

## ACCESS-ACCESSIBILITY

Panagiota Koutsoukou, President of the Eco-Museum of Zagori

Doxa Papakonstantinou:

I will now give the floor to MrsKoutsoukou.

Panagiota Koutsoukou:

Good evening.

Thank you very much for the invitation and for this honor you gave us. We consider that your effort has been exceptional in these four years that you have organized the Festival and, as we said before, we are definitely moving forward in terms of legislation, we are trying to take steps, but the most difficult thing is to train people to have a different attitude to diversity- the most difficult and basic aspect is education; and what you do here is, I believe, the way to sensitize people, touch the to play on the heart strings of every human being, to make them aware of the issue at hand

The movie "I am another" was very moving yesterday. I was particularly moved by these four portraits and the attitudes of these people about how others treat them and how they see them. Some were artists, some had another occupation and that was how we see. It will be interesting to make a film that will feature the opinion of people who do not have a disability, to see how they see these disabled people and to have the courage to take a stand, because education is a big issue. We face it too, as a Museum that is different from other museums, as an open-air museum that welcomes actions and the involvement of the local community, raising awareness of the wider society in general about disability issues. Disability is a pillar of the museum's interests. Take, for instance, the project we recently launched for people with visual disabilities, to bring them closer to the environment and to help them see, to touch the cultural heritage. We created some 3D models and did an environmental type walk. It is very important. We got to see some topics that we did not have, we did not know, as we are not special education teachers and so on, we were inspired by this program to be able to bring people closer to the environment, to experience the environment, to come to know the cultural and natural heritage of the area. All of these, inspired by the belief in equal access to cultural and environmental heritage. And we saw a lot of aspects of the subject and so we got to enjoy interacting with these people,

we were very moved, we saw the blind kids want to swim in the river, to touch the water. That is, it was a unique experience. And all this through our contact with these people. Because since 2016, in our effort to create models for people with visual impairments, in collaboration and constant contact with the Association of the Blind of Northwestern Greece, we have managed to reach a satisfactory point, of being able to give them, through touch, a sense of where we are and what it is that we call cultural heritage of our area. But more than that, we also learned from these people, these people led us, they guided us and this relationship that was created is unique. And I believe this is the only way we can get closer to people, to even out differences, not seeing other people's particularities as peculiarities, on different levels, not just the level of disability but also on the level of gender.

This is what I wanted to say on my part, thank you very much. I wish you continue your work, which is very important, and I wish we can all get together and discuss such issues.

Doxa Papakonstantinou:

Mr. Koutsoukou, thank you very much. It is a valuable feedback that you give us especially from the perspective of cultural institutions and I think we will come back with questions from the public to you especially.