



5.4 Reformative function of cultural mediation

We speak of the reformative function of cultural mediation when experiences or knowledge generated in cultural mediation result in changes intended to improve structures existing within a cultural institution. For example, the Vincenzo Vela Museum in Ligornetto drew on its experiences with visitors with impaired vision from a project supported by Pro Helvetia called “Kulturattaché-e-s” (Grossrieder 2009) to expand its programming in this area over a longer term and to improve the accessibility of the museum to this user group.

One example from the field of theatrical mediation is the → [audio description](#) project carried out at Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne. Visitors with vision impairments hear descriptions of what is occurring on stage in real time during the natural pauses in the dialogue of a theatrical production via earphones. A tactile examination of the stage set takes place before the performance and participants have the opportunity to talk with theatre personnel.

The more effective the information flows within an institution are, the greater the extent to which cultural mediation can fulfil the reformative function – i.e. if mediators have a voice in decision-making at the planning level of the institution and thus are able to apply their project experiences directly and effectively. One almost never finds such structural conditions in place in Switzerland, and it is still quite unusual to encounter them in other countries.

→ [Audio description](http://www.vidy.ch/jeune-public/audiodescription) <http://www.vidy.ch/jeune-public/audiodescription> [11.4.2012]; see Text 2.CP by Corinne Doret Baertschi and Fanny Guichard: Two concrete examples of cultural mediation in Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne