ACCESS-ACCESSIBILITY

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Doxa Papakonstantinou:

Mr. Georgokostopoulos, over to you.

Georgokostopoulos Christos:

Good evening from me too. Good evening to all, I am very glad to be here today.

I would like to thank Ms. Kartasidou, to thank her because it is an honor for me to be here today, to participate in this panel representing a section of disability. So let's show you a picture that this is the logical and the expected, a living proof that a person with a sensory disability is here today talking with you.

A little earlier, Ms. Papakonstantinou said the following, that we are trying through this Festival to reduce, to eliminate all stereotypes and prejudices. And yet it is 2021, in a few days we will have 2022. We expect that there will be no stereotype to eliminate. I feel this makes a lot of sense, but we continue to fight relentlessly against prejudice and discrimination. We humans try to get rid of it. And yet we still talk about the rights of the deaf, the rights of the disabled and the debate is ongoing. We should move on to the next step, so that these do not exist.

Now, as for the movies we watched a little earlier: Personally as a deaf person, a representative of the deaf community, and as a bilingual and English speaker, this festival gave me the opportunity to have very good access to the film and very good access to the material. So for us, the way of the eyes, the visual pathway), is the way that will help us access the content - what, respectively, is the audio description for the blind.

There are many things that can help us hear, such as headphones or cochlear implants, but these do not give access to the contents. I see my interpreter today, I understand, you give me subtitles, I feel, I understand, I am informed, in the same way that you hear. So if you want to hear better, you turn up the volume, maybe I should turn up the volume on my headset too. But all these are somewhat half-measures, the only way that can help me to have a perfect perception is the visual way. For us deaf, access comes from the eyes. Access comes when there is communication and information, when they exist, when they are given, then we become an integral part of society. You see in the songs, even in the music there is a connection mainly of people who think that music is about hearing. It is an experience that becomes conscious only through hearing. Yet music, although it uses sounds, instruments and all that, is an experience that when we see it we do not need to hear it - we live it in a different way, we experience music see the experience of music differently. So there are other ways, other methods that can be used like the tactile method, to feel the music, say for example, holding a bottle that will absorb all the vibrations and give me a tempo. Maybe I should use a vest that has the right material inside which will also absorb the vibrations and give me the vibe, the movement of the music and so I will feel an experience too.

There are thousands of ways. Most people think that a deaf person cannot do certain things. Let's not think about what not everyone can do, let's think about what everyone can do. I may be able to do something different but I can. If we start from ‘I cannot’, we will end up nowhere. I want us all to focus together on what we can each have, different or the same, and let us focus more, at least for us, on visual stimuli. So far, special education uses music as a means, as a tool to help either using the rhythm or the voice or the color of the voice and all this is very good, I do not object, but for the deaf the message must be appropriately translated, to suit the nature of the deaf, as is the case with the hearing, each person lives his experience differently. So everyone can perceive the image and experience very differently and this will certainly affect psychology, which, as a science, clearly states that perception is something terribly subjective and cannot be the same for every person.

Of course, the dominant group in society is the group of the hearingand so, attitudes, perceptions and most of the stimuli are created by them for them. If I'm not mistaken, in the second film there was an actor who was of Italian descent and deaf. He was a deaf actor, who was struggling to find his identity, to promote it.

There is an existential dilemma within him, there is a dipole, of the deaf and his sexual identity. So, we all have to think that people are looking for our identities and when our identity is stigmatized, this path, this exploration, becomes more and more difficult. There are so many different identities that we need to explore and so, it is good for me and everyone else to open our horizons a little more in relation to this and thus, later, to help society. At this stage most are sensory or auditory-central in our case, if that is what concerns us, and we run to keep up with what is being created for practitioners. Do you understand then that like this actor, his parents were absent, and he was running behind their own perception of things, which is usually influenced by medicine, by the medical model - to put a cochlear implant, to put a headset, to learn to write, to read, to become like the hearing listening children but ... is this a success? is this true equality? Where did my identity go, where does the identity of a child go, how does the child gain confidence to communicate, to express himself, to become a member of the world? He should not run after a ready-made identity but he should make his own. Self-determination, then, is the key to moving forward. So far, heterogeneity is what happens and what may make you sick. Even I, myself, fought for many years with this model and at some point I stopped and wondered why this is happening. That's how I am and everyone should accept me for it. I also accept others but I should not run after certain standards. Think about how much time has been wasted in our lives trying to become normal. We have lost a lot of time. So why is this happening? Yes, we can achieve many things but I do not want the next generations to experience such paths. Medical models have led us here where they have led us, they have created stereotypes, they have created, if you will, the concept of deafness phobia, i.e., we see a child who cannot hearand we are immediately upset about how he will manage in his life. However, I hope that either with education but, above all, by cooperating and coexisting, we do not rely so much on the educational part, on pathology, on the medical approach, on pathogenesis, on lack, on damage, on whether or not the ear works, whether or not the throat works, the vocal cords. Let's see what this child can do. Let's focus on this child, using the social model because man is a whole. It's not just his ear. I hope I gave a picture; I hope to give rise to a discussion.

Doxa Papakonstantinou: Thank you very much.

Georgokostopoulos Christos: I am free now and willing to answer any question you have.