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Building Cities for All: Inclusive and Accessible Cities and Territories
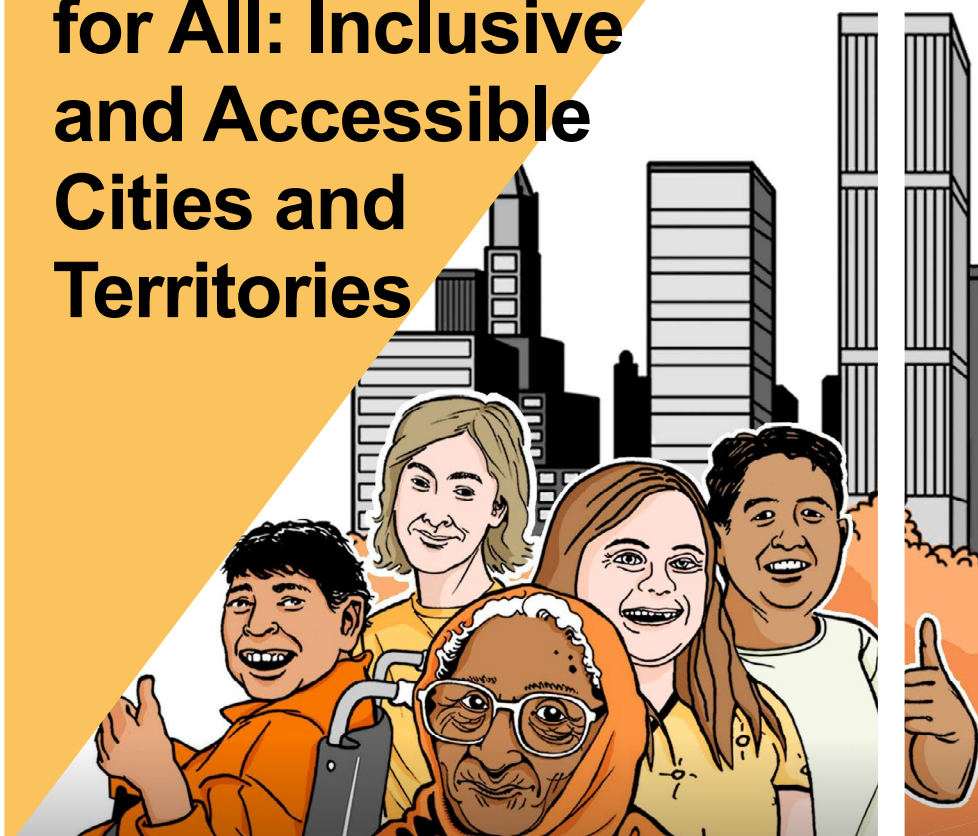
CITIES FOR ALL
GLOBAL CAMPAIGN ON INCLUSIVE
AND ACCESSIBLE CITIES

Learning
UCLG

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Kota Kita Foundation
Municipal Department for Communication of La Paz
Municipality of Santa Fe

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Foreword

Accessibility is undoubtedly the most cross-cutting legal concept of the 21st century, as it is a pillar and bridge for the exercise of human rights and fundamental liberties.
It is universal, because it provides unique conditions to millions of people in the world: persons with disabilities, older persons, young children, *pregnant women, injured or temporarily ill people, among others*.

*It is based on **universal design**, which applies to products, environments, programs and services that can be used by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design (art. 2. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities). Consequently, accessibility is multidimensional, as it can reach different areas for the proper functioning and well-being in people's lives.*

What is the current challenge regarding universal accessibility?

Undoubtedly, the main challenge is for authorities at local, regional and national governments to encourage and consider the input of persons with disabilities, older persons and their representative organizations through a structural transformation that leads to policy products such as progressive decisions, legislation, public policies, inclusive strategies, capacity building, data collection and statistics, accompanied by the necessary funding.

It is within this framework that the Community of Practice on Inclusive Accesible Cities and Territories develops their work. Through the Community's valuable networking and articulation, with interactive learning as the key, they catalyze and create

various paths to achieve compliance with the legal obligations of the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** (CRPD) and the 2030 Agenda, especially its Sustainable Development Goal No. 11, which refers to goals on accessibility in green areas, public spaces and transportation.

This peer learning note should be a strong motivation to multiply these communities of practice because they respond to accessibility and inclusion standards that must reach our global society in line with human rights and sustainable development, strengthening stronger democratic systems to "leave no one behind".

The peer learning note provides practical content to the concept, messages and statements on accessibility, making contributions to decision-makers, public policy implementers and participatory monitoring bodies in human rights and sustainable development at the national and international levels. The Community of Practice makes it clear that we are in the cultural era of "rights instead of favors".

**María Soledad
Cisternas Reyes**

UN Special Envoy on
Disability and Accessibility

Introduction

The Global Compact on Inclusive and Accessible Cities

Over the next 35 years cities will shape global development, including the way that human rights are respected and put into action. The growing movement in urbanization gives opportunities for social inclusion, equitable access to services and jobs, and engaging communities that are often ignored, particularly older persons and persons with disabilities. Today, persons with disabilities and older persons make up 25% of the global population of which more than half live in cities and towns today. By 2050 it is estimated that this number will grow to over 2 billion people living in urban centers.

To respond to these opportunities, in 2018 the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), World Enabled, the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development BMZ, the UN Special Envoy of Accessibility and Disability, the UN Special Rapporteur on Disability, the Disability Inclusive and Accessible Urban Development (DIAUD) Network, and the General Assembly of Partners Constituent Group of Older Persons came together to launch the **Global Compact on Inclusive and Accessible Cities**. The founding signatory cities of the Global Compact are Amman, Chicago, Curitiba, Laayoune, New York and Sao Paulo.

The Global Compact on Inclusive and Accessible Cities is a declaration that defines an inclusive and accessible city as a place where everyone, regardless of their economic means, gender, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual identity, migration status or religion, is enabled and empowered to fully participate in the social, economic, cultural and political opportunities that cities have to offer. The Compact connects the main global agreements to accessibility, universal design, and inclusion within the UN's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,Sustainable Development Goals, New Urban Agenda, and the **World Health Organizations's Age-friendly Cities and Communities Framework**; defending the rights of 1 billion women, men, girls and boys with disabilities and the growing population around the world aged 60 or older that experience daily barriers to participate in society.

To reach the goals of the Compact, signatories committ to promote its six principles: **Non Discrimination, Participation, Accessibility, Inclusive Urban Policies and Programs, Capacity Building** and **Data for Development**. At the heart of the Compact is the Cities for All Campaign.

⊙ Founding cities
● Signing cities

The Peer Learning

"How can we ensure that social exclusion, marginalization, and discrimination, environmental infrastructure and attitudinal barriers do not pose significant challenges for building safe, inclusive, and resilient cities?"

From the 26th to 28th of January and the 20th to 21st of April, the UCLG Global Community of Practice on Inclusive and Accessible Cities and Territories together with the UCLG World Secretariat team and World Enabled came together for the online Peer Learning event series "Building Cities for All". This idea for this peer learning series comes from the recommendations from the <u>2019 UCLG World Congress and Townhall on Inclusive and Accessible Cities</u>.
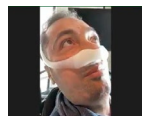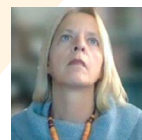
The goals of the peer learning series were to find common problems to working on accessibility at the city level, to understand common benefits of accessibility for the community, and understand how to use the principles of the Global Compact to make human rights real in cities.

This peer learning series is the first skill building activity of the Community of Practice, adapted from the outline of World Enabled's Building Cities for All Training program.The peer learning sessions were split into sections that included background, good practices and challenges, and hands-on learning activities. Through the structure of the training program, the sessions explored the principles of Global Compact; mainly *Participation, Inclusive Urban Policies and Programs, Capacity Building and Data for Development.*

Background

The "Building Cities for All" training program was developed to understand the 6 principles of the Global Compact and recommendations of the Townhall in action, through knowledge sharing from the experiences of both local governments and persons with disabilities working with cities. From the local level, the chapters of the program explore the practices of the cities of Banjarmasin, Freetown, Mersin and Villa Carlos Paz. The interviews with city leaders explore actions of city governments to remove physical, digital and institutional barriers in the environment that limit participation, particularly of persons with disabilities and older persons. The interviews also make the case for including accessibility as a central part of local public services and programs as an important step to make sure that persons with disabilities and older persons can be in decision making roles.

The training program will be online in a self-paced learning style on UCLG's Learning page, and include videos that talk about the importance of accessibility and how to work on it at the local level.

Good Practices & Challenges

To understand the Principles of the Compact in action the **cities of Banjarmasin, Mersin, Lisbon, La Paz, Santa Fe and Villa Carlos Paz shared their actions and challenges to make accessibility and universal design central parts of local strategies and programs**. Some of the solutions presented included the development of a data collection model with residents to improve local data on disability, mental health support services for residents and migrants, making charging stations for wheelchairs available around the city, providing sign language in-terpreters for public use both in person and online, making training available for city staff on accessibility, improving accessibility and safety of public transportation for women and girls, and having persons with disabilities in leaderships roles within the city office.

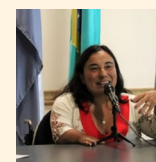**Patricia Morla**
Municipal Councilor
Villa Carlos Paz

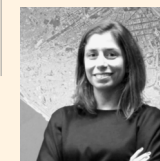**Ibrahim Evrim**
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Although many good practices were shared, city representatives also talked about the current challenges from their experience that are barriers to making accessibility a reality at the local level. Main challenges shared include

- limit of city's knowledge to work on accessibility
- change in the priorities after new political parties enters office
- building trust with community to take part in local surveys and data collection
- lack of data on barriers persons with disabilities and older persons experience to find better solutions to make sure public services are inclusive
- lack of understanding and partnership with local private sector to make sure accessibility standards are understood and being worked on
- working together with other city departments so that they understand the benefits of accessibility and universal design in their work.

Please find more detailed information on some of the practices shared in the section below on Case Studies.
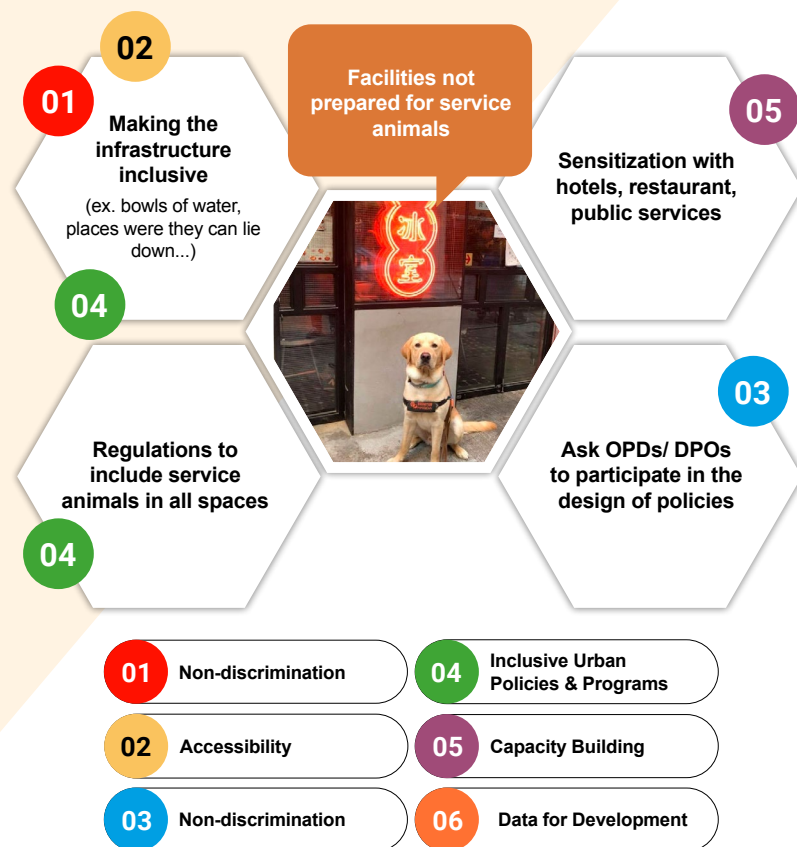
Hands-on Learning

To support the learning discussions, the participants were put into different working groups to explore and find common barriers connected to accessibility in different environments, come up with answers to common barriers they identified, and explore ways to communicate the importance of and make the case for accessibility with different city departments in the Thinking Inclusive Cities, Co-designing Cities for All and Universal Design Debate exercises. Participants were also asked to think about how the solutions they found connected to one or more principles of the Global Compact.

Thinking Inclusive Cities

An **important step in making cities inclusive, is understanding the problems in the city that limit and separate people and groups from taking part in the community**. Understanding these problems or barriers is the first step in finding solutions.

To understand the common problems affecting inclusion in the community, the participants looked at different situations connected to accessibility in an activity called "Thinking Inclusive Cities". Some of the situations discussed included the use of service animals, use of smartphones and other digital technologies, access to services in informal areas, and access to education and sports. Taking a look at the discussion on the use of service animals, barriers that participants talked about were lack of community awareness or planning of public building and transport that consider people living or visiting the city that use service animals to access services and spaces. Participants also highlighted that service animals are not only for people with visual disabilities but are also important for many people living alone, which is the case for many older people in cities.

In response to these barriers, ideas included making sure that rules on public spaces allow entry of service animals, making public spaces friendly to animals by having bowls of water available and areas were they can lay down, organizing information campaigns to raise community awareness about service animals in tourist areas and in public services, having surveys and conversations with the community to listen to their ideas and suggestions on how to better include

01 Non-discrimination	**04** Inclusive Urban Policies & Programs	
02 Accessibility	**05** Capacity Building	
03 Non-discrimination	**06** Data for Development	

service animals and the people who use them, and making sure to involve organizations of persons with disabilities in the design and development of responses to the community suggestions.

To finish the activity the groups were asked to connect the ideas that were talked about to one or more principles of the Global Compact. Through this part of the activity participants were able to make a connection with the principles of the Compact and the ideas that were presented by the group. Although participants were able to better understand how the principles of the Compact could be included in city programs, they felt **more training was needed at the local level to implement some of the principles such as principle 6 on Data for Development**.

Co-Designing Cities for All

The thinking around accessibility and universal design are shared across the world but the way these ideas are put into action changes based on important points such as local culture, natural environment, political goals and wants of people in the community. Following the discussions from "Thinking Inclusive Cities", the participants took a look at the real world examples in "Co-designing Cities for All" to explore how the context of a place can make understanding barriers and finding the solutions more difficult.

Barriers

Solutions

For the Co Design activity two groups were made and asked to review a city profile. The profiles gave important information about the city that the participants had to remember as they looked at problems and talked about possible solutions to those problems. The city profiles had information on the size of the city, at-risk people in the community, budget priorities, transportation, and the economy. In addition to the profiles, the groups were asked to think of solutions within specific spaces. These spaces looked at in the discussions included a cooperative working center and public mobility network. To evaluate the ideas each of the participants were given a role within different departments in the city including the department of urban planning, social rights and community rights, finance, resilience,digitalization, and mobility.
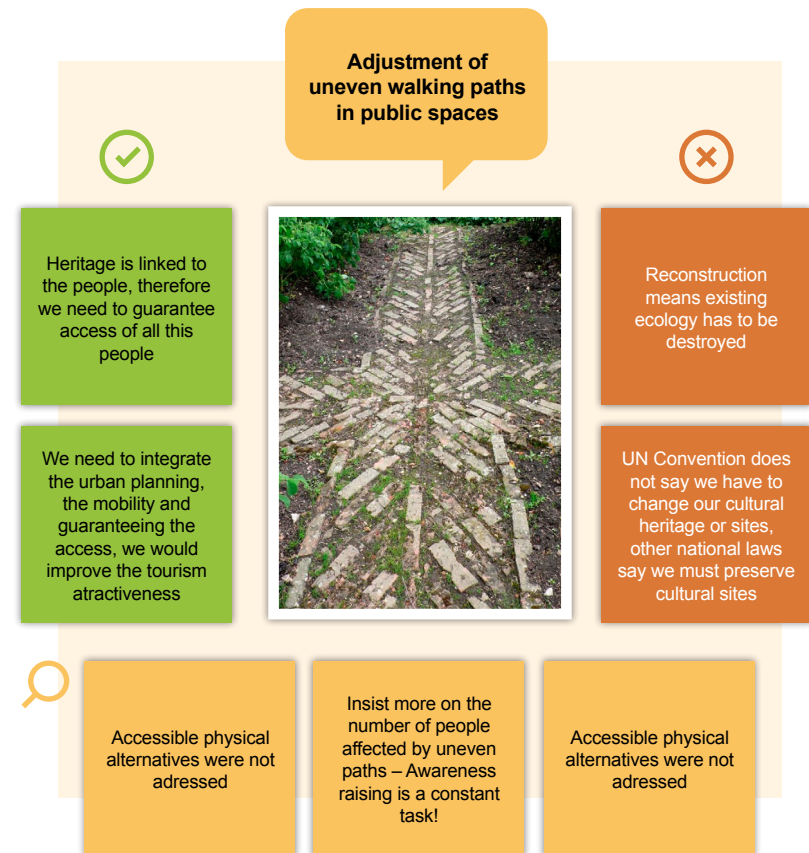
Within the two groups interesting reflections and ideas were talked about including the need for:

- accessibility to be focused on from the beginning and starting at a person's home and to information
- accessible solutions to be based on the principle of independent us,
- continuing training on accessibility and dignified treatment of persons with disabilities city transportation staff and other city staff working with communities and public services,
- the importance of technology to be seen as a driver for better access to services and information
- communications campaigns to improve public knowledge on the importance of accessibility of services for community health
- services to be accessible for both residents and visitors.

A closing thought from the groups was on the fact that it is important to remember the different departments that are needed to make any project real and how hard it can be for each department to come to an agreement -even for great ideas. In this regard, communication and partnerships are also important to finding any solution.

Universal Design Debate

To close the activities and bring together the ideas, solutions and challenges explored in the different activities, participants were given the task to look at a specific project to update uneven walking paths in public spaces. For this activity three groups were made and with the roles of coming up with arguments for and against the project, and to judge the debate between the group for the project and the group that was against. On to the debate!

Adjustment of uneven walking paths in public spaces

Heritage is linked to the people, therefore we need to guarantee access of all this people

We need to integrate the urban planning, the mobility and guaranteeing the access, we would improve the tourism atractiveness

Reconstruction means existing ecology has to be destroyed

UN Convention does not say we have to change our cultural heritage or sites, other national laws say we must preserve cultural sites

Accessible physical alternatives were not adressed

Insist more on the number of people affected by uneven paths – Awareness raising is a constant task!

Accessible physical alternatives were not adressed

The group against the proposal brought up key points such as

- Protection of cultural heritage. The uneven walking paths are part of the design and identify of the city and should be left unchanged
- Cultural heritage is also important to the economy in the form of tourism.
- Small budget of the city should be saved for protecting cultural spaces
- Changing paths will make waste and can affect the environment. Keeping original paths is better for the natural environment
- Lack of information of whether the paths actually negatively affect the people in the community. Decision to work on the project should be based on real data or complaints from people
- The United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities does not require big changes to cultural sites.
- Persons with disabilities are a small group, and do not represent a large population of voters. Changing the cultural heritage of the environment could have negative effects on the re-election.

The group in favor of the project brought up important benefits such as

- The connection between cultural heritage and people. Culture should be accessible to all people and culture should be about inclusivity and mobility. The city should build a culture of inclusion
- More accessible places is better for everyone, making mobility better and tourism more attractive
- Walkable paths could lower the need for cars and which in the long term would be better the environment
- Solutions to budget problems can be solved using materials that exist in a new way
- Persons with disabilities are not a small group and accessibility not only benefits people with disabilities but also older persons, parents with young children and other groups.
- Making paths accessible could include more people in work and that could help will reduce the financial stress for the city

The two groups also talked about alternatives to find a common ground between the arguments such as trying to use existing

materials to create something more accessible or complimenting lack of funding in partnership with the private sector; **using public spaces to create a new culture centered on inclusion**.

Following the arguments the third group assessed the arguments presented. In general the third group found that the points presented were good but that the group that was in favor of the project could have made stronger points. These points included

- making direct reference to the principle of non discrimantion within the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,
- clearly stating the data on disability and the co benefits of accessibility for different groups in society.
- Points should better take into consideration the topic of climate change.

The group reflected on the exercise by making connections to their own work, which they felt were similar to the points that came up during the activity. The participants shared the feeling that the hard part of making accessibility real at the city level is often due to communication, lack of partnerships, and limited local data on accessibility.

Case Studies

Mersin, Turkey

Accessible Life Park: a park and service center for persons with disabilities and their families in the Yenişehir district of Mersin

Mersin is a large city with more than 2 million people located on the Mediterranean coast of Turkey. In the last few years Mersin has focused on infrastructure invest-ments and inclusive social policies in order to adapt to the fast population growth and make the city acces-sible to all. In addition to the accessible infrastructure changes in the city, social and physical development is strengthened by creating living spaces for people with disabilities. The Accessible Life Park project was cre-ated with the goal to provide an accessible space for persons with disabilities and their families in the city.

The main institution for the project is Mersin Metropolitan Munici-pality, which designed this 4,250 square meters building with the support of experts from the city departments on Disability and Health and Parks and Gardens. It is a place that can be easily reached from four central districts of the city. The Accessible Life Park was finally introduced in July 2021, with around 165 people benefiting from all the facilities free of charge.

In the park, people of all ages and all disability groups can spend time comfortably and safely thanks to the wide and accessible social activity area. This includes a swimming pool, large green space, meeting room, workshops space, playroom, as well as a dance floor equipped for dance and fitness activities and resting areas and activities organized for the parents.

Both single and group activities are constantly organized by expert trainers. One of the most important services of the center is the "De-velopmental Playgroup" project which is the first among municipalities in Turkey. The Developmental Playgroup was started to stop sensory loss, to respond to effects of the pandemic lockdown on children aged 0 to 6 that were diagnosed with sensory loss due to the lack of social and environmental contact for a long period of time. This project in-cludes the participation of psychologists who follow the developmen-tal processes of these children and ensures progress of movement, language and social skills. To support the physical and mental de-velopment and skill building of the people in the community, different sport activities and hand craft workshops are available. These activi-ties help with the sense of responsibility and connection from being in a team and also help build economic opportunities for people through showing of products made in workshops.

In summary

Challenge

Provide an accessible space for people with disabilities and their families, and improve their movement and social skills through different activities.

Strategy

- Interviews to all non-governmental organizations working with people with disabilities.
- Interviews to people with disabilities who benefit from municipal services.
- Design of the park based on the social and sportive activities chosen.
- Start of a 12-months construction phase after the tender and budget process.

Lessons learned and transferability

By establishing this park and providing accessible sports and social activities, the quality of life of people with disabilities and their families has gotten better.

Villa Carlos Paz, Argentina

Accessible and inclusive tourism: Offering city infrastructure and services adapted to the needs of all citizens regardless of whether they have a disability or not.

The city of Villa Carlos Paz, Argentina, is the second most visited tourist destination in the country. Being a city built on mountains, accessibility is often very difficult and in some places impossible. Before 2011, the city was designed only for regular tourism without any kind of adaptation for people with disabilities. In this context, the city wanted to find solutions so that people with disabilities and their families could feel comfortable when choosing to spend their holidays in the city.

The use of public policies on accessibility started in 2011. The main objective was to make reasonable adjustments in those situations that could not be changed from the start and to ensure that the new buildings and spaces had an accessibility perspective from the beginning.
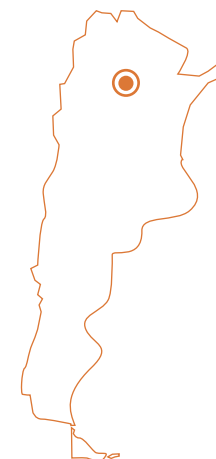
Different rules were made that required the private sector, especially hotels, restaurants and recreation spaces, to include accessibility by providing accessible rooms, ramps, bathrooms, menus in Braille, and authorization to enter with guide dogs. In this sense, the biggest challenge was for the private sector to understand this new model of inclusive tourism.

As for public spaces, the municipal government started working on the recovery of squares and green spaces and adapting them with games for children with disabilities. Another measure put in place was the training of the staff of the Secretariat of Tourism in the proper treatment of tourists with disabilities.

In summary

Challenge

Overcome the structural barriers due to the geography of the territory by offering infrastructure and services adapted to the needs of all tourists, both national and international, regardless of whether they have a disability or not.

Strategy

- Projects carried out by the Secretariat of Tourism in coordination with the Subdirection of Disability, which addresses the concerns that neighbors and tourists bring to its offices.
- Survey to assess the situation of the hotel, restaurant, commercial and cultural sectors in terms of accessibility.
- Rules issued to adapt all these public and private spaces.
- Training courses on the proper treatment of people with disabilities and on Argentine Sign Language for public and private agents involved in tourist activities.

Lessons learned and transferability

Tourism must be redesigned to make it inclusive and accessible for everyone, especially in those cities that rely on tourism as their main economic activity.

Lisbon, Portugal

How better urban planning can improve gender equality

The city of Lisbon is 100 square kilometers and has a population of 545 000 people, with its metropolitan area having approximately 2.8 million people. In 2017, the Division of Pedestrian Accessibility of the Lisbon City Council started a research project on the "Safety and Perception of Safety of Women in Public Spaces and Access to Public Transport". The method used was defined by seven main themes: accessibility, convenience, sexual harassment, costs, road safety, social dimensions, personal safety.

Bairro Padre Cruz, a low income, social housing neighborhood at the edge of the city borders, was the area selected to start the field research and pilot infrastructure changes at the local level. Many women in this neighborhood are shift workers or have jobs that require traveling late at night or in the early hours of the morning, which also require access to the bus services at these times. Bairro Padre Cruz also has limited services and shopping options, which forces many residents to travel to nearby neighborhoods for their necessary daily errands and weekly food shopping.

After drafting the method, team members from the Division of Pedestrian Accessibility met with representatives from local organizations to present the project, get feedback, and ask for suggestions on how to better involve participants. The data collection was based on information from different sources, coming from both desk research (geo-referenced and socio-demographic data) and field research (survey, focus groups and interviews to participants from four age groups and occupations), with the support of local stakeholders at every step of the project.

In 2019, after the data was collected and the results presented, two main areas were selected within the neighborhood in order to change the location of the bus terminal from an out of the way area to be near the central street, to create new bus stops closer to the school, and to make more space for walking. The team also worked fully with CARRIS, the municipal bus company, because some of the solutions required the changes of routes of bus lines and infrastructure.

This initiative is part of the SUNRISE CIVITAS H2020 Project, who provided technical support, training resources, and helped engage with other cities working on the co-creation of sustainable urban mobility at local level.

Learn more about the <u>Bairro Padre Cruz case study</u>!

In summary

Challenge

To understand the safety and accessibility challenges for women and girls in using public space and public transport, and to implement pilot changes in the selected area of the Bairro Padre Cruz neighborhood.

Strategy

- 2 years of data collection by the Division for Pedestrian Accessibility, combining desk and field research in Bairro Padre Cruz
- Meetings with representatives from local organizations and the municipal bus company.
- Priority areas selected for pilot infrastructural changes in Bairro Padre Cruz based on the results of the research.
- Final designs and plans ready to be approved by the City Council for the budget.

Lessons learned and transferability

- The seven key themess are a very useful framework for any similar research or work on this topic.
- Having the support and engagement of local associations and CARRIS from the very start was a huge success factor for the whole process, including for the recruitment of participants.

Banjarmasin, Indonesia

Banjarmasin Inclusive City Movement: A multi-stakeholder initiative to promote social inclusion through participatory data collection, placemaking, and community participation
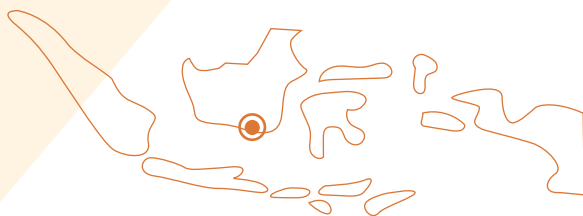
Banjarmasin is a growing city in the South Kalimantan province of Indonesia that's home to more than 700 000 residents, with around 3,897 persons with disabilities. The City of Banjarmasin has continuously claimed their promise to create an inclusive city, through making local policies and regulations to promote social inclusion, participating in international initiatives such as the Network of Mayors for Inclusive Cities program, and making visible access changes along the main roads.

Although there have been good local government actions and civil society advocacy, basic disability rights remained largely out of focus and continue to be a great challenge. That's why the Banjarmasin Inclusive City Movement was launched. Using a participatory process and multi-stakeholder engagements, its goal is to reduce the lack of city's disability data and improve evidence-based governance through a strong data system, to show the role and benefits of participatory approaches to government officials by sharing a participatory approach to the design of public spaces that includes persons with disabilities in the process and strengthening persons with disabilities and local Organizations of Persons with Disabilities.

The Banjarmasin Inclusive City Movement is made up of three main points that have been put into practice between 2018 and 2022. First of all, a group of volunteers led a participatory data collection process to record the number of persons with disabilities, and to map out their locations and needs. Secondly, building on this data and several co-design workshops, the Movement led to the application of four inclusive school zones. It first started with one pilot site in the Gadang neighborhood, which later led to its reproduction in three sites by the Banjarmasin Transportation Agency and the construction of inclusive public spaces in Pelambuan and Kelayan Barat neighborhoods (that is on-going). Finally, a three-wheeled motorbike model was developed to provide accessible rides for persons with disabilities.

The Movement is led by the Kota Kita Foundation, an NGO based in Solo (Indonesia) with expertise in urban planning and citizen participation in the design and development of cities. It has been supported by multiple international donors, including UNESCO, GIZ, ADB, Global Disability Innovation Hub, and University College of London, and implemented in collaboration with the City Government of Banjarmasin, experts, CSOs, universities, and local partners in Banjarmasin and other cities in Indonesia.

Learn more about the Banjarmasin Inclusive City Movement case study!

In summary

Challenge

Accessible public space and inclusive policy implementation remain a challenge due to the absence of disaggregated city-level disability data, limited knowledge and perceptions of inclusive principles among stakeholders, and lack of meaningful participation by persons with disabilities.

Strategy

- Participatory data collection for a disability-inclusive city.
- Inclusive design and placemaking.
- Inclusive mobility through prototype making of accessible rides.

Lessons learned and transferability

- Data must be collected, contextualized and transformed into actionable insights in order to build an inclusive city.
- Accessibility needs to be well planned to encourage social mobility, which in turn benefits the economy as it opens up interaction amongst citizens and economic activities.
- A participatory approach must be used to make sure all voices are heard in decision-making processes.
- Coordinated strategies and strong leadership from LRGs are key components to ensure an inclusive planning, design, and implementation at all levels.

La Paz, Bolivia

The EBAU Plan: An inclusive perspective in the delivery of works, services and activities carried out by the Autonomous Municipal Government of La Paz
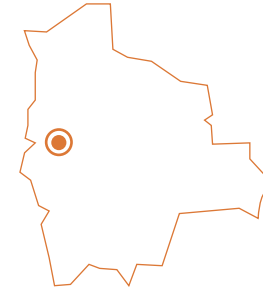
With an estimated population of 816.044 (2020) and at an average altitude of 3650 meters above sea level, La Paz is the highest city in the world. Its uneven form makes La Paz a city that is difficult to access for people with disabilities. Furthermore, in 2015, an analysis of the situation in the Municipal Autonomous Government of La Paz (GAMLP) in terms of inclusion and elimination of architectural barriers showed that:

- 8% of the executive and technical team did not know the rules related to this issue
- there was no specific law in the municipality for universal accessibility
- GAMLP services were still not accessible or not very inclusive
- GAMLP units did not have accessible information signage.

The Intersectoral Committee for Universal Accessibility, which is made up of representatives from municipal authorities and people from the community who have disabilities, designed and executed the EBAU Plan. The EBAU Plan's main goal was to continuously make sure that architectural and urban barriers are removed (the acronym EBAU from Spanish "Eliminación de Barreras Arquitectónicas y Urbanas").

Specifically, the EBAU Plan aimed to put into place a training program for the organizational units of GAMLP on the treatment of people with disabilities and current rules on disability, to improve the city's transportation service. Through better city transportation, GAMLP hoped to ensure full accessibility and to remove communication barriers in points of care, among other areas. Its design was based on the principles and values of non-discrimination, accessibility, reasonable adaptations, progressiveness, gender complementarity, plurality and diversity, inclusive dialogue and transversality.

As a result, the issue of accessibility was included in the city's agenda, to the benefit of 16,000 people with disabilities and more than 90,000 older adults living in La Paz. Moreover, a commitment was made to work on drafting a new Universal Accessibility Law to present to the city Council.

On November 10, 2019, after three weeks of civil protests following the questionable general election, there was a political and social crisis in Bolivia. By the time the crisis became stable, COVID-19 was impacting the country and citizens were in quarantine for months. This affected the execution of the EBAU Plan because the priorities of government at all levels had changed. Finally, in 2022 an election was held, and a new administration took office. Policies and programmes to support people with disabilities are not among the priorities of the new administration and the EBAU Plan is not currently being worked on.

Learn more about the !

In summary

Challenge
Remove architectural barriers in buildings and spaces under construction, provide greater accessibility to city's citizen services by using universal accessibility criteria, and improve the lack of knowledge regarding disability and accessibility.

Strategy
- Establishment of the Intersectoral Committee for Universal Accessibility for the design of the EBAU Plan.
- Presentation of the EBAU Plan to the media and citizens.
- Workshops held on current disability regulations, and on the appropriate treatment of people with disabilities within the GAMLP.
- Drafting of a new municipal law on universal accessibility to present it to the Council.

Lessons learned and transferability
- Continuous awareness-raising campaigns and courses on disability and accessibility issues must be offered for both local authorities and the general population.
- People with disabilities should take part in the decision-making, design and management of disability policies and programs, which need to be independent of who's ruling the municipality to ensure their continuity.

Santa Fe, Argentina

Generating an accessible communication channel in Argentine Sign Language to remove barriers to communication.
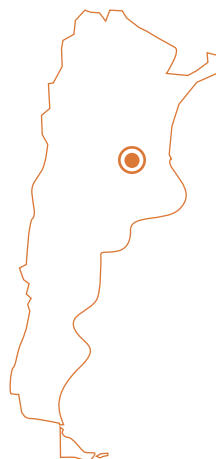
Communication and access to information is a right of all citizens. However, there are people who find this access not possible because of the ways they communicate, share or give information in the community. Historically, the deaf community has been left out of common communication channels. This situation became even more important during the COVID-19 lockdown, when many women with hearing loss went through different situations of violence because of isolation caused by the lack of accessible communication tools that would help them to make complaints or consultations.

"...most deaf people have always had difficulties in relation to information due to lack of accessibility or lack of sign language interpreters", says one of the young women taking part in the training.

For this reason, Santa Fe started a process to remove barriers and promote new practices aimed at giving more access to those citizens whose rights are ignored every day. One of these initiatives is the Module of Attention and Guidance in Argentine Sign Language (LSA, from the Spanish "Lengua de Señas Argentina"), which was established in 2020 within the department of Citizen Attention, Communication and Community Relations.

The Module was initially set up for those women who needed quick and effective support from the city to face situations of violence. However, since the demands were not only about violence, the proposal quickly became more complex and broadened the field of support. This created the need to connect with different municipal departments, stations and district centers. Today, the number of requests has reached a total of 70 requests.

The project was done together with the National Ministry of Labor and presented to the national funding program "Promover Línea II – Entrenamiento para el Trabajo". The project had the goal of helping people with disabilities to build or update their training and occupation, develop paths for work, to complete formal education, in academic experiences or training for work, in the generation of productive activities alone and/or to be hired for quality jobs. The project calls attention to persons with disabilities as active members of society that can equally perform in a competitive work environment if their right to accessibility, both communicational and non-communicational, is made real. This participation benefits all of us as a society and results in the strengthening of democracy.

In summary

Challenge

Ensure accessibility to communication for everyone in order to promote the participation and advocacy capacity of people with disabilities.

Strategy

- Public and open call prepared together with the Directorate of Citizen Attention, Communication and Community Relations to fill the position of Citizen Service in LSA, and presented to educational institutions and NGOs that work with deaf people for the selection of two deaf women for a one-year period of work.

- Promotion of the Module through videos in LSA in different social networks.

- Guides for museums and touristic sites recorded in LSA, and menus of bars and restaurants made accessible.

Lessons learned and transferability

Use of new technologies to ensure communicational accessibility to everyone.
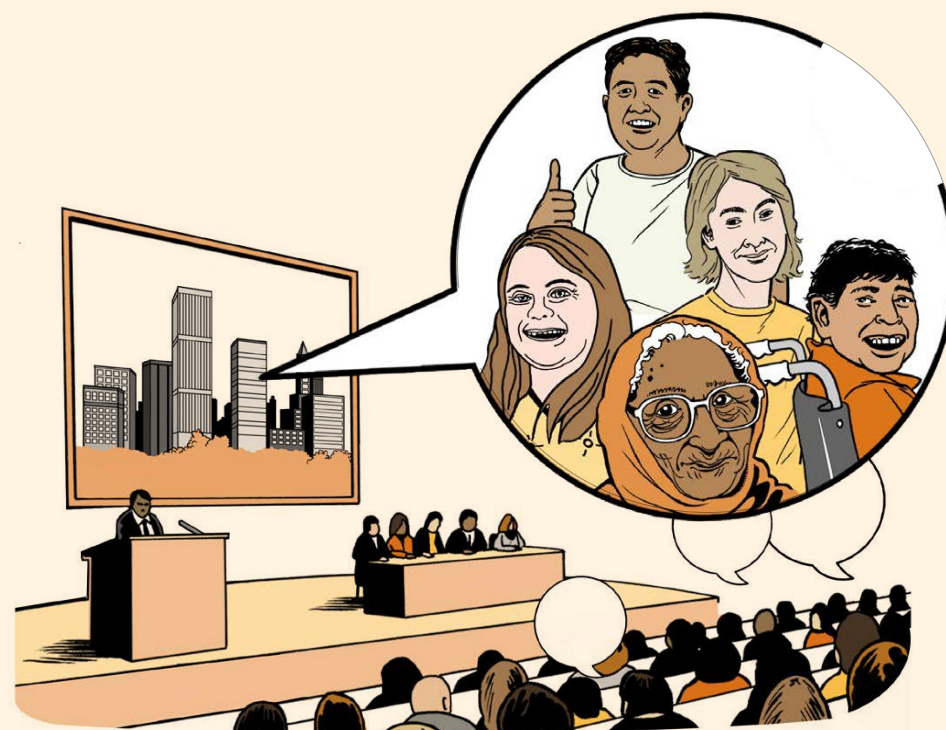
Conclusions
Key Learnings & Way forward

The Building Cities for All peer learning series brought together different city representatives from around the world to take a look at how the principles of the Global Compact on Inclusive and Accessible Cities and human rights could be made real at the local level.
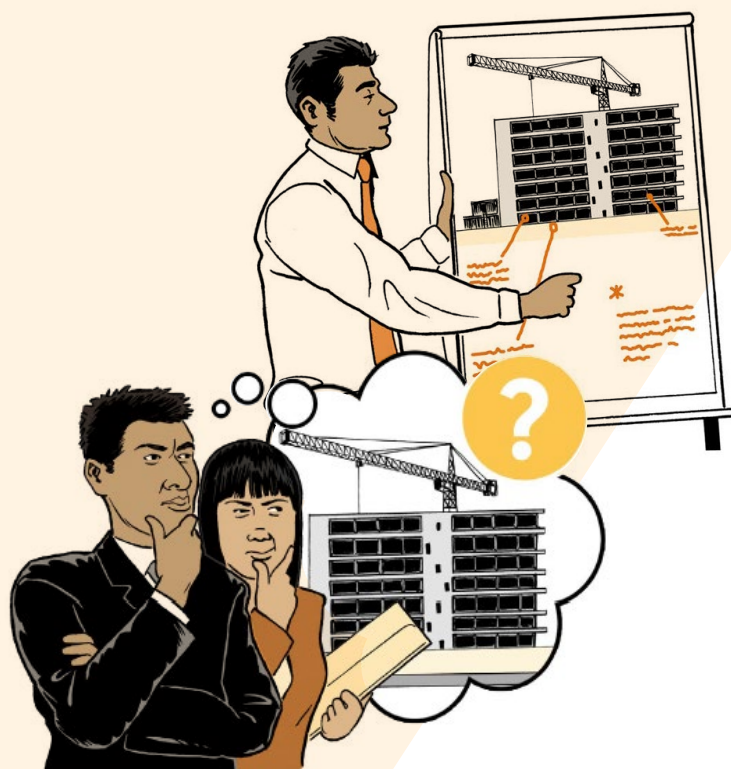
Important reflections from the discussions included:

- Need for to improve knowledge on accessibility and universal design of city departments and the community through accessible awareness raising campaigns

- Need to create and improve local understanding and data groups in the community that are left out because of inaccessibility of physical, digital and social public spaces and services. Groups included persons with disabilities, older persons and migrants.

- Need for mayors to encourage more communication between departments so that accessibility and universal design become central topics in different programs and services.

- Need for more training and tools on how to implement the principles of the Global Compact, especially principle 6 on Data for Development

- Importance of having better local data on accessibility, as well as on persons with disabilities and older persons, to make the case for accessibility to be central part public planning, services and budgets.

- Need for better partnerships and real conversations between local and governments, civil society, private sector, universities, international organizations.

To build on this training, it is clear from the discussions that cities have an important role to play to make human rights real at the local level but to exercise their role - long lasting partnerships between different organizations and levels of government are needed to find answers, turn ideas into action and build trust with the community. The principles of the Global Compact are an important guide to make these partnerships. To build back better, **the future must be accessible**.

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