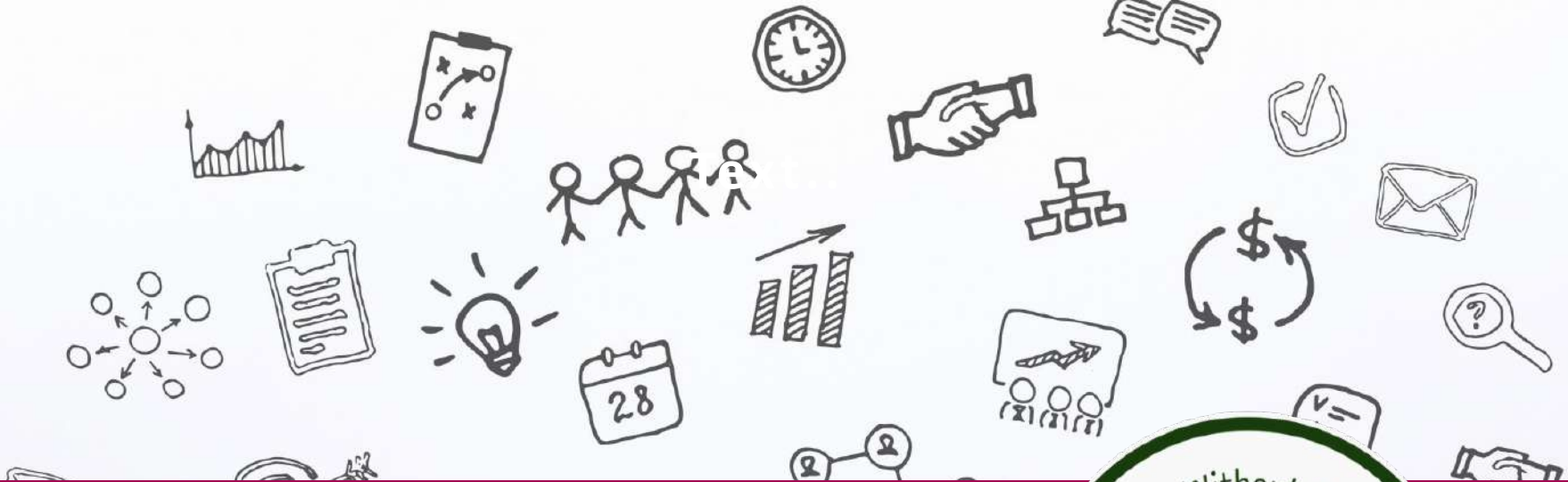


Group work

Identify:

- additional areas/situations which may create problems in the various elements of the tourism service chain
- possible solutions





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