



Association Internationale pour le Développement, le Tourisme et la Santé  
*International Association for Development, Tourism and Health*



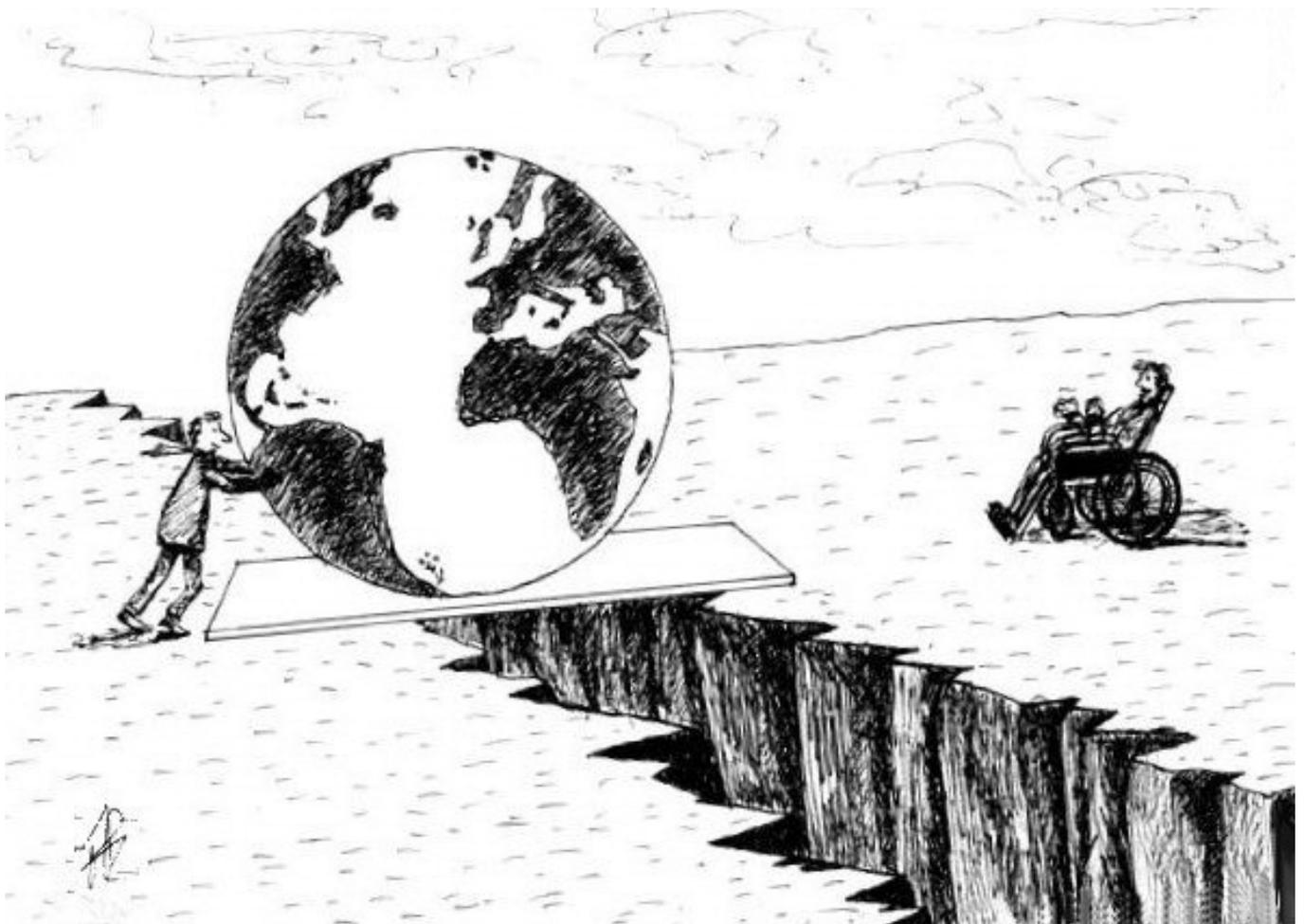
# Tourism for Young Disabled People in France

Results of the study and survey conducted  
between 1999 and 2001 among young disabled and tourism professionals



*Salon Mondial du Tourisme, mars 2005*  
World Tourism Fair – Paris, March 2005

« Disabled people remind us of the unsustainable fragility of human condition.  
What modernity stubbornly refuses to understand. » (D. Le Breton)



Created in 1996, AIDéTouS is committed in two complementary actions: the impact of mass tourism on the Southern countries population and the unequal access to tourism for the Northern countries populations. However, all those actions are motivated by a quest for tourism based on exchange and sharing rather than exploitation or exclusion.

AIDéTouS originates from a situation, observed by tourism, health and populations professionals as well as by operators concerned by the extension of side effects of tourism, such as exploitation and exclusion.

In the Southern countries, our studies have enabled to identify the most vulnerable population: children and young victims of sexual tourism.

In the Northern countries, the unequal access to tourism in societies focusing on leisure lead to real social exclusion for already marginalised populations. They are excluded from all positive effects induced by holidays and tourism: insertion, education, culture and health (see the "Health through tourism for vulnerable populations" presentation available at the company's office or on the internet site [www.aidetous.org](http://www.aidetous.org)).



## The « Health through Tourism for Vulnerable Populations » programme

In 1997, AIDéTouS has initiated a specific survey on «Health through Tourism for Vulnerable Populations», targeting four types of population: poor people and families, senior dependent people, people suffering from chronic or long-term diseases and disabled people. Two projects have already been carried out:

- In 1997, a study on care for long-term illnesses and dependent seniors has put a focus on the positive effect of tourism for those people and their environment: family, association, support (health, social, institutional workers);
- In 1998, a survey on functional rehabilitation support, among which, the development of health tourism;
- In 1999, AIDéTouS has undertaken a study on tourism for young disabled.

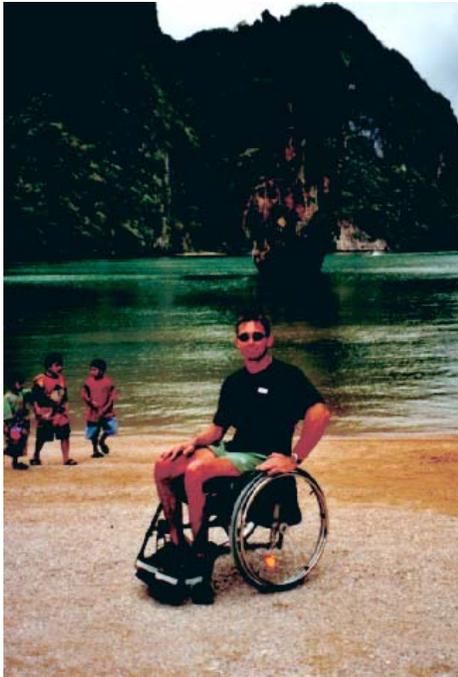
All those studies and related actions on the concerned populations will be summarized so as to emphasize and evaluate the social, psychological and sanitary impact of tourism as well as the obstacles and possible solutions to facilitate their access to tourism.



## Study description and methodology

This project aims at facilitating tourism for young disabled - whatever their handicap may be - based on a description of the present situation, and subsequent media coverage.

The young disabled (15-25) are still not sufficiently considered, despite the demand for tourism they represent. This is why we have decided that they should be the first beneficiaries of the AIDéTouS programme, which is also a complement to a more general study, done by the Ministry of Tourism for Disabled (publ. 2000, 2001).



## Study objectives and justification

This survey has been conducted in France over three years (1999-2001) on:

- Handicap, tourism and society: desk analysis, interviews with personnel from the ministries, tourism professionals, associations, families and young disabled.
- Offers of tourism products for young disabled and their limits: desk analysis (interview: 82 responses) and self-administered questionnaires (67 responses).

## The Team

AIDéTouS summoned a multi-disciplinary team among its members and expert networks:

- Florence PASNIK:** coordinator, president, co-founder of AIDéTouS, health economist
- Gilles CHAPPAZ:** expert of sustainable tourism, director of the AIDéTouS department for tourism and environment
- Franck MICHEL:** social expert, socio-anthropologist specialised in tourism
- Anne DUBURCO:** statistics experts, project manager of Cemka-Eval
- Jean DEWAILLY:** medical doctor specialised in public health and statistics, manager of Blue Stat (consulting in biostatistics), vice-president of AIDéTouS

Other consultants and members of AIDéTouS have also taken part to the project inception:

- Roberto GARCIA:** co-founder of AIDéTouS, development and tourism economist
- Francisco GARCIA:** general secretary of AIDéTouS, ILO expert (International Labour Organisation) on legal, institutional and organisational aspects
- Yves CHARPAK:** manager of Cemka-Eval, doctor for public health and epidemiologist, since then expert at WHO Europe (World Health Organisation)
- Daniel LORIOT:** manager of Social Conseil, sociologist specialised in organisations.

We wish to thank Sophie DUPONT and Xavier DUFIL, who have supported the team in the completion of this brochure, as well as Christine Guillot for the English translation of the brochure.



## Partners

AIDéTouS has strived for the participation of the concerned populations. At the stage of the project study, different formal or informal partnerships have been established:

### Financial support

Fondation de France (department for Disabled People)  
French Ministry of Education  
French Ministry of Employment and Solidarity  
Secretary of State for Tourism  
Regional representations of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur  
(Region and Prefecture)  
Regional representation Île-de-France

### Technical support

Associations and other institutions (relays with the young disabled for the study): APF, AFM, ANPEA, APAJH, APTH, Association de formation pour les malentendants, CER Forma, IME Les Coteaux, INJA, Pro métiers, UNAPEI, Mutuelle générale des PTT, Fondation de France, Agefiph.

### Partners for the completion of the interviews

Tourism professionals, public, private institutions or associations (replies to the interviews and questionnaires)  
Young disabled and their families (replies to the self-administered questionnaires)

### Illustrations

The cultural department of the Louvre museum  
Grégory Picout for the French Federation "Handisport"  
Association Française de Sport Adapté  
(French Sport Association for Disabled)  
The private school Jeanne d'Arc de St-Étienne-du-Rouvray  
Francisco Tardino (painter and drawer)  
Arnaud Laporte

## Support for media coverage

- Complete study report (main text: 250 pages - 1000 pages exhibits)
- Synthesis illustrated brochure
- Communication or presentation in conferences, congresses, workshops, cell meetings...
- Press presentation
- Organisation of a public event for a meeting of all the participants and concerned interlocutors
- Participation in events organised by specialised users associations
- Distribution of presentation brochures of the programme, its results and study output
- Films, TV and radio programmes ...





# 1 Handicap, tourism and society

We felt it was important to briefly describe the legal environment and social perception of handicap, in order to better understand its interactions with tourism. We have identified two main types of difficulties hampering the integration of disabled into tourism: legal reasons and social reasons.



## The associations

Some associations have consistently concentrated on the question of tourism and handicap, despite the lack of necessary support that would be required in a social approach of the issue.

## A continuously evolving perception of handicap in society

Disability was previously negatively defined as a "deficiency" of the person herself, qualified as invalid, impaired or not adapted. Handicap is now viewed, according to the WHO, as a "social disadvantage originating in the quality of the people's relationships with their environment". Tourism, as a factor of encounter and socialisation, can then be thoroughly explored to provide the disabled with a possibility of meeting the "Other" and the "Elsewhere".

After performance sport, tourism becomes a factor of social integration for disabled: reduction of social imbalance, social insertion, strengthening of family and social links, openness.

However, the mobilisation and awareness of society on the topic of handicap is still not on a par with the stakes.

## Holiday for young disabled: from hope to reality

Holiday have become a *social norm*; still, they remain inaccessible or restrained for disabled: the structures and activities are seldom adapted to their needs, the personnel is not enough informed and trained, the financial means, especially among the young travellers, are still not sufficient.

The *cost* is obviously the main restriction: the fees for the accompanying person, adapted transports, specific equipments and services, etc. have to be added to the "standard" cost of holiday. Moreover, the support proposed by society does not compensate the cost overrun.

Among the different types of trips (family, group of friends, group of tourists, individual, specialised trips), the AIDéTouS survey on the young disabled shows that travelling "autonomously" and free is the option preferred by young people.

But the *possibilities of travelling should be adapted to the level of dependency*: it would be irrelevant to consider only one type of organisation. Besides, the tastes and wishes of the young disabled have greatly evolved in the last few years, reflecting the type of trips done by the average young French population: search for adventure, experience, "sensations", "emotions", etc.

This can be observed in the evolution of the activities presented at specialised fairs or shows such as the Handica fairs (outdoor sports), the development of the label « ski with a handicap », etc.



### A restrictive and overspecialised legal framework

Generally, *the legal framework of handicap should enable accessibility for any institution receiving public* (ERP). The orientation law of 1975, as well the subsequent laws and decrees (1991, 1994 and 1999) insist on the obligation of ensuring accessibility for disabled. However the established obligations, whatever the type of handicap may be, are still not enough applied and do not seem to correspond to the different types of situations (for example accessibility for sensorial or mental disabled can be eased through technical or human support).

Despite some lacks, some legal texts concern tourism for disabled, notably the obligation for the associations organising adapted trips and stays to be certified.

### Why is the non-application of the law tolerated?

Even if the law of 1975 establishes right for vacation and leisure, it has been openly *disregarded* for a number of years: in 1989, 60% of the new buildings did not abide by this law. The accessibility obligation has been actually applied only after the publication of the decrees in 1994 but has not completely avoided disrespect of the obligation, even for new constructions.

The same laxity has been observed for the « tourism » certification that has *not been applied in the two years* following the publication of the 1994 decrees; this has not encouraged the associations to spontaneously have a more professional approach of the issue.

Unfortunately, until a recent time, the work to be done for public awareness and information to professionals has only been supported by association networks and has not lead to the application of controlling tools established by the CCDSA (Consultation Commission of local Districts for Security and Accessibility) and of the CDAT (Commission of local districts for Tourism Action).



### A growing awareness but still no turning point

Lately, *new public actions* have been done: creation of a special ministerial commission for accessibility that controls the obligation respect, initiates and coordinates the actions in transportation, road constructions, public areas and tourism. The commission is also in charge of evaluating the potential market volume, "Holiday for All" campaigns organised by the Secretary of State for Tourism or "Access for All" organised by the ministry of culture (accessibility of the exhibitions for any kind of handicap at the Louvre and La Villette museums in Paris), "Solidarity Holiday Grant", organisation of think tanks (Coliac, "Tourism and Handicap", "Culture and handicap", etc.), creation of an inter-ministry delegation for accessibility (in charge of controlling the accessibility application), inclusion of specialised programmes in the training programme of tourism studies (still optional for the 2 years professional marketing qualification in Tourism) or architectural studies (school of architecture in Montpellier, France), etc.

Even if this is a good sign of the government rallying, the actual *application of concrete actions is still not satisfactory*: only a few locations are concerned, low volume of accommodated people, limited means, etc.

Let us hope that the recent "Tourism and Handicap" label will be a concrete sign of rallying and concerted action among all the actors – associations, public and private operators – who can deeply modify the social perception of the relationships between handicap and tourism.



## 2 Practice, obstacles and dreams of tourism among young disabled

### Learning about their expectations: a necessary – though difficult – step

The tourism field is particularly sensitive to the “dictates of demand”; it is therefore logical and necessary to focus *on practice, needs and dreams of young disabled* if the objective is to harmonise the services offered with the demand of those specific clients.

The main difficulty at that stage comes from the *general lack of knowledge of the French disabled population* (the study led by Handicap Invalidity, Incapacity and Dependency – HIID – was not available at the time we established the database) and from the absence of federating tools to reach this population in an efficient and comprehensive way.

### An indirect approach relying on the “associative spirit”

AIDéTouS has avoided this difficulty by contacting the young disabled in an *indirectly*, through specialised users associations or institutions managers, through the General Mutual of Post & Telecoms and the Agency for Funding of the Disabled Population (Agefiph). Those associations have accepted to duplicate the questionnaires and send them to their subscribers.

The study samples have been built so as to cover the *whole French territory and the different socio-professional layers and disability types*, focusing of an age group from 15 to 25. To simplify the analysis, the different types of disabled declared by the young people surveyed have been broken down into to three categories: physical, mental and sensorial.

On the 2000 self-administered questionnaires, almost 700 have been returned, corresponding to an *unexpected reply rate of 30%*. This proves the positive impact of the associative relay and the rallying of the young disabled on tourism and holidays topic.

### Tourism of young disabled: unfulfilled expectations.

#### A low and fluctuating usage rate

45% of the young disabled declared having been able to travel “*rarely, very rarely or never*”. For around 50% of them, the last trip had been done 2 to 3 years ago.

- The young disabled with mental or sensorial disability go twice as much on holiday as the young physically disabled; the latter are more dependent on accessibility problems or on cost of equipments and accompanying person.
- Children of professionally active mothers go on holidays twice as much as the others, probably for financial reasons.

### A limited access to “free tourism”

Among the ones who can leave, three quarters of them have “*family holiday*”. Moreover, due to the lack of tourism offer and the complex organisation and funding, less than half of the young people going on holiday have done trips with “*tourism as main focus*” (*tours, visits, activities, accommodation*). In addition, most of them would like to travel alone or with some friends.

### Tourism offers remain too “standard”

*Sport trips*, especially outdoor, very fashionable among the young French population, are done mainly by young people with sensorial handicap (25% of them) rather than by the ones suffering from mental and/or physical handicap (9 to 10% of them). Enthusiasm should be therefore moderate when it comes to the new procedures for integration of the disabled on holidays.

### Limited travel opportunities

Among young disabled who said they had already been on holiday, slightly less than half of them (47%) “has gone abroad at least once in their life”, mainly in the neighbour European countries (Spain, Italy, UK, Germany).

- *This rate varies greatly according to the handicap*: one third of the young mentally disabled, more than half of the physically disabled and almost three quarters of the sensorial disabled people have been abroad.
- *Among those ones, only one out of five have been out of Europe*. The most visited countries outside Europe are then Canada, Morocco.

### Three main reasons for not going abroad are directly linked to their handicap

- Those who do not go on holiday attribute it to the high cost of stay, impossibility of leaving individually and impossibility of finding adapted structures on spot.
- More than 30% of the young physically disabled think that « *going on holidays is too complicated* ».
- More than half of the young physically or mentally disabled think that « *the impairment partly or mostly explains the fact that they have never been on holidays* ».



### Few difficulties linked to the stay itself, much more to daily life

- A quarter of the respondents explain that « *difficulties encountered during their last holidays* » which are mainly linked to accessibility problems.
- Up to 40% for the physically disabled.
- Young disabled with visual or hearing impairment refer to *problems to find interpreters and guides*, frequently “forgotten” in the accessibility process.
- In general, problem of intolerance is strongly felt.

### Preference for individual, simple and autonomous transportation

Despite difficulties, almost three quarters of the young disabled leave with *private vehicles*, accompanied or not, whereas *collective transportation* (train, bus, plane) is mainly considered as difficult, not reliable and insecure during transfers.

### The family prefers “standard” holiday resorts

Almost three thirds of the young disabled, when on holidays, stay in standard commercial accommodations (rented places, camping places, holiday clubs) or holiday homes (family, friends) or, most of the time, in the family holiday home. They are looking for a break from the usual way of living and a greater autonomy in the organisation of their holidays.

### An expressed wish for minor reorganisations consistent with the law

In order to face the encountered difficulties, the young disabled only expect the law application: *sanitary norms*, respect of the reserved *parking* places, increased availability of the *accessible seats* in planes, but also “respect and understanding”.

### Few health problems during holiday trips

During stays and travels, the proportion of young disabled “*needing services from a health professional*” is noticeably low (10%) and at the same level as the entire population of tourists. Those figures should reassure tourism professionals and avoid their reluctance to take in young disabled. Moreover, specialised holidays such as thalassotherapy do not interest the young disabled (less than 2% of them).

### A very high satisfaction level if tourism is possible

Whatever the conditions may be, nearly 90% of the young disabled have already been on holiday and claim that they were “*satisfied or very satisfied of their last stay*” and 60% consider that “*they have had a positive influence on their health, morale, appetite, energy and most of all « it changes the ideas* ».”.

### “Standard” motivation and claim for autonomy

Like anyone else, apart from relaxation, less stressful *rhythm* and change in life conditions, one of main motivation for holiday is the “*very positive effect on the morale*”.

- For some of them it is also the opportunity to “*acquire more autonomy*” and experience the trip as an initiation.
- *Trips in France*, easier to organise by oneself, seem to bring a higher level of satisfaction.

### Expectations and dreams that are “typical for the youth”

Only 14% of the young disabled have been on holiday alone. The accompanying people are mostly parents and siblings. Despite the pleasure of staying with the family, the dreams are focused on escape, alone or with friends of their age. Like any young people of the same age, the young disabled dream of Adventure and Elsewhere: love, discovery, surprises, unknown, human and cultural encounter ...



### A very low request addressed to non-specialised tourism professionals

Only 3% of the young people surveyed have been “*in contact with a tour operator or a travel agency for the choice of their holiday*”.

- This confirms the baldness of tourism marketing and services to the disabled people and is consistent with the results of the part of our study concerning “tourism offer”.



# 3 Services and limits of tourism offers for young disabled

## Tourism operators with very broad service offer: complex and difficult to identify

In order to complete the analysis of the demand survey conducted among young people, AIDéTouS has made a study on the tourism offer adapted to young disabled in France.

*The entire profession* has been examined through interviews with operators representing the production chain: influencers, travel organisers, distributors, transporters, accommodators, promoters, community workers. Within each segment, the state-owned, *private and associative operators* have been identified as such, as well as “*generalists*”, “*specialists*”, “*leaders*” and “*innovators*”.

One of the difficulties we faced is our focus on “young people between 15 and 25” who represent two different segments on a legal point of view: *under age* and *adult* between 18 and 25, belonging to very different legal frameworks and habits.

## A double approach: qualitative and quantitative

A first approach, preferably qualitative, has been done through *80 phone or direct thorough interviews*. They have made it possible, in a first phase, to gather a number of figures and most of all to notice their heterogeneity and relative poorness.

A *statistical survey* has then been conducted to translate the identified facts into figures. Unfortunately, on the 400 questionnaires sent, even after making people aware of the importance of their answer, only around 60 of them have been returned which does not enable the generalisation of the results but emphasises the lack of interest or discomfort of the tourism branch about the question of handicap (see below, chapter *Main figures*).



## Rare and limited services

The commercial offer remains limited for all disabled tourists and even more for the under age.

Non-specialised operators (including the leaders) - whatever their position and size may be in the field of tourism - have a *very small amount of disabled clientele* (in average, 1 or 2% of their global volume, corresponding to the legally minimum number of accessible rooms in a hotel).

- *This amount drops further for the under age* who are not concerned by organised tourism. Moreover, school and language trips are rarely proposed to disabled under age.

- *Some Anglo-Saxon operators working in France (Disneyland, Hertz, etc.) set an example but represent a marginal case because of the advanced level of services provided to disabled populations in their countries of origin.*

- Whatever the quality of their action may be, the contribution of *the few specialised tour operators do not notably modify the global volumes of disabled tourists because of their limited commercial size* (2000 clients per year and per tour operator in average).

## The public authorities do not support enough the access to tourism for the under age

The main part of the holidays proposed to young disabled – and even more for under age – is organised by structures belonging to “social tourism”: specialised associations in the first place, movement for youth and some precursory works council of state-owned companies (scouts, CCAS for example) and, in a recent period, “generalist” leisure associations (such as UCPA) as a consequence of the political focus made on integration through holiday.

- This acknowledgment hides a *very big distortion between the social representation of those actors* (number of subscribers or users) and *the volumes of young disabled they contribute to help travelling* (with proportions corresponding to the sizes indicated for private operators).

- Another, more worrying, problem: historically, all those structures are linked to different “thought or ethical movements”, to different administrative supervision (Ministries of Youth and Sport, Health, Tourism) which restrains the pace of open and efficient partnerships (apart from some “transverse” associations who try to take part in those pooling, such as UFCV or Éclaireurs de France).



### A "voluntaristic" public offer, but broken up and not enough relayed operationally

Strategic *public campaigns* ("Holiday for All") or more concrete actions (« Tourism and Handicap » certification, "Accueil pour tous", "Solidarity Grant for Holiday", "plan Patrimoine", etc.), organisation of *special training sessions* within tourism, architecture and other professional training programmes, publication of *adapted rules* (CVL directives from June 2000), etc.: public actions have been numerous in the last few years.

▪ However, *they lose a part of their concrete impact* due to lack of means and lack of local relays, especially at the level of the cities, and also to lack of global articulation. Now, some cooperation groups have been created, such as "Tourism & Handicap", the commission "Culture & Handicap" or the inter-ministry commission for the promotion of Accessibility.

### A strong specialisation of the tourism operators

A "*specialisation*" of the operators has been observed, even among the "generalists": associative operators put a focus on the under age, the young mentally disabled people and the people suffering from heavy pathologies (mainly poly-handicap), whereas the private operators would rather take in the young adults physically or sensorial disabled and, more generally, people with light handicaps.

▪ *Most of generalist associations for tourism (including the work councils and the youth associations) stand between both trends*, taking in the same type of public as the specialised associations while keeping a certain level of autonomy.

▪ This specialisation of the association has been dictated by *accessibility of the equipments* (structures belonging to the associations are generally not easily accessible) and by *qualification of the supervision teams, mainly focused on activity organisation*.

▪ The commercial operators suffer from a lack of training of their teams (reception and supervision) and still think that pooling different kinds of populations is difficult. Fortunately, the mobilisation and training of the personnel enhances easier handling and knowledge of the work with disabled.



### Adaptation of the smaller operators to the diversity of handicaps

The big number of institutions involved enables a bigger *diversity of holiday types* that could be proposed to all publics, according to specific needs and level of autonomy: "specialised" holidays in the most heavy cases, "adapted" for the intermediary cases, "integrated" in the least acute cases.

▪ Proposed by militant associations, those different holiday options are generally very structured but follow different *quality charters* defined by associations unions (Union nationale pour l'accès des handicapés aux loisirs [Unahl], Comité national pour les loisirs et le tourisme adapté [CNLTA], Jeunesse au plein air [JPA]).

▪ The integration of disabled in generalist environment should be promoted as early as possible but is limited by the volumes of people taken in (general will for a "dilution" of disabled people among the groups) and by the additional cost to be covered for the heaviest cases.

▪ Trips in foreign countries for young people (not specifically for disabled), but also specialised trips for any destination are still not legally defined: if both contributed to the development of original packages (learning autonomy), the task of the organisers are more and more complicated by the low consideration given to the observance of the rules.

### The private operators criticise "constraining" and "ever changing" rules

For the private operators, the main drawback is the heavy constraint put on them by rules on "*accessibility*" of the *tourist equipment*:

▪ *weight of the investment* to abide by the norm with no perspective of direct investment return because the operators themselves cannot previously identify the clientele;

▪ *changing norms* (especially in the last 10 years) obliging the local operators to permanently adapt with different situations according to the countries. This makes it even more difficult for international operators who aim at homogeneous quality standards.





### Associations confused by the legal framework that lacks relevance and coherence

For associative operators, the heavily “commercial” orientation of the *Tourism agreement*, on the one hand, and the too “social” *agreement made by the institutions related to the Ministry of Youth & Sports*, on the other hand, are hardly compatible

- *Inadequate training or specialisation* is also considered as a big drawback, as well as the “rigidity” of the *sanitary and social sets of rules*.
- *Administrative inconsistency* among the relevant ministers generates conflicts of interest among the associations, according to the link they have with one or more of the institutions.

### Difficulties to design travel packages

The *lack of reliability of the operational information*, especially abroad but also in France, often require time-and-money-spending studies on the spot, mainly for the operators taking in young physically disabled (to avoid any break in the “chain of accessibility”).

- The obligation to design ‘*tailor-made*’ packages for this specific clientele generates even more costs which accordingly reduce the profitability of the trips and of the services (“marginal cost” increase difficult to pass on the sales prices).
- Some specialised operators who are resolutely militant avoid this problem by relying on the *awareness of the other members of the group* to “erase” the handicap situations, either through mixed groups or through motivation of the service providers (Soleil pour tous, XIII Voyages...).

### An organisation and travel agenda perceived as potential sources of difficulty

All operators insist on the *numerous unknown situations* they have to handle when dealing with this part of the clientele they hardly know : *difficult inscription* (weight of the guardianship and medical follow-up, solvency difficult to evaluate, conditions for taking in to be enquired ...); *difficult funding* because of additional supervision and planning of the stay are collectively supported ; *travel process “on the verge”*, never safe from an unexpected problem of accessibility, supervision, transportation or non-adapted activity...

- *Dealing with security, key point of adapted tourism, triggers two opposed behaviours*: the militant operators, being good professionals, acquire adapted means (on the spot enquiries) and accept to reduce their margin and activity volume; the others, being good professionals as well, avoid this clientele who is too complex to “include” in a profitable business

### A very particular marketing approach

The characteristics of the commercial handling of young tourists are numerous: *clientele supervised* by associations or families, necessity of *reducing the margins* to absorb the cost overrun to respect the code of ethics, *risk of image* in case of clientele mixing, especially *risk of intolerance* on part of the tourism branch or of the tourists themselves!

- Therefore, *those characteristics explain why some private operators who position themselves on this niche tend to prefer physically disabled (motor or sensorial deficiency)*, regarded as more “presentable” in spite of the difficulties to handle accessibility. The mentally disabled are taken in charge by specialised or generalist associations that the community does not easily integrate. And the supervising personnel have received an advanced training to that purpose.





# Weaknesses of tourist offer to young disabled:

## Key figures out of the AIDéTouS survey

The following data are extracted from the statistical survey done in addition to the qualitative study. 390 representative tourist operators have been surveyed (return rate: 16.2 %), based on a "stratified" sample covering all functional segments of the branch tourism for young disabled:

Functions: influencers / organisers / distributors / transporters / caterers / providers of activities;

Status: public / private / associative;

Types: specialised / non-specialised.

- **A clearly segmented branch**  
67% of the private operators are mostly generalists, 71% of the associative operators are specialised and 100% of the public operators are exclusively generalist.
- **A dedicated offer which is still very weak**  
24% of the private operators and 33% of the public ones do not propose any dedicated "product".
- **General awareness is very recent**  
65% have been organising trips for disabled for 15 years maximum. However, only 2% of the operators have been positioned for 25 years, i.e. since the law of 1975.
- **Specifics not enough taken into account**  
More than 20% of the operators who offer directly or indirectly specific travels do not develop any targeted reception of the disabled person for trip reservation.
- **It is necessary to professionalize the reception of the disabled**  
Nearly 30% of the operators actively or passively positioned do not rely on qualified personnel.
- **An offer to the under age mostly proposed by the associations**  
70% of the operators providing services to under age disabled are associations.
- **A more balanced offer for adults under 25**  
Still a big majority of associations in that case but with more private operators (26%) and generalists (52%).
- **An almost « classic » offer for the families**  
Even more private operators (37%) and generalist structures (65%).
- **Services classified in categories according to the type of handicap**  
The associations are in majority, especially for mental handicap (79%), less for motor deficiency (62,3%) and sensorial deficiency (57%). The generalists are on par with the specialists for motor handicaps (50%), but in majority for sensorial handicap (60%).
- **A travel offer still mainly proposed by associations**  
More than 60% of the offers come from associations. Between 4 and 6% of the offers comes from public operators.
- **A very limited use of specialised structures**  
100% of the public operators, 94% of the private ones and 79% of the associations do not use specialised structure to organise their travel packages.
- **No real awareness of specific cost overruns**  
93% of the generalist operators, 100% of the private and public operators and 79 to 100% of the tourism production chain do not indicate any specific cost overrun. Only the organisers of stays are evenly split: 50% yes and 50% no.
- **A destination offer mainly from the associations**  
65% to 81% of all destinations are covered by the associations. The private operators propose up to 25% of the destinations only for "sea trip" and "other" destinations (mainly cities and foreign countries).
- **Complexity of the product design? Especially for the associations**  
Be it for the preparation, the organisation, commercialisation or development of a specific product, the associations represent 56 to 65% of the positive answers.
- **Very low rates of disabled clientele except for the associations**  
86% of the private operators and 100% of the public ones indicate less than 10% of disabled within their clientele whereas 63% of the associations announce rates between 10 and 50%. However, 100% of the private operators and 88% of the generalists think that this part of the clientele could grow.
- **A clear positioning on travel for young people on part of the associations**  
80% of those travels are organised by the associations, whereas 75% of the private operators indicate that they do not cover that type of offer. However, 67% of the public operators say that they are active on that market, so do 55% of the generalist operators.
- **A raising need of specific offer for the whole branch**  
100% of the public operators, 80% of the specialised ones and 76% of the associations, as well – and it is important to emphasize it – as 64% of the generalists and private operators noticed an increase of the demand from disabled people.
- **Development of the offer carried by the private operators?**  
43% of the private operators plan the development of a specific offer. However, only 54% of the specialised operators plan an increase in the activities proposed.



# Conclusion

France – fourth industrial country in the world, country of the Human rights and most visited country – shows a serious backwardness in research, reflection and action on the topic of tourism and handicap.

AIDéTouS' work, complementing actions of other partners working on the same topic, clearly shows that tourism offer, in terms of quality and quantity, is far from responding to the needs, expectations and dreams of young disabled.

Until now, this population has rarely had the opportunity of expressing their difficulty and wishes. Now the collected information shows that most of them are discouraged: insufficient access to information about travel possibilities, complex organisation, unsuitable offer still stand in their way.

Decisive factor of for not travelling for people under 25 is the too high cost of the trips. Moreover, the young disabled have to carry specific cost overrun: payment of yearly accommodation (even if they are away), need for an accompanying person, additional fees of an "adapted" trip, etc.

However, our survey clearly shows their will, as well as the will of their families or supervision, to go on holiday "like everybody else", provided the conditions of travel are in line with their needs for an adapted offer and the respect of legal framework. The issue is clearly social integration on which public authorities and tourism operators have to work, all the more than young disabled – even more than many other people of their age – want to discover the world, whatever the difficulties to realise it may be.

Tourism offer, very limited, is still too dependent on the militancy of specialised associations who rightly continue to express their lacks and request increased support.

The main learning from the survey on tourism offer is the low volume of young disabled people taken in charge by the tourism industry.

Transportation in individual vehicles and family holiday remain the most usual type of holiday for young disabled. Many reasons for that: recent awareness and uncoordinated actions on part of public authorities, inflexible social and associative tourism, lack of means given to specialised tourism, reluctant private operators, absence of adapted funding conditions.

Conflicts among the different actors on an institutional level – with increased impact on the associations – have to be added to those main causes.

All those causes will have to be taken into account, should a policy lead to a real expansion of tourism for young disabled.

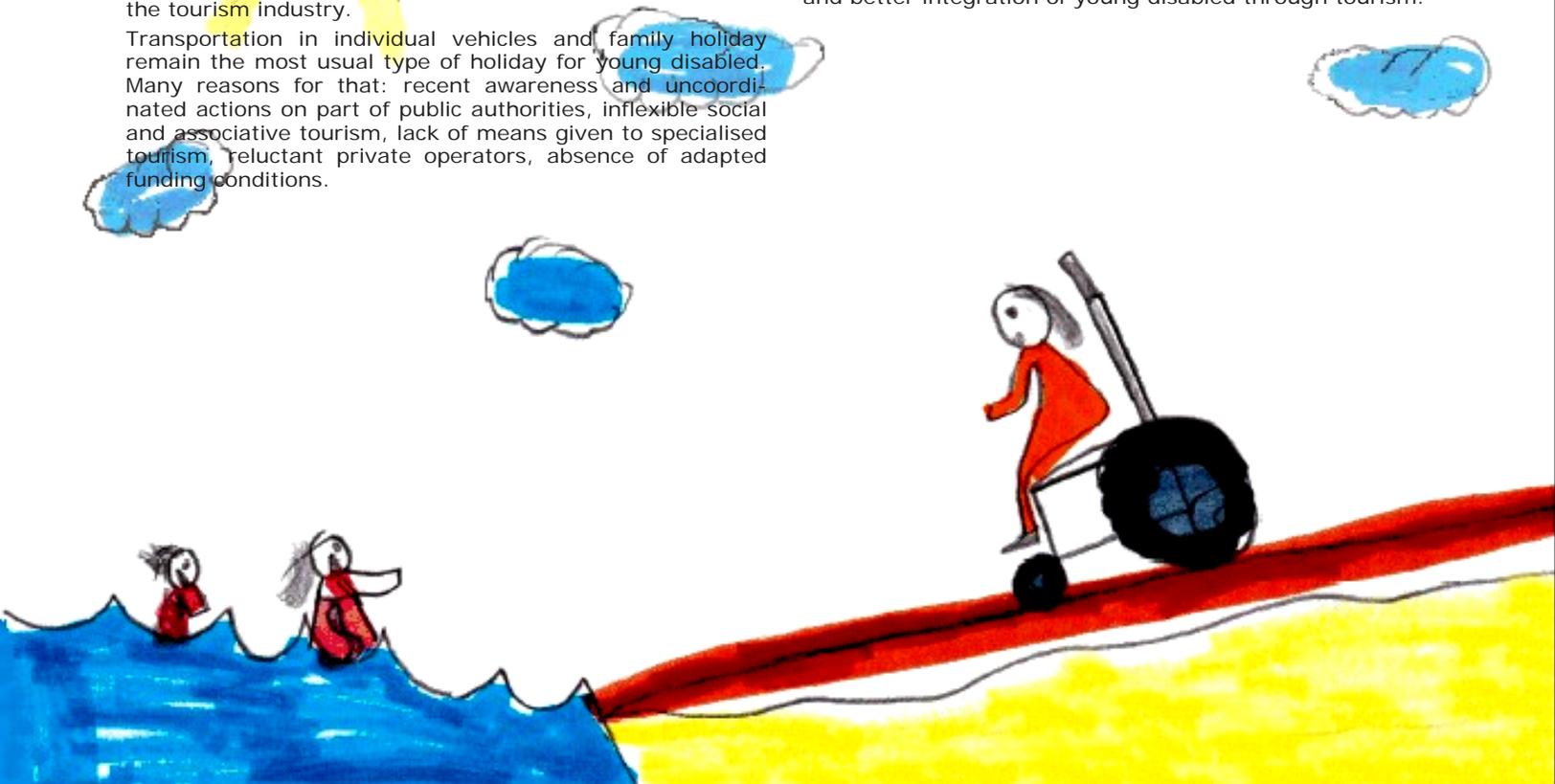
The departure rates are still very low, despite encouraging signs on part of public authorities and operators (very slow process of identification and development of accessibility, at least for physical handicap), as well as on part of young disabled and their families (increasing claim on their rights and will to avoid the usual types of adapted organisation).

Despite increased awareness, the public authorities have still not managed to stimulate and supervise those market operators, who are still not reactive enough to a practice they do not know and are not used to.

Even if no turning point can be seen, ministers reinforce some departments and enhance co-operations (Ministers of Tourism, Transportation, Youth and Sports, Education, Health...etc.). The weight of generalist associations grows and some private operators seem to be willing to enter this market, understanding that tourism fail to include a dynamic market potential that can be observed in countries who have chosen to react a long time ago.

Adapted tourism is the only way of relieving social threat and unequal access to tourism; it is therefore necessary to understand the whole problematic around accessibility ("physical" = "access" and "functional" = use). However, the issue is mostly around mental accessibility (understand, find one's way): media coverage and communication on the work done by all the players is of paramount importance.

This is why AIDéTouS has decided, as a follow-up of this project, to spread and share the study results, publishing the whole report, providing its main results on its internet site [www.aidetous.org](http://www.aidetous.org) and taking part in the promotion of exchange programmes: working for easier tourism accessibility and better integration of young disabled through tourism.





## Contents

- Handicap, tourism and society
- Practice, obstacles and dreams of tourism of the young disabled
- Weaknesses of tourist offer to young disabled people
- Key figures out of the AIDéTouS survey

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### Project follow-up

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The results in the preliminary phase summarized in this brochure are used as a basis for future media coverage:

- Public presentation to the most concerned actors (associations, operators, public institutions);
  - Development of specific training kits for our partners.
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**Association Internationale pour le DÉveloppement, le TOUrisme et la Santé**  
*International Association for Development, Tourism and Health*

25 bd Poniatowski – F-75012 Paris

phone: +33 (0)1 43 44 97 01

e-mail: [aidetous@wanadoo.fr](mailto:aidetous@wanadoo.fr)

web: <http://www.aidetous.org>