

Design For All

Accessible Tourism in Portugal



Chairman's Desk:



Dr. Sunil Bhatia

Displaced attention is crucial point for designers and its ignoring has already cost a lot and I believe it has not got that proper attention what it is supposed to be. Why are designers ignoring this crucial area of design is mystery. Many lives have been sacrificed because designers have not paid attention since defective design was the reason of many minor and major incidents. Everyone in life experience displaced attention on many occasions but never give proper thought to this phenomenon. I am narrating my experience of displaced attention. One day I visited my friend's house and he came out of the house to see off. We were talking standing at the end of his residence lane and his young son was coming out of the lane. My friend was feeling sorry that I could not meet his son. He noticed that his son was coming toward us and out of excitement he informed his arrival "Look my son is coming". I failed to notice his presence close to me because my mind was occupied with thoughts we were discussing and I was under influence of that. I was looking at the entrance of the lane where my mind was directing but in reality he was nearly out of the lane. My mind was mapped with what I was expecting and my sight was under the control of mind and it was following its direction. I failed in locating his coming son toward me because I was suffering with displaced attention. I inquired "where is your son?" He said "He is approaching close to you". He taunted me "I believe your eye sight is weak". I realized I was victim of "inattentive blindness". An author has defined this phenomenon like this. We only perceive that to which we attend. This upshot gives rise to what we call the paradox of perceptual attention: to see details in the environment, we must direct our attention to it. But how can we direct our attention to an unperceived feature of the scene? Surely in order to direct our attention, we must perceive that to which we wish to direct

our attention. This paradox would seem to threaten the very possibility of perceptual awareness.

There is another personal example relating to my cycling for reaching institute and mind was occupied with some urgent pending tasks that need my immediate attention. I was worried “Failing may invite huge losses”. I was peddling in mechanical way because of demand of bicycle for its motion but mind was occupied with something else. All of a sudden, I realized a speeding vehicle was stopped with screeching sound. I also applied sudden brake as I woke up from some dream. It was my reflex actions that averted the accident. That vehicle owner was shouting & abusing me. I was calming down to normalcy from sudden shock. It was not the case of carelessness but displaced attention. “Why our designer do not use the reflex actions of human body for averting accidents because of displaced attention”. There are many real stories relating to accidents of industrial workers when they are injured or lose their hands or say some body parts and spending their lives at the mercy of others. They were not born disabled but they are disabled because they are victims of industrialization. We will find sympathizers expressing their feelings by saying he is victim of industrialization. It is the hunger that forces everyone to work under such hazardous environments. Industrial owner might get rid with this problem by saying “It is your carelessness”. Government will be busy in framing new rules for compensation of losses and executive, judiciary is busy in analyzing justice in disbursement of financial assistance according to rules. Worker thinks it was his destiny, it was wish of God and he is suffering because of his past sins. But real fault lies somewhere else. It is simple designing fault and designers have not done their jobs with complete honesty and they are real cause of triggering of many accidents. Designer fails to imagine while designing the products/services about human weakness because of displaced attention and that lead to such accidents. Irony is designer does not come into picture of accusation of centuries old problem and it is remain the same what it was at the beginning.

When child is not sleeping, mother sings by its side and she softly strikes with her palm over child’s forehead. Child gets bored out of this singing as well as striking with her palm and fails to stop her for doing and to come out

of mother's actions, child slips to sleep. I have noticed in metro train a child was insisting of specific things of their choice and mother was unable to provide. She was busy in diverting his attention by saying father is calling you from platform. "Oh! Look train door is close. How your father will come?" She again spoke "Look at the hanging handle bar in metro". These acts are nothing but creating displaced attention for controlling getting worse situations. A young man expresses his intention to a woman of his choice by staring. As she notices his stare she starts correcting his dress or locks that are covering her face. These acts are nothing but act of displaced attention to avoid her embarrassment caused by young man in public place or her inner feelings should not be known to him. An example of a displaced emotion is when a wife, who is frustrated with her husband's lack of ambition, puts extreme pressure on her children to overachieve. Another example is when a teenager worried about his grades comes home and lashes out at his sister. Pickpocket is performed when person is attention is displaced for a moment from his carrying asset. I admire their art. How these people learn this art target person attention is somewhere else and that very moment they pickpocket. Another class is of politicians. They are masters in art of displaced attention and no one can judge what they speak and what they mean. Even they trigger violence and real issue will be lost in this background.

I have noticed that magician playing tricks by displacing our attention to some other insignificant area of the game and he executes silently what he wishes without giving any slightest notice to masses. He uses displaced attention for performing his tricks. We call it illusionist and admire what they show us. What he plays is not reality but it does not appear virtual also. Magicians are aware in their trick what are the common areas where masses can be fooled by diverting their attentions in particular game. Are they aware or they know what are the common mistakes a person can commits when he loses his attention or where displaced attention lies in his tricks? We should learn from magicians about displaced attention. Why do designer never perform as magicians and can visualize these areas where displaced attention may appear and it may invite such accidents. It is not true all the time that designers have ignored about this concept. They are practicing in their design. A locomotive driver of rail engine needs constant attention to

avert accidents because rail coaches are transporting many lives. To keep the driver attentive they have introduced a lever that requires constant tapping from leg. If driver misses few seconds of tapping the rail engine automatically stops and helps in averting any danger. In medicine we are using displaced attention. Someone experience headache and he applies balm over his forehead and this act is nothing but it generate irritation in applied area of the forehead and person mind focus shifted on that irritation and gradually forgets about his persistent headache. When nurse administers the injection on patient she applies the spirit as cleanser that cleans the area to avoid any infection and also evaporation works as local anesthesia and person do not feel piercing what he would feel without displaced attention. As irritations disappears mind also forgets the pain of headache. Coughing can be used to attract attention, release internal psychological tension, or become a maladaptive displacement behavior or it reminds other that you are doing mistake and our coughing displaced his attention to other possibilities for correction.

This is very common phenomena with every common person that his mind is thinking or occupied or mind's memory was loaded with program and could not wipe for new program and continued to influence the next program. It might be when he informed about his son my mind was occupied with my earlier notion that he might be at the beginning of the lane and refused to see other possibilities. It is momentary but has great impact on users. Our designers while designing the products/services should incorporate such habits of human mind otherwise ignore may invite great tragedy.

Forgetfulness is another crucial activity of human mind and it may invite great tragedy. A industrial labor forgets to feed next level of material in time for manufacturing finished goods, it may lead to damage of the half finish products or may invite an incidence that may damage the human body parts. I do not know why our mind forgets in spite of our all attentions. I remember I forgot where I have kept my bunch of keys .I tried to recall but it was no use. I thought I should not think about keys and after few months I recalled that I have kept it that place. I found keys were lying there. It is still mystery for us why our memory goes blank for some duration and again restarts in its own way. I'm constantly getting to the cupboard only to realize I have no idea what

I was looking for in the first place. Rest assured, forgetfulness is normal and experienced by young and old alike. This blankness is real worry for designer because it may invite any danger. Some designer get rid of this problem by saying it is “Brain freeze” and no designer can do anything with type of this problem. It may be sleep deprived, eating poorly or not getting enough exercise to support good memory health or it is more likely to experience physical and emotional disorders that are responsible for such conditions. A good designer is attempting to attack this problem by designing other features. They have designed key ring with electronic beep and remote control. By pressing remote control button lost key ring can be traced with sound beep. Even mobile phone can be traced by using the dial tone. In automobile we use horn to divert the displaced attention and it reminds what a sensible driver is supposed to do while driving. It is just beginning.

Displaced attention or forgetfulness or temporary memory loss are significant role in designing but we mostly ignore these factors while designing and we invite serious injuries or tragedy for humans. We introduce various controls when subsystems fail to take proper interface with other system but we ignore role of different levels of attention where the manual work is demanded to function the system. We always believe that user is absolutely working with attentive mind and if follows our guidelines less chances are to meet with untoward incidence and ignore the remotest possibilities. What is attention? Once we know the psychology of attention then only we can understand about displaced attention. The use of “attention” in the psychological literature also is problematic, because it is often used to refer to tasks that require attention, as opposed to the processes of attention. Task-defined attention does not explain the mechanisms or processes that permit the selection to occur. High-level vision involves processes such as object recognition, selective attention, and visuomotor action, at the interface of perception and cognition. Attention is a set of processes that allows selection of some stimuli over others and performance of multiple tasks in a coordinated manner. William James has defined attention as involving where he described “withdrawal from some things in order to deal effectively with others”. He further added attention restricts processing to some items over others and allows the attended items to become more salient, or enhanced, relative to unattended items. He relied on a process-oriented definition of

attention and considers mechanisms that allow observers to select one spatial location over other locations.

I am thankful to Ana Garcia who has given us new dimension of accessibility of Portugal and this simple concept has revolutionized the area of tourism. Those who wished to visit Portugal they must read this issue before visiting Portugal.

With Regards

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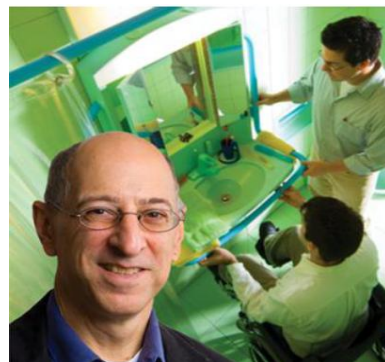
November 2012 Vol-7 No-11

Josyane Franc Director of International Affairs Cite du Design & Saint- Etienne School of Art & Design (ESADSE) since 1989. She has accepted our invitation as Guest Editor for special issue on designers from France.



December 2012 Vol-7 No-12

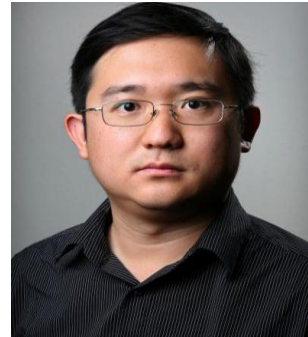
Edward Steinfeld, Arch. D., AIA , Professor of Architecture and Director Center for Inclusive Design and Environmental Access School of Architecture and Planning University at Buffalo, State University of New York will be the Guest Editor of December 2012 Vol-7 No-12.



A year 2013 dedicated to young designers

May 2013 Vol-8 No-5

Dr. Kenneth Joh is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning at Texas A&M University, Program Coordinator of the Graduate Certificate Program in Transportation Planning, and an Assistant Research Scientist at the Texas Transportation Institute. He will be the Guest Editor of this special issue.



July 2013 Vol-8 No-7

Christian Guellerin is president of Cumulus, the International Association of Universities and Schools of Design, Art and Media since 2007. The organization counts 178 establishments in 44 countries. He is also the executive director of the Ecole de design Nantes Atlantique, which trains professionals to create and innovate for socio-economic development, with an interface between technology, economics, and the sciences. Today they're expanding to China and India. He writes on design and pedagogy. He will act as philosopher & guide for this special issue and students of different streams will participate in this special issue.



August 2013 Vol-8 No-8

Dr. Antika Sawadsri PhD in Architecture, Planning and Landscape University of Newcastle upon Tyne, UK. Lecturer, School of Interior-Architectural Design (2004-present) Faculty of Architecture King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang (KMITL) Thailand will supervise this special issue of student designers.



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GUEST EDITOR:

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This is a special issue that will be led by Guest editor Ms. Ana Maria Marquis Garcia Rodrigues who holds a Business Management degree. Since 2008, she is the Managing Partner of Accessible Portugal, a Portuguese tourism company founded in 2005 and focused on people with special needs, their families and friends. Accessible Portugal has been talking with major players in the field, spreading good policies and practices and suggesting reasonable changes which would benefit all in their places or projects.



Accessible Tourism in Portugal

Accessible Tourism (AT) involves the provision of services and products enabling people with disabilities to enjoy tourism experiences with equity and dignity. The concept, however, remains poorly defined in the literature and it is certainly an underdeveloped field of investigation. In Portugal, AT is perceived as a marginal theme within Tourism studies and an extra burden for tourism entrepreneurs, there is little knowledge about the real economic impact of these initiatives, or the actual needs and preferences of its clientele. Hence, the strategic value associated with AT remains largely untapped. While AT as a rights issue for persons with disabilities is a vital perspective in a democratic society, the economic worth of this market should not be underrated, given its relevance not just to persons with disabilities (who according to UN estimates represent 10% of the world population and tend not to travel alone) but also to a growing senior population. The long-term vigour of the Tourism sector will depend on its ability to address the needs of this rapidly expanding market. Tourism is a determinant sector within the Portuguese economy and therefore the nation cannot afford to risk its sustainability by ignoring AT.

Accessible Tourism has been defined by one of the most recognized experts in the field as “a process of enabling people with disabilities and seniors to

function independently and with equity and dignity through the delivery of universal tourism products, services and environments” (Darcy, 2009). Nevertheless, the concept remains poorly addressed by the academia, internationally (Buhalis and Darcy, 2011; Yau *et al.*, 2004) and particularly in Portugal (Devile, 2009). In spite of the social and economic relevance of the topic, largely recognized in key documents of both national and international agencies (ENAT, 2007; UN, 2008; WHO, 2007; WTO, 2010) it is still hard to identify a body of experts working specifically on this theme. It is vital to bring together those who have an interest in Tourism with those who came to this topic from a Disability perspective (Buhalis and Darcy, 2011; Cole and Morgan, 2010).

Tourism itself is a poorly defined concept (Butler, 2004; Hall, 2007), given its inherent complexity and relative youth, drawing from a diversity of perspectives: culture and society versus economy; supply versus demand; private and personal interests versus public interest (Buhalis and Costa, 2006; Quintana, 2006; Uriely, 2005). These considerations about Tourism in general apply entirely to AT, since this is no more than an alternative, holistic and integral way of conceiving touristic supply (Buhalis and Darcy, 2011; Cole and Morgan, 2010). In reality, the specific topic of AT, if anything, adds another layer of complexity and youth to analyses of Tourism, representing a knowledge gap that urgently needs to be filled: The first temptation is to think about physical accessibility, and within this, to focus on efforts to facilitate mobility for wheelchair users; when, in fact, AT goes much beyond ramps, as it addresses the needs emerging from a variety of impairments (EC and Westcott, 2004). Infrastructures and equipments are critical but adequacy of service provision is as well (Buhalis and Darcy, 2011; Yau *et al.*, 2009); Tourism (whether Accessible or not) does not end with the provision of tourism facilities but requires an understanding of the concept involving other aspects, spaces and actors – e.g. transportation services, public spaces, concert rooms, exhibition places, etc. (Jansen-Verbecke, 2009); AT applies to other target groups such as seniors or those in convalescence (the relationship between Health/Rehabilitation and Tourism is a growing reality) which enlarges considerably the applicability of the concept of AT (Moschis, 2000; WHO, 2007); AT as a rights issue for persons with disabilities is a fair and necessary perspective in societies around the globe

(UNCRPD, 2006; Richards *et al.*, 2010; Freeman and Selmi, 2010; Darcy and Taylor, 2009), but the economic value of this market should not be underestimated, given that people with disabilities usually do not travel alone, and the fact that the satisfaction of their needs often constitutes the key driver of decisions within the larger group they travel with (Packer and Carter, 2005).

The recognition of the economic and strategic value of AT is based upon several aspects, starting with the breadth of this market and the specificities of its consumers - tourists with disabilities tend to generate higher consumption within the facilities in which they are staying (Darcy *et al.*, 2010) and may prefer to travel during low-season. However, the lack of information available about the economic added-value of this market hinders the recognition of its importance and works against its development (Buhalis *et al.*, 2005).

It is anticipated that, just as with the rising awareness of environmental considerations, the market will become more demanding and intolerant of the negative discrimination of this group of clients: from being viewed as a difficulty and a cost, it may be expected that, in time, AT will become a social requirement and then a marketing strategy. Society will not allow that people with disabilities are excluded from the world of Tourism which also includes their participation in the labour market (Buhalis and Darcy, 2011; Cole and Morgan, 2010). The lack of knowledge has hindered the dissemination of these ideas and has obstructed the view that it is not expensive, not difficult, and certainly not demeaning to the image of any tourism facility to provide accessibility, especially if the best practices of Design for All are incorporated and the service is adequate. On the contrary, it can improve the global functionality of the facility with advantages for many, a reality which is far from being achieved currently (HREOC, 2007).

Beyond an understanding of AT and its prospective vision, it is important to reflect upon the implementation of this concept, a dimension even less developed in the literature and on the ground: what structure and management model should an accessible destination present? (City of Sydney, 2007; Darcy *et al.*, 2010).

Finally, AT is crucial for the concept and practices of sustainability, notably their social and economic pillars not to mention the environmental one (Montes and Aragall, 2009; Sheldon *et al.*, 2005). The long-term vigour of the touristic supply, and the companies involved, depends upon the current and prospective consumer population (their age and physical abilities) who tend to show a preference for low-season travelling. Tourism is a huge sector in Portugal, and as shown in the contributions to this edition, the nation is beginning to take AT seriously as a vital market and component of modern, sustainable tourism.

In this August issue of the Design for All Institute of India, it is our great pleasure to present some cases of good examples that are improving the quality of Accessible Tourism for All in Portugal.

We hope that you will enjoy reading about these innovative practices and research results and we certainly welcome your feedback on the ideas and examples presented here.

**Can we promote Accessible Tourism? Yes, we can.
And we should.**

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Can we promote Accessible Tourism? Yes, we can. And we should.

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Abstract: Accessible tourism nowadays, more than a touristic product or a social cause, is a matter of intelligence given that:

- it emerges from culture, considering culture as an aggregate of knowledge and values that only intelligence can build and enhance;**
- the number of those who need any special attention in order to enjoy tourism experiences is huge, and even greater if we consider their families and other assistants, as well as the millions of seniors who, though not formally disabled may have, due to old age, acquired a set of diseases and impairments;**
- it does not involve special difficulties nor does it require big and disproportionate investments.**

In this paper we state and substantiate that Accessible Tourism is a principle of freedom and democratic maturity, but is also a great economic opportunity.

1. What is Accessible Tourism and what it is not



Figure 1: Hotel Golden Residence – Madeira Island

We must start by saying that Accessible Tourism (AT) is not a tourism product, in the sense that it does not emerge from specific resources or is it

supposed to serve rare and different people. In fact, people with disabilities usually have the same tourism preferences as all others; they are different from common people, they need some adjustments in order to be received as tourists, but aren't we always saying that modern tourism is precisely the understanding and support of difference? (Buhalis and Darcy, 2011) On the other hand, all living people can be healthy today and ill or injured tomorrow, in a temporary or definitive basis; all those who are fortunate enough to get older will also increase their chances of acquiring certain disabilities, at least those that are appropriate to aging. So, we can (easily) say (although we seldom do it) that AT is a set of facilities and practices in order to permit or improve the tourism experience for a large spectrum of people (Cole and Morgan, 2010).

AT is a complex reality, with many origins and perspectives. There are a lot of possible impairments, which imply a large set of needed solutions and the mobilisation of a very large network of private and public agents, strictly related to tourism or not. Aircrafts, hotels, restaurants, theatres and museums are obviously examples of everybody's tourism experiences, as well as are streets, undergrounds and buses, gardens and, sometimes, hospitals or police squads. But the complexity of the concept only means the need for a solid organisation and the capacity of good planning; we clearly believe that AT is not a huge difficulty and even less a utopia (Montes and Aragall, 2009; WHO, 2007; Yau, McKercher and Packer, 2004).

Although we intend to point out the economic opportunities and benefits related to this issue, we must and we want to start by claiming that in mature and developed societies AT is (or must be) a social and human rights concern; if we consider democratic access to tourism an important civilization progress, we cannot accept in this process any kind of negative discrimination of any group of people, even less if there are disadvantaged citizens involved (WTO, 2010). But we substantiate that AT is not mandatorily (or even primarily) a cost or a moral or legal obligation; in fact, there are several evidences confirming that AT is really a very interesting economic opportunity, as we will see ahead in this paper.

On the other hand, if there are such evidences of the economic benefits of AT, and if it is a moral and a social requirement, why is it still in a low stage of development? We believe that the problem is a lack of information, because AT is not a recognized difficulty in itself or an expensive solution. Using modern knowledge and technology, including Design for All options, AT is only a different way of doing things (Montes and Aragall, 2009).

In a tourism destination, AT must be a commitment of all the stakeholders, particularly the professionals and including the host population (Packer and Carter, 2004). It should be natural to see disabled people in hotels, both as clients or as professionals. It is absolutely necessary to make people believe in that, including people with disabilities... If this happens, market can be the most powerful changing agent, in a process similar to that the green cause followed: from a tiresome concept, through a good practice challenge, to a marketing winner; from an exotic idea to a market requirement. In a changing process such as this, AT may well be found at the centre of an image statement, both in entrepreneurial and regional approaches: good for the believers and proactive, bad for the non-believers or inactive.

AT is not the future of tourism, but the future of tourism is less promising without AT. We believe that AT is a matter of intelligence, because it synthesizes a culture requirement with an economic opportunity that soon will become inevitable. But we are sure that, at the moment, from a destination manager or a private promoter point of view AT is, at least, an interesting alternative niche.

In this paper, we will continue by discussing the Ethical and Human Rights perspective on Accessible Tourism; we do not permit distractions in our strong conviction concerning the need of such debate. Despite that, and because we believe that the more pragmatic can also find opportunities in AT, the following chapter will be focused in the market and its challenges. Finally, we will point out some practical notes about AT, withdrawn from the Portuguese experience. We regret that the incipient development of AT in Portugal does not allow us to use relevant information, namely quantitative indicators and chronological sequences.

2. An issue of law and citizenship

Until quite recently, disability was predominantly understood as a medical problem, directly caused by disease, accident or a health condition. Presumed unable to meet the standards of normal living, people with disabilities were, therefore, institutionalized and hidden away from a society which saw no real imperative for change. During the 70s, however, disability activists began to challenge such views focusing instead on the disabling society which excludes people with disabilities through barriers and its inability to accommodate different forms of embodiment. This politics of disablement found intellectual expression in the so-called social model of disability (Oliver, 1983). The social model maintains that persons are disabled not by their impairments but by a society that is not organized in ways that address their needs. Hence, what must be fixed and changed is society itself, not the individual with the impairments.

The adoption in 2006 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has brought increased political and economic attention to the plight of persons with disabilities. Leaving behind medicalized perspectives associating disability with medically defined conditions, the new Convention applies the term persons with disabilities to all persons with “long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various attitudinal and environmental barriers, hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others” (UN, 2006). Impairment is seen as part of human diversity but environments are recognized to be either enabling or disabling for some people. In other words, the new understanding that the Disability Convention puts forward stresses the importance of contextual factors, whether physical or attitudinal, in the process of disability creation, while also acknowledging the existence of a variety of bodies and personal factors. More importantly, the Convention sets out full and effective participation as the standard against which institutions, activities and practices are to be evaluated. People with disabilities can thus expect the same right to participate fully in the community and to enjoy the same quality of life as people without disabilities.

Nations around the world have signaled their agreement to this Convention, which has collected an unprecedented number of signatures and ratifications around the globe (UN, 2006). What does this mean for the tourism sector?

According to the Disability Convention, full participation explicitly includes the right to travel and participate in leisure activities. Indeed, Article 30 asserts the right to access all areas of cultural life including that of tourism. This puts tourism operators formally on notice to change their operations in order to guarantee access to tourism goods and services for people with disabilities. Importantly, such human-rights-based initiatives have long been put forward as a significant social force for ensuring the citizenship (Barton, 1993; Bickenback, 2001) of people with disabilities generally and, more particularly, their purposeful engagement in cultural life (Buhalis and Darcy, 2011; Darcy and Taylor, 2009).

Enabling environments should not just ensure access to all; they must also empower people with access requirements to make informed decisions about whether accessible destination experiences are appropriate for their needs. Contrary to what many believe, research has shown that people with disabilities desire to travel, and many do it when their information and access needs are adequately addressed (Packer, MCKercher and Yau, 2007).

The overall aim of the rights-based model, as advanced by the Convention, is to move the whole society to a more positive understanding of disability and a more proactive attitude in changing environments and systems to accommodate human diversity. Over their life span, most people will experience some form of disability, either temporarily or permanently (for example broken limbs, difficult pregnancies, impairments associated with old age). Given this reality, if disability is more commonly recognized and accepted in the way societies build environments, and particularly tourism environments, not just people with disabilities but a wider range of population will benefit - including a growing elder population. The democratization of access to tourism experiences by the population in general achieved by industrialized societies is an unquestionable social gain; we have to think that mature and developed societies are further obliged to

eliminate all forms of negative discrimination. In this sense, accessibility is a crucial citizenship issue that democratic societies must not overlook.

3. The economic perspective of Accessible Tourism

In addition to social reasons, several economic reasons justify AT, but the Tourism Offer side is still not convinced about these advantages. Much has already been discussed about the costs of making the business accessible, but in this paper we intend to address economic advantages from another perspective. The demographics of people with disabilities confirms that this is an interesting and profitable market (Chan, 2010), but this fact is not known or is systematically ignored by the tourism industry.

AT targets a set of consumers with personal limitations who still buy, in most cases, products/services with low quality and not suitable to their needs.

The market for accessible tourism has a growing number of consumers around the world, if we consider issues such as the aging population, greater independence of individuals, and growing motivation to live new experiences. This market segment has over 650 million people with disabilities, which means 10% of the world population (Darcy, 2008).

In the current global context, with high competitiveness, clients are more informed and more demanding, and do not accept improvisation because of their personal conditions. They want (and deserve!) to be well received and to find satisfaction to their needs/desires. In the AT segment the reality is not different.

Some specific characteristics of AT are particularly interesting and should be highlighted to raise awareness amongst the Tourism Offer regarding the economic potential of this market (FMET, 2004; Chan, 2010, DCMS, 2010). We can indicate a set of reasons to support that point of view:

- i) the number of people with some kind of impairment is already huge, nowadays, but it is still growing, namely in the developed countries, which are, at the same time, the most aged and the most important demand markets for international and national tourism;

- ii) whenever a family or a group of friends demanding a tourism experience includes someone with disabilities or impairments, that person most likely will be the centre of the group decisions, which means that the *economic* dimension of this market is much wider than the officially reported¹;
- iii) the number of accessible tourism destinations is still low, which means that the competition within this specific market is less aggressive than in general; in fact, research has shown that a large number of disabled people decide not to travel due to lack of accessible facilities or, in other words, they would travel more frequently if there were more accessible services available (King, 2009);
- iv) people with disabilities and/or impairments (including aged people) are frequently available and more likely to travel during low season;
- v) in average, guests with disabilities stay longer at the holiday destination than other tourists²;
- vi) the concept of accessible tourism and its requirements are also useful to explore markets such of *health tourism*, considering this as the use of a hotel and other tourism accommodation places for ambulatory recovering or treatments;
- vii) sometimes, this kind of tourism can be supported by social funds or personal insurances, widening the economic dimension of the market;
- viii) given the nature of certain impairments, and consequent difficulties in moving around, these clients are more likely to stay and spend within the tourism unit;

¹ DCMS (2010), in a study conducted for the London Paralympic Games 2012, states that disabled people tend not to travel alone and are often accompanied by carers, family or friends, with more than 50 per cent traveling with a partner, 20 per cent with a child, and 21-25 per cent with an assistant, which actually impacts on occupancy rates and spending.

² 25% more, according to DCMS (2010).

- ix) when they feel their needs are adequately addressed, these clients tend to be more loyal to their holiday destinations and facilities.

Darcy and others (2008) estimate that 7-8% of international travelers have some limitation. In 2010, tourism reached a turnover of 935 million people worldwide (WTO, 2011), which allows to estimate that the number of tourists in this segment was somewhere between 65 to 75 million. Considering that these tourists tend to travel accompanied, these figures may still increase significantly. The research developed by Legacies Now (2010) with the aim of understanding the market for accessible tourism, pointed that only 29% of disabled tourists travel alone. Thus, in a market with an estimated average of 70 million people, this slice of the market can easily involve 120 million people. Additionally, if in 2009 international tourism generated 611.000.000€ in export earnings, an estimated 78.400.000€ was brought in from this particular segment (WTO, 2011). These numbers provide an idea of the size and importance of the AT market.

As well observed by Catena and others (2004), within the accessible tourism sector, customer satisfaction is even more fundamental than for regular customers, which transforms this element into a powerful promotional vehicle. Indeed, satisfied AT customers have greater chance to return and become loyal customers than all other costumers, due to the difficulties in finding a suitable offer. Therefore, they normally prefer to return to the resorts and facilities where they have been well treated rather than risk new experiences.

In the future, we believe that accessibility issues will not just constitute a differential on the positive side. In fact, most business/destinations will be naturally ready for this new reality, which means that the unprepared will be remembered in a negative perspective, considered as a product with low quality or even not committed to social sustainability. The reality is that “an accessible built environment is a crucial requirement for around 10% of the population, a necessity for 30 to 40% and comfortable for 100%”³.

³ FMET - Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology, Economic Impulses of Accessible Tourism for all. (Berlin: FMET, 2004), 13.

For these reasons, building a strong business positioning or a global tourism destination based upon the concept of accessibility offers a competitive advantage both in the short and the medium terms. This is the time. Being able to attract and satisfy customers with disabilities can in fact result in true loyalty, a profitable characteristic of this segment. While these clients represent a segment economically advantageous in the short and medium term, in the long term, the AT segment will be determinant to both the business image and the success of the tourism industry.

4. Accessible Tourism in Portugal: lessons learned

Accessible Tourism is only beginning to become a reality in Portugal. Given the natural and historic resources of the country, tourism in general has been defined as a strategic sector for the Portuguese economy. However, it is recognized that the country needs to do more to increase quality offer (Turismo de Portugal, 2007). Accessible Tourism can well fit into this description. Significant strides forward are being made in this area but many opportunities remain to be explored. Therefore, it is important to examine the examples already in place to gather useful knowledge about what works and what does not work when it comes to consider accessibility in tourism destination and facilities. In this final section we highlight three major lessons learned from the early Portuguese experience with Accessible Tourism, as a way to guide future entrepreneurs interested in this sector.

First lesson: keep it simple!

Despite the advantages that setting up an accessible tourism offer would provide, accessible rooms in most hotels and touristic resorts are currently scarce and typically badly adapted. This means they do not meet the needs of their users, and often are closer to a physiotherapy or hospital ward than to a pleasant and cozy hotel room. They are over equipped, with bars and other steel equipments that are ugly and unpleasant. Consequently, these rooms are not sold by the hotel to clients that do not need these adaptations. We are talking about accommodation for clients, not for patients.

And this is unnecessary. Today, there are a variety of solutions based on the notion of “Design for All”, inspired by adjustable concepts, according to the

needs of each client. As an example, we can mention the removable or embedded bars, allowing for more free space where a technical equipment (e.g. a bath chair), can be placed to suit the needs of a specific client. This equipment is removed once the client vacates the room. Moreover, these technical aids can be rented or be part of the hotel assets, similar to the cots for babies.

These solutions are also an appropriate way of dealing with the difficulties of selling adapted rooms to customers without disabilities, and provide an opportunity to receive large groups of people with disabilities, which remains today very challenging in the tourism market.



Figures 2, 3 and 4: Portuguese hotels: examples of bad and good practices in adapted rooms



Figure 5 and 6: Hotel Riverside, Portimão, Algarve⁴: clean bathrooms, with a roll-in shower and the help of a bath chair

⁴ Riverside is a new 4* Hotel with 136 rooms, 5 of them adapted with bars and all the others prepared to receive the major part of disabled guests. Accessibility is one of the key concerns of the Hotel and one of its marketing strategies.



Figure 7 and 8: Hotel Riverside, Portimão, Algarve:
it is very important that all facilities in the hotel or resort,
like swimming pools, are also accessible to all clients

Second lesson: AT provides for smart use of tourism environments!

Groups that include people with disabilities have usually more monitors around during the practice of activities. Thus, the occurrence of accidents, as well as the destruction and vandalism of spaces, equipments and toys is significantly lower (Darcy et al, 2010). Camping Serpins (Lousã, Portugal) is a good example of this. This park was one of the first to offer accessible activities in Portugal. The operator of the park is now very motivated to receive groups that include children and youth with disabilities. He acknowledges that, since he started adapting his offer to this group, he has attracted not just a loyal clientele, given the lack of competitive qualified offer, but the safe profitability return of the services he now sells (personal communication, January 2011). An environment and staff prepared to the needs of persons with disabilities will be ready to welcome a range of clients with greater efficiency and quality.

In animation activities, namely those involving adventure, the large majority of accidents occur due to the amateurism, lack of professional skills and lack of licenses of people who perform and monitor them. When one is dealing with a client that has physical, sensorial or cognitive impairments, there cannot be risks; these have to be reduced to the maximum. The preparation of the activity will be carefully executed without skipping security steps. With this

extra caution, the possibility of accidents is significantly reduced and this practice is encouraged for people who apparently do not have impairments, only lack an adventurous spirit. Seeing a person with disabilities practicing activities and seeing all the care and preparation involved (in some cases special equipments are used) is a motivation and there are many people who decide to take the experience too, because they feel it is safe. Upgrading technical adjustments and safety procedures thinking about the needs of disabled people is also a good guide for the everyday work of such companies and their staff. From this perspective, the reduction of amateurism and the professional qualification and skills for activities in air, water or land, may be seen as an important contribution that people with disabilities bring to tourism and to society.



Figure 9 and 10: Portugal: examples of adventure activities practiced in Accessible Tourism

Going back to our initial question: “Can we promote accessible tourism? Yes, we can. And we should”, though not in a way that creates new ghettos but because integrating this issue in the tourism sector makes good economic sense. In addition to material concerns, accessible tourism is an ethical imperative that must always be imposed, realizing also that the absence of it is increasingly criticized and penalized by the market.

More research is needed on this topic to fully understand the challenges and opportunities that lay ahead for accessible tourism. Case studies and quantitative data, in particular, would be important to raise knowledge and provide strong foundations to future initiatives in this sector.

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Defining and Developing an Accessible Tourism Destination.

Lessons from Lousã, Portugal

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Defining and Developing an Accessible Tourism Destination. Lessons from Lousã, Portugal



Abstract: The association of accessibility and tourism gives way to Accessible Tourism. Many still insist on making persons with disabilities the target market for Accessible Tourism. But if tourism is a universal right, then it should be for everyone, indiscriminately – Tourism for All. Despite the recent increase of attention in this area in many countries and regions, Tourism for All does not yet have a significant expression in Portugal. The reason why is that the breadth and the complexity of the demands of tourists with specific access requirements means that accessible tourism supplies have to be met at a larger scale than that of the single hotel or the airport. The Tourist Destination has a broader territorial scope and a level of organisation and integration of tourism services which makes it far more suited as the level of action for addressing the challenges of Tourism for All. At this stage, the definition and development of the Accessible Tourism Destination requires an effective implementation of more systemic and participatory approaches. In the municipality of Lousã, a small country town in central Portugal, Tourism for All was also seen as a business opportunity. With a long tradition in the areas of rehabilitation and social care, Lousã successfully gathered a set of local stakeholders around a joint initiative to promote accessible tourism. This led to the project "Lousã, Accessible Tourism Destination", which placed the municipality at the forefront of a national transition towards a tourism with greater social responsibility, justifying a fresh look at tourism in Portugal.

Key-words: Accessible Tourism, Tourism for All, Tourist Destination, Accessibility for All, Social Responsibility, Disability, Elderly, Management, Evaluation, Certification, Portugal (Lousã).



Figure 1 and 2: Visit to Lousã

1. Introduction to "Accessible Tourism Destination": Reflections on a concept still misunderstood

The General Assembly of the World Tourism Organisation (2005) defined that the term "persons with disabilities" includes all persons who, owing to the environment being encountered, suffer a limitation in their relational ability and have special needs during travel, in accommodations, and other tourism services, particularly individuals with physical, sensory and intellectual disabilities or other medical conditions requiring special care, such as elderly persons and others in need of temporary assistance. The definition includes mainly tourists with physical, sensory or intellectual disabilities and others who are in conditions of health or age who require special care, temporarily or permanently.

The WTO subscribes that the disabilities are not only confined to the handicapped people, as stated for long. In fact, the concept is now open to other dimensions, from permanent (chronic diseases, problems related to age, congenital or acquired disabilities) to temporary disabilities (the injured and sick, children under five and women in an advanced state of pregnancy). Moreover, it is recognised that the experience of disability is related to the helping or hindering environment in which the person finds him or herself. The combination of personal and social conditions with the physical features and services offered in a given setting, all contribute to the degree of efficacy and participation that can be attained by the visitor in any given place.

Given the complex nature of its "publics", the Accessible Tourism - far from being a well-defined tourism product - cannot fail to bring those responsible for planning and managing the tourism supply to a state of perplexity. Currently, the debate on the issues of Accessible Tourism is claiming the academic field and many researchers have been seeking to define and understand the phenomenon.

One of the most baffling questions comes from the definition for "Accessible Tourism" which focuses on serving "tourists with special needs". For how are their needs different from any other tourists with respect to their travel interests? As far as we see this issue, Accessible Tourism defined in this way has more to do with a condition of the tourist than with any kind of tourism motivation.

Contrary to classical approaches of tourism, inspired by marketing methods that consist in the segmentation of tourism products on the basis of the main motivations of tourists, Accessible Tourism is largely defined by a prior condition of the tourist. As an extension of this, Accessible Tourism may well be defined also by the provision of any solutions meant to overcome physical, sensory, mental or other barriers that can affect the condition of the tourist while travelling and staying at a destination.

Scholars and researchers dedicated to this issue are now emphasizing that the concept of "Accessible Tourism" recognizes that everyone, in any condition, should be able to use any tourist facilities, equipment and services provided by the tourist suppliers. Thus, these suppliers must provide a large range of services and activities geared for the tastes and preferences of those people who may be subject to a whole range of constraints. By doing this, the suppliers are preparing themselves to meet the needs and requirements of all segments of tourist demand, either those with (so called) "special needs" or not (Devile, 2009). Therefore, the concept of "Tourism for All" has been replacing gradually that of "Accessible Tourism" and we will adopt it in the scope of this article.

It is important to note that the term "people with special needs" has been used in some circles, both in a euphemistic way (instead of saying "persons with disabilities") but also to denote persons who may have specific access

requirements due to age, ill-health, temporary impairment, very large or small stature, frailty and so on. While we do not take issue with the need for a broad terminology, the term “special needs” remains misleading insofar as the needs of these persons are not “special” in or of themselves. Indeed their needs and motivations are those of any other person. It is their requirements for certain access provisions that, to some degree, may set them apart from others. But it must be remembered that these tourists share the same aspirations and vocations of most tourists: to walk, to have fun, to meet people and places, to rest, etc.. Thus, it is important that destinations provide suitable means and services which will enable all visitors satisfy their motivations, regardless of the nature and degree of a possible disability.

The Tourism for All, by its very nature, deals with the supplying of any conditions, means and services likely to meet the special needs of each tourist. So, any tourism supplier must play his part for the accessibility of the tourist infrastructures, equipments and services in order to allow to all tourists a full enjoyment of transportation, accommodation, food and beverage, animation and activities.

Therefore, the tourist destination should be improved step by step to with the removal of any kind of barriers and the introduction of an inclusive approach to the design of tourism products and services. In this sense, Tourism for All can contribute to improving the competitiveness of the destination, by increasing its potential tourism demand, and thus becoming a powerful factor for the economic promotion of a territory and of its community.

Any effort to promote and consolidate Tourism for All requires a close coordination and a persistent collaboration between all the main stakeholders involved in managing the tourism destination: tourist suppliers and travel agents, municipalities and other authorities, other public offices, institutions related to the sectors of rehabilitation and social care, organizations representing the people with disabilities, older people and others.

Thus, accessibility turns out to be assumed as a transversal concern to every sector of the tourism destination: not only from the tourism stakeholders, but also from other stakeholders of the territory and, last not the least, from all the community. Therefore, the definition and development of the accessible

tourism destination requires a strong engagement within a collective framework based on a systemic approach and a full commitment to principles of a shared responsibility.

Of course, this common concern needs to be fed in some way. The promotion of self-esteem within the community, the broad qualification of the territory and the promotion of the economic value of the sectors of the rehabilitation and social care are all part of this complex equation. Nevertheless, no other "driver" is more powerful than the extra incomes provided by an influx of tourists with specific access requirements, along with their families and friends.

It was this lure that gathered the stakeholders of the project "Lousã, Accessible Tourism Destination" since 2008 and it is very probable that in the future it will be this same lure that will push many other tourism destinations in Portugal and in the world to grab the opportunity of Tourism for All.

2. The importance of developing "Tourism for All" in the context of a "Tourist Destination"

The emphasis on the involvement and engagement of tourism service providers and other related stakeholders in meeting the critical conditions for the full deployment of Tourism for All is not idly proposed.

Unlike other forms of tourism dictated by the tourist motivations, the Tourism for All involves the provision of integrated responses and solutions to tourists that transcend most often the individual operational capabilities of the stakeholders of the tourism sector. The provision of Tourism for All cannot be disconnected from a territorial dimension, because only within the context of a given destination can these integrated responses and solutions be fully attended and achieved.

Thus, it is important to stress the definition and development of the provision of Tourism for All in the context of the closer relationships that tend to be established between the providers of tourist services in a tourist destination. It is in this context that should be sought any answers to the challenges of accessibility that may transcend the scope of action of the tourism service

providers. For example, the accessibility of spaces, public facilities and services, attractions and animations - often of great importance for the attractiveness of tourist destination - are often the competence of the local authorities. Police, health care and civil protection - so important to convey a sense of security to these tourists - are also competences that clearly exceed the scope of tourism service providers. Obviously, other areas relevant to the integration of an accessible tourist offer might very well be added. But what this reveals is the importance of the organization of this territorial dimension for the availability of an integrated range of accessible tourist services.

Thus, it is important to work within the accessible tourism destination - considering the population, the local institutions and the individual stakeholders directly or indirectly connected with tourism - through the establishment of an appropriate territorial scale for the dynamic convergence of the dispersed interests and through the adoption of the right networking methodologies in order to discuss the transition of places, functions and roles and to boost the creation of a new set of synergies.

Therefore, the challenge of accessibility throughout the tourism destination demands the collective work of local stakeholders within a systemic and participatory framework. It also demands an emphasis on “balanced tourism engineering” by which stakeholders seek to fulfill the tourists’ interests as well as the interests of the community and other territorial interests, which may be essential to the provision of far more integrated solutions of tourist accessibility.

3. A systemic approach to the planning of "Accessible Tourism Destinations"

The difficulties of working on a systemic level in the Accessible Destination are not the focus of this article. But naturally the systemic approach has its consequences when the aim of the destination is the integration of tourism offers having in view the supply of Tourism for All. This is due both to the physical constraints of the destination (the dispersion of its stakeholders, for example) as to commercial behaviors (the competition between tourist agents, for instance). Although they may be understandable, the resilient

barriers to the adoption of systemic working methods must be withdrawn step by step.

This may be justified by three orders of interest:

- 1) **The interest of the territory.** Despite all the constraints, it is a widespread view that a greater accessibility of the tourist destination is also synonymous with greatest advantages to territories and to its people and institutions, because:
 - It improves quality of life for both residents and visitors;
 - It strengthens the competitive position of the destination in tourist markets;
 - It allows tourist authorities to intervene in various levels of action;
 - It mobilizes local stakeholders for a deeper commitment with networking behaviors;
 - It typically increases tourist occupancy rates in low season.

- 2) **The interest of the market.** We believe there is no such thing as a single segment of market for Tourism for All, but rather, an extensive set of population groups that share the same types and degrees of access requirements. Eventually these groups may be organized as market ranges. Truly important, as we have emphasized above, is that the motivations of the erroneously labeled “tourists with special needs” are not different from common tourists: you will find them enjoying an adventure in the wild, having a sun tan on the beach or experimenting with some exotic gastronomy... This diversity of motivations, plus the specific responses requested by this market, increases the level of complexity of the offer of the Tourism for All. In fact, the scope of tourists encompassed within the Tourism for All covers many distinct motivations and multiple levels of specific requirements which certainly poses great difficulties to the efforts for supplying of adapted responses in the destination.

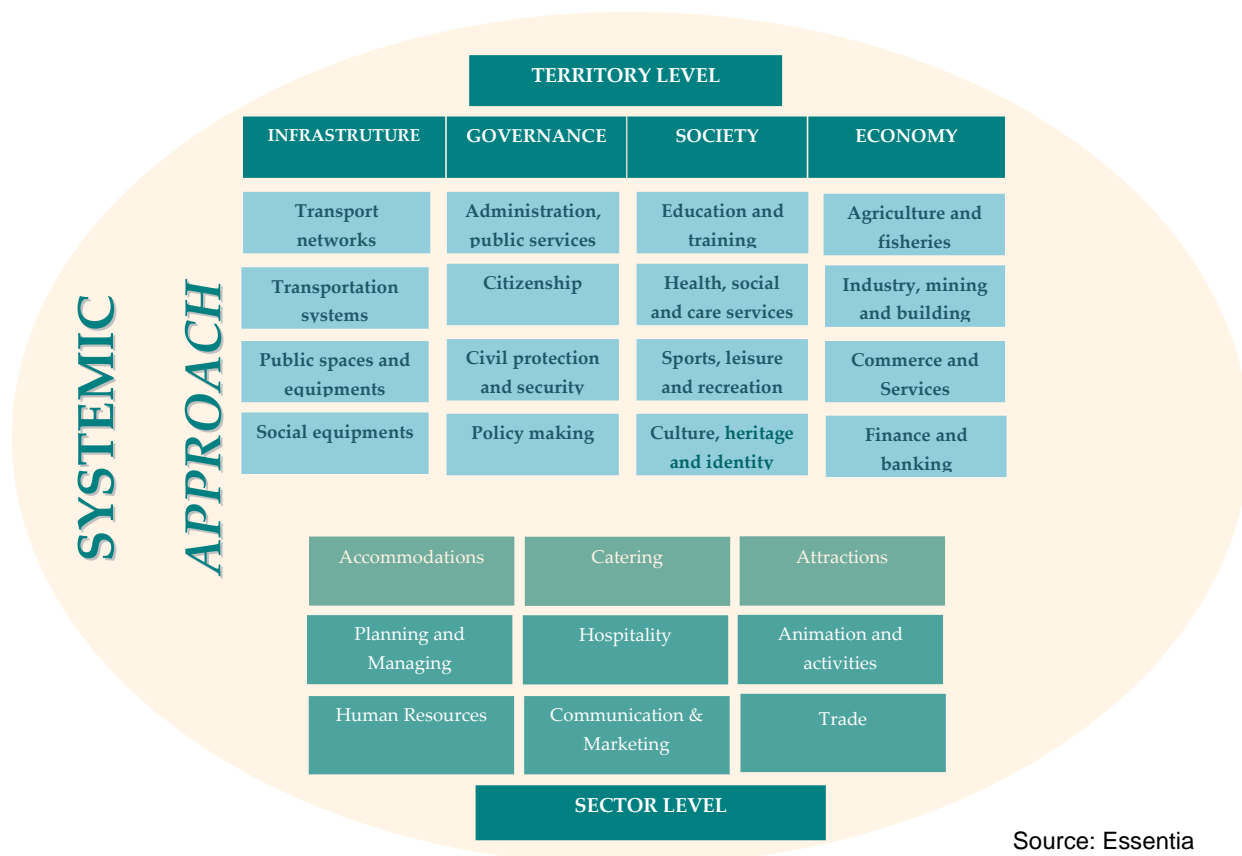
3) **The industry's interest.** The third underlying issue is that, unfortunately, tourism is traditionally not planned, developed and operated to be accessible for all visitors (and this is not exclusive to Portugal). Indeed, except for the occasional partially adapted tourist equipments and attractions, there are only a few organized tourism destinations with integrated offerings available. The tour operators that are trading in this area confirm that most destinations fail in ensuring the broad requirements of the Tourism for All, even where there may be outstanding physical adaptations of hotels, restaurants and other major tourist establishments. But the adaptation of the tourist infrastructure highlighted above is not enough. Tourists wander, wonder and are dazzled by many other aspects offered within the destination. The physical adaptation of public spaces, attractions and transportations are other aspects of the equation of the Tourism for All. This equation becomes even more complex if we consider a whole set of non-material requirements such as, for instance, the training of tourism professionals, the supplying of care services and the policies of communication and marketing of the destination. Truly, Tourism for All is concerned with the whole value chain of tourism. More than dealing with the individual responsibilities of tourism agents, it demands a common framework of responsibility that includes, to varying degrees, the individual roles of the stakeholders within the accessible destination.

The systemic approach in Tourism for All cannot be seen, for the reasons exposed, as a mere image of rhetoric. Certainly, this approach must be taken seriously by all stakeholders of the tourism destination and adopted at every level of their interventions. Figure 3 seeks to clarify a framework for these intervention levels. From the broad actions applied to the territory of the tourism destination to the specific initiatives taken in the sector of tourism, many intervention areas should be taken into account in the collective draft for the creation and definition of the accessible tourism destination. At the general level of the territory of the tourism destination, there is a broad set of dimensions of intervention as diverse as complementary, going from the Infrastructure and Governance to the Society and Economy. At the specific level of the tourism sector, the interventions should be more related to the way business is organized and done. Tourists with particular access

requirements and their friends and family should be always in the frontline of the tourist providers of the accessible tourism destination. Most importantly, this does not mean that the destination becomes a kind of ghetto of accessible tourism but rather that it becomes an inclusive destination where all tourists are equally welcomed and catered for. To achieve this, all tourists' needs and requirements should be considered seriously and passionately.

The functionality, the fluidity and the transfer ability of either transport networks or the transportation systems, the universal access to public spaces, equipments and amenities and the progressive improvements in the social facilities are concerns of the dimension of the infrastructure that should be seen as priorities of the systemic approach to the accessibility in the tourism destination. Any access improvements in these areas may be seen as tangible indicators of the collective effort developed by the stakeholders of the tourism destination, especially by the local authorities.

The dimension of local governance is basic to the systemic approach in the accessible tourism destination. In Portugal, as in many other countries, local authorities are responsible for the regulation of the tourist services providers, the management of the territory and its resources and the definition of the broad tourist development strategy. The progressive adaptation of public spaces, equipments and services, whether tourist-related or not, requires the full commitment of the authorities of the territory. Thus, the administrative dimension stands out as one of the most important in the collective effort to create and then to develop the accessible tourism destination.



Source: Essentia Consulting, 2007

Figure 3: The systemic approach in the accessible tourism destination according to both territory and sector levels.

Although more diffuse, the creation of a true culture of accessibility and inclusion for all within the local community should be one of the main commitments of the political dimension. This culture should be present in every aspect of the daily life of the community and values, meaning that everybody's rights to a full citizenship or the right to difference must be shared and cherished by all the residents within the destination. A greater awareness for the culture of accessibility will lead to significant changes in the way locals will accept people (and so the tourists) with disabilities or other access requirements. The expansion of this culture implies the involvement of all stakeholders of the destination in the adoption of far more ambitious targets for improving accessibility in the community as a whole. Finally, one should not neglect the role of the culture of accessibility and inclusion also in changing mentalities and behaviours among the very citizens who have disabilities, long-term health problems or age-related

conditions. Unfortunately, still today many of these people limit themselves in the exercise of their right to full access to the tourist services and it is a broad political responsibility to change this.

In terms of governance, finally, we must also recognise the relevance of safety factors which can influence visitors' travel decisions, given the condition of dependence in which they often find themselves. Areas such as civil protection and security should be among the first to engage in this collective work in favour of the creation of an accessible tourism destination. This requires a reorganisation of the local civil defence and safety services, so they might be ready and able to attend to all kinds of situations related to the safety and wellbeing of tourists.

The importance of the domain of the society to the accessible tourism destination is more than anything, a matter of common sense. Starting with the concerns of education (a powerful instrument for the awareness of the entire society towards everybody's respect for differences, beginning by the younger generations) and continuing with the worries in terms of health, social and care services (essential to reinforce the feeling of safety among tourists with special needs), the creation of an accessible tourism destination should be a matter by which the entire society should gather and engage. This social awakening should be a turning point to other aspects of the life in society within the destination. Sports, leisure and recreation or culture, heritage and identity are other important areas of common work. The fulfilment of requirements in terms of animation, entertainment and occupation of the tourists with specific access requirements should result naturally from the collective approach within the accessible tourism destination.

In the dimension of economy, it is the tertiary activities of commerce, general services and, of course, tourism services with which we are mostly concerned. Traditionally, the issue of accessibility has been analyzed in terms of the resolution of physical constraints (mobility conditions, physical barriers, design for all, etc.). But, the introduction of the systemic approach in these business fields is adding a new perspective: the social responsibility of entrepreneurs in the adaptation of products and services sold or provided to people (and tourists) with specific access requirements. So, it is important to

ask the entrepreneurs to pay as much attention to the immaterial dimension of their businesses (reception, attendance, services, etc.) as to the physical adaptation of their establishments, especially those that are open to the public. In fact, the satisfaction of a client in a shop may have a more to do with the storekeeper giving special attention to the customer (for example, giving a couple with a newborn baby the access to a WC) than with the luxurious design of the establishment.

The level of the tourism sector service should be seen as the cornerstone of the Accessible Tourism Destination. The tourist agents should work together and carefully compose the various components of the tourist offer within the destination. It is essential that hotels, restaurants, attractions, etc. meet their responsibilities towards all their customers. The responsible commitment of the leaders should be shared by their staff, because they are a key factor of success when it comes to dealing with the special needs of guests. In more specific terms, the integration of legal standards of accessibility in the design phase of architectural and special projects, the realisation of adjustments and improvements to make the tourist units more accessible, the certification of provided tourist venues and services or the training of staff to prepare them to answer to the special needs of tourists are some of the collective measures that tourist entrepreneurs have to adopt in order to improve the attendance levels of the accessible tourism destination.

On the other hand, the travel decisions of tourists are strongly influenced by the tourism destination's capacity to supply accessible tourist activities and support services. This intangible offer is essential to establish high standards of quality within the accessible tourism destination. Thus, the acceptance of more creative solutions and the adoption of more proactive attitudes to deal with the challenges posed by the Tourism for All are among the most relevant tasks for the creation and development of accessible tourism destinations.

Therefore, the creation and development of an accessible tourism destination strongly recommends the adoption of systemic methodologies capable of crossing the broad interests of the territory with the specific interests of the tourism sector in matters of accessibility. For example, most hotels may find it easier to build a platform of cooperation with some social institution in

order to provide personal hygiene services to their elderly customers than train their own staff for this delicate task.

On the other hand, it is within the existing tourism offer that answers must be found to meet the specific needs of tourists. The progressive resolution of the physical barriers in the destination should not be the excuse to delay working on other fronts. Often, the accessibility of the destination can be greatly enhanced by the means of a reorganisation of hospitality services or by a greater attention to intangible factors such as the training of human resources and the tourist innovation. Actually, such intangible factors are increasingly key factors for the positioning of the destinations within the tourism markets.

4. A participatory approach to development of "Accessible Tourism Destinations"

In a way, the systemic approach is only possible within the frame of a participatory approach. The collective work needed to build the accessible tourism destination demands for the participation of a critical set of local stakeholders. It asks also for leadership.

The local authorities and the tourism destination organisations are natural leaders of this collective work. They have the territory and the tourism management tools needed to enforce improvements on the accessibility levels in the public domain and in the private domain of the tourism stakeholders. But, in order to satisfy the needs of the systemic approach, this core of good will needs to be enlarged with the participation of other sectors of the destination.

Nevertheless, the enlargement of the set of participants in the creation and development of the accessible tourism destination poses a great deal of challenges: how to set and organize the collective work, how to gather local stakeholders in a collective mission, how to commit the individual roles of each participant within a collective mission, how to reward each participant for their individual work through the sharing of the added value of the collective work, how to embody this collective mission into a set of effective

tourist supplements offering a right level of accessibility for all, either in terms of quality or quantity?

These challenges remind to us that the participatory approach is not only a question of goodwill for all participants but also one of responsibility. And this responsibility leads all participants, specially the leaders, to make either individual or collective commitments. Therefore, the regulation of the engagement of the stakeholders of the accessible tourism destination should be a major concern of this approach. This regulation should encompass the responsible commitment of each participant - and should reward him for it. So, accessible tourism destinations should develop mechanisms of regulation that assure that those participants that are actually willing to take steps towards greater accessibility are effectively rewarded.

It is precisely in this context that comes with sharpening interest the setting and implementation of certification tools for tourist accessibility. As means of regulatory enforcement, these tools should be open and transparent for all participants and they should be supported by a governance model widely acknowledged and accepted by all participants in the collective work for the creation and development of the accessible tourism destination.

These certification tools should also be means of qualification and reliability of the accessible tourism destination. Common standards for tourism service providers (and other relevant suppliers in the destination) must provide assurances of adequate and appropriate services for the widest range of tourists. In time, these common standards should be improved with a view to achieving the highest levels of tourism services for all.

In the end, the participatory approach may well be considered as a cornerstone of the development of the accessible tourism destination. In particular, the certification tools should be seen as a key factor for its qualification and reliability. In time, the certification of the accessible tourism destination will place itself among the most strong assets of the collective work run within the destination.

5. A business approach to the management of "Accessible Tourism Destination"

What is this market of the tourists with specific access requirements? Is this an homogeneous or rather an heterogeneous market? How to identify and reach the complex web of special conditions, affinities and motivations of these markets? Is it possible - and if so - is it actually feasible to meet the needs of all of them and all at once?

Several studies confirm that the market of Tourism for All is vast and set it as a unique business opportunity often underrated by the industry. According to available data, at least 10% of the global population has some type of disability, which translates the existence of at least 600 million to 850 million people with special needs worldwide (UN Enable, 2012)). Studies show that many disabled people in developed countries would be travelling more if the accessible conditions were being really met by the providers of tourist services. These studies show also that an important part of disabled tourists who actually travel are loyal to their holiday destination and in such numbers that tend to be greater than among regular tourists. Recent surveys in Germany set in 48% the percentage of those disabled tourists willing to travel and in 26% those who say they are loyal to their tourist providers (Neumann & Reuber, 2004). We may say from these accounts that Tourism for All is advantageous from an economic standpoint for those Tourism Destinations that are really willing to take up the accessibility challenge.

Given the challenges posed by the multiplicity of conditions covered in the market of Tourism for All, it will be rather difficult for any tourism destination to fulfil all the special needs of the tourists. This assumption leads us to make a finding: there is not a typical market of Tourism for All and therefore each tourism destination has to do its own market study in order to detect its potential offer and typify its fringes of demand.

The market study is an essential tool to guide the work of the tourism destination towards accessibility. This study includes, but is not limited to:

- Defining the typology of the demand
- The definition of a marketing and communication strategy to meet and attract specific accessible markets,

- The design of composite accessible tourism products (mixing of tourism and care services) to retain and satisfy these markets, and
- The setting of monitoring and evaluation tools in order to ease the ability of the destination to adapt to changes in the demands of visitors.

It will thus be desirable to organise the offer of the accessible tourism destination on the basis of the types of special services that offer the better business prospects from the point of view of the destination's stakeholders. The offer of more targeted accessible tourism services will not only be economically more efficient but will also be more prone to satisfy the particular requirements of the targeted tourists. In fact, often, our voluntary commitment of wanting to please everyone happens to be counter-productive and does not allow us to address details more carefully.

This attitude may seem contradictory to the concept of Tourism for All, because after all there will always be fringes of tourists with certain requirements who will not be served well, with even the best accessible tourist services. It is, however, our conviction that it is impossible for a given tourism destination to be 100% accessible for all types of special needs of tourists. On the other hand, the economic and social turmoil that many tourism destinations are undergoing nowadays advises the adoption of more conservative business approaches and target the most relevant and strategic “fringes” of the accessibility markets. In this way, we believe that all destinations can play a role in enlarging both the general accessibility of their products and offers and extending the range and availability of particular and specialist offers for visitors with highly specific service requirements.

In national terms, the available official figures and the complementary research carried out in recent years by the Essentia Consulting both show that 80% of the people with permanent disabilities in Portugal are concentrated in three key markets:

A) Aged people (over 74):

It is estimated that by 2050 21% of the world's population will be more than 65 years of age, a rate far lower than that of 31.8% that is expected for the elderly national population in Portugal (INE, 2005). Simultaneously, we

have been witnessing a gradual qualitative change in this older population that, unlike in the past, now aspires to live longer, with a better quality of life and with full access to all services that modern society has to offer, including tourism. Therefore, the numbers of older people that are willing to take part in tourism is increasingly significant in Portugal and in the world. However, increasing ages are also associated with a rising fragility of the individuals. We must remember that after 75 years of age the probability of becoming disabled is fourteen times greater than the average (Prates, 2007). As the world population gets older, this fringe of the tourism market will become increasingly relevant for accessible tourism destinations both in Portugal and all over the world.

B) Cardiac and Diabetic Patients:

In the group of people with chronicle health conditions, the groups of the domestic market with the greatest potential for Tourism for All are, in general, people suffering from heart disease or diabetes. Many of these people are expected to be seniors, but despite only 3% of these being limited to their homes, they are among the approximately 1/3 of the Portuguese who have reported they needed some kind of assistance from someone to perform such routine tasks as dressing themselves or climbing more than one flight of stairs (DGS, 2006). These indicators underpin the importance of such groups for any accessible tourism destination in Portugal and they guide tourist stakeholders to meet their specific illness-related requirements, ranging from the coordination of emergency services to the provision of special diets at destinations and venues.

C) People with physical disabilities and sensory impairments:

According to the study produced by the CRPG and ISCTE, in 2007, it is estimated that the percentage of Portuguese people with disabilities is around 8.2% of the population 78.6% of them are aged over 0 years, 67.9% are female and mostly are married (61.9%). In 2007, about 60% of disabled people have special requirements needs related to the lack of physical functions of some kind or degree (CRPG & ISCTE, 2007). Within the types of disabilities considered in the 2001 Census (note: data from 2011 Census

are still not available), visual impairment has the highest incidence rate (26.23%), followed by physical disability (24.59%). Therefore, the resolution of visual and physical barriers is to be taken seriously in the creation and development of the accessible tourism destination.

In the group of temporary disabilities, we should pay a special attention to the cohort of children under 5 years old. Despite the continuing trend of reduction, in 2011 the number of children between 0 and 4 years in Portugal was set on 511 thousand, 4,8% of the total Portuguese population (INE, 2011). This market faces, as a general rule, many physical obstacles in the tourist amenities (no lifts, no trails wide enough for the pushchair, no bathrooms with comfort stations for babies, among others). It is also evident that there is an absence of tourist services tailored to this group (babysitting services, for instance), so young parents may enjoy the destination at its best.

Market research studies show that the majority of disabled people travel together with their family or friends. A clever business strategy to deal with tourism accessibility might come from techniques of tourist packaging. The offering of accessible tourist packages should be a basic condition of the supply of the accessible tourism destination, satisfying expectations of tourists with specific access requirements, along with their families and friends, through their integration in the broader offer of the tourism

destination - and not necessarily by the provision of specialized or dedicated tourism services all the time.



Figure 4 and 5: slide and river bath in Lousã

Moreover, for the success of the accessible tourism destination, we believe that equally or even more important than the physical works (accessibility of tourist amenities; public spaces; sports, leisure and culture equipments;

attractions or frames of visit...) is the creation of a business culture in favour of accessibility and inclusion of all visitors. The special attention and dedication of all stakeholders involved in the tourism business is of great importance to sustain the full integration of tourists in the destination, regardless of their physical, sensorial or psychological condition. The local population is a major stakeholder of Tourism for All. Therefore, we must ensure that residents are truly committed in making their community and territory more accessible for tourists. Finally, destination management organisations and local authorities are natural leaders and prominent stakeholders in this business approach, sensitizing, motivating and promoting a collective call for a progressive empowerment of the whole community in the matters of the accessibility.

6. The case of the Municipality of Lousã: the opportunity for Accessible Tourism

In the last decade, tourism has become one of the most important economic sectors of activity in the municipality of Lousã and still today it is one sector that has a lot of potential for growth. Lousã has another strong asset: an important and influent rehabilitation sector, based on the activities of a local association, which has bolstered the local community's awareness of a greater social responsibility. Without any surprise, Lousã is one of the Municipalities in Portugal which offers an outstanding culture of accessibility.



Figure 6 and 7: Using the joëlette. Adapted trekking

While some municipalities in Portugal are beginning to see Tourism for All as an interesting business opportunity and they are starting to adapt their tourism offer in order to be more able to host tourists with access requirements, Lousã was a pioneer in this area.

Held in the 20th April 2007, the first National Congress on Accessible Tourism in the town of Lousã was a milestone in terms of Tourism for All in Portugal. The event had a major role in the awakening of the local stakeholders of the sectors of rehabilitation and tourism towards this business opportunity. Moreover, the Congress helped to highlight the substantive work held by many local institutions through the time, such as the association *ARCIL - Associação para a Recuperação de Cidadãos Inadaptados da Lousã* (Association for the Recovery of Unadapted Citizens of Lousã), founded in 1976, and the *Provedoria Municipal das Pessoas com Incapacidade da Lousã* (Municipal Ombudsman for Disabled Persons of Lousã), established in 2005, just to mention the two of the most outstanding.

Due to the strong local and national participation in the Congress and as a result of its conclusions, the municipality of Lousã was led to bet decisively on Tourism for All. An opportunity was set: the raising of the Municipality of Lousã as the first destination of accessible tourism in Portugal.

The project was launched casually in the aftermath of April 2007 with the spontaneous formation of a working team with a single mission: to embody the goodwill of a local movement of citizens towards the creation and development in Lousã of the first Portuguese destination of accessible tourism. This municipality in the central region of Portugal, neighbour of the old university city of Coimbra, was then placed on the path of Tourism for All.

This local citizens' movement was greatly influenced by the work and reputation acquired by the ARCIL over the preceding three decades. The institution was the first in Portugal to seek the reintegration of disabled people, confronting the local community with the inclusion of those citizens that were seen as different and contributing decisively to change local mentalities. The Municipal Ombudsman for Disabled Persons of Lousã (one of the five existing in Portugal at that time) also contributed to improve the local conditions of accessibility and, mainly, to raise the awareness of the

local community towards the rights of disabled citizens - either as residents or as visitors and tourists. It launched demonstration initiatives such as the "Seal of Accessibility" that recognized an entry level of physical accessibility to public buildings and tourist and commercial establishments open to the public in the municipality. Another successful initiative was the project "Alert School ", that was held with the school communities of Lousã, contributing to the greater awareness of the children, youngsters, teachers and their families towards the concerns of accessibility and integration.

Eventually, the initial team work evolved to a task force that was first called "Accessible Lousã". After the ARCIL and the Municipal Ombudsman soon other local institutions joined in and thus the local movement grew with: 1) the membership of some important tourist representatives of the municipality: the local Hotel Palácio de Lousã, some bed & breakfast establishments and restaurants and a tourism service agent; 2) the participation of the authorities for the regional economy (Direcção Regional da Economia do Centro), for the regional development (Comissão de Coordenação da Região Centro) and the Regional Tourist Board (Região de Turismo do Centro); 3) the collaboration of academics from the High School of Education of Coimbra (Escola Superior de Educação de Coimbra); 4) Meaningfully, the municipal authority of Lousã (Câmara Municipal da Lousã) also joined the task force, thus recognizing the importance of the project and embracing the local move of citizens; 5) Finally, the work of the team was coordinated by Essentia Consulting, which had the task to prepare a "Plan for the Development of Accessible Tourism in the Municipality of Lousã".

On the 20th of May 2008, the task force "Accessible Lousã" publicly presented its Plan. The conditions of accessibility offered in Lousã to tourists with specific access requirements were studied. The most promising fringes of the market of Tourism for All for Lousã were identified. After these preliminary studies, the Plan identified the conditions, the needs and the requests of a common strategy for the creation and development of the accessible tourism destination. The strategy proposed an action plan and established the individual roles of the participants in the task force. A governance model was also set up for the management of the Plan, giving to local players such roles as managing and execution of tasks and offering to

external participants such roles as the consulting, advising and monitoring. In the end, the Plan set out the basis for the launching of the project "Lousã, Accessible Tourism Destination".

The public reactions to the Plan coming from the participants of the task force and from the local community were extremely positive and gratifying. The initiative "Accessible Lousã" exceeded the initial expectations and gained a broader institutional support, both locally and externally. This unexpected impulse generated the best expectations for the pursuit of the strategy and the goals that were set on the Plan. Another reflection of the wide acceptance of the proposals of the Plan is visible in terms of the continuity and enlargement of the initial task force, which started to bring together a representative group of local and external actors, all of them engaged in different roles within the mission to promote Lousã as an accessible tourism destination, as shown in Figure 8.

On the 17th of May 2009 a cooperation protocol was signed between the participants of an enlarged task force with the presence of His Excellency the Minister of Labour and Social Solidarity, José Vieira da Silva. This protocol has formalized a network of strategic cooperation between different local actors to launch the Project "Lousã, Accessible Tourism Destination".



Figure 8: The main players involved in the launching of the project "Lousã, Accessible Tourism Destination" (Source: Essentia Consulting, 2007)

The Municipal Authority (Câmara Municipal) of Lousã had taken by that time the leadership of the initiative "Accessible Lousã". But the investments implied in the execution of the Plan were far too great for its own means and fundraising was needed. Thus, the Câmara promoted a first application of the project "Lousã, Accessible Tourism Destination) to a national program financed by the European Union (the POPH - Operational Program for the Human Potential). The application was approved and the project was economically supported with EU funds between 2008 and 2010. A second application was made and approved to the same POPH Program and the

project "Lousã, Accessible Tourism Destination" was extended until June 2011. At the end, the local and national political commitment and the fundraising of European money were critical milestones for the success of the initial local move.

Last but not the least, the project "Lousã, Accessible Tourism Destination" was the opportunity for applying an innovative framework of intervention in the municipality of Lousã. The main guidelines were inspired by the broad integration of such systemic, participatory and business approaches towards the creation and development of an accessible tourism destination. In the core of the governance of the initiative (Figure 9) a Mission Structure was set with the presidency of the Municipal Authority of Lousã (Câmara Municipal da Lousã).

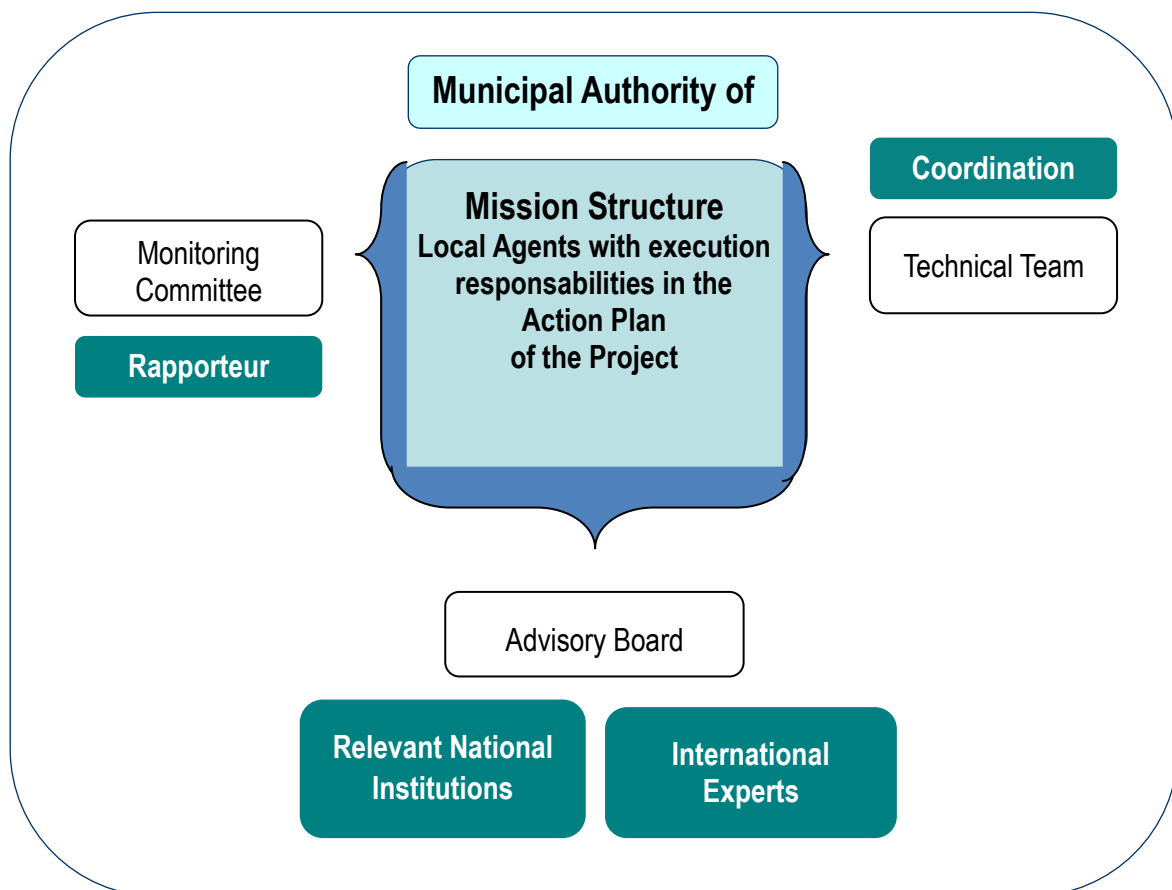


Figure 9: The Governance of the Project "Lousã, Accessible Tourism Destination".

(Source: Essentia Consulting, 2007)

The Mission Structure, in its final 2011 form, was enlarged to other local partners, integrating other sectors of the tourist offer of Lousã:

- Municipal Authority of Lousã (*Câmara Municipal da Lousã*);
- Association for the Recovery of Unadapted Citizens of Lousã (ARCIL);
- Social Institution "*Santa Casa da Misericórdia*" of Lousã;
- Boutique Hotel "Meliá Palácio Lousã";
- Movijovem / Youth Hostel of Lousã;
- B&B "Quintal Além Ribeiro";
- B&B "Casa do Vale Linteiro";
- Camping of Serpins;
- Tourist Animation Agent "Montes D'Aventura";
- Tourist Animation Agent "TurisLousã";
- Tourist Shop "Catraia do Candal";
- Restaurant "O Burgo";
- Restaurant "Casa Velha";
- Restaurant "Travessa com Tapas".

7. The journey undertaken by the Municipality of Lousã to be the first Accessible Tourism Destination in Portugal

The project "Lousã, Accessible Tourism Destination) was led by the *Câmara Municipal da Lousã* with the help of the *Provedoria Municipal*. Despite this institutional coverage, the project does not intend to neglect, but rather it aims to involve the local stakeholders, especially those that are more directly responsible for the issues of accessibility and tourism.

Thus, a Mission Structure was set in order to organize and represent those local interests. Moreover, this Structure had operational tasks, the most important to be the implementation of the Action Plan of the project. The accessible tourism destination requires an effort designed to reorganise the territory and involves the proposal of adapted offers directed to the markets of tourists with special needs. This requires the creation of a platform for the cooperation of local stakeholders in order to create and to design those adapted offers. This interface would also become a Front Office for the

attendance of markets of tourists with access requirements, fulfilling functions of tourist representation and hospitality.

The Action Plan of the project was organized in five intervention areas. The work accomplished in these areas is briefly presented below:

i. Technical Assistance, Cooperation and Internationalization

The Mission Structure was assisted by a technical team that played an important role in the project management and execution. This team was directly responsible for the scheduled activities, sometimes taking part as direct executors, at other times being responsible for the development of specifications and the monitoring of the activities executed by contracted suppliers.

The external assistance was set as essential to the overall execution of the project since the beginning. The technical team was assisted by a staff of consultants in order to satisfy the needs of project management (Essentia Consulting, which was linked to the initiative "Accessible Lousã" from the start). In some very specialized activities, the technical team was advised by external experts.

Empowered by the gathering of these skills and expertise, the technical team occupied a dedicated office located in the town centre and was endowed with its own logistical means. It started then to establish contacts with local businesses and institutions. Special attention was given for contacting local people with disabilities and for assisting tourists with access requirements.

The technical team then conducted a complementary set of technical missions to national and international reference institutions to acquire useful experience and knowledge and to set partnerships, particularly in matters of Tourism for All. As a result, the following contacts were performed:

- Organisation of missions to Belgium (Hasselt) in May 2008 and to Spain (Ávila) in May 2010;
- Participation in the ENAT Congress in Austria in October 2009;
- Participation in several conferences and seminars in Portugal and abroad (as for instance the Conference "Development Of Tourism For

All - Promotion Strategies And Procedures In The Good Offer" in Alba, Italy, in June 2010);

- Promotion of exchanges with national entities, as were the cases, for instance, of the Association for Blind and Amblyopic People of Portugal (ACAPO), the School of Hospitality and Tourism of Coimbra, the consultants in accessibility issues "ProASolutionsPT" and the tour operator "Accessible Portugal".

ii. Accessibility Plans and Projects

Under the framework of the Plan of Integrated Solutions for Accessibility for All of Lousã (*PSIAT – Plano de Soluções Integradas de Acessibilidade para Todos da Lousã*), developed in 2009 for the *Câmara Municipal da Lousã* by the consulting in accessibility solutions "ProASolutionsPT", the technical team commissioned a set of preliminary plans and projects of urban intervention which are distinguished by the introduction of the value of "accessibility for all" in urban and architectural policies developed in the municipality of Lousã.

The PSIAT brings together an application that identifies the operations that can favour the accessibility in the physical spaces and equipments in the municipality of Lousã, including an accessibility diagnosis, the proposal of solutions of accessibility and the setting of a budget for the works on accessibility. In addition, ProASolutionsPT promoted some campaigns of awareness for accessibility in Lousã to empower municipal technicians in the fields of their own competences.

In this sense, ProASolutionsPT was an important partner of the technical team, especially in the relevant matters of the accessibility of the public spaces and equipments of Lousã.

PSIAT become not only a relevant tool for the adoption of principles of "Architecture, Urbanism and Design for All". It sets the general guidance for a new generation of urban plans and architecture projects in the municipality of Lousã that are changing the way public spaces, buildings and equipments are designed and adapted. Therefore, several tourist attractions, amenities and ventures have been created or adapted following the principles of "Accessibility for All".

iii. Studies on Accessibility and Tourism for All

In the course of the project "Lousã, Accessible Tourism Destination", several studies were commissioned in order to provide a better understanding about the reality of the Municipality of Lousã in terms of accessibility and of "Tourism for All". The gathering of this knowledge was critical for supporting and justifying the decision making of the local stakeholders, especially the Câmara Municipal da Lousã. Consequently, the Mission Structure initiated the elaboration of the following studies:

Diagnosis of the Resident Population with Disability in Lousã

The study was commissioned to get a broader understanding of the disabled population of Lousã in order to develop an analytical tool that would allow the adoption of effective and consistent local policies for this population. The diagnosis also provided a systematic overview of the available data regarding the targeted population in terms of their living, work and leisure conditions. Further, it gave to the Mission Structure a thorough evaluation of the practices of rehabilitation and social integration in the municipality of Lousã.

The diagnostics of this study allowed the socio-economic weaknesses of this population to be examined, resulting in solutions and policies for prevention or resolution of problems under the principles of a systemic approach, integrating such relevant domains as urban planning, tourism, social assistance, rehabilitation services, etc.

Diagnosis of Accessibility and Mobility of Tourist Establishments in Lousã

Taking advantage from the experience of the "Seal of Accessibility" in Lousã, the Mission Structure wanted to provide to already distinguished tourist entrepreneurs a full diagnosis of the conditions of accessibility they were offering to tourists with specific access requirements at that time. Further, the study was meant to provide to the entrepreneurs a set of technical recommendations in order to promote improvements of the accessibility conditions in their establishments and therefore bolstering the general conditions of accessibility offered to tourists in Lousã.

A contract was drawn up with the specialized Tour Operator "Accessible Portugal" in order to strengthen the technical ability of the Mission Structure in the conduction these diagnoses. The technical commitment of Accessible Portugal fostered a particular focus on the tourist services that were being offered to tourists with special needs at that time.

In the sequence, a "Handbook of Recommendations on Accessibility" was created for the tourist agents of Lousã. This handbook provides a set of recommendations for the adaptation of tourist services in order to improve the first contact, the communication process and the delivery of information to tourists with special needs. Further, it also provides guidance on accessibility to tourist entrepreneurs in order to enhance both comfort and safety of all kinds of tourists.

Study on Hospitality, Entertainment and Occupation of Tourists with Special Needs in Lousã

The Mission Structure had intended to study the conditions of accessibility of the services of recreation, leisure and tourism offered to the tourists with special needs in Lousã. The study was also meant to identify and to propose individual and collective responses for shaping a more adapted tourist animation. Another implication of the study was the evaluation of the opportunities of employment and entrepreneurship that result from the adaptation of the tourist animation in Lousã. Finally, the study set some concrete proposals for the consolidation and competitiveness of tourism in Lousã, bolstering its value chain through the promotion of better conditions to satisfy the wide demand of Tourism for All.

Study of the Impact of the Tourism for All in the Social Market of Employment of Lousã

Based on the study of the socio-economic development potential of Tourism for All in the municipality of Lousã, the Mission Structure had intended to identify new training needs for the local labour force, in particular for the *lousanenses* with disabilities, as well as highlight new opportunities of employment and entrepreneurship.

The problematic of the integration of disabled people in the labour market of Lousã was largely disregarded through the times, particularly in the tourism sector. This was a fault that the Mission Structure wanted to overcome with this study, starting with the full identification of any professional expectations nourished by local residents with disabilities, especially in the domain of tourism. On the side of employers, the study listed the potential needs of skilled manpower associated to the business opportunities arising from the creation and development of the accessible tourism destination in Lousã. Finally, and stating firmly a will to promote an accessible tourism destination in Lousã, the study wanted to evaluate the level of perception of the local tourist agents in regard to the needs of training and qualification of their staffs, including their availability for the employment of disabled professionals.

Study of the Accessibility and the Mobility of the Transport System of the Municipality of Lousã

The specific needs of Lousã in this field were diagnosed in order to set proposals to adapt the system of transportation of passengers and tourists of Lousã. Either by the means of road, rail (via Coimbra) or plane (via transfers to the airports of Lisbon or Oporto), the study aimed to establish solutions to meet efficiently the special needs of Lousã's residents, visitors and tourists.

The study allowed the *Câmara Municipal* to take a more responsible stake in the accessibility improvement of the municipal transport system, hand in hand with other local stakeholders in the business of local transport and mobility. Thereby, it increased the attractiveness of Lousã both for transport agents or tour operators that see a growing opportunity in the passengers and tourists with specific access requirements.

Monitoring and Evaluation of the Project

Under the aegis of the European Network for Accessible Tourism (ENAT), the Mission Structure developed a system of permanent monitoring and evaluation of the project "Lousã, Accessible Tourism Destination" aiming for its continuous improvement. The implementation of this system allowed the production of qualitative information that assisted to the decision making and the introduction of corrective measures.

This work included an assessment of the project that aimed to set the Lousã's experience as an international benchmark for the creation and development of accessible tourism destinations. Furthermore, the multi-faceted evaluation of the project contributed to the creation of the first Accessible Tourism Destination Certification Programme which was applied in Lousã in the final phase of the implementation period (described in Section V, below).

iv. Destination Management

The Mission Structure promoted the launching of tourist packages (with experimental, demonstrative and promotional purposes) to stimulate the social and commercial integration of Lousã in the national and international markets of Tourism for All. In turn, the tourist packages created the opportunity for local tourism stakeholders to acknowledge the weaknesses along with the strengths of Lousã's tourist offer concerning the specific requirements of all tourists.

The Tour Operator "Accessible Portugal" (AP) provided consulting services to the Mission Structure in the area of tourism operation for special tourists. AP took charge of the organisation and the delivery of the tourist packages of Tourism for All. The involvement of AP had also coaching purposes: the Mission Structure wanted to test, as realistically as possible, an array of tourist proposals specially arranged to serve different types of tourists with specific access requirements. This coaching was a major asset not only for the tourist agents involved in the delivery of tourist products but also for the technical team of the project which has been directly involved in the preparation, organisation, implementation and evaluation of these "tours".





Figures 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15: Leisure Activities in Lousã

In implementing these "Tour" simulations, the Mission Structure has measured the specific needs of groups of different tourists, as well as its commercial potential. On the other hand, the details in execution of tours raised critical points in the organisation and provision of special tourist packages that would be improved through the continual training effort of the local tourism stakeholders. Moreover, the simulations served to identify simultaneously those local tourist agents who demonstrated a willingness to be more devoted and prepared to provide such special services.

With the expertise and connections of AP, the simulations were carried out with real tourists organised in groups in real situations of Tourism for All. The contact with the special needs of these groups of tourists - according to their diverse conditions, their expectations and their affiliations (e.g. travelling with family or friends that then also become part of the group of tourists) - was an important source of knowledge and motivation for the awareness of local tourist agents who voluntarily involved themselves in these tests of Tourism for All.



Figure 16 and 17: leisure activities in Lousã

v. **The Promotion of a Culture of Accessibility**

Through its significant presence in the rehabilitation sector, the ARCIL helped the local community of Lousã to develop an open attitude towards the difference that in time has become part of the local culture and has spread to the public local bodies and privately-owned businesses, thus giving to this municipality a competitive advantage in the moment it is willing to implement a project and run actions that aim at promoting the inclusion of disabled people.

In order to capitalize this distinctive human capital, there was a cycle of conferences dedicated to the awareness towards accessibility issues and tourism. Other municipalities, institutions and corporations were invited to present their own experiences and methods with regard to accessibility. The conferences accorded a particular attention to the economic and social advantages of working with accessibility either in territories, communities or organisations. Some of these gatherings were reserved for an interested local public, but most of them were open to the local community and were widely disseminated through local schools and media of local expression. Some relevant examples may be pointed:

- Action "Accessible Tourist Animation" - promoted by the French Association HANIMA and the *Provedoria Municipal*, June 2008;
- Action "Food Services for People with Disabilities" - promoted by the School of Hospitality and Tourism of Coimbra and the *Câmara Municipal da Lousã*, May 2009;
- Annual event "Downhill in Wheelchairs of Lousã" – promoted by ARCIL, with the introduction of concerns of Tourism for All since 2010;

• Since 2010, introduction of accessibility concerns in some actions contained in the quarterly Agenda of Animation of the *Câmara Municipal da Lousã*, with the support from the municipal departments for sports and tourism, as for instance:

- "Urban Hike - Hike Inclusive", on April 2010;
- "Sport for All - Goalball", counting for the national championship, on April 2010;
- "Healthy Lousã", on May 2010;
- "Meeting of Generations," on September 2010.
- "Table for All", accessibility in the gastronomy festivals of Lousã, since 2010;
- Festival "Arts for All", promoted by the *Câmara Municipal da Lousã*, the Tour Operator "Accessible Portugal" and other local institutions, June 2011.



Figure 18: Festival "Arts for All"



Figure 19: "Downhill in wheelchairs in Lousã"



Figure 20: Adapted bike



Figure 21: trekking in a joëlette

Other awareness-raising and information actions were also carried out in order to spread the concerns and opportunities of accessibility among teachers, trainers, entrepreneurs and professionals of the tourism industry, technicians and staff in the fields of rehabilitation and social support, as well as among the local residents with disabilities. These actions were meant to promote Tourism for All as a means to foster employment and entrepreneurship within the local community.

In addition to awareness raising, the Mission Structure have developed specific expertise in these fields of Tourism for All that need now to be consolidated by the means of continual professional training with the help of specialized trainers. This effort should be accompanied by the delivery of materials and equipment (technical aids) of training on matters of Tourism for All.

8. The Certification Programme for the Municipality of Lousã as "Accessible Tourism Destination": Past and Future Challenges

As part of the external monitoring and evaluation of the Lousã project, in 2009 an international access consulting organisation, Toegankelijkheidsbureau vzw. (TGB, Belgium) was given the task to develop a specific certification programme for the management and assessment of the accessible tourism destination. This was probably the first such accessible tourism destination certification programme in the world. It was designed to verify the quality and performance characteristics of the destination, based on the project's internal objectives and international benchmarks for good practice.

The consultants describe the Accessible Tourism Destination Certification Programme as: *“an objectively verifiable procedure for measuring the systems and performance of the tourism providers, for providing an accessible environment and tourism offer based on specified criteria, taking into account the access needs and requirements of a wide diversity of visitors, including persons with disabilities, older people and others who are in need of good access”*.

The purpose of the Accessible Tourism Destination Certification Programme or ATDCP was to provide a certification system that, simultaneously, could support and benefit the diagnostic work which was required by the network of the public and private service providers in the destination.

The ATDCP is based on an extensive audit of the municipality's accessible tourism policies (including resourcing), infrastructure, transport, services and visitor information, and includes accessibility assessments of the outdoor environment, overnight accommodation, attractions, activities and offers for visitors including, especially, persons with disabilities, older persons and families with small children.

ATDCP is a completely new destination management tool which provides an accurate measure of the excellence of an accessible tourism destination, based on strictly defined criteria.

The Destination Certification Programme involves assessment meetings with destination managers, coupled with on-site audits and document analysis by external auditors, thus building a picture of the capacity and level of achievement of the accessible destination.

Each element of the assessment described in text format and is then scored against a set of indicators, thus enabling auditors and managers to track the destination's performance over time. Performance indicators are graded on a 1 to 4 scale where 1 is the lowest level of performance and 4 is "best practice". This procedure allows, potentially, for benchmarking across any number of accessible tourism destinations.

As a result of the ATDC audits, the programme concludes with detailed report showing both *Performance Scores* and a tailor-made *Action Plan* for destination managers, giving priorities for improvements that need to be made in the different facets of the accessible destination.

As such, the Action Plan provides a management tool that can be used for resource allocation and setting priorities, ensuring that the destination will continue to develop and improve its offers to all visitors, giving them

fulfilling, accessible experiences, whatever their interests and regardless of their age or abilities.

In keeping with similar quality management and certification tools, the TGB Accessible Tourism Destination Certificate is valid for two years, after which time it must be renewed through a re-assessment process.

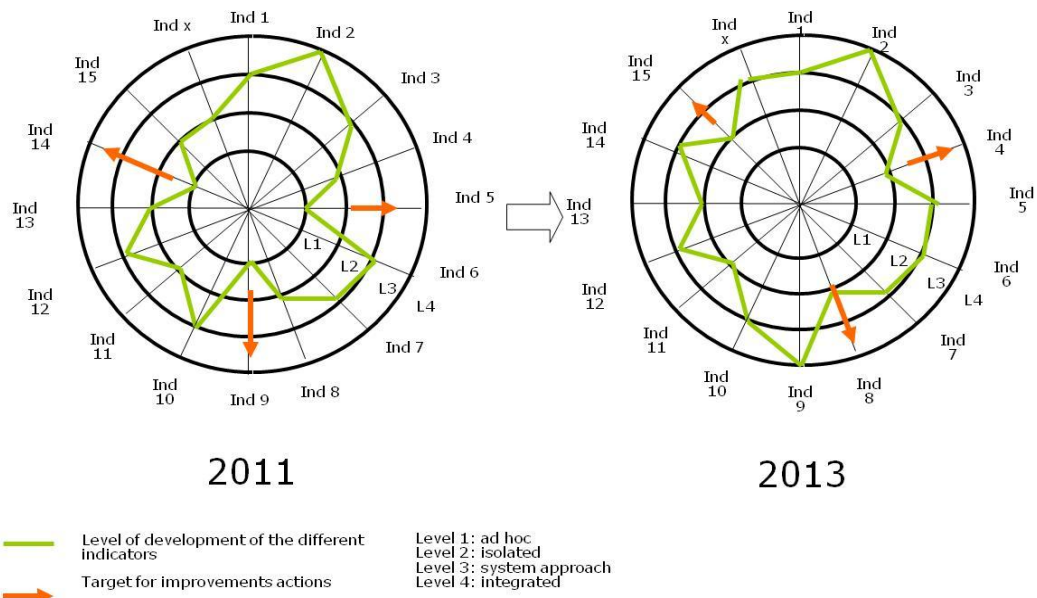


Figure 22: Schematic representation of ATDC assessment (2011) and Action Plan targets (2013) for Tourism Destination for All, Lousã.

The above figure shows the summary result of Lousã’s ATDCP 2011 report, based on 16 key indicators, together with the targeted improvement actions to be achieved by 2013. The outward pointing arrows show which (low-scoring) indicators are in most need of improvement. It should also be recognised that where there is good performance in a certain area, this level must be maintained or even improved to achieve a satisfactory and continuing positive outcome in future certification assessments.

What the ATDCP also reminds us is that, however good they may be, *tourist destinations can always improve their accessibility, inclusionary policies and practices*. One of the major lessons from the certification of Lousã is that achieving good access, as well as more visitors – and *more satisfied* visitors – is a process which must be continually nurtured and supported by all those who are involved in destination management and implementation activities.



Figure 23 and 24: Accessible Tourism Destination Certification

9. Conclusions

The challenge of Tourism for All leads us to conclude that the host communities of the tourism destinations - by being more awake as a whole to the constraints but also to the business opportunities of working for a better accessibility - tend to gradually improve the conditions of access offered to disabled citizens, whether they are tourists or residents. Therefore, it is believed that the creation and development of a given "accessible tourism destination" will promote, in time, a symbiotic relationship between tourism and accessibility, which tends to benefit everyone: residents and the local community, entrepreneurs and local authorities, institutions of rehabilitation and of social aid, the different tourist agents and, after all, the tourists with greater or lesser degree of "special needs".

Lousã had a long tradition in the field of accessibility. Thus, it had in its hands a strong asset to lay the foundations of a serious work towards the creation and development of an accessible tourism destination. But, first it had to overcome some serious constraints. Traditionally in Portugal, the areas of rehabilitation and of social support were lacking in any form of economic orientation. These sectors were always viewed in a welfare perspective, which contributed to a certain detachment from any idea of economical sustainability. To some extent, and despite the work of institutions as ARCIL, Lousã also colluded in this common perception, which in the long run proved itself to be unsustainable. As a paradox, the mind-set

of the sectors of rehabilitation and of social assistance were one of the first constraints to be overcome in Lousã.

Indeed, the growing numbers of the part of the population presenting specific access requirements and social needs, the greater awareness of the society towards the rights of disabled citizens and the growing economical and social influence of people with disabilities have spurred the institutions of rehabilitation and social welfare to decrease their dependence on government subsidies. The initiative "Accessible Lousã" gave rise to the idea that the further development of accessibility responses would be very dependent from the actual ability of the Mission Structure to engage the local community and the local economy actors (and not only tourist agents). This engagement was critical in finding solutions for a more sustainable development of the sectors of rehabilitation and of social welfare in Lousã, providing here a case study for the rest of the country.

The Portuguese society is starting to show a level of familiarity with the issues of disability that makes it ready for a shift of social paradigm. Entrepreneurs start looking at this issue from the standpoint of business and, not least, by broadening its business potential via an increase in their basis of targeted customers - this opportunity is very evident when it comes to tourism. Finally, local authorities are closing a cycle of major infrastructure investments and are seeking the next step of local public policies. In this context, general topics such as accessibility and special fields of development such as Tourism for All must be seen as an opportunity to strengthen social cohesion and strengthen the rights and guarantees of all citizens.

The national government and the national authorities for tourism and for rehabilitation saw in the project "Lousã, Accessible Tourism Destination" the opportunity to set the framework of a pilot project at the national level. The creation of an accessible tourism destination in Lousã was seen as a test to promote socially the business of tourism and to introduce an economical concern in the rehabilitation sector. Meanwhile, the tourists with specific access requirements from all the country and abroad were invited to be part of the creation of the accessible tourism destination, giving end to the

fulfilment of a citizen's right that until now was only set on the rhetorical level in Portugal.

The Municipality of Lousã saw this project as an opportunity to take charge of a new generation of local public policies promoting a reconciliation of the economic growth with the values of social responsibility.

In conclusion, we assert that the project "Lousã, Accessible Tourism Destination" served as a lever for the creation of a new business area based on the development of a tourism with social sensibility. However, there is still a long way to go in adapting the local services and infrastructure, along with changes in mentalities in the businesses of tourism. We must bear in mind that tourists with particular access requirements should be integrated into the "regular" tourism market of Lousã, under penalty that a specialization in the fringes of disabilities become a kind of unconscious discrimination. Another factor to consider is the need for a stronger joint effort between the public and the private sectors towards the pursuit of common objectives to improve accessibility for the local community and the visitors.

Given the collective work done until now in the framework of the Mission Structure, at the present time Lousã is getting ready for the next works, being the most critical:

- Further developing the accessible tourism destination of Lousã, while keeping the Mission Structure functions;
- Strengthen the synergies already created with a greater co-responsibility of local public and private partners;
- Implementing and managing the system of certification of the Accessible Tourism Destination in Lousã towards a sustained improvement of the conditions of accessibility offered by the local tourist supply;
- Strengthen the dimension of training to tourist staff, public clerks, tourist entrepreneurs and clerks of institutions of rehabilitation and social aid in order to improve services provided to tourists with special needs, in particular, and to the local community, in general.

Meanwhile, the results obtained until now should provide a stimulus and be construed as a commitment for continuing this project on a more solid basis.

The initiative "Lousã Accessible" - and within it the project "Lousã, Accessible Tourism Destination" - has merited the respect of many national and international authorities in their respective fields and has proved to be very well accepted by the national community of disabled people, with favourable echoes in the national and international media. Moreover, the case study of Lousã has merited an extraordinary attention of the academic community, being the centre piece of field research for many scientific papers and theses of masters or PhD, especially in the academic field of tourism management.

Proving the wide recognition of the initiative, the "Lousã Accessible" was honoured with many distinctions and awards since 2007. Among them we should distinguish the European Enterprise Awards for the "best national practice of corporate social responsibility" of 2010 and, recently, the national prize of 2011 in the category of "Service Quality" granted by *Turismo de Portugal, IP*, the national tourism authority.



Figure 25: European Enterprise Awards 2010



Figure 26: "Service Quality" Tourism of Portugal 2011

In conclusion, Lousã has undertaken a pioneer work in the conception and in the testing on the field of innovative solutions to the challenges posed by the creation and development of accessible tourism destinations in our time. This is a collective effort that must be continued with persistence, far-sightedness and wisdom because the wide community of tourism professionals and citizens with specific access requirements now have their eyes on Lousã.

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Inclusive Tourism - How To Develop The Right Hospitality Skills To Receive and Entertain People With Special Needs

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Inclusive Tourism - How To Develop The Right Hospitality Skills To Receive and Entertain People With Special Needs

When reflecting on the relationship between tourism and people with special needs we can consider 3 dimensions:

- **Accessibility;**
- **Education for Tourism;**
- **Quality of Service.**



Accessibility in Tourism refers to the actions needed to ensure that tourist destinations, products and services are accessible to all people, regardless of their physical limitations, disabilities or age. This involves the delivery of universally designed tourism products, services and environments that allow that people with mobility, vision, hearing and cognitive limitations can function independently and with equity and dignity.

Education for Tourism refers to the actions needed to develop in people with special needs, their families and friends, the tools required to activate their rights to participate in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport as any other citizen. This involves raising awareness for the needs of people with disabilities and teaching them how to use the resources available in the tourism industry.



Quality of Service refers to the efforts needed to incorporate in the tourism professionals competences the complementary and specific skills needed to provide an excellent service to people with special needs. The qualification of tourism professionals is key to build successful solutions of Inclusive Tourism.



In order to better understand the dynamics of providing hospitality services to people with special needs, a study was conducted in 2010 in Portugal.

The study was based on face to face interviews conducted by experts (with significant experience on disabilities and tourism areas) to key stakeholders:

- people with special needs with traveling experience (including people with physical, visual, hearing and intellectual disabilities and elderly citizens with limitations arising from the aging process)
- tourism professionals with experience of working with this target group

The study enabled the extensive identification and detailed characterization of the special needs that people with limitations have when using tourism services (transports, accommodation, meals, activities, etc).

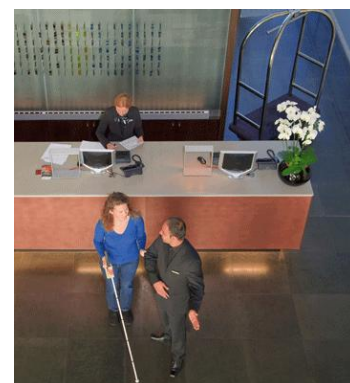
With that knowledge, the experts were able to identify and define the specific hospitality skills that tourism professionals need to develop to deliver an high standard of service to those clients.



The conclusions of the study were used to produce a Training Package aimed at developing in the tourism professionals the right set of hospitality skills to welcome and receive people with special needs.

The Training Package is organized in 4 modules:

- A “Cross-sectoral” module for all tourism professionals focused on the specific skills necessary to support and give assistance to people with special needs in what concerns general mobility, orientation and communication



- An “Accommodation” module that covers the specific skills that professionals of the Hotel business need to develop to provide a better service to this target group (in daily operations like reservation, arrivals, check-in, room adaptation, activities during stay, check-out, etc)
- A “Food&Beverage” module focused on the specific skills that F&B professionals should develop to deal with people with special needs (in day to day operations like welcoming the client, table service, bar service, buffet, coffee-break, room service, etc)
- An “Other Tourism Services” module that covers the development of skills necessary for the professionals that work in other tourism services (like tour operators, travel agencies, transports, event organization, leisure activities, etc)



Each one of the modules covers the 4 main areas of disability (physical, visual, hearing and intellectual) and the area of elderly citizens with limitations arising from the aging process.

It is suggested that each tourism professional participates in 2 modules, the Cross-sectoral module and the module of their specific area. For instance, a receptionist should take the Cross-sectoral and Accommodation modules while a bartender should take the Cross-sectoral and Food&Beverage modules.



This Training Package intends to prepare tourism professionals to respond successfully to people with special needs, knowing and dealing with their

specific requests in a way that enables them to have positive experiences within the leisure and tourism industries.

Training is one of the most powerful weapons to develop in the tourism professionals the hospitality skills required to successfully receive and entertain people with special needs.

The qualification of tourism professionals is a key contributor to the widespread fruition of leisure and tourism services by people with special needs as recognized by the United Nations in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Design and Society| FUNDAÇÃO LIGA, Portugal

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Fundação LIGA (1956), is a pioneer institution on the (Re)Habilitation of people with constraints of their physical or cognitive functions, being an interdisciplinary cross-cutting and complex intervention, with great support of ICT, and aware of the importance of accessibility to promote a better life quality.

When the advance of science and technology was felt for an easier access to knowledge, application, the children with multiple disabilities were beginning to survive growing up, nobody was prepared to respond appropriately to these new situations. Fundação LIGA has been steadily creating methods and tools most appropriate and immediately joined technological resources, specifically aimed for communication and overall development of children. Fundação LIGA explores the ICT resources as they are essentially for global development and for the communication and mobility access.

Since 1995 created the Resource Centre for Independent Living, as a technician support service for access to the autonomy development, to prescribe and train with each person, the use of technological aids, looking to atomize the needs to exercise their citizenship. In addition, it maintains a Tecnoteca - service of temporary release of technical support, the assistance as an accessibility adviser and the personalized support services (medical and therapeutic, accompaniment and personal care, and finely the home services). This Resource Centre is part of the global intervention with an interdisciplinary participation between all departments.

Since 1992, Fundação LIGA⁵, joined knowledge and experiences from consulting for accessibility, training programs for designers, architects and other professional on these topics, promoted whit the Technical Engendering University a one year program for the graduations studies in Design and Disability.

On December 2010 do the presentation of the SELO ACESSO Project, using a new concept of accessibility comprehensive and based on the possibility of enjoyment of a space that can be physical as well as informational or communicational.

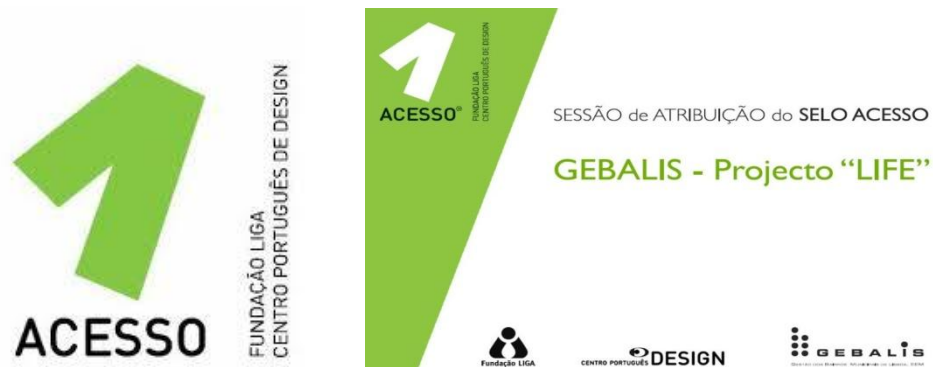
SELO ACESSO Project appeared for identify the conditions and characteristics of physical, communicational and informational accessibility, equipment and personal assistance, existing in public and private spaces and facilities for public use; for distinguish the good practices in accessibility, identifying needs and providing guidance aimed at improving the built environment, adding value to the institution or space applicant and for disclose the existing accessible conditions in spaces and public and private facilities for public use and to promote its clear and intelligible reading and identification.

The target group of this project is Schools, Educational Units, Cultural and Leisure Spaces, Tourism Equipment, Other Public and Private Buildings for Public Use.

The award of the SELO ACESSO is structured and based on evaluation grids and consider the accessibility developed [physical, communication and information, equipment and personal assistance], the degree of autonomy that they offer, the safety and comfort of use and the comprehensiveness of accessibility [greater or lesser number of target audiences]. The analysis of these requirements is performed by a multidisciplinary team of experts in accordance with the specificities of the application object. The final report, prepared by that team, systematizes the identification of situations and guidelines that should be undertaken and implemented by the requesting entity.

⁵ www.fundacaoliga.pt

In 2010, SELO ACESSO has been awarded to GEBALIS⁶ and is being implemented at Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian⁷, among other institutions.



Fundação LIGA is a founding member of EIDD, Europe (1992) and the European Design for All e-Accessibility Network EdeAN (2000).

Fundação LIGA has organized Conferences, Congresses and Workshops looking at how a whole systems approach give the support and the opportunity to recognize the dignity and autonomy of all individuals as equal citizens. During this year on November the Fundação LIGA, will develop a Congress about “The Humann Diversity as a Capital for a new Strategies to Create Future”.

⁶ www.gebalis.pt

⁷ www.gulbenkian.pt

State of the Art of Accessibility in Portugal – Integrated Accessibility Solutions Plan

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State of the Art of Accessibility in Portugal – Integrated Accessibility Solutions Plan

1. General Framework

If there is any common characteristic of mankind is its DIVERSITY. However, we live in a stereotyped society, designed for the most part, not taking into account the rights and interests of a large minority and thus discriminating against an important part of the population.

Accessibility is a broad and comprehensive concept that has evolved in recent years beyond the idea of architectural barriers removing implicit in legislation to the implementation of municipal instruments seen as the condition to be met by spaces, services and equipment to ensure its use and enjoyment of all citizens on equal terms, taking Design for All principles into account. This involves seeing accessibility related to fundamental freedoms, the right to lead an independent living and life quality for all citizens.

Given Portuguese demographic evolution, this issues become even pressing since last decades evolution has not been positive.

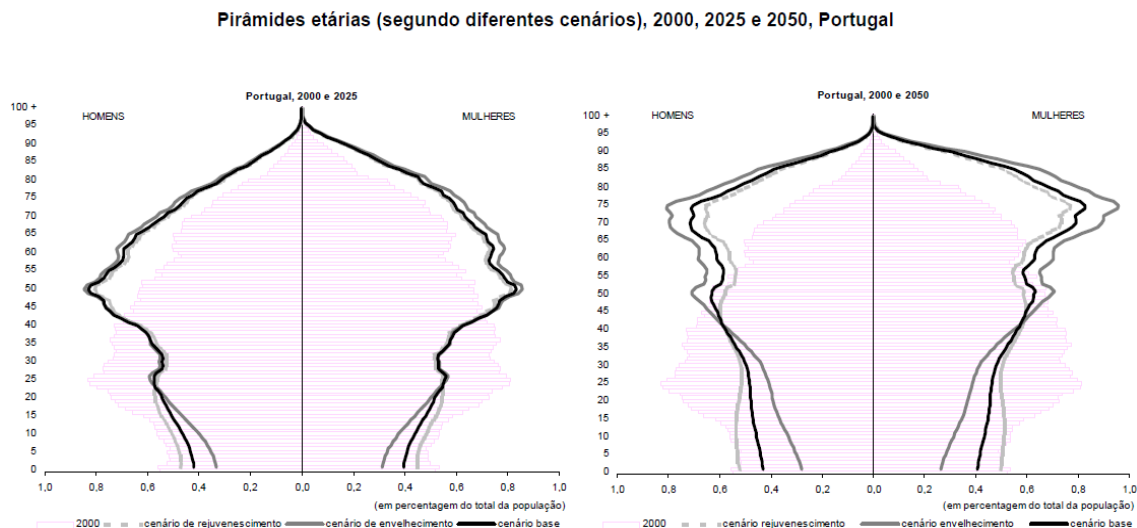


Figure 1: Portuguese Demographical evolution - forecast to 2050 (source INE)

In 2050 elderly (people over 65 years old) citizens should represent about 32% of Portuguese population. In 2005, births were little more than the deaths and the flow of immigrants decreased. Against this background, the

conclusion is obvious: the Portuguese population is stagnating, aging and there's a lack of assets to bear the costs of aging.

This information added to the fact that about 10% of the Portuguese population has some kind of disability and about 40% of the population would benefit from improvements regarding accessibility, makes the implementation of accessibility and Design for All criteria even more imperative.

2. Portuguese legal framework

The Prevention, Habilitation, Rehabilitation and Participation of disabled people Basic Law (Law No. 38/2004) establishes the principle of non-discrimination, and recognizes the built environment as a factor of discriminatory practices or integration facilitator if it takes disabled people into account or not.

In 2006 a national law was approved regarding the application of technical standards and regulations on Accessibility on buildings defining the access conditions to be met in the design and construction of public spaces, community facilities and public buildings and housing (DL163/2006 published on 8 August 2006). This law also provides the technical standards to be met by buildings, equipment and infrastructure covered.

Policies Relating to Accessibility are included in the National Plan for the Promotion of Accessibility (PNPA), approved in 2007 by the Portuguese Government that proceed to the systematization of a set of measures to provide disabled people an increased autonomy, equal opportunities a, social participation as citizens and increase their life quality.

In this scenario local authorities/municipalities are agents of change since they hold the responsibility for the management of local urban planning actions, construction licensing, urban and architectural projects approval, but also have many legal responsibilities to implement, monitor and enforce accessibility regulations.

Therefore it was essential to provide them means to correspond positively to the challenges and needs of the community regarding accessibility, and legal requirements.

Given this, the Human Potential Operational Program (POPH) financed by European Social Fund created the "RAMPA" Program - Support System to Municipalities for Accessibility, which aims to support local authorities in developing local or regional plans that promote physical and architectural accessibility in public space. The RAMPA program is at the service of local authorities who want to improve its built environment to ensure urban accessibility for disabled people.

Through the RAMPA program has been supporting local and regional accessibility diagnosis in urban areas, awareness and training in the areas of environmental accessibility, as well as plans and projects aimed to adapt accessibility local conditions.

From this financial support, combined with the need to fulfill Portuguese Laws, Integrated Accessibility Solutions Plans emerged.

3. The need for Integrated Accessibility Solutions Plans

As proposed before the Plan should not be limited to the simple elimination of architectural barriers for people with physical disabilities, but it should prepare cities and towns to become accessible to all people, taking into account human diversity and their different needs.

These Plans are tools that allow regional and local governments to plan accessibility improvement actions on Thoroughfare, Public Buildings and facilities, Recreation, Leisure, and Neighborhood services, Transportation and Traffic services, Communication and Accessibility to the Web/Information technology in order to fulfill the legal obligations prescribed by DL 163/2006 published on 8 August and therefore improve all citizens wellbeing. This Plan allows municipalities to access and manage key information to achieve an increased quality of life for all citizens, providing schedule, execution and evaluation actions that will contribute to social inclusion for all citizens.

The Plan implementation, developed taking into account an integrated analysis on the accessibility and Design for All, is an information system that serves as a guideline for the actions taken for all the stakeholders that operate in built environment, allowing municipalities to set clear objectives, solutions, priorities, and responsibilities for each stakeholder, an efficient actions coordination, citizens needs and optimization of physical, human and financial resources as well as scheduled actions to be performed, since after the diagnosis stage needed solutions are established and properly budgeted.

It is also a powerful tool that allows working with a huge amount of data depending its utility from the capability of municipality to keep the Plan constantly updated using GIS tools (Geographic Information Systems) a technology that meant a step forward on the Plans development.

Public participation policies of citizens and local disabled or elderly people associations is essential in order to manage these plans, providing social data and inputs that will complement technical information, helping politicians and technicians to determine what actions are urgent and needed in the short run.

Thus, planning in an integrated point of view provides answers to the population needs, which are:

- Essential to 10% of citizens (affected by permanent disabilities).
- Required to 40% of citizens who suffer from any mobility impairments (pregnancy, accident, old age, freight, etc.).
- Comfortable to 100% of the citizens, who find a city more convenient, unobstructed, well signposted and sensitized.

In order to develop solutions that will be suggested by the plan, it's important to rely on six criteria for action, design and development, such as defined by the "European Concept for Accessibility" (2003), reference text in Europe, which suggests that the built environment should be:

1. *Respectful* - (remove barriers that hinder the access of a substantial part of the population)
2. *Safe* - (Eliminate health and safety risks for the all population)
3. *Healthy* - (Eliminate health and safety risks for the all population)

4. *Understandable* - (Let access to information to be clear and understandable to everyone)

5. *Functional* - (Led to an improvement of life's quality of for all people)

6. *Aesthetic* - (Be aesthetically pleasing and harmonious)

The existence Plan provides a set of benefits to different stakeholders. Thus, one can mention the following:

➤ Social Utility

Respect for diversity is created from a Design for All approach which aims to enable all people to contribute to the development of society with equal opportunities to participate in economic, social, cultural, recreational and leisure activities, accessing, interacting and understanding the built environment in an autonomous way, regardless age, gender, cultural background and physical sensorial or psychological abilities.

➤ Technical Utility

One of the fundamental rules on the making of the Plan is to work very closely with municipal technicians and workers, consultants and other local staff, so that on the one hand, develop a profound knowledge of the actions, and on the other hand, to adjust their customary work methods and be compatible with already existing plans and studies.

➤ Polical Utility

In order to make decisions for municipality's social and economic development, elected politicians need information on the population's needs and territory, and what actions and investments are needed to improve their citizens life quality.

4. How to develop an Integrated Accessibility Solutions Plan

A Plan must be based on the study of human relationships with its built environments. This relationship is established at different levels. The purpose of developing an INTEGRATED ACCESSIBILITY SOLUTIONS PLAN focuses on analyzing and diagnosing the level of accessibility on:

- **Thoroughfare**
- **Public Buildings and facilities**
- **Recreation, Leisure, and Neighborhood services**
- **Transportation and Traffic services**
- **Communication and Accessibility to the Web/Information technology**

Developing budgeted, scheduled technical solutions that will result in a strategic, tactical, operational and comprehensive management tool for the gradual adaptation of the built environment and services managed by municipalities, which aims to achieve the following goals:

- **Thinks strategically accessibility at municipal level avoiding piecemeal responses;**
- **Ensures integrated accessibility in urban and public spaces, facilities and services that are Municipality responsibility or other bodies directly or indirectly related;**
- **Allows equal access for all citizens implementing systems to support people with visual or sensory impairment and physical or mental disability;**
- **Avoids making new mistakes in new public works and gradually correct the diagnosed problems;**
- **Develops integrated solutions Accessibility for All, right from the beginning;**
- **boosts other agents to ensure full accessibility to public and private spaces and environments for public use;**
- **Encourages the optimal use of municipal financial and human resources;**
- **Provides detailed information about accessibility level at built environments, facilities and services that are managed by the municipality and its related bodies;**
- **Identifies and describes existing accessibility problems, setting goals that must be achieved in terms of accessibility improvement;**
- **Facilitates decision making and selects the most appropriate alternatives for improving the accessibility of facilities, products and services;**

- Establishes actions in order to meet objectives, action prioritization and implementation schedule;
- Provides criteria and assessing mechanisms for compliance with the proposed objectives;
- Establishes intervention proposals for general and specific implementation of accessibility improvements and maintenance in an integrated way in order to ensure the accessibility chain;
- Develops a territorial context and demographic characteristics survey with special relevance to the target population (older population, disabled people and reduced mobility persons) and their socio-economic conditions and use data resulting from this survey to be taken into account in preparing accessibility solutions;
- Uses interdisciplinary teams in order to manage the plan (geography, planning, architecture, environment);
- Involves disabled and elderly people representative organizations and local stakeholders to jointly find solutions and guidelines;
- Develops actions for public participation so that the data collected from this will be inputted to the technical solutions developed in the Plan;
- Sets priorities, timing and valuation stages for interventions, taking into account technical and social information;
- Develops a GIS (Geographic Information System) tool that works accessibility information, including geo-forums that will allow citizens to participate in on-line activities monitoring;
- Provides political, municipal technicians and the general technical knowledge and awareness of the issue of accessibility through awareness and training;
- Provides training of technicians and employees of the municipality, and dissemination of the principles of "Design for All" and Inclusive Design in society, to improve awareness and consideration of these principles in the design of any product or service;
- Enables to calculate detailed estimated costs for each one of the actions described in the Plan.

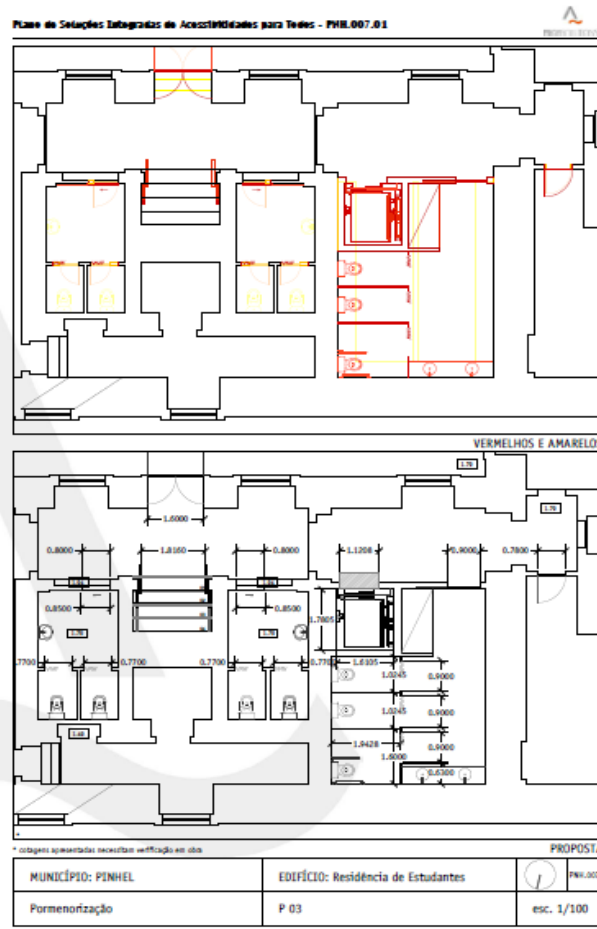


Figure 2: Building Accessibility Plan detail (source ProAsolutions.pt)

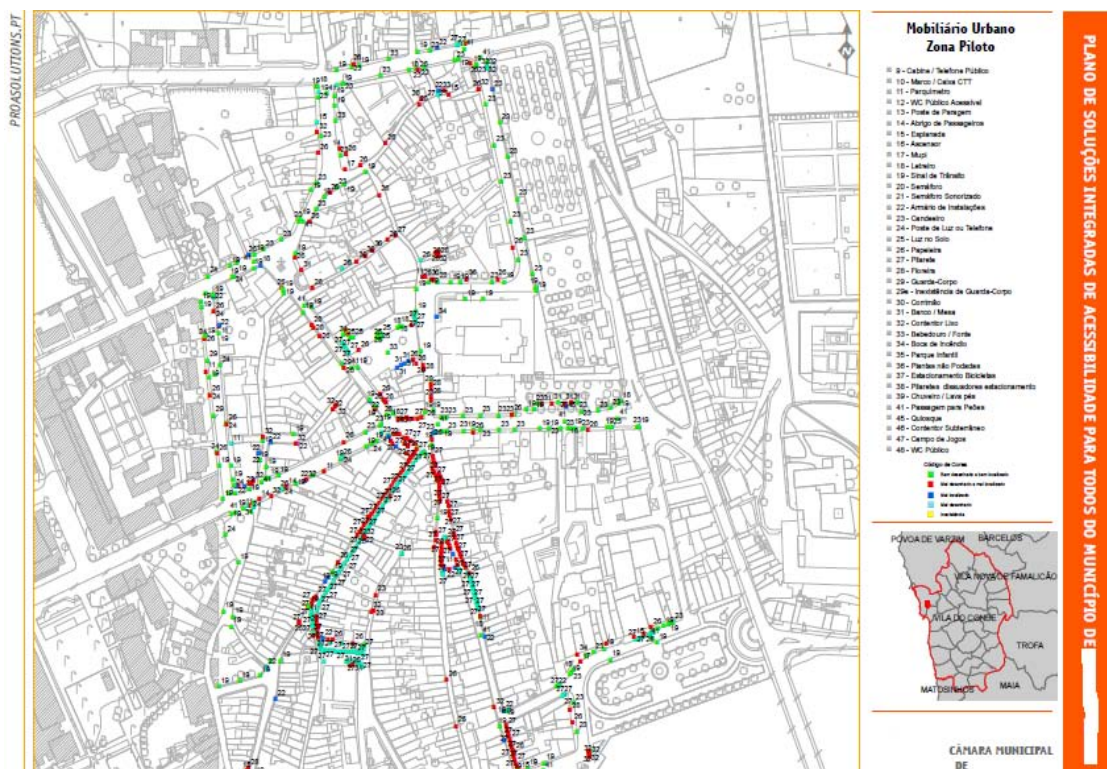


Figure 3: Thoroughfare Accessibility Plan detail (source Proasolutions.pt)

5. The use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

Use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) is a management technology and geographical information database, which allows managing a great amount of accessibility information since it's supported by databases that are aggregated to georeferenced information. Its use will enable the municipality to easily update and consult information about accessibility, turn it available to citizens using the website being one more tool to support civic participation and cross information and data with other plans based on GIS. Furthermore, the fact that the information is treated using databases will allow extracting graphic information on the status of accessibility elements facilitating the understanding and updating the technical and financial information.

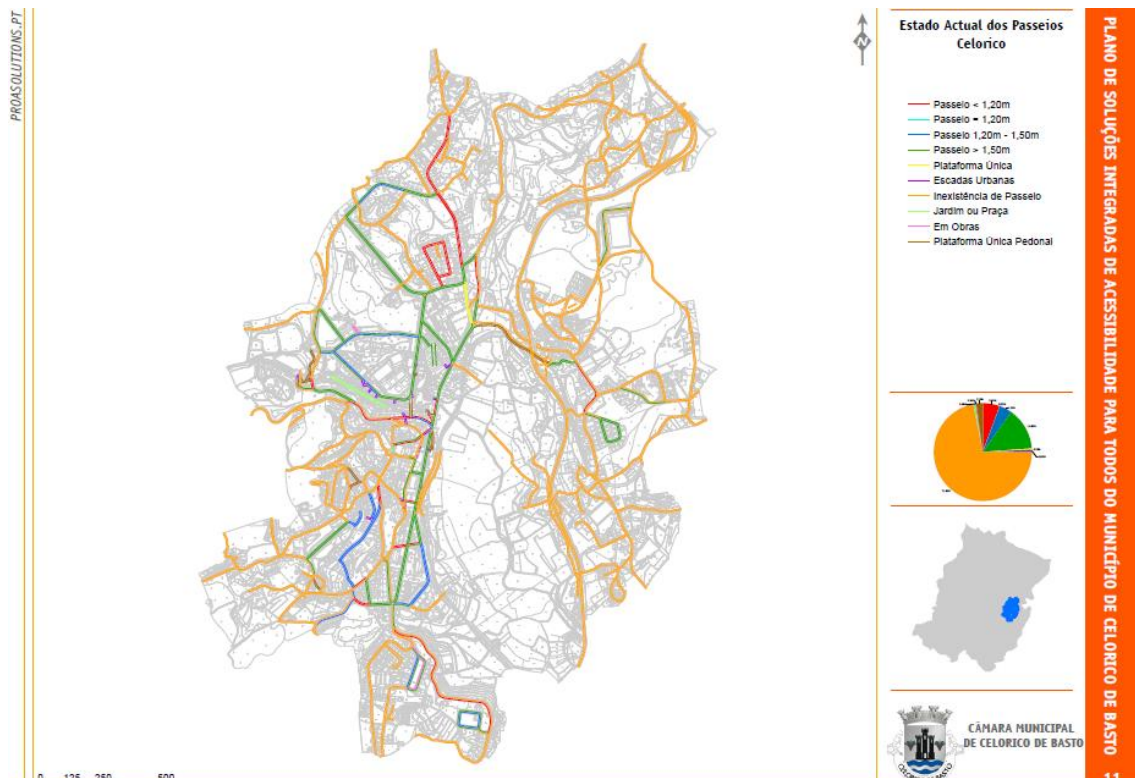


Figure 4: Information generated by GIS (source ProAsolutions.pt)

6. General municipality practices and regulations

The proposal for the drafting of a municipal accessibility regulation that serves as a guideline and sets the rules for the works taken place in built environment, architecture and urban projects, as well as public space usage

is a primordial issue. Thus, it's possible to comply with the existing National Accessibility Law, but also complement the gaps of existing law with the resort to European standards, recommendations of Design for All, or ergonomic criteria ensuring a proper implementation of future interventions and works, as well as proper maintenance procedures.

Issues like how to signal works in progress in thoroughfare or buildings in order to ensure that interventions won't cause any additional more imbalances in accessibility. Operations to predict the passage of pedestrians, signal and restrict hazardous areas, among others, are described and systematized to minimize the impact on all citizens.

7. Design for All and accessibility training and awareness

Training and awareness are decisive in the successful implementation of a Plan. In order to complement the technical features of the Plan it was developed a set of training sessions for a wide audience.

7.1 Training Course in Accessibility and Universal Design for All

Technical training in accessibility and design for all issues, and the practices required under the law is one of the most important success factors for the implementation and management of an INTEGRATED ACCESSIBILITY SOLUTIONS PLAN. However, given some loopholes in the law, it's necessary to complement this training with the presentation of good practices in accessibility that are issued by Standardization and Certification on accessibility in other countries. It is also intended to provide trainees a quick reference manual focusing on accessibility on Thoroughfare, Public Buildings, Transportation, Communication and Accessibility to the Web/Information technology. Municipal technicians architects, engineers, geographers, construction inspectors, are the main targets but also operating personnel responsible by public works and maintenance, but also technicians who collaborate regularly with the municipality in order to prevent in all stages future mistakes and at the same time solve existing accessibility issues.

7.2 Management and Implementation Plan of Integrated Solutions for Accessibility Training

Plan management is the Key factor for its successful implementation. It should be borne in mind that good intentions alone cannot produce the expected quality of results and continuity must be guaranteed at the outset of any action or plan and in order to prevent that the plan is placed “in the bottom of the drawer” there should be clear guidelines on how to put it into action. Many municipalities have been using the “Seven ISF (7 Interdependent Success Factors; © Aragall, Sagramola and Neumann, 2007)” published in “European Concept for Accessibility for Administrations” ECA 2007, that contributes with the methodology implementation of a Accessibility and Universal Design for All culture in the municipality organization. These ISF are:

- Decision-maker commitment
- Coordinating and continuity
- Networking and participation
- Strategic planning
- Knowledge management
- Resources
- Communication and marketing

An administration can pursue Design for All using a lot of single activities. Very promising and more effective is a strategic approach that includes all stakeholders from the outset and develops a long-term and sustainable concept (master plan).

7.3 Training and Awareness and in Accessibility for Public Procurement

An issue that has been proved efficient in the implementation of issues related to accessibility, is the inclusion of clauses Design for All and Accessibility in public procurement procedures. This training allows

municipalities to develop skills on how to achieve these, based on the experience gained with the publication of "Build-for-All - Promoting Accessibility for all to the built environment & Public Infrastructure" work supported by the European Commission.

The Build-for-All project gives guidance on three main areas:

1. The need to provide public authorities with guidance on the establishment of essential accessibility criteria and a methodology for step-by-step implementation of accessibility as provided for by the Public Procurement Directives of the EU
2. The need to inform the private sector and professional stakeholders about how to meet the demands of including accessibility criteria
3. The need to bring together the representatives of disability organizations and older people's organizations at European, national and local level with their counterparts from the other professional and stakeholder groups - the local and regional authorities, the construction industry, the lift manufacturers and architects - in order to promote and create lasting and ongoing constructive dialogue.

8. Accessibility Working Committee

In order to better manage the Plan implementation it's central to create a working committee that brings together every municipality department that is somehow related to accessibility, along with politicians and other stakeholders that can give some input to the effective management of all the tasks needed to put in practice the actions defined by the plan.

The existence of this working group is intended to achieve the following goals:

- Incorporate management tools:
 - Articulation of the different departments of the for the issue of accessibility;
 - Define the responsibilities and tasks of each agent in the process;

- **Manage and update effectively information produced under the Plan**
- **Coordinate the actions proposed by the Plan**
- **Define the physical, financial and time needed for implementation proposed by the Plan**

9. Awareness and training younger generations

The raising awareness of students, schools, teacher, parents and the general public on issues related to **Accessibility and Design for All**, has to be developed in complete harmony and coordination with the Plan. For that the Plan must provide awareness and education sessions or workshops taking into account that students - Children and young people - are the major driving forces of society, and which constitute precious vehicle of information, awareness-raising activities are targeted at teachers and teachers for these same be converted, the multipliers of action and knowledge among students, as well as the rest of the educational community: parents and educational assistants. The recipients of the project are students aged between 7 and 10 years old.

The objectives of this training and awareness sessions are:

- **Create awareness among teachers on issues of Accessibility, Mobility and Diversity;**
- **Deliver a battery of working tools likely to be implemented together / with the (s) / the (as) students (as), for a good awareness of the issue in question;**
- **Create curiosity about topics related to Accessibility and Design for All;**
- **Sensitize the largest number of people in the education community on these issues.**

10. Promoting Civic Participation

Within the project designed to promote accessibility, it's proposed a research project that has the overall objective of promoting civic participation and effective inclusion of all citizens in this process.

The first study aims to gather relevant information on general accessibility among residents, particularly the main accessibility problems they identify. With this study the municipality will in the one hand, define the main accessibility problems recognized by citizens and, secondly, to understand how they perceive the accessibility problem as a citizenship experience. This study allows the city to support intervention strategies aimed awareness raising among citizens concerning them about accessibility for all. The second line of research builds on a study conducted in the parishes of the city with the "target populations" priority in terms of accessibility (people with permanent disability or temporary disabled). This second study is materialized in the form of "working sessions" promoting civic participation and local community direct involvement employing techniques of group dynamics. These sessions are designed on the one hand to complement the results of the Plan, and, secondly, sensitizing population to the need to promote inclusive accessibility, as key to achieving the ultimate social purpose of ensuring conditions for the existence of full citizenship.

11. Accessible Tourism Plan

The **ACCESSIBLE TOURISM PLAN** is a management tool that allows achieving a fundamental increase in the life quality for all citizens and more specifically tourists and visitors, which optimizes the resources used by local authorities. The Plan allows executing and evaluating the equipment and communication tourist sector with a view to fulfilling legal requirements. The right to tourism assumes the duty of society for all citizens to create the best practical conditions for effective nondiscriminatory access to this activity. The "Accessibility Tourism Plan (ATP)" is intended to diagnose, facilitate and promote accessibility to equipment, resources and touristic services for all. The ATP answers to fundamental principles of Design for All in order to develop Tourism for All approach.

Tourism for All guarantees the right of a large sector of the population to fully enjoy all the tourist resources and otherwise respond to the demand for an important market segment, which at present lacks an accessible supply of their needs. Since it is estimated that in Europe 80 million people have some

kind of disability or disabilities, it's a market that is growing annually due to demographic changes and lifestyle habits. United Nations (UN) estimates seem to indicate that the aging phenomenon is progressively increasing. The Accessible Tourism guarantees the right answers and looking for an important segment of the population, which currently lacks a tourist offer adapted to your needs.

In the preparation of the municipality Accessible Tourism Plan be designed as a comprehensive management tool that should be borne in mind the following:

- Avoid piecemeal solutions.
- Gives accessibility conditions to disabled tourists and to tourist destinations and its supply, which must be understood from its integrated approach (tourist accommodation, restaurants, museums, transportation, ...).
- Ensures that the accessibility problems that may arise for people with disabilities will not serve as a basis for prohibit, deny, limit or restrict their access to touristic services, under the same conditions as the rest of the citizens.
- Regenerates touristic areas, creating an attractive environment that encourages integration
- Ensures that disabled tourists, especially those with mobility problems or communication, have real and effective right to regular and standardized access to tourist services and equipment.
- Favors the Tourism for All, facilitating access to equipment and resources for all tourist.
- Creates affordable destinations, pleasant, convenient, safe and easily understandable.
- Improves the destinations image, its touristic resources and equipment contributing to the achievement of a true tourism for all.

Extends its current market share by entering a new market segment that is characterized by its contribution to offset the seasonal nature of touristic activity.



Figure 5: National Tile Museum,
Hidden assistance bars (Detail)
(source ProAsolutions.pt Lda)



Figure 6: National Tile Museum, active
assistance bars (Detail)
(source ProAsolutions.pt Lda)

12. Accessible cultural heritage

Heritage conservation is beginning to take a major shift towards the integrated management of cultural heritage and social sustainability, economic and environmental interventions are made in it. This change in trend means that, in addition to the technologies that ensure proper restoration and conservation, put emphasis on its future use and value in all its dimensions (social-economic-environmental) and all scales (building-city-territory).

Within this scope, the approach of Cultural Heritage to society, in response to social demand orientation has to be necessarily more accessible and understandable to all citizens . The heritage accessibility, understood as its capacity to be known and enjoyed by more people in comfort and safety conditions, implies greater social profitability of interventions, and integration into the mainstream that the new rules and legal requirements.

Is necessary to increase accessibility in buildings and public spaces: on the new demands, demographic changes, regulatory requirements or demands of elder and disabled persons.

For change to be effective in generating new knowledge necessary throughout the process, to facilitate the industrial and professional performing necessary transformations, minimizing risk and investment.

Portugal is one of the leading European powers in Heritage and Tourism, our economic health depends largely on the touristic sector, and we are one of the societies in which the rate of aging is higher. With this background, we should develop the technology and knowledge for the enhancement of the heritage.

The Plan should establish criteria, methodologies and tools of diagnosis provided by the built heritage, which involve an adequate knowledge of the cultural (history, materials, structures, etc ...) of the same level of accessibility and its surroundings. The plan must purpose the Development of decision making tools, determine the degree of intervention possible in every monument and facilitate their design from a concept of maximum accessibility with minimum impact on capital and heritage.

It also must point out the development of solutions and systems to facilitate access to the monuments, based on criteria of integral accessibility and design for all, where possible, offering combined and complementary actions, focused on joint chain accessibility, and are compatible with the structural and aesthetic monument. These solutions must propose the use of Information Technology and Automation to complement access to the monument itself developing those specific technologies when required.

In short the plan has to:

- Develop a comprehensive approach to accessibility under the common framework "Design for All", permitting diagnosis, design interventions and maintenance in a manner consistent with the constraint of the monument.
- Disseminate project experiences either continuously or through participation in the appropriate in a national and international forums and the development of training activities.
- Implement and validate the innovations generated through real case studies.



Figure 7: National Tile Museum
Removable light ramps



Figure 8: National Tile Museum
Removable light weight ramps

13. Conclusion

With the approach proposed for the implementation of an Integrated Accessibility Solutions Plan, Municipalities can potentiate the actions effects of effective methods to improve the quality of life of all citizens. The evolution from the elimination of architectural barriers to an integrated and holistic using the Design for All approach allows the existence of management mechanisms that maximize the likelihood of success in creating a society for all.

BEAliving – Modular Eco-Homes®

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Gonçalo Silva Pinto, is an Architect and Urbanist by formation, but is actually a Creative, Perfectionist, Entrepreneur, willing and able to turn ideas into Out-of-the-Box, Innovative and Sustainable Projects and Businesses.

He believes that when we create something, we have a responsibility to positively influence the life of people who will live or interact with what we created. He's a

Great Fan of Walt Disney philosophy and Imaginary: "IF YOU CAN DREAM IT, YOU CAN DO IT".

Gonçalo's Life Goal is to Be truly Happy, Living with his Family and Creating, sustainable and beautiful places that can improve the quality of life of future generations, making the world a better place to live, work and play.

Therefore he created SPARQ - Creating Living Places, a company driven to develop ideas and custom projects in the Sustainable Architecture and Building Sectors, tailor-made for each client. SPARQ's main VALUE is in the SUSTAINABILITY concept.

He believes that all people and all companies should have a Dream! The Dream is the engine of everything. BEAliving is a accomplished example of this belief, with a enormous growth potential. BEA concept can enhance the creation of innovative projects in the Accessible Tourism sector, in the Eco-Tourism sector and in boosting existing Real Estate and Touristic Projects.



BEAliving – Modular Eco-Homes®

1. What is BEA?

BEA is a Sustainable, Flexible and Accessible Modular Home, Innovative and Universally Designed for All. Built entirely with recycled or recyclable materials, using has building system the reuse of Used Metallic Structures, like Shipping Containers.

Based in Modular Architecture, Sustainable Construction and Universal Design principles, the used metallic structures are converted into sustainable housing modules, allowing endless forms of organization of space, with a very small footprint.

The Innovation is in (Re)inventing the Existing. Based on the "Three Pillars" of Sustainability: Environment, Society and Economy, BEAliving (Re)think and articulates several principles as the Lifetime Home concept, Universal Design and the Concept of the 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle), among others, and (Re)integrates universal technology and prefabricated systems.

The result is the creation of a Beautiful, Ecological and Accessible Home, Affordable and Adaptable to all, at all life stages.



BEA - Beautiful, Ecological and Accessible

BEA is a Eco Lifetime Home, Universally Designed for All and Ecologically Smart.

2. Why create BEA?

a) Future Generations

The greatest legacy that we have and could leave by inheritance to our children is a Living Planet.

b) Accessibility for All

World population is increasing and getting older.

More than 36% of the existing population in each country has reduce mobility: disable, pregnant women, senior people and temporary disable people (accident).

c) Sustainable Economy – New Opportunities

The Construction and Tourism Sectors continue to be major sources of employment in all countries, but the world economy is driving through a new cycle with the need of new sustainable alternatives. There for this two sectors need to adapt and invest in innovative solutions that serve people in different generations.

The “Tourism for All”, the Ecotourism or just Sustainable Tourism, is a new opportunity and powerful source of employment, economic growth and human wellbeing improvement.

BEAliving wants to show to the major Construction and Tourism Stakeholders that is possible to grow even more financially, being innovative and differentiator both in services and infrastructures with accessible, flexible and sustainable solutions. And BEA is that solution.



3. BEA Experience

The first BEA is being installed in Lousã - Portugal at the Camping Serpins, engaged in the Project of Lousã Municipality - "Lousã, Accessible Tourism Destination", where the main purpose was to provide for Lousã a cross offer of facilities, equipment and services in the Accessible Tourism sector.

This project had the involvement of various stakeholders and experts in this area like Essentia Consultancy (management of tourism projects), Accessible Portugal (accessible tourism marketing & sales), ProAsolutionsPT (urbanism, architecture and design for all), TGB, Belgium (certification of the accessible tourism project), ENAT - European Network for Accessible Tourism (international monitoring of the project), among others.

The Project "Lousã, Accessible Tourism Destination" has received the Portuguese Tourism Award 2011 for the Category Quality of Service.

Camping Serpins in Lousã is a fantastic place for people to make a getaway, to take a few days to rest from the fast pace of work and have an unforgettable holiday with the family in the countryside, full of trees, streams and local wildlife, with various activities for all ages.

The intention is for people to know truly BEA, allowing them a Positive Experience for a few days.

BEA in Lousã will be more than a showroom, will be people's home for a few days! During that time they could feel the comfort that is to have a BEA and experience all that BEA has to offer, from the possibility to enjoy a Space with Stylish Design, to rest in rooms with accessible storage, to cook a delicious meal or take a good shower in Accessible Bathroom with hot water heated by the sun.

The Experiences we live are the Memories we keep and the Stories we tell!

How often we visit a showroom, regarding the product it may be, where in the end the only thing we remember was the price? Of course we will not remember much more because we had no interaction, only we went, we looked, we saw the price (twice!) and left with very little. But what if we had entered, seen, experienced, felt and lived for a while? Surely we would leave

this showroom with a lot of ideas and subject matter to share with family and friends or even work colleagues!

The goal is to make people desire BEA and to share BEA with their contacts network as a Fantastic Experience!

4. Building System

The BEAliving Concept, focuses on its framework for Sustainable Development, in the innovative business concept and in the creation of a Sustainable Construction System.

So the first question to make is: What kind of Building Structure to choose? Wood, Concrete, Masonry, Steel?

All these constructive systems consume new raw material directly from the planet and therefore require a specific amount of energy to be processed. Of all the available building materials, the wood, from certified forests, shows a positive balance of carbon, absorbing carbon from the atmosphere.

However, to meet the needs of society, the consumption of wood, even from certified forests is unbalanced due to the difference between the speed and quantity of cut trees and the rate of growth of new trees.

BEAliving's alternative, is developing a structural building system by maximizing the reuse of used materials, that can ensure strength, flexibility and quality, reducing the need for new raw material and energy consumption.

BEAliving choose reusing used steel structures, like used shipping containers.

The Constructive System developed, ensures a high level of resistance, multifunctionality, flexibility, accessibility, comfort and energy efficiency. It allows, at any time, its expansion, conversion into new typologies, or remodeling all the interior or exterior coating, quickly and efficiently, corresponding to the different needs of live, work and relax.



Shipping Containers are a constructive method extremely flexible, modular, durable and available. They are giant LEGO pieces that comply with, very demanding, ISO standards.

The Housing Modules allow various Standard Typologies of one floor or two floors, allowing you to add more modules any time, either in width or height. Other architectural solutions can be developed and customized in a unique solution to fit each client need, but with the whole concept and advantages of BEAliving.



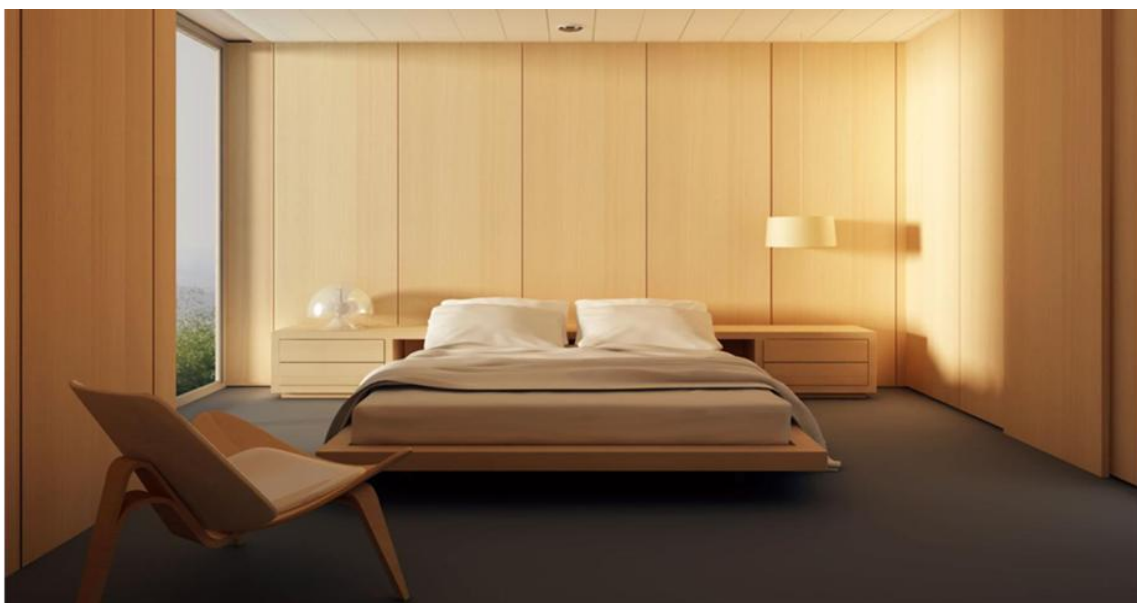
All Interior and Exterior Coatings of the Housing Modules, are assembled by Mechanical Fastening Systems, without mixing the materials. In this sense, the Housing Modules may, at any time, be fully disassembled and separated by type of material, allowing its replacement, reuse or recycling. At any time and life stage of the house, at the time of purchase either, the materials can be exchanged for others depending on the taste, need and affordability of the family that inhabits BEA.

BEA's Acoustic and Thermal Insulation is applied from the outside of the metallic structure, with black agglomerated CORK. Cork is natural, renewable and fully recyclable. Cork oak harvesting is an environmentally friendly process as trees are not cut down.

The final Exterior Coating is made with 100% recycled mixed plastic strips, applied mechanically by a Ventilated Facade Docking System.

BEA is more than a house, is a sustainable housing concept people-oriented, it adapts to the different human needs throughout all their life stages.

The Interior Coating of the walls is made with modular Wood Particleboard Panels with high pressure decorative laminate surface, mechanically applied with a metallic fitting system. This material offers a wide range of solutions in regard to colors, patterns and textures. From soft white or solid color for kitchen and bathrooms, to the natural textures of wood for dining rooms, bedrooms or even furniture design, the range of color options, glows, textures and patterns is almost unlimited.



The Flexibility concept developed in BEA enables its complete refurbishment without creating wasteful or residues, as the material replaced, after analyzing the quality, can be reused for BEA Social solutions - Controlled Costs Housing, or for recycling.



5. Target

Applies to all people, with or without disabilities.

Applies to the entire International Market, mainly for the Housing and Tourism sector (Eco-Resorts).

6. Standard Dimensions

Typology	Designation	Lenght (m)	Width (m)	Build Area (m ²)	Living Area (m ²)
T1	1Module	12,45	2,75	39,00	32,00
	2M	12,45	5,25	75,00	66,00
T2	2M	12,45	5,25	75,00	66,00
	3M	12,45	7,71	107,50	97,50
T3	2+1M	12,45	5,25	109,00	93,00
	3M	12,45	7,71	107,50	97,50
	4M	12,45	10,20	140,50	127,00
T4	2+2M	12,45	5,25	141,00	123,00
	4M	12,45	10,20	140,50	127,00



7. What does it cost?

BEA can be purchased from 35.000,00€.

8. How long does it take to build?

Built in Factory – 5 Weeks

On-Site Assembly – 3 to 5 days



9. What warranties /guarantees are there?

5 Years.

60yrs cover to the metal structure.

10-15 years to the fit-out, including cladding and windows etc.



10. Features

BEA Modules = 30 m²

Base Length: 12.20m

Base Width: 2.45m

Construction

- **Sustainable Modular System;**
- **Removable and Transportable Building System;**
- **Recycling of Used Steel Structures;**
- **On High, preventing soil waterproofing and contamination;**
- **Fully Built with Recycled or Recyclable materials;**



Energy Efficiency

- **Thermal Insulation in Exterior Facade by agglomerated cork;**
- **Exterior Coating with Ventilated Facade System made of 100% recycled Mixed Plastic;**
- **Aluminium Frames with Stop System with Thermal and Double Glass;**

- **Optimized Natural Ventilation;**
- **Air conditioning or Radiant Floor;**
- **Waterproofing with PVC Canvas covered with Recycled Inert Material;**

Accessibility

- **Kitchen with Accessible Bench;**
- **Accessible Bathroom, with structural reinforcement for grab bars;**
- **Wardrobes with folding doors and accessible Closet Rod;**
- **Accessible Electrical and Lighting gear;**
- **Doorbell with Flashing Lights;**



Lighting

- **Optimized Natural Light;**
- **LED lamps;**

Equipment included

- **Sanitary Equipment: Shower, Glass Guard, Suspended Toilet, Washbasin, Mirror and Cabinet;**

- Kitchen furniture of Reconstituted Wood coated with Thermo-controlled rolling of White High Gloss and Bench Surface Ecologically Efficient, fully equipped with appliances;
- Wardrobes with different storage spaces;
- Solar panels for domestic hot water system;



Sanitation (optional):

- Ecological Sanitation System: Tank Composting;
- System of rainwater harvesting;
- Compact Treatment Plant for Wastewater;

Solar (optional):

- Photovoltaic panels;
- Wind turbines for wind energy capture;
- Generator Biodiesel;



**BEAliving is believing in a New Lifestyle,
in a new way to think and live your home.**

Innovative project certifies the accessibility and draws a map of Portuguese accessible places

Author:

Paula Teles

Paula Ribeiro Teles da Silva, Civil Engineer – in the field of Planning, post-graduated in Strategies and Methodologies of Urban Management, has a master's degree in Urban Planning and Environmental Design by the Engineering and Architecture departments at the University of Porto, completed a thesis on "Social Territories of Mobility."



National Coordinator of the Network of Cities and Towns with Mobility for All, a project that she has created and developed in collaboration with APPLA-University of Aveiro since 2003.

She is currently a Consultant in the area of Municipal Transit and Urban Mobility in several municipalities and expert on Accessibility and Mobility for All, having been collaborating regularly with various entities of Portuguese Government.

She is president and founder of the Institute of Cities and Towns with Mobility (www.institutodemobilidade.org). In March 2008 she was named by the Portuguese Government to integrate the work team of the Accessibility existing law (Decree-Law No. 163/06, August 8).

Since 2008, she is a certified member of ENAT-European Network for Accessible Tourism - and member of the Board of Monitoring of Accessibility and Mobility for All of the metropolitan area of Oporto.

Elected President of the Technical Commission of Accessibility and inclusive Design (CT 177) from the IPQ – Portuguese Institute for Quality -, in April 2008, for the development of Technical Standards for the Accessibility Certification and inclusive Design in Portugal. She is the representative of Portugal in the CEN (European Committee for Standardization) in Brussels, for the Normalization of Accessibility and Design for All.

She is a researcher at the University of Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro in the mobility project MOBMAPS-model, process and device for the evaluation of accessibility/mobility in urban areas.

Innovative project certifies the accessibility and draws a map of Portuguese accessible places

Institute of Cities and Villages with Mobility (Instituto de Cidades e Vilas com Mobilidade - ICVM), Portugal, geral@institutodemobilidade.org

1. The importance of Accessibility Certificate - ICVM

In most of the cases, the cities do not correspond to the real needs of its population. The public space and the buildings have been designed for the average, strong and healthy man. However, there are few places that offer technical aid capable of responding to the special needs of people with disabilities or even for the elderly, so that they could autonomously and securely move using the equipment.

In Portugal there are over 3.5 million people with reduced mobility who feel daily difficulties of wanting to access public or private spaces. For 2 million elderly, 1 million disabled, 540 thousand children under 5 years and thousands of other people (injured or who simply must use a stroller) mobility and accessibility is a topic of high importance.

The accessible tourism is a topic that is on Europe's agenda, given the high number of people looking for places suitable to the limitations of the senior or disabled tourists.

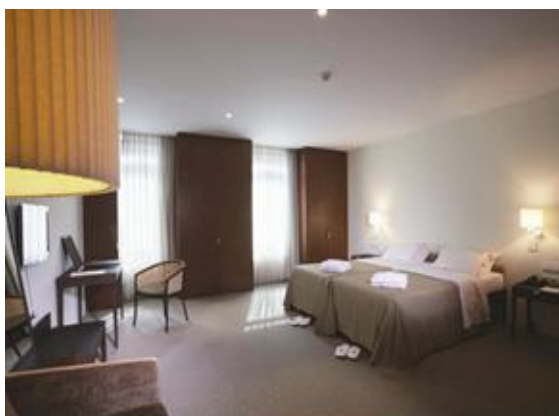


Figure 1 and 2: The promotion of accessibility in tourism (Camélia Hotel & Homes - Guimarães; Zmar Eco Camping Resort - Alentejo)

In Europe, the market for accessible tourism is worth 90 billion Euros, i.e., half of the Portuguese Gross Domestic Product (GDP), with 80 million people with disabilities in the European Union, which represents a potential market of 130 million tourists, including family and friends.

In Germany, 58% of people (data from 2004) with disabilities travel regularly and in the previous year, 37% of people with some limitations decided not to travel due to a lack of accessibility in tourist services, equipment and facilities in the destinations.



Figure 3, 4 and 5: Accessibility as insurance for the differentiation and competitiveness of territories

The ICVM, a non-profit institution, established the Accessibility Certificate, whose purpose is to make public or private places truly accessible, present solutions and promote all locations on an online platform of information, enabling citizens to organize their trip, or simply travel from home, being the platform placed also at the service of domestic tourism.



Figure 6: Accessibility Certificate – ICVM

This project is of growing importance in contemporary societies and has already motivated the institutional recognition by the National Association of Portuguese Municipalities (ANMP), institution that represents all of the Portuguese municipalities, in a letter that recognizes that this is *"a project of great importance in terms of public policies developed by municipalities [...]"*

in the improvement of the quality of life and the integration of people with special needs".

Additionally, the strategic importance of the issue "accessibility for all" has led Tourism of Portugal to *"recognize the importance, opportunity and merit of this project on improving the quality of life and the integration of people with special needs", it appears essential "to the promotion of Portugal as an accessible destination."*

It was also as a partner of this project the Association of Hotels, Restaurants and Similar of Portugal (AHRESP), which is an entity that represents in Portugal all companies in the areas of accommodation, catering and drinks, and whose accessibility certification *"may represent a business opportunity and work as a competitive advantage for companies [...]"*.

In addition to the institutional recognition from important national bodies, it was very important for the implementation of this project the partnership between the Rehabilitation Engineering Centre and Accessibility of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro University (CERTIC-UTAD) and the Association Salvador. The first because it was recognized as a national research centre on accessibility and rehabilitation, the second by the experience accumulated over the past few years in promoting accessibility in terms of disabilities.

In addition to these national recognitions and operational partnerships, other entities joined the ICVM to promote accessibility, namely the Accessible Portugal (touristic operator) and the Association of Portuguese Municipalities of Wine (AMPV), Dream Cities and the Planning and Cities Journal (JPC).



Figure 7: Institutional Recognitions, Operational Partners and Protocols

2. Accessibility Certificate – ICVM: what is it for?

- **To provide information about the possibility of access to people with reduced mobility to certificated spaces.**

It is a certificate that is intended for organizations whose activity involves access to their spaces by the general public or companies wishing to have their workplace accessible to everyone.

- **To create a collective awareness and cause the accession of public opinion.**

Sustainable development is a concern that covers most of the organizations. Through an awareness of corporate social responsibility, adherence to the Accessibility Certificate - ICVM -, it will materialize this awareness by promoting access to everyone.

- **To identify the compliance with legislation and improve the internal management of the organization.**

Fully compatible with other management systems and certifications, the Accessibility Certificate - ICVM, through technical audits performed by ICVM, supports any organization to fully comply with the accessibility requirements in the current legislation (Decree-Law No. 163/2006 and law No. 46/2006).

Furthermore, the application of the Accessibility Certificate- ICVM, ensuring equal opportunities and universal accessibility, will bring the Organization and the worker together and encourage a positive work environment.

- **To contribute directly and indirectly to the increase of the general economy of a business, a country and a society that aims to be inclusive.**

Accessibility is more than a requirement of contemporary society. It is also an important factor of economic development. The application of the Accessibility Certificate - ICVM - will allow the places audited to create differentiated products, increasing the attractiveness and competitiveness of the service.

3. Accessibility Certificate – ICVM: what is it?

The Accessibility Certificate ICVM has the goal of creating a positive differentiation and attest to the comparative advantage of certificate holders, informing users of the recognition, by the Cities and Towns with Mobility Institute (ICVM), of these the places, on terms and conditions of accessibility for people with reduced mobility.

It is also a form of collective accountability and adherence of public opinion. This certificate is recognition and a confirmation of the universal orientation of the entity that receives, and a demonstration of willingness to embrace what is socially responsible and to keep a positive attitude.

The Accessibility Certificate – ICVM - foresees the creation of a database, available online, allowing the consultation of all places already distinguished by the ICVM, depending on the levels of accessibility achieved, and helping people with reduced mobility planning their travel, with all the autonomy and freedom.

This database will present all locations and also the distinction of degree of accessibility of each one in three levels:

- Level 1 – places that comply with the function of “visiting and enjoying the space” in all aspects in terms of public access;
- Level 2 – sites that meet the level 1 and still offer materials and content that improve the welfare of users in that certified space. It can also promote accessibility conditions beyond the scope of the existing legislation, such as the personalized accompaniment and the creation of informational and computerized materials or strengthening complementarities in universal accessibility able to integrate everyone in the different social, cultural and touristic components;
- Level 3 – meets the levels 1 and 2 and also creates conditions for exercising professional activities with their different limitations. This level, directly connected to employability, assumes a decisive role in the promotion of a more universal concept of accessibility, and consequently considered of excellence.



Figure 8: Accessibility Certificate: the levels

The Accessibility Certificate – ICVM - is not a requirement nor replaces any documents from public entities of supervision intended to prove the regularization of the building or the entity, and it is total technical responsibility of the ICVM.

4. Accessibility Certificate – ICVM: what benefits does it bring?

- **Increases market share, including the touristic**
 - **Creates new business opportunities;**
 - **Allows differentiation from the competition;**
 - **Allows the opening of a new "cluster" of targeted market for people with disabilities, for the elderly and their families;**
 - **Promotes accessible tourism.**
- **Strengthens prestige and social recognition**
 - **Promotes equal opportunities;**
 - **Promotes the integration of people with disabilities;**
 - **Reveals proximity with society.**
- **Strengthens Corporate Social responsibility**
 - **Highlights the commitment to all interested parties (stakeholders);**
 - **Promotes the quality of life of more than 1 million people with some type of disability and about 2 million elderly in Portugal;**
 - **Covers a broader range of the population, not specifically people with disabilities or the elderly, but also the children,**

pregnant women, families with pushchairs, temporary accident victims or people who carry large volumes;

- Involves around 60% of the population (according to OECD data), which, in the case of Portugal, corresponds to about 6.3 million inhabitants.

- **Complies with the accessibility legislation**

- **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (ONU);**
- **Law of Prevention, Habilitation, Rehabilitation and Participation of People with Disabilities (Law No. 38/2004 of 18 August);**
- **Decree-Law No. 163/2006 of 8 August;**
- **Law No. 46/2006 of 28 August.**

5. Accessibility certificate – ICVM: a bet on inclusion, urban quality and economic development

The Accessibility Certificate - ICVM, released on July 3, 2012 in the Cloisters at the Pousada de Viseu, involves a wide range of partners with relevant importance to the issue of accessibility and aims to standardize accessibility criteria in Portugal, identifying locations where universal access to economic, social, cultural and tourist is guaranteed.



Figure 9 and 10: Public launch of the Accessibility Certificate – ICVM

This project is based on two fundamental axes. On the one hand in the field of solidarity and social inclusion, promoting equal opportunities for all citizens without any discrimination by their different (in)capabilities of mobility, and, on the other hand promotes the economic development of a

business, region or country, by the introduction of competitive gains and, if 50% of Portuguese citizens with disabilities could travel, it would generate a billion Euros.

In a time of change as we are experiencing, the opportunities of the future belong to those who impose accuracy, professionalism, creativity, truth and vision, in all areas of its activity.

The time has come for challenges in economic activities, in particular in places of public reception. There is new vision about accessibility, having gained a growing affirmation by the multiplier effect that it introduces: universality, quality and promotion. For all this, it is now considered a new world of opportunities and relationship between supply and demand.

In addition to corporate social responsibility, the economic sector opens, along with the Accessibility Certificate ICVM, the doors to an extensive universe of people with special needs, seniors and their families and friends looking for spaces that are suitable to all.



Figure 11: The universe of people with reduced mobility

Make known, with truth and accuracy, a meeting and visiting place, with trade, catering, hospitality, services or equipment, is what now we propose, with the help of the Cities and Towns with Mobility Institute, through the Accessibility Certificate - ICVM and its emblem, able to announce the veracity of their conditions for receiving all those seeking friendly locals and able to respond to their specific needs.

These places that prepare for people with special needs, will meet the requirements for all users and are thus able to foresee accessible tourism as a differentiating and, of course, competitive offer.

Accessibility as a strategic vector of urban design in the Requalification of Downtown Vilamoura, Algarve, Portugal

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1. Downtown Vilamoura, territory and tourism

Vilamoura is the largest and most complete touristic complex of Europe, covering an area of 1600 hectares. Its construction was begun in 1960 and, as an architectural project, it has grown around the marina, including a casino, golf courses, tennis clubs, hundreds of houses and other enterprises dedicated almost entirely to tourism.



Figure 1: Location of Vilamoura, in Algarve (Portugal)

Anchored around its prestigious and recognized marina, with about 825 moorings, Vilamoura is a sailing departure point for many of the territories surrounding it, and has always pursued Quality as a physical and symbolic reference element.

Over time, some mistakes were done on Vilamoura that inevitably proliferated in the region. However, nowadays Vilamoura is the result of a balanced development of several aspects and vectors. It was also considered an environmental quality area, and has received the distinctive award for the Falésia Beach, which is one of the few beaches in the country, and one of the first in the world, being distinguished, in July 2003, with the environmental certification in accordance with ISO 14001 (revised in 2004 with ISO 9001), synonymous with a strict environmental management and a constant process of improvement of environmental quality offered to its users.

Without succumbing to elitism, but resisting populism, Vilamoura offers something for everyone. From the marina to the casino, from beaches to golf, from bird watching to nightlife, from luxurious restaurants to quick meal restaurants, from exclusive shops to souvenir kiosk, diversity consecrated it a quality of life that already exceeds the logic of mere tourist resort, having been stated as an excellent place to live.



Figure 2: The marina, marina beach and golf courses

Obviously, this complex diversity has caused on the public space some effects of functional overload, no longer seasonal, but daily and progressively intense. Without possibility to be present everywhere all the time, due to an exponential growth of the urbanized area and of the inherent responsibilities, some areas of the city have been deprecated in the hierarchy of priorities.

Nowadays, Downtown Vilamoura is nonetheless the reflection of its initial quality that allowed an effective resistance to use and time, sacrificing itself to allow the diversification of investments in constant growth.

However, this determination and will are no longer compatible with the current situation in Downtown Vilamoura, in particular in what regards the quality of the urban environment in the new challenges of the contemporary places.

2. Concepts and intervention strategy

2.1. The intervention strategy

The main goal of the project developed was the Urban Requalification of the "space" that covers nearly the entire Downtown Vilamoura around the Marina. From Cupertino de Miranda Square to Alameda da Praia, respectively on the north and south of the surroundings of Parlatório Romano Square towards Sun Street and Estrada da Quarteira.

At an initial stage, there was the Requalification of the spaces that relate directly and almost entirely to the dock, in the "ring of hotels", which is a large urban roundabout South of Sol Street, formed by Marina Avenue and Tivoli Avenue.

Aware that one of the fundamental criteria of quality, legibility and attractiveness of public space resided in its continuity and identity, the second stage corresponded to the extension of the Green corridor/maintenance circuit of Avenue Eng. Joaquim Meireles to the southern limit of Alameda da Praia de Vilamoura.

The third stage, yet to be started, will focus on the spaces in the northern limit of the Marina, functionally less visible and requested, and structured by Botelha Street. Although with some visible signs of degradation and neglect, these spaces have a less urgent need for Requalification in the entire area.

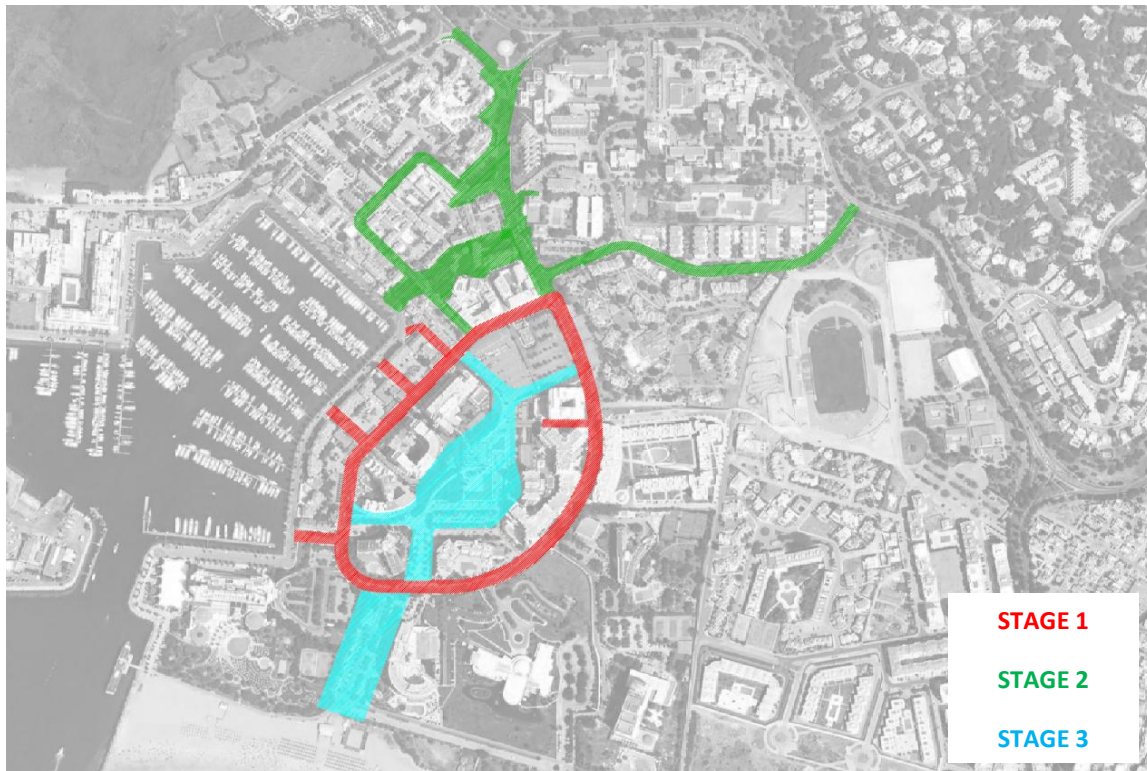


Figure 3: Stages of the intervention to the Requalification of Downtown Vilamoura

(Re)Qualification is the right word, recognising the etymological meaning "to qualify again". Regardless of the problems that now are recognized, such as the design of urban roads of the 60s, it is clear that this Avenue has been endowed with true urban quality since its beginning. But, in many aspects, perhaps the most important and most fundamental ones, it is not complete. However, let us not be deceived by very less positive things mentioned above. So, it is important to precisely see also the values that still remain.

The determining infrastructure and structuring urban space of Vilamoura, clearly well thought, were fundamental aspects of the "natural" organization in the intense growth of the last decades that articulately and dialectically ended up by mutually qualify. The Avenue, a urban space, serves as an ordering structure to the buildings that surround it; the buildings really give the urban space its true meaning and ambition, in the dialogue with urban

activities that it enables and in the dignity that the minimally regulated alignment and significant size provide.



Figure 4: Downtown Vilamoura Requalification Project (Algarve), Portugal

On this basis, that as surely served as an example, the area grew on a regulated and organized way, which is a feature missing from many other urban spaces with dispersed and unrelated allotments, absolutely autistic to the immediate "neighbours", wasting territory and hypotheses of urbanity.

Urbanistic, from "urban", between the adjectivation and substantiation embodies the willingness to honour and retrieve this qualified past (properly adapted to the requirements and wishes of contemporaneity); against this actuality, it also selects as two general objectives two central themes of the current construction (broad sense) of urbanity(ies): Accessibility and Mobility for All and Sustainable Urban Development.

Said another way, how to make these two objectives and the Urban Requalification with emphasis on Accessibility and Mobility for All and on Sustainable Urban Development, something operative and feasible in space?

With regard to Accessibility and Mobility for All, the measures and specific actions were, in essence, the following:

- **Creating an Accessible Route:** no obstacles to any citizen, whatever their mental and physical condition;
- **Specific and continuous marking of auxiliary travel means for the visually impaired:** associated with the Accessible Route, by strengthening its conditions as an inductor element of a truly universal and democratic mobility in the access to the city and the urban space;
- **Creating a channel of infrastructures and urban mobile objects:** freeing urban space of obstacles that generally accumulate through the urban space, articulating with the Accessible Route, in the execution of its operability;
- **Rigorous and detailed control of Project and Work Coordinates:** guaranteeing to the greatest extent possible the elimination of barriers to trade access and equipment, understanding these as a natural extension of public space;
- **Application of the same coordinate to all transverse profiles:** perhaps the most innovative solution considering the mixed character of the Avenue (road and pedestrian), but probably the greater affirmation of the strategic direction of the intervention: a renewed consideration of pedestrians and their travel needs, in particular taking into account the ageing of the population and the increasing importance of senior tourism. Obviously without neglecting the issues of security, this solution only became possible considering also the innovative solution of the double arborisation that serve as a guideline to parking and protects the pedestrian of any driver's inattention.

In terms of Sustainable Urban Development, the measures taken were, among others:

- **Very significant increase of permeable area:** the continuous caldera achieved more than 40 % of permeable in the transverse profile. Obviously, given the precipitation conditions in Vilamoura, and even the typical soils of the region, the gains do not occur at the level of the

natural drainage, but rather at the level of hygrometrics, heat exchange balances and retention of pollutants in suspension, contributing decisively to the quality of air in the Avenue;

- **Quadruple arborisation pattern:** duplicating the number of trees commonly present even in the more heavily wooded streets is a solution that can offer the urban space a significant environmental value. This way it is possible to decrease the quantity of carbon released by vehicles and also reduce the evaporation of the permeable soil and, in the summer, significantly cool the air temperature between the floor and the canopy of trees. The reduction or almost elimination of black asphalt exposure to the sunlight, which is a huge warehouse of heat, also contributes decisively to the microclimatic monitoring across the Avenue and to its immediate environment.

In this context, it is also important to register the positive impacts that the dense arborisation will have on the shading of adjacent buildings, decreasing the temperature range to which they are subject, contributing to the reduction of its energy consumption in air conditioning and, consequently, to the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions;

- **Strict and correct selection of trees:** considering the environmental benefits wanted, it was not enough to plant any kind of trees. The chosen species are native or "acculturated" – species that have been in the country for centuries and have proven compatibility with fauna and native or endogenous flora.

Obviously, another selection criterion referred to its compatibility with the local climate, in particular with the sea proximity and the soils, and also with the criteria of urban space and environment defined above;

- **Energy management and lighting:** energy and design criteria – implementing, placement and distribution, reducing waste as much as possible.

Once again, facing varied and complex criteria, without appropriate responses in the current public lighting market (particularly given the

accumulation of trees in the infrastructure channel), the decision fell on the development of new luminaires.

Synthesizing the most recent world technology in terms of energy efficiency, the luminaires are exclusively in LEDs, whether of 4 meters (pedestrian) or 7.5 metres high (road). This technology has proven to provide energy consumption reductions of about 40%, in comparison with ordinary iodide metals or sodium vapour.

The specific design that was developed for the luminaires, in conjunction with the specific characteristics of the LEDs, also allowed a very significant reduction of light pollution. In addition, it is important to consider the lifetime of 60,000 to 100,000 hours, meaning that the lamp will last approximately 20 years.

- Regardless of the great advantages listed, the solution of lamps/luminaires as allowed an extremely competitive price, more than 10% compared with current sodium vapour and iodide metal lamps;
- Creating a subterranean infrastructure channel: Considering the cost-benefit ratio compared to the current circumstances and infrastructures in Vilamoura (recently renovated), the solution adopted was the installation of two flexible cables, that will allow, at any time and at a low cost, the installation of new cables (e.g. optical fibre, or wiring for powering electric vehicles) with almost no works of removal or replacement of floors. By reducing the consumption of materials and waste inherent in these interventions, this solution contributed positively to one of the fundamental vectors of this project: Sustainable Urban Development;
- Study of battery recharging points for electric cars: in a similar position to the previous point, and as the previous study, here too the option is to install the infrastructural base. The great indefinitions inherent in any new technology, as well as the possibility of, in conjunction with two (infra)structural elements of the project – green channel infrastructure and underground power cables –, at any time, implementing any solution without impacts or significant costs;

- **Formalization of the bike lane at downtown:** the bicycle is a vehicle and can therefore travel on almost all transit routes that serve motor vehicles. So, it is relevant the definition of specific channels, designed and dedicated to this means of transport with several contributions to the sustainability of our cities and populations, and it has proved to be useful not only for the sake of fashion, but also to implement good habits, like the effective security on the use of the public space. This was one more promotion action of leading character, of future direction and quality, with very significant positive impact on the image and symbolic relations of Vilamoura to its inhabitants and visitants;
- **Return the city to the pedestrian:** conjugation of all the points referred above and the main objective of guiding the whole intervention and restitution of the possibilities of concrete use of urban space to the pedestrian. Without a definitive separation from the car, that recent history has proved to be negative at various levels, the consideration of contemporary urban design, more comprehensive and transversal than the two main themes, could not fail to consider as a priority the replacement of hierarchies among the users of this place. Without prejudice to the road traffic, the near future will have to go through the priority consideration of pedestrian low-impact mobility, as much inclusive as possible. Often thought of as an isolated issue or sector, we consider that this is a key measure of the broader goals of Sustainable Urban Development.



Figure 5: The vision towards Downtown Vilamoura

2.2 The choice of the technical team

mpt® - mobility and planning of territory, lda. was the company selected by Inframoura, E.M. (entity responsible for the Management, Conservation and Maintenance of All Public Spaces of Vilamoura) for the development of this intervention because it is one of the largest companies operating in Portugal in terms of accessibility and whose projects are oriented to 4 main components, as shown in the following image.

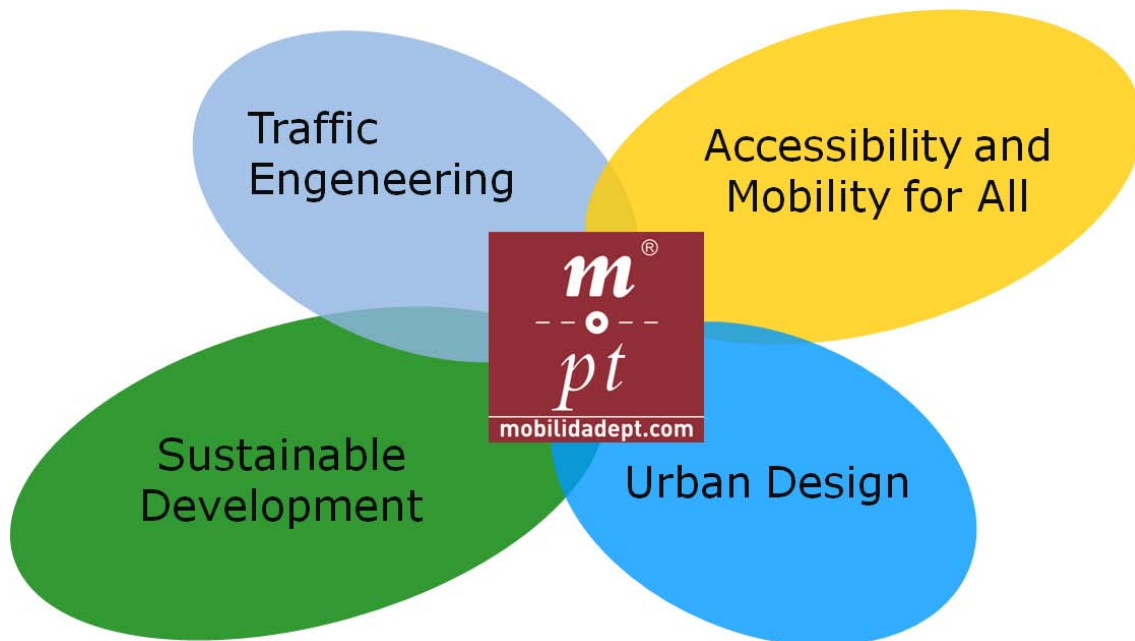


Figure 6: Concept of project mpt®

One of the main goals of the company is to promote social territories of mobility in complete transdisciplinarity, by relating integrated planning and project practices, involving traffic and means of transport, urban planning, urban architecture and design, in a perspective of urban and social quality improvement.

mpt® is, effectively, a pioneer in Portugal in terms of accessibility and inclusive urban mobility. This is the company's strategic axis, either in private or in the public domain, facing the urgency in the evaluation of accessibility conditions in towns and cities, making the territories more accessible.

Inframoura has chosen mpt® also due to its vast experience in accessibility, where stands out the technical responsibility for the development of the National Network of Cities and Towns with Mobility. Moreover, Paula Teles has been the national coordinator of the project; it has done about 90% of the 1st Generation of Programmes to Promote Accessibility in Portugal,

becoming an experienced company and market leader, and, for this reason, it has also been selected by the Government (POPH) to the current launch of RAMPA Program, in order to explain the work done in the 1st Generation.

All these experiences allowed testing working methods, essentially in looking for people's quality of life and their relationship with places. It was the development of this methodology, based on the application of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) that traced the Innovative Role of Promoting Accessibility in the Qualification of Cities and Physical and Social Territories in Portugal.

At this time, the company has about 50% of Portuguese municipalities as their customers.



Figure 7: Project team meeting with Inframoura on the premises of mpt®

2.3. Former Downtown Vilamoura – State of degradation of public space

The heart of Downtown Vilamoura was the intervention area, characterized for having the greatest diversity throughout the cluster. For better and for worse, these clusters were randomly disposed, with ups and downs, and denser areas contrasted with still empty allotments; neutral and bright colours faded over the public space but at the same time were the affirmation of the private and commercial image.

The delicacy of the buildings that define the front side of the Marina, directly face the hotels that try to peek over the stunning visual maresia. Tivoli, Ampalius, Aqua Pazza and Dom Pedro (Golf), Crown Plaza Hotel and Sheraton highlighted in the middle of the Casino, which seems to mock the others in the stillness of its height.

It wasn't our assumption that the volumetric and imagnetic would be a qualifying feature of the public space, of its image, or any of its aspects. If in

many cases it was true, in many other situations diversity was precisely the *raison d'être* of the attractiveness of these spaces to those who live there.

However, as in many other aspects of human life, so that the contrasts are not disturbing and unsettling, a safety net or a defined and systematized security network is needed. New York is an example of this, where the great volumetric diversity and images are tied to a strict hipodynamic grid.

In this context, and to complete the above equation, some aspects of disfunctionality characterized the area of intervention and needed to be carefully adjusted:

- **Uncontrolled design spaces and scale:** At the level of qualifying processing possibilities, there were some interesting points where it was notorious the little attention to design, resulting in uncontrolled image of scales, with the asphalt dominating everything, strongly disturbing the qualifications of public space. Major intersections, such as excess tar and huge distance between pedestrian circulation spaces, not only destabilised the reading of the urban/human scale, but were, of course, a synonym of predominance of the automobile and road engineering, and constituted as outbreaks of displeasure and insecurity;



Figure 8: Spaces of uncontrolled design and scale

- **Unappealing spaces:** what contributed to the strengthening of this idea, and its effectiveness, was a set of small moments of pragmatic and unappealing activities. Probably needed to solve urgent problems, these places are proof of the lack of assessment of the consequences; in its apparent simplicity, ended by characterizing the entire zone as a

victim of questionable aesthetics and quality performances. Diverse urban and dissonant equipment, considering its proximity and interrelation; Public and almost ostentatious exposure of garbage containers, welcoming any one that arrives to Downtown Vilamoura and everlasting temporary improvisations, in no way contributing to the image wished for Vilamoura. More worrying still is the fact that it is proven that these signs of neglect, abandonment and little care, work as a spiral of decline, which disrupts the relationship of citizens with the necessary care with the space that belongs to all;

- **Uncomprehensive resolutions:** very much like the previous point, this area of intervention was characterized by some remarkable aspects, however, they did not proliferate as they could and should. For instance, a ramp that with a few inches shorter would not constitute a trap on the sidewalk (given the available space in the high coordinate), would allow an ascent/descent inclination able to serve even athletes. Also by reducing some more inches, the downgrades would contribute to a place that does not exclude, and once again, preventing possible accidents with wheelchair or any distraction with a stroller. Moreover, it is also generalized the perception of the consequences of this problem in Vilamoura as holiday destination, since visitants carry heavy suitcases with wheels.

It is important to refer to elements that show, at the same level, the conjugation of this point with the previous one, always at the service of an effective need. The knowledge in this field has allowed us to conclude that the design/project options are multiple, and some greater consideration would lead to more integrated, articulated and qualified solutions than the unappealing wastewater treatment plan, which occupies a place that should be one of the most significant, symbolic and iconic in Vilamoura: the access to the beach. Although the Cliff has greater projection, this is the beach that carries the reference name;



Figure 9: Spaces with a more comprehensive resolution

- **Urbanistic and architectural barriers:** The articulation of one of the main design vectors of the strategy (Accessibility and Mobility for All), with critical diagnostic and characterization, so that it can be stated that this is one of the aspects that characterized recurrently the entire area of intervention of the project presented, i.e. the application of Decree-Law No. 163/2006 of 8 August.

2.4. Accessibility Plan

The rapid and disorderly growth of the public space spreads elements and situations that potentiate the exclusion of citizens, especially those with reduced mobility, when it should be place for all. Effectively, there were many barriers in the area of intervention, preventing a significant number of people from truly experiencing these spaces.

Thus, it is essential, before starting the drawing itself, the elaboration of a plan for accessibility with which it was possible to obtain a x-ray of the intervention area concerning accessibility, enumerating all the problems detected in order to be able to list priorities and define the intervention program that would later give rise to the urban design.

Urban and architectural barriers in the area of intervention (as shown in the following figure), assumed as a very important factor in how territories provide environments and experiences more or less pleasant to the ones who live, work or visit the place.


































Tipologias de Barreiras Arquitetônicas, Urbanísticas e Móveis Temporárias		
Barreiras Arquitetônicas e Urbanísticas		
 Abrigo de Transportes Coletivos	 Papeleira	
 Armário (EDP, Gás, ...)	 Parquímetro	
 Árvore	 Passadeira	
 Bandeira	 Passadeira a Terminar em Estacionamento	
 Boca-de-incêndio	 Passadeira Mal Dimensionada	
 Bola, Prumo ou Meco	 Passeio Subdimensionado/Inexistente	
 Cabina Telefônica	 Pavimento Degradado	
 Grelha para Caldeira de Árvore	 Placa Toponímica	
 Candeeiro de Iluminação Pública	 Poste com Floreira	
 CicloParque	 Quiosque	
 Contentor do Lixo	 Rebaixamento de Passeio	
 Degrau, Escada ou Rampa	 Semáforo	
 Floreira	 Sinal de Trânsito	
 Gradeamento	Barreiras Móveis Temporárias	
 Marco do Correio	 Estacionamento Abusivo no Passeio	
 MUPI	 Iluminação de Festas e Romarias	
	 Obra ou Tapume	
	 Obstáculo Comercial	

Figure 10: Types of urban and architectural barriers and mobile objects

For example, the sidewalks are the base of the pedestrian circulation and public space, however, they are seldom treated and designed in accordance with the importance they have; or distribution of urban mobile equipment in space, the quality and comfort of pavements, or the relationship of the sidewalks with the crosswalks, and being frequent the lack of lowering crossing zones or their wrong execution. Combining these problems to a lack of civility and failure to comply with the law, reflected particularly in unregulated and abusive parking, the disorderly way the space is occupied by a range of different activities (work, trade, etc.), and how the lack of articulation and coordination between services (works, environment, monitoring) raises new barriers, we realized it would be a real challenge.

Generally, the barriers found in the public space were various and inflicted a variety of difficulties to the citizens, in particular:

The existence of steps in the full extent of the circulation channel and the lack of continuity of the sidewalks, blocking the circulation of citizens with reduced mobility;

- The lack of pedestrian crosswalks or pedestrian crosswalks with ramps wrongly built, increased the risk in crossing also by poor visibility given to the driver. Additionally, the lack of access ramps to the crosswalks caused, as explained in the previous paragraph, discontinuities in the walking routes, making them inaccessible;
- The undersizing of the crosswalks was a barrier repeatedly found in the public space of Vilamoura, preventing the movement of people in wheelchair, carrying packages or parents with strollers. This undersizing is often caused by the way marketers have, in the middle of the sidewalks, a set of elements that interfere with or preclude the circulation;
- The improper location of urban mobile equipment often difficults the free movement on the sidewalks, interrupting the continuity that sidewalks should have. Additionally, the wrong disposal of these elements and the choice of materials of low aesthetic quality, conveys an image of a low qualification urban territory;
- Due to the difference in dimensions along the area of intervention, it was detected a set of architectural barriers that blocked the access to small establishments, trade and services to hotels. The existence of these situations created difficulties of access to people with reduced mobility, no providing equal access to spaces;
- In some places, it was found that there was a concern in trying to overcome the absence of accessibility. However, some solutions adopted are like traps, not only to those who want to access these spaces endowed with this "alleged accessibility" but also to the ones who circulates on the public road;

Therefore, there was the need to face this problem as it should be: reassessing accessibility as a priority.

So that the desired results were actually adjusted to the local reality, namely to those who inhabit, work or visit this place, the engagement and proximity in the whole process of preparation of project and work was extreme, with multiple meetings with Inframoura but also with key local actors, in particular with representatives of local trade and hotels, whose access to the establishments had to be assured.



Figure 11: Moments of discussion and debate about the project

So, because what is public should be within everyone's reach, one of the main objectives of the Accessibility Plan was to identify all obstacles that restrict pedestrian accessibility, inserting them into Geographic Information System and using innovative geocoding methods to quickly insert information on geographical databases.

Using these innovative systems of geotagging it was possible to transfer to the Geographic Information System the results obtained on the accessibility conditions survey (Figure 11) where, for the sample presented, it was possible to identify a diverse set of scenarios, in particular related to undersized or unexisting sidewalks, the presence of considerable extensions with degraded pavement sidewalks, poor execution or absence of lowering access to the crosswalks, and also the existence of trees that blocked pedestrians circulation. For all these reasons, the network of sidewalks represented in Figure 12 was considered inaccessible to citizens with reduced mobility, and, therefore, marked in red.

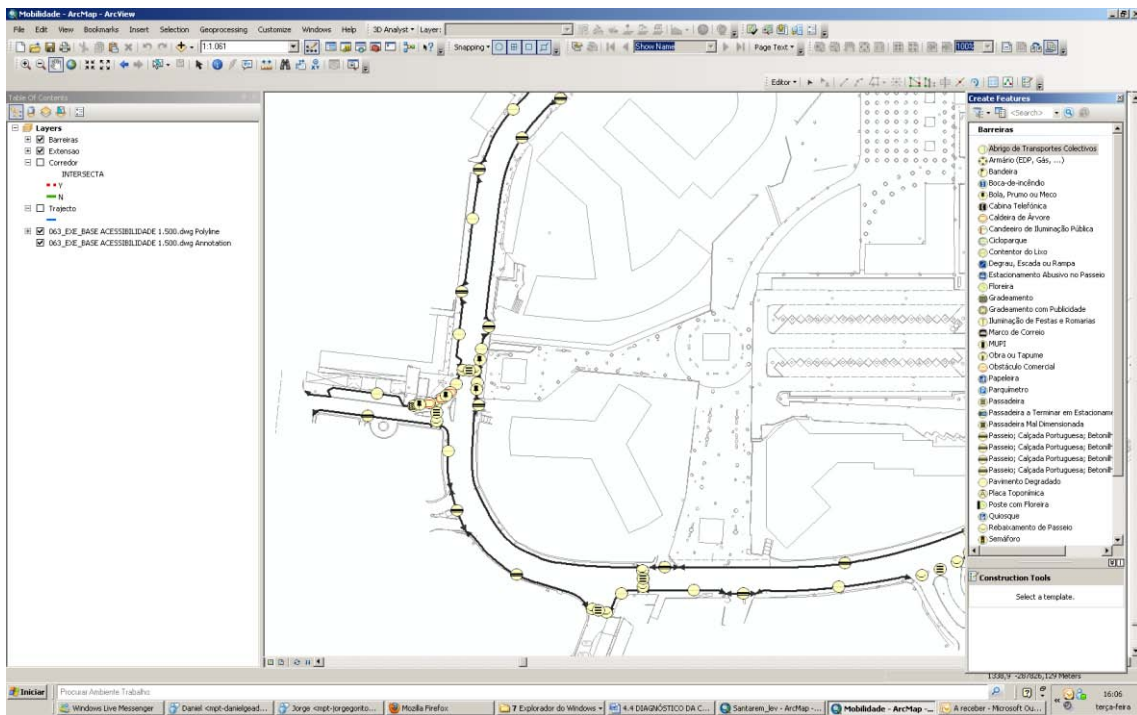


Figure 12: Insertion of barriers to mobility in Geographic Information Systems

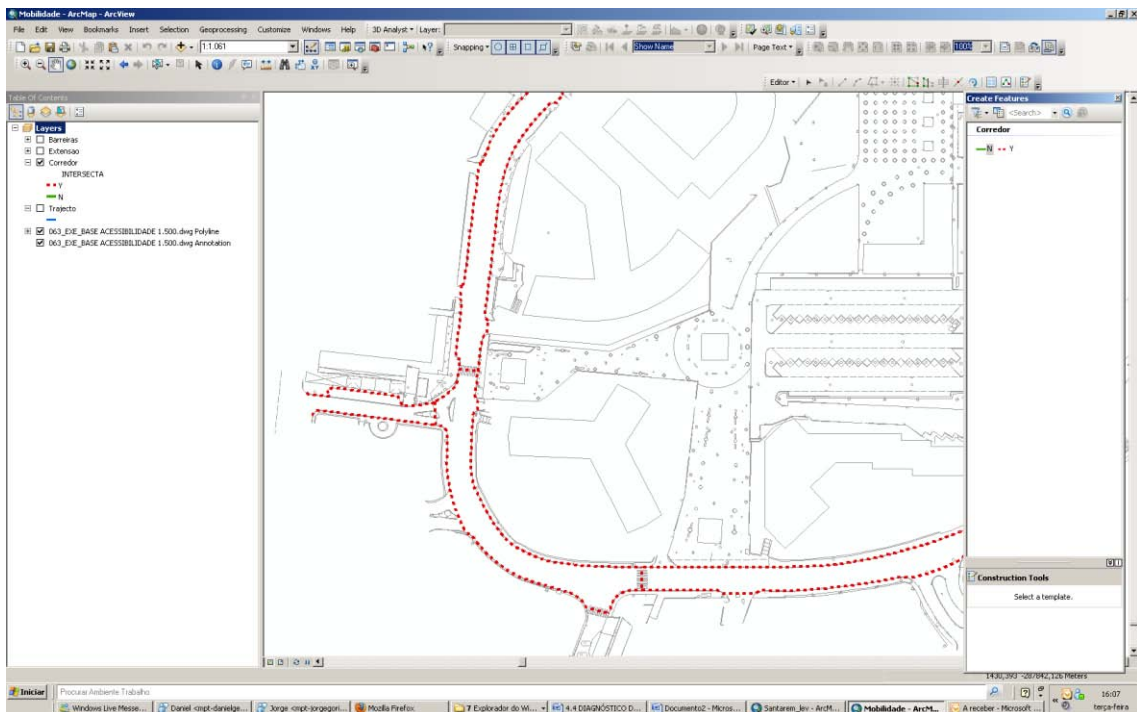


Figure 13: Insertion of accessible/inaccessible walking routes in Geographic Information Systems

In this project, GIS was an important system to support the political decision towards the existing potential in the intersection of territorial information, allowing the perception of the spatialization of architectural and urban barriers and the definition of priority areas of intervention.

2.5. A project with a street level solution and focus on the soft modes

Clearly, the most requested and functional space was that surrounding the Marina, not without surprise as it showed obvious signs of disqualification of the urban environment. It presented intense challenges because of the complexity and variation of coordinates, and the goal was to implement a complementary relationship between the physical and the psychological, between the explicit and the subliminal, between the visual and the transcendent, that could state: "this is a preferred route relationship between the Avenues and the Marina".

The completion of the entire project is based on a profile-type that includes the set of issues referred in point "2.1. The intervention strategy", and that briefly corresponds to the creation of a route of traffic where it was introduced an exclusive channel to bikes.

The marking of the Avenue was done using the parking lot to which was added a quadruple arboreal alignment that works here in two ways: as a climate regulator and in road safety, protecting pedestrians, considering that they move in a street level solution and, therefore, in theory, they are more susceptible to suffer some accident inflicted by cars.

Additionally, and perhaps the most important point, was the creation of pedestrian routes with considerable dimensions (never less than 1,5 meters in width, and in many cases with higher dimension), to which have been added guidelines to the blind, with textured pavement and contrasting colour on pedestrian crossings.

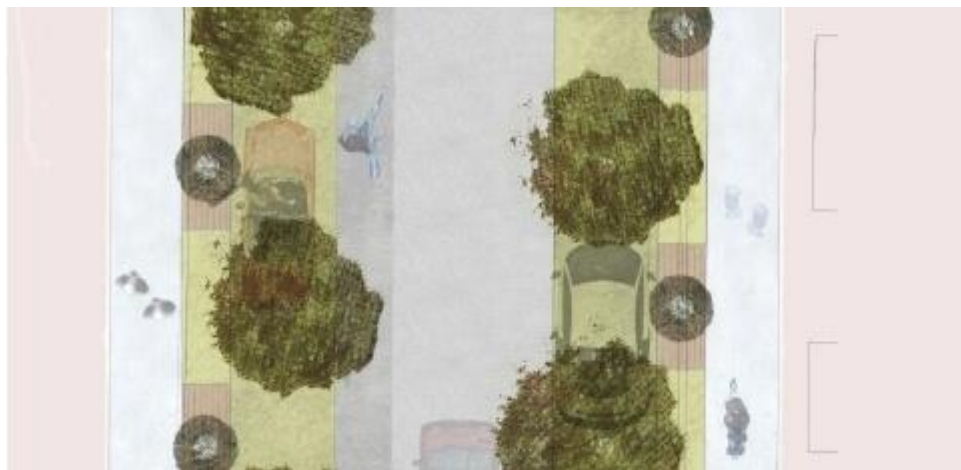
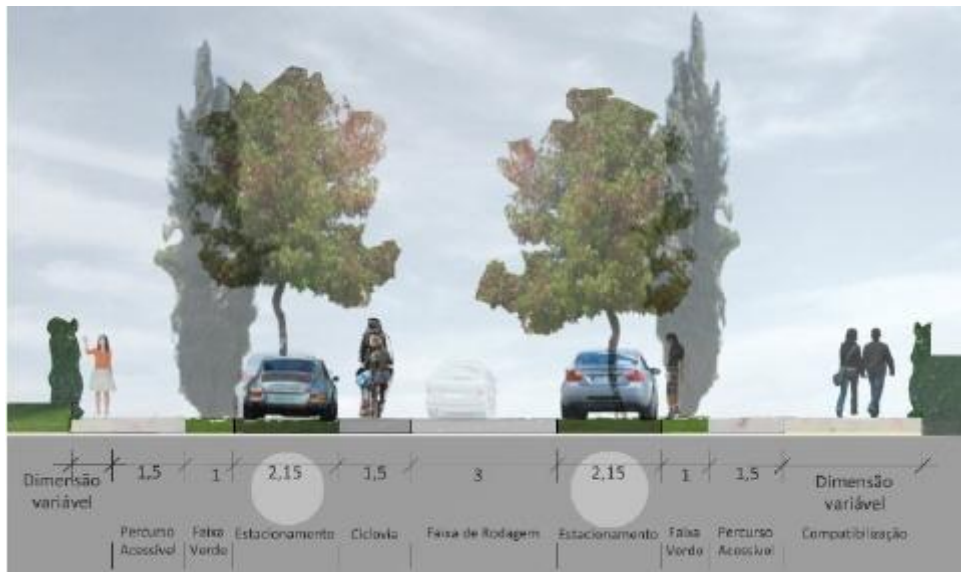


Figure 13: Profile-type implemented in Downtown Vilamoura

2.6. A concept that wants to be drawn

The central idea of the project was to return this urban space to the pedestrian, allowing, in the same space, the combination of multiple mobilities and allow "every actor in this space" to respect and be respected, so that everyone can have the right to its own space in Downtown Vilamoura.

The pedestrian has secure and comfortable channels to move (with the incorporation of additional elements of orientation) and places where the crossing is ensured in safety conditions; cars have their place of circulation (before there was massive circulation), organized and well marked parking spaces; cyclists also have specific and marked channels.



Figure 14: Downtown Vilamoura before and after requalification (1/9)



Figure 15: Downtown Vilamoura before and after requalification (2/9)



Figure 16: Downtown Vilamoura before and after requalification (3/9)



Figure 17: Downtown Vilamoura before and after requalification (4/9)



Figure 18: Downtown Vilamoura before and after requalification (5/9)



Figure 19: Downtown Vilamoura before and after requalification (6/9)



Figure 20: Downtown Vilamoura before and after requalification (7/9)



Figure 21: Downtown Vilamoura before and after requalification (8/9)



Figure 22: Downtown Vilamoura before and after requalification (9/9)

3. From theory to practice

Studying specific solutions of design, spatialization and configuration, materials and lighting, signage and graphic information, such as specific solutions for mobility and accessibility in urban barriers elimination, drawing paths accessible for people with reduced mobility, crossing urban furniture with inclusive design, it was intended to crystallize and strengthen the relationship between the two spaces by "umbilical cords" to reform and requalify, thus fulfilling a structuring role in access to the "street shopping centre" that characterizes the surroundings of the water plan.



Figure 23: The integration of diversity in the different uses of urban space

The goal was that in these spaces the pedestrian could feel it was safe and comfortable venturing into increased risk of crossing, introducing also specific solutions such as arborisation, refinement of materials, specific design, excellent lighting, etc.



Figure 24: The comfortable and safe routes for pedestrians

It was intended to not only upgrade the scale and environment of these spaces, but also to provide them specific identity, allowing them to claim as referral points along the kinetic pathway of avenues, in particular, for the faster vehicles, such as car and bike.



Figure 25: Implementation of soft modes of travel

Also with the goal to provide a polissemic, diachronic and synchronic environment, the landscape study considered as important criterion to choose trees that could keep up with temporal and seasonal variation, but also that could provide the flowering scenario in spring. Diversifying significantly the visual experience, this occurrence also allows you to activate the sense of smell, known to have a great impact on the memorization of experiences. Thus, these "umbilical cords" present a systematic and referential image, which allows relying in the idea that "this is a preferred access point between the urban street and the terrace at sea".

3. The importance of universal design throughout the project

The importance that the staff gave to Universal Design throughout the project is evident in all the concerns of design. The main idea was to draw for

everyone, to create spaces usable by as many people as possible regardless of age, ability or physical situation.

In this way, many elements of street equipment were drawn specifically for this project. It was included a tactile pavement with contrasting colour for guidance of blind and partially sighted, and pedestrian circulation and the channels were extended to allow a fluid circulation and the intersection between people.



Figure 26: Notable concerns with the usability of spaces and equipment

Universal Design presents a set of seven principles that were included throughout the project, in particular:

- 1. Fair use - Provides the same mode of use to all users: equivalent or identical whenever possible;**
- 2. Flexibility in use - Satisfies a wide range of individual preferences and abilities;**
- 3. Simple and intuitive use - Easy to understand, regardless of experience, knowledge, language skills and degree of concentration of the user;**
- 4. Perceptive information - Communicate the information required for the user regardless of their abilities or environmental conditions;**
- 5. Error tolerance - Minimizes misunderstandings and the consequences of unintended actions;**
- 6. Small physical effort - Can be used efficiently, comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue;**

7. **Size and space for approach** - Appropriate size and space for approach, reach, manipulation, and use, regardless of stature, posture or mobility of the user.

In order to have a fair use, also by the fact that Vilamoura has a large influx of tourists, it was introduced in urban furniture information in several languages besides Portuguese, namely, English, French, Spanish and German.

And because we are talking about inclusion and fair use of spaces and equipment, there are also Braille inscriptions on several elements of street furniture for that blind people could experience the public space in conditions of full equality with other citizens.



Figure 27: Integration of Braille and multilingual description

4. From project to work

Having defined the concepts and claims of all parties for the achievement of this ambitious project, the ideas were transposed from paper to the ground, accomplishing the complicated task of incorporating in the same work an endless number of ideas that could return this urban space to the pedestrian, in equal circumstances regardless of degree of mobility.



Figure 28: Downtown Vilamoura (re)qualified



Figure 29: Downtown Vilamoura (re)qualified

5. Summary: Vilamoura, a place for all, a place of excellence

With the completion of the project, Vilamoura has thus become a renewed and sustainable urban area, accessible to all, retrieving the image of quality that made it an icon of tourism in Portugal and abroad in the late 80s. At this point, Vilamoura is stated as an attractive territory to live, work and visit! Moreover, Inframoura and other local entities, with their local policies, promoted this urban place as a residence place too, contradicting the previous policies that preferred it to be only a location of tourist destination.

We believe that the emphasis on Requalification increases the capacity of fixation of its population, contradicting the urban decay that has been felt in Vilamoura in the past years. Besides, it will allow the attraction of many others, in particular citizens with reduced mobility (seniors, people with disabilities, families with children, etc.).

Moreover, in 2012, still a year of financial crisis, Algarve was chosen by many families that preferred not to travel abroad and Vilamoura is already experiencing the effects of this choice. Some of them recognize that the choice for this place was conditioned by the good accessibility conditions, where they may take the baby strollers or even bring the elderly. Some families with people with disabilities chose the place for the same reasons, not ignoring the ones who say that Vilamoura offers a high quality urban environment.

Today, Vilamoura offers a cosmopolitan stage, in which the soft modes are the choice *par excellence*. Cycling, walking, hiking, walks by decks between trees and flowers that paint the organized floor, without barriers, shows that it is possible to draw an inclusive city, a city for all.

Still it is only the first stage of the overall strategy of Vilamoura and much work will have to be done in the future. However, the results are so positive that encourage mpt® team and others to spread this concept with great conviction and determination, to turn other places into intuitive and simple places: places for all. Anyway, everything that is inherent to the functioning of the urban design by applying the seven principles of Universal Design.

6. The mpt® – mobility and planning of the territory, Ida project planners

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Coordination of urbanism and architecture

Fernandes Andrade, Urban Arch.

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Technical Team

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Treasures in the National Tile Museum (MNAz) for All

Author:

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Clara Mineiro graduated in History at the University of Lisbon in 1976. She started her professional life as a History teacher but engaged with the museum sector as a volunteer very early. She worked for the Instituto dos Museus e da Conservação (IMC) [Institute for Museums and Conservation] from 1996 to 2011, with the task of developing access to museums for people with disabilities. In 2001, she started a PhD research at the University of Westminster, in London, aiming at assessing the offer of Portuguese museums to visually impaired visitors.



Treasures in the National Tile Museum (MNAz) for All

Summary: Treasures in the MNAz for all was a pilot-project developed by the Portuguese Ministry of Culture between 2008 and 2010 at the Museu Nacional do Azulejo (MNAz) [National Tile Museum], in Lisbon. It was designed to test solutions aimed at enhancing the opportunities of visitors with mobility and/or sensory impairments to access art and culture in museums, following advice from consultative groups. Two years after the public presentation of the project, this article offers a general overview of the work, comparing the initial objectives with the real outcomes and looks at the new challenges in a times of financial crises.

Key words: Attitude. Challenges. Economic crisis. Multimedia guides. Problems versus opportunities.

➤ AZULEJO, or how this adventure begun

AZULEJO. The Portuguese word for the Arabic al-zuleik, meaning “polished stone”. Beautiful colourful “tapestries” made with small pieces of stones, covering the floors of the ruined Roman villas of the North of Africa, the last remains of a glorious past and a cause for wonder for the Arab invaders, in the 7th century. Stone was not easy to find in a landscape where the eyes were lost in the desert and clay seemed to be an alternative. This is the historic background to manufacturing tiles, glazed ceramic coloured plaques produced by talented Arab craftsmen as a creative interpretation of Roman mosaics⁸.

The Arabs invaded the Iberian Peninsula in the 8th century and remained in the area which nowadays corresponds to Portugal and Spain until the 15th century – long enough for the craft to become a typical feature of the Portuguese popular culture, associated to our national identity. Portuguese azulejos are different from all others, and the tradition to decorate private houses, public buildings and urban spaces with tiles has survived until the present day.

⁸ Information available in the multimedia guides of the Museu Nacional do Azulejo (MNAz).

A national museum portraying the evolution of Portuguese azulejos throughout the centuries, with a unique collection ranging from the 11th to the 21st century. Not surprising. A museum housed in a beautiful 16th century convent, refurbished in the 17th and 18th centuries, with large areas covered with azulejos – one of the most visited by foreigners, who also appreciate the location, near the banks of the river Tagus, in Lisbon. Perfectly understandable. The choice of the Portuguese Ministry of Culture to develop a pilot-project on accessibility in museums. In a historic building? With all the problems associated in relation to access? Strange, to say the least.

Perhaps not. The MNAz - acronym for the Museu Nacional do Azulejo [National Tile Museum] – had been welcoming visitors with disabilities for a long time, in several initiatives such as tile manufacturing workshops. It has particularly motivated members of staff and in 2008 a recently nominated director, known for her concerns for the social responsibility of museums. These were the main criteria for the selection, fitting well in the wider context of how access to museums for people with disabilities is regarded in Portugal. Attitude matters. Very much so.

➤ Accessibility in Portuguese museums

The approach museums take towards disability has changed in Europe, and equal opportunities in access are now seen as a cultural right for everyone (Weisen, 2010 and 2001; Partington-Sollinger & Morgan, 2011) in line with international policies, like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (article 27) (UN, 1948), the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (article 30) (UN, 2006) and the Council of Europe Recommendations R(92)6 (CE, 1996) and Rec(2006)5 (CE, 2006). At a national level, some European countries also have legislation, confirming their willingness to comply with the recommended policies.

However, people with disabilities still face many obstacles to their equal access to museums in many places. A resolution approved by delegates from 4 continents and 22 countries who met at the In Touch With Art Conference, held at the V&A, in London, in October 2010, considers that those may be political barriers, since many governments have neither established national strategic actions to enhance this access nor awarded enough public funding

for this purpose; and institutional barriers, due to the lack of commitment to implement an inclusive design of services, spaces and exhibitions in museums on a permanent and systematic level. This leads to a limited and fragmented offer and reinforces the social and cultural exclusion of these people (EBU, 2010, p. 2; Weisen, 2011, p. 13).

Portugal has a legal framework for accessibility in museums. Law n.º 46/2006 prohibits all discrimination by reason of disability, while Decree-Law n.º 163/2006 determines that all buildings open to the public have to be accessible by 2017 and establishes technical guidelines for the purpose. Furthermore, in 2009, the country ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN, 2006). However, our governments have not implemented policies to meet the obligations of these international and national regulations.

Portuguese public museums were until recently managed by the Instituto dos Museus e da Conservação (IMC) [Institute for Museums and Conservation], under the umbrella of the Ministério da Cultura (MC) [Ministry of Culture]⁹.

This Institute had been addressing access to museums for visitors with disabilities since 2003, the European Year of People with Disabilities. A very practical guidebook was published (Colwell & Mendes, 2003) and a programme of disability awareness training for museum professional was took place every year from 2003 to 2011. After some experimental work in small temporary exhibitions, developing a pilot-project in a permanent exhibition of a national museum under its umbrella was one of the last initiatives of the IMC/MC and explains the context in which the project Treasures in the MNAz for all came to be.

In spite of the commitment from the IMC, executives within the Portuguese museum sector have developed few measures to meet the rights of persons with disabilities. This is particularly relevant when considering access to information about the collections in display. While many Portuguese museums have complied with the law in terms of physical access to the buildings, generally when refurbishment works are planned, it can be argued

⁹ Both the Ministry of Culture and the Institute for Museums and Conservation were extinguished in the end of 2011.

that barriers in communication are often considered of minor importance. A recent study by Diana Walters (2009, p. 29) confirms that despite all the anti-discrimination legislation, attitude of museum professionals is still the main barrier to access. However, Portuguese museum professionals operating within education departments have engaged with the issue of access for visitors with a disability, and in 2004, created a professional group to share and disseminate good practice, the Grupo para a Acessibilidade nos Museus (GAM) [Group for Accessibility in Museums]. GAM meets monthly and organizes an international annual seminar. As a result, there have been significant outcomes with potential to be developed and replicated, although scattered in space and time and with considerable differences in the variety, outreach and quality of the programs delivered. The MNAz is an institutional member of the GAM.

➤ **The pilot-project Treasures in the MNAz for All**

The project started in September 2008. As project coordinator, I thought that the task of transforming a big traditional national museum housed in a historic building in an accessible venue on a permanent basis was daunting, unless priorities were established and first things came first.

➤ **Concept**

Hence the concept underlying this pilot-project - the idea that the treasures in the MNAz (the main objects in the collection or the most relevant spaces in the historic building) should be the first to become more accessible for all (an expression to mean that the project was designed to include the vast majority of visitors, even those with a physical and sensory disability). Further developments concerning access could certainly be built on top of this later.

➤ **Objectives**

Ambitious objectives were established, both short and a long term. As considered by John Falk and Lynn Dierking (2011. pp. 1-4), visiting museums is a complex experience, where accessing information on an exhibit is only a small part of the global engaging experience. Personal, social and physical contexts interact. Assuming that the museum building, objects displayed and involving ambience are the physical setting that influence the experience, the

social context in which the visit occurs is another factor, as people visit museums usually with company and even those who visit alone interact with staff or other visitors. Personal factors, such as knowledge, interests, motivations, concerns, culture or beliefs also determine what he or she looks for when visiting a museum. All these realities interact and make the museum experience a unique and individual one.

In the present case, disability is a relevant feature of the visitor's personal context, originating basic needs that have to be considered by the museum as any other. However, this is only an aspect of the person, as a blind participant in a recent study testified: "I am me first and blindness is just a part of me. The person is the big part, not the blindness" (Partington-Sollinger & Morgan, 2011, p. 21).

This is why a particular attention was given in this project to what we considered the basic needs in a museum visit of wheelchair users and people with other mobility impairments, of blind or partially sighted visitors and of the Deaf and people who are hard-of-hearing. Persons with mental or intellectual disabilities such as dyslexia, learning difficulties or some types of autism would certainly benefit from the offer provided, such as the simplified text in the extended labels or the tactile replica. The main short term objective was, therefore, to grant these visitors a positive and enriching experience in the museum, creating conditions that would allow these excluded audiences to access and enjoy art and culture.

In the long run, the project was expected to contribute towards changing leisure habits in these people, introducing museum going and attending programs or activities in cultural sites as regular practices. As the majority of visitors to the MNAz were foreigners, there was also the intention to attract more Portuguese visitors through the innovative offer created in the museum and therefore disseminate the history of this ancient tradition among our compatriots.

➤ Methodology

As a methodology, the project was developed in phases, sometimes overlapping in time. The director and the curators selected thirty eight

objects and spaces considered to be the treasures in the MNAz and prepared a handout with the latest scientific information about each of them. This was to be the basis of all the work, which I started with the two colleagues of the education department who had been involved in the museum's access provision.

We decided that having simple information about the treasures was the first thing to be done and wrote extended labels with simple text for all the objects and spaces selected, taking the journalist text as a model. We followed the V&A guidelines for writing gallery text (Trench, 2011), which recommend that the information should be scientific but written in a personal style, clear and motivating, addressing details regarding any particularities or curious episodes of their history. After this, it seemed obvious that granting full physical access to all the treasures was the step to follow, as well as preparing information in alternative formats that sensory impaired visitors could access.

The following phases of the project involved financial resources which were not available, considering the increasing constraints that the Portuguese museum sector was already living at the time. These phases also involved a specific know-how that the team did not have. Looking for sponsorships and building partnerships seemed a possible solution to these problems.

➤ Outcomes

Some of the Treasures were located in places that visitors with a physical disability could not reach. The first partnership was established with the Associação Salvador [AS] (Association Salvador). This non-profit organization was created by Salvador Mendes de Almeida to promote the inclusion of physically disabled people in society and to work to improve their quality of life, after he became tetraplegic in a motorcycle accident at the age of sixteen. AS commissioned an external assessment to identify architectonic obstacles to reach the treasures in the MNAz, as well as the project and construction works to eliminate them. This allowed a number of tangible results, some very obvious, other quite discrete. The reception desk was adapted to welcome visitors in wheelchair. Ramps were placed where steps once were. In the ancient stone staircases, handrails and self-adhesive

anti-slip surfaces for the steps were set in place. More accessible furniture was placed in the museum's lounge, restaurant and garden, such as newly upholstered sofas and new tables to accommodate wheelchair users. And a new accessible toilet was built on the 1st floor of the museum, in compliance the Portuguese law.



Figure 1: Reception desk



Figure 2: Ramp 1



Figure 3: Ramp 2



Figure 4: Accessible table 1



Figure 5: Accessible table 2

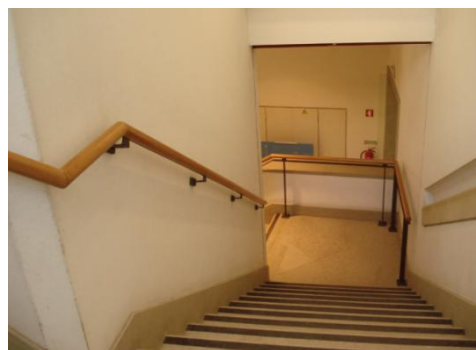


Figure 6: Staircase 1



Figure 7: Staircase 2

If physical obstacles related to the architecture in the historic building were identified and eliminated through this partnership, other kinds of partnerships were established with disability associations to access specialized know-how. These organisations could help to organize consultative groups of people with disabilities, essential to provide guidance from a user point of view. One of them was the Associação dos Cegos e Amblíopes de Portugal (ACAPO) [Portuguese Association of Blind and Partially Sighted People] and the other one, the Federação Portuguesa das Associações de Surdos (FPAS) [Portuguese Federation of Associations of Deaf People). Two consultative groups were formed, one for visual impairment, composed by two blind persons and an expert on guidance for the visually impaired, and another one for hearing impairment, integrating two Deaf persons and their interpreter.

As a result, eighteen of the tiles in display now have tactile replicas made in ceramics and placed near the originals in the exhibition circuit, alongside with large print and Braille labels. Multimedia guides were sponsored by Fundação Millennium bcp, a foundation created within this private bank to address its social responsibility. Audio and video guides are now available at the reception desk to be used by visitors, free of charge.

The contents for the audio guides, in Portuguese and English, include audio description enhanced by music from different historical periods ranging from the 16th to the 20th century and also by surprising sound effects - as different as the sounds caused by an earthquake, by a train approaching the subway station, strong waves against the rocks, costumers murmuring in a coffee shop or water falling down in a fountain. The purpose of music and environmental sounds is to reinforce the sensory experience related to the spaces the selected objects might be related to, particularly relevant for people who are blind or have low vision (RNIB & Vocaleyes, 2003).



Figure 8:Tactile replica 1



Figure 9:Tactile replica 2



Figure 10:Tactile replica 3



Figure 11: Audio guide



Figure12: Tactile model of the church's main chapel

The same information was translated into Portuguese Sign Language (PSL) and International Sign Language (ISL), a very important fact for the Portuguese Deaf community, as it was necessary to create new vocabulary in relation to the tiles and the museum environment. It is now available in the video guides, as is the information in text format for people who are hard-of-hearing.



Figure 13: Video guides 1



Figure 14: Video guides 2

Lisbon's town council also contributed towards the project, by providing two car parking places for disabled visitors in front of the museum's entrance and sloping the sidewalks. The city public transport company was also contacted and informed us of the plan to provide accessible buses on the routes that serve the museum in a near future.

By the end of 2010, the project was coming to its end. Two years had passed. Members of staff contacting with visitors at the front office, shop, exhibition rooms and restaurant, had a one day disability awareness training session and asked for a second one, on etiquette towards people with disabilities. A good sign. The project was presented to the public on the 3rd of December 2010, the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The initial team had increased in unexpected ways as the project developed, and by then more than thirty professionals from diverse areas had been involved - several

members of staff from the MNAz (colleagues from the education department, researchers, a specialist on tile conservation, the person in charge of the maintenance of the building), several members of staff from the IMC, members of the disability associations organized in the two consultative groups, specialists from universities and private foundations. Private companies which provided innovative services and equipment such as the tactile replica, the Sign Language translation, or the multimedia guides, also had a very relevant role in the process, as all the solutions were developed in close dialogue with the project team, observing the guidelines provided by the consultative groups.

➤ Conclusion

This holistic approach to accessibility in art and culture involving physical and intellectual aspects in a permanent offer for all visitors was absolutely new in the Portuguese museum scene in 2010, as eliminating architectonic obstacles was an imperative imposed by the law, but very few museums addressed barriers to information. In this domain, all features described above represented innovation, from the extended labels in a journalistic type of text to the tactile replicas in the museum circuit, along with Braille and large print labels. But the multimedia guides were the most original feature of the project. Some Portuguese museums had already audio guides, but none of them included audio description, music and sound effects to meet the needs of blind visitors. As to the video guides for Deaf and hard-of-hearing visitors on a permanent basis, they were the very first experience in our country.

➤ Dissemination

From 2003 to 2011, the IMC training programme for museum professionals within the Rede Portuguesa de Museus (RPM) [Portuguese Museum Network], which includes 132 public and private museums from all over the country, provided sessions to share and spread knowledge and good practice on access to museums. In these sessions, the project Treasures in the MNAz for all became one of the examples of good practice. By the time I am writing these lines, other museums have implemented similar experiences in different scales, according to their financial and human resources.

➤ Next challenges

In December 2010, the offer was there but our target audiences were not aware of it. Planning a variety of inclusive and original activities and programmes based on the treasures for all as a motive for repeated visits and organizing a well-planned, systematic and targeted information campaign designed to reach our potential new visitors should be the next and essential phase of the project. However, two years have passed since the project was launched and these phases have not yet been accomplished. To some extent, the initial objectives, obviously ambitious, have not been reached so far. The number of visitors with disabilities in the MNAz has hardly increased.

Portugal is living an increasingly serious recession, after the International Monetary Fund (IMF) established a very strict economic programme which also involves major structural reforms in the cultural sector. Museums are being run with very limited budgets, and staff is being reduced to almost unsustainable levels as the most graduate and qualified members are being retired and not replaced. In a contradictory direction, several university departments of museum studies are releasing a large quantity of young graduates and postgraduates every year that cannot be employed or hired as freelancers by museums for financial reasons (ICOM Portugal, 2011). This scenario has of course affected the MNAz as well.

Despite the grim outlook, there are positive prospects for the future, as we think about the potential of a whole lot of interesting ideas still to be developed at the MNAz. Here are some examples: tile manufacturing workshops for adult visitors; online audio description of ten objects and spaces a year; the volunteer collaboration of blind and Deaf people; special sessions with music, poetry, dance or theatre inspired by The 'azulejo' of the month; visits to places with interesting azulejos in the city of Lisbon or elsewhere in the country; regular guided tours for and by blind and deaf persons; guided tours with simulation of visual or hearing impairment, including a blind lunch or tea at the restaurant or coffee shop, or seeing parts of films inspired in the collection without any sound or subtitles - opportunities to provide disability awareness for audiences without disabilities, only to mention a few.

The next challenge for Portuguese museums and also for the MNAz is finding strategies to approach access for visitors with disability as an opportunity, not as a problem, and discover sustainable ways of delivering activities and programmes (Weisen, 2011, p. 10). Accessible tourism can be a business opportunity in difficult times, as focused in a recent seminar organized by the public institute Turismo de Portugal (Tourism of Portugal) and Accessible Portugal, a travel agency set up to organize holidays in Portugal for people with disabilities, which took place in Lisbon in May 2012 and managed to attract a large number of museum professionals and tourist operators. A sign of sunnier days to come.

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iACT – Inclusion & Accessibility in Action Research Unit

When research actively works towards change

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Josélia Neves has a degree in Modern Languages and Literatures, a MA in English Studies and a PhD in Translation Studies, with a dissertation on Subtitling for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing and a post-doc in inclusive communication in museums. She has carried out a number of projects within the field of sensory accessibility, involving Portuguese broadcasters, distributors and Deaf or blind viewers and has published widely in the domain of SDH and AD. She is presently leading researcher of the iACT research unit at the Instituto Politécnico de Leiria.



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Abstract: Inclusion and Accessibility in Action Research Unit (iACT) is a recent research group, based at the Polytechnic Institute of Leiria (IPLeiria) that aims “to develop scientific and interdisciplinary research in the field of Communication Sciences, by taking on fundamental, applied and experimental approaches. Simultaneously, it aims to develop methodologies, techniques and products and to offer training and services to the community, while intervening in society itself (improving conditions and attitudes).”

One may wonder how a research unit that is not explicitly working in the domain of tourism might be making major contributions towards accessible tourism in Portugal. In addition, some might see research and practice as totally distinct and question the validity of the first particularly when the second has a significant impact on the social tissue. This gap between research and practice is easily bridged when the approach is that of Action Research. A further issue this paper proposes is the richness that derives from a multidisciplinary approach to research projects. By addressing issues in a holistic manner, bringing together various sub-projects that work towards the whole, and by combining diverse viewpoints, one may arrive at a comprehensive understanding of complex matters such as accessibility and inclusion.

In this paper we will discuss how this particular research group has contributed towards understanding accessible tourism better through the development of specific projects in cultural contexts, namely museums, exhibitions, and other cultural venues.



1. Introduction

In 2011, a group of young researchers came together to set up a new multidisciplinary research group – *Inclusion and Accessibility in Action Research Unit (iACT)*¹⁰ –, at the Polytechnic Institute of Leiria (IPLEiria)¹¹, in Central Portugal. This group has quite a unique profile for Portuguese academic standards in that it brings together researchers from different scientific domains with a common interest in accessibility and inclusion. These circumstances allow the group to work within the same project with the benefit of distinct standpoints; but also give way to an array of quite diverse projects, thus respecting each researcher's special interests. The dialogic interaction between researchers from different fields is extremely enriching for all involved and allows for complex, multi-layered projects that may be quite diverse in nature but that work together as a whole – a case to be shown below. Another aspect that characterises this particular group is the fact that most researchers are simultaneously active teachers, engineers,

¹⁰ Detailed information on iACT's activities available at www.iact.ipleiria.pt.

¹¹ All information available at www.ipleiria.pt.

medical practitioners, therapists, cultural agents or performers; and quite a few are disabled or work directly with people with disabilities in schools, cultural venues or associations. We consider these circumstances an important asset to the group. The insights that such researchers bring to the discussion of particular issues are unique and their contacts are valuable when setting up projects, collecting data and finding solutions for practical problems.

By embracing diversity and inclusion both as a research topic and as the group's overriding principle, there was a need to find a scientific and methodological approach that would be sufficiently ample to contain each researcher's scientific, professional, cultural and personal profile, whilst bringing together quite distinct methodologies and approaches in what should add up to one common framework. It became very clear right from the beginning that all the members had a wish for applied research with direct impact on the social tissue. Some of the researchers had come into the group with previous experience in the field and iACT soon took on Action Research (AR) as the ideal framework for all that needed to be done. In so doing the group partakes of Coghlan & Brannick's (2001:xi) view of AR as an "array of approaches" rather than as a methodology or a theory and takes on Reason & Bradbury's (2001:1) understanding of Action Research as being:

(...) a participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes, grounded in a participatory worldview which we believe is emerging at this historical moment. It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities.

The fact that iACT has embraced AR doesn't mean that all its research is participatory and applied. Some research projects under way are traditional and theoretical in nature and fall outside this framework, but even so, they contribute towards the applied projects and make the whole all the richer for their specificity and conceptualisation.

2. Working towards Inclusion in Tourism

iACT does not work directly with accessible tourism as such, but has been developing a number of projects with a direct impact. Much of the work done is directly connected to accessible communication in cultural and educational contexts in the desire to improve accessibility for all.

If one is to welcome tourists with disabilities at all, one ought first to work towards improving accessibility conditions in general for the locals. By working with all the agents involved in education, culture, heritage and services to stimulate inclusive attitudes and to develop skills and solutions for the full participation of all people in their home environments one will be paving the way for the tourist agents' task of promoting "tourism with a difference". Accessible tourism will not be possible if the hosts are not ready to welcome people with special needs and still haven't found adequate solutions for their own people.

On the other hand, tourism can help countries develop better conditions for their own. Countries such as Portugal have tourism as an important source of income and in many ways the country has developed thanks to the need to provide for foreigners wishing to make our beaches and countryside their elective holiday spots. Holiday resorts, theme parks, hotels, restaurants and other facilities have sprung up, particularly in coastal regions, in reply to ever more demanding visitors. And whole populations have gained benefit from such endeavours. When tourists visit a new country they want to take in the natural and architectural environment, know the peoples and the culture and have an "experience" that will last over time. In short, regardless of their profile, tourists want to feel "included" in the life of the people and the places they visit. The question thus remains: "how are we to welcome people with disabilities if our country has not yet found the means to cater for the needs of their own disabled citizens?". The answer to the question might be in making accessible tourism a goal in itself and to work with local agents towards finding the means to welcome tourists with special needs while improving conditions for their own people. This would also mean that by making culture accessible to others, we would be contributing towards our own access to our own culture. Laaksonen (2010:8) clarifies this close

interrelationship in saying that “[i]t would be ideal if culture were inclusive and cohesive, accepting, free of discrimination and respectful towards other cultures. It would be ideal if we could feel culturally at home and culturally accepted where we live and when we go to other places”. Into this we read that at the core of all accessibility is cultural participation and inclusion, a notion that iACT partakes in.

3. Small projects with considerable impact

Among the numerous action research projects that iACT members have been carrying out in the last ten years, many prior to the existence of the research unit itself, this paper addresses a few of the ones that have already proved to have a real impact in the sphere of accessible tourism. In the knowledge that it is impossible to cover every aspect of each project and all the projects, we will be addressing the various projects within a restricted set of themes: accessible webpages, barrier free environments, inclusive museums and accessible exhibitions and accessible communication in the performing arts.

3.1. Accessible webpages

One of the main research projects under way at iACT, developed in close collaboration with the Distance Learning Unit at the Polytechnic Institute of Leiria, deals with understanding the makings of digital formats and devising truly inclusive webpages with accessible contents. As happens with every project, here too, the work is carried out by a highly qualified multidisciplinary group that includes experts in IT, graphic design, multimedia development, educational design and communication strategies. The team has worked in a considerable number of projects that go from online distance learning platforms, project development websites and corporate and product websites. Some projects have been fully developed in house and are used within the context of our home institution (IPLeiria) but many others have been done with external partners and have led to websites used by the community and Portuguese companies. The iACT website itself (www.iact.ipleiria.pt) is one of the main products of such research efforts and has become a forum for experimentation and inspirational material for many internal and external projects.

Web accessibility, as it is understood by iACT researchers, is not to be determined solely by getting perfect scores when pages are validated through automatic engines or simply by following W3C criteria. Accessible webpages are those that are equally easy to use and attractive to those who have and do not have a disability and for all who use the page, both the visitors and the providers. This means access needs to be guaranteed from all standpoints and usability becomes the main concern.

The group's interest in web accessibility issues derives from the belief that accessible webpages are important platforms on which all projects will grow, either in their making or simply in their dissemination. Virtual existence is presently as important as physical existence and this couldn't be more true if we think of the role of the Internet in Tourism. Before travelling people go into the internet to choose their destinations, to buy flights, book hotels, rent cars, know more about the place and even to prepare their trip beforehand so that they can make the most of it. If this is the case for tourists in general, it will be even more the case for tourists with special needs. Agents with special offers will necessarily need to make their webpages equally "special". To many, the webpage mediates the first contact between the various stakeholders. Providers, and tourist agents in particular, will need to show how prepared they are to receive such special clients. Their webpages need to be clear and information must be easy to find and understand, whilst being attractive and lively; interaction must be easy and effective, nobody wants to go through convoluted processes to achieve their goals; and the overall result must be one of comfort and reliability. These are highly demanding criteria that require well planned and impeccably devised pages, intelligent use of promotional content that is easily updated and back office tools that require little effort when uploading new content. Once the page has been set up, an important part of its success will be in the hands of those who update and edit its contents. No automatic validator is as yet intelligent enough to determine the quality of the content and any machine can be easily tricked into accepting as perfect less than adequate content. For these reasons, our visually impaired researchers, for instance, offer vital contributions validating new solutions and keeping track of changes. Their collaboration in these projects, as in most others, makes an enormous difference, for their insight is unique and in the first person.

Among the various projects that have been developed in this domain, one that is undergoing development at the time of writing, is the site for Accessible Portugal, the first tourism operator in Portugal catering for people with special needs. As far as it is known, this site (<http://www.accessibleportugal.com/>) is also the first of its kind in Portugal to spring from a concern for inclusion rather than for accessibility. Accessible sites are often unattractive. By following the criteria that this site has to be equally attractive and useful to all, regardless of personal needs, it sees itself as work in progress in the desire to be equally attractive, easy to use and useful to all.



3.2 Barrier free environments

No accessible tourism will ever be possible if the physical environment is not ready to embrace difference through adequate solutions. Making cities accessible is a gigantic and multi-faceted endeavour which lies beyond the scope of this particular research unit. However, various of its members are often called upon as expert advisors to help local teams in the assessment of physical barriers and the proposal of solutions in a variety of locations that go from whole areas in public places: roads, parks, beaches, cultural venues such as theatres and museums, schools, shops and religious shrines, just to name a few.

Specific work has been carried out with local authorities in the region of central Portugal, mainly in conjunction with the Municipalities of Leiria, Batalha and Ourém. These three municipalities are within the area of influence of our Polytechnic and such interaction lies within the mission of

the institution itself that sees its research as a service to the region's development.

In this domain, two interesting projects are worth mentioning in the context of this paper: one with the Municipality of Batalha and one with the Shrine of our Lady of Fatima, in Ourém.

Both these projects derive from close and long standing institutional relationships and from the direct interest of the researchers involved. It needs to be said that every project has to be "useful" to all the partners, and within the spirit of Action Research has to derive from a background of mutual respect, commitment and proactive inquiry. Each partner may have specific goals, which are not necessarily common to all, but all parties need to understand that their actions must revert as a benefit to the rest of the partners. That is what collaboration is all about, in the end.

In the case of the Batalha Municipality, iACT and the IPLeiria at large collaborate closely in making Batalha a truly inclusive Municipality¹². Interaction goes much beyond the links with iACT and all see great benefits from such collaboration. Students from different areas carry out their internships and often stay on working in the places where they trained; teachers find real projects for their students; researchers are given interesting research questions in their fields and while researching find solutions to actual problems in context. These are always win-win arrangements. In this interplay, iACT has been called upon to collaborate towards making Batalha an accessible tourist attraction. As it is, Batalha is a much visited tourist destination due to its natural resources and its cultural and architectural heritage. It is there that tourists go to see the 14th Century Monastery of Sta. Maria da Vitória, considered a World Heritage Site, by UNESCO, in 1982; to visit natural caves, gullies, scarps, clints, dry valleys, poljes and dolines; to actively participate in sport events and enjoy parks and resorts such as the Pia do Urso [the Bear's Basin] Eco-Park; to visit museums and to taste the food and drink of the region. Steadily Batalha has come to differentiate its offer by taking on an accessible stance. Accessibility and inclusion were seen by the political powers as a means for progress and slowly, Batalha has come to be one of the major Portuguese destinations for tourists with a disability. At present, Batalha offers a reasonably barrier free

¹² Find out more about Batalha at: <http://www.cm-batalha.pt/>.

environment around its main attractions, has a fully accessible hotel, and invites national and international tourists to visit their two main accessible venues – the Pia do Urso Eco-Park and the MCCB – the Batalha Community Museum. And in all their doing they have iACT as their main research partners and thus take on the philosophical approach of Action Research, collaboration and inclusion as their standpoint. By addressing the issue of accessibility and inclusion through multiple clines and towards the promotion of tourism, one of the place's great assets, Batalha is taking down barriers for its own people and making life easier for the locals whilst finding new opportunities for all. A detailed account of the MCCB research project will be discussed in section 3.3. below.

The research project with the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima is rather diverse in nature but works together with the Batalha project towards a wider approach to tourism. According to Santos (1999:14) religious tourism goes beyond personal religious convictions to have a significant geographical impact in the human and natural environment in which it takes place. Fátima is certainly an example of such acknowledgement and the recent decision to make this Shrine fully accessible derives from the understanding that by catering for the needs of pilgrims with disabilities, everybody will benefit. The call for the help of iACT researchers came initially for the provision of audiodescription for visually impaired visitors and subtitling of religious services for deaf participants but has since stretched to an encompassing project to address overall concerns with physical barriers and the development of inclusive communication strategies. This project is still in its initial stages but should be in full swing soon to have a real impact in the Shrine's centennial celebrations, to take place in 2018, that aim to live under the flag of accessibility and inclusion.



3.3 Inclusive Museums

One of the strong points in iACT's action is to be found in its contribution towards studying and setting up inclusive museums. In this domain, as in others, what initially begins as one researcher's individual project soon gives way to multiple sub-projects that work together towards the greater whole. And here, too, an initial project spins out into many others and has a greater impact within and beyond what was initially envisaged. iACT's involvement with accessible museums started off with an individual post-doctoral research project, registered at London Imperial College and the University of Aveiro and with various case studies in Portugal. A pilot study was first carried out with an itinerary exhibition called "Olha por Mim" [look at/for/over me] that aimed to evaluate different communication strategies to make the art experience available to all. Further to acting as a campaign for access to culture¹³, it was also a test tube for experimenting with multisensory communication strategies, intersemiotic translation and, in particular, for the development of a different approach to audio description, that of "soundpainting", that might be seen as "a new and different piece of art, that will not be a go-between but will actually substitute the original, possibly becoming an original work of art in itself" (Neves 2010:45).

This initial research project at MCCB brought together a number of researchers that would later work on other projects in museums in Portugal, namely at the Batalha Community Museum, at the Tile Museum in Lisbon, and more recently in research projects with Brazilian partners working towards inclusive museums in Brazil.

Museums play a major role in cultural tourism in particular and tourism in general. Benediktsson (2004: 4) reminds us that museums can "contribute to cultural tourism as attractions, because they work with the cultural heritage, or even are themselves cultural or heritage assets", the later situation often disregarded. It may be interesting to see that accessibility may become in itself an asset and an attraction, thus reverting towards a greater interest in visiting a specific venue. This positive impact has been felt in the MCCB project that has turned a small community museum into a national reference

¹³ This exhibition travelled the country and had a great impact in society at large. See more at: <http://bailaolopes.wordpress.com/projecto-olha-por-mim/>

as an inclusive museum (cf Neves, Roberto & Diaz Cintas, 2012, for further details).

iACT's role in the making of this particular museum was crucial. Further to acting as consultants, IPLeiria's staff and researchers studied and developed multimedia products, such as virtual books and 3D animations; worked with the curators towards a better understanding of the exhibits and, above all, worked closely with the municipality and all the museum staff towards making the MCCB truly accessible to all. The approach was once again dialogic, holistic in nature and involved the whole team working on this new museum. iACT researchers worked with the architects, engineers and designers, towards an inclusive physical environment. Space was designed so as to allow for comfortable visits regardless of people's age, physical, sensory or cognitive profiles. Signage, directionality, lighting and facilities were closely monitored to guarantee easy use and safety and all furniture was designed to be equally appealing and appropriate, both for impaired and non-impaired visitors. The whole museum was seen as a communicational whole within which different texts were presented and placed to work individually or in connection with each other. This approach allows for every visitor to find the means for interaction with the museum, by making the most of individual skills and abilities. This multi-modal, multi-format approach gave way to layered information strategies, where written text can be complimented by touch experiences; sight can be enhanced or substituted by hearing (via audioguides with audio description); and interaction is sought through a number of activities that can be easily adapted to different age and interest groups. All these materials were developed and tested under the scrutiny of iACT researchers. Here again, it became clear that having impaired researchers among the group allowed for richer and more productive experiences proving that, in this domain as in many others, it is crucial to work "with" the people rather than "for" the people.



3.4 Accessible communication in the performing arts

Another area in which iACT researchers have contributed towards inclusive tourism is that of accessible communication strategies in the performing arts. Portugal has a very rich artistic production but is not yet prepared to use it for the benefit of tourists. Unlike other countries that use their performances as touristic attractions in themselves – eg. The Opera in Beijing, Classical concerts in Vienna, Musicals in London or Rock Concerts in Rio de Janeiro (Rock in Rio) – Portugal seldom takes advantage of its performing arts and often finds it difficult to draw national audiences to what is known to be exceptionally good performances.

In this respect, iACT is also working towards making a difference and has taken on a number of accessible communication projects to enhance the artistic experience of impaired patrons and to contribute towards a greater visibility of Portuguese artistic productions.

As far as the performing arts go, iACT has worked mainly within three domains – sign language interpreting, surtitling and audiodescription. These experiences have all happened in close interaction with established companies working within the performing arts – Vo'Arte, the Gift or VA - Visual Audio, for instance – and have raised interesting material for a significant number of MA and PhD research projects.

4 Final words

The projects that have been briefly described in this paper may read as subsidiary to the overall issue of accessible tourism; however, they have certainly contributed towards a greater offer of points of interest both for national citizens and for foreign tourists wishing to know the Portuguese culture better.

Even though research is mainly expected to produce science and knowledge to be disseminated and replicated by other researchers, in the present context it is also expected to revert towards a better world. This is particularly true when research leads to the invention of new objects, technical solutions or techniques; but is also valid when it leads to better human environments. It is hoped that it has been proven that academia has a word to say and a role to play in improving standards and in contributing towards new and

interesting solutions to enhance tourism in general. It is also hoped that it is easily seen that research projects can stimulate action in the various domains of a people's cultural expression and that in so doing researchers are helping to make their country more welcoming and attractive, thus stimulating economic growth, while enhancing knowledge and making science. It is often said that the social sciences seldom contribute towards real change. It is clear from the work done by researchers in the Polytechnic Institute of Leiria that social sciences can play a major role in promoting actions that involve researchers from all fields and people from all walks of life. In domains such as tourism, very little can be done within mono-disciplinary approaches, and much less so if one adds matters of access and inclusion to the equation.

The iACT Research Unit is highly committed to keeping a collaborative, inclusive and educational approach to all its endeavours. It will continue to intertwine research with education and social change and will always work for and towards inclusion in whatever domains its researchers' interests may lead the group to. At the core of all its work lies the belief that inclusion is all about attitudes and those should be worked on at every level.

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APPEAL:













Beautiful Gate Foundation
for the Disabled
美门残障关怀基金会
(638388-A)

美门残障关怀基金会 (638388-A)

Beautiful Gate Foundation For The Disabled

No. 29, Jalan 552/59, Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia.
Tel: 603-78736579, 78758609 Fax: 603-78762686
Website: www.beautifulgate.org.my Email: info@beautifulgate.org.my

July 09, 2012

Dear Sir / Madam

**Appeal for Sponsorship of
Beautiful Gate Foundation Puchong Centre Building Fund**

Beautiful Gate Foundation for the Disabled has been providing services and assistance to disabled community since 1993. There are now 7 Beautiful Gate centres established in different cities throughout Peninsular Malaysia, located in Petaling Jaya, Kepong, Kampar, Seremban, Melaka, Klang and Sitiawan.

After numerous requests, Beautiful Gate Foundation initiated plans to set up a new centre in Puchong, aimed to provide job opportunities, training and various services to disabled community in Puchong, USJ and Subang Jaya.

In 2010, Beautiful Gate received donation of a 1½-storey factory in Puchong for setting up this new centre, and decided to extend it into a 2-storey building to increase space that is required for various services.

After the initial groundwork, we took about a year to raise funds for renovation works and drawing up of the architectural plans. The renovation plan was approved by the authorities at the beginning of this year and the construction is awarded to KS LEE Construction, which came up with the most favorable quotation among 5 submissions during tender calling, at the lowest price of RM398,000.00. The contract for the construction of the lift was awarded to Kone Sdn Bhd, the lowest bidder at the price of RM96,000.00.

HQ:
No.29, Jalan 552/59, 47300 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia. Tel: 603-78736579, 603-78758609 Fax: 603-78762686 Email: info@beautifulgate.org.my www.beautifulgate.org.my

美门残障服务中心 Cancer Development Centre for the Disabled: 92, Jalan 352/238, 47300 Petaling Jaya, Selangor. Tel: 03-78756758 Fax: 03-78702586
 美门残障教育中心 Rehabilitation Centre for the Disabled: 90 & 92, Persiaran Mawarputih, Kepong Baru, 52100 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03-62795900 Fax: 03-62723848
 美门残障教育中心 Educational Centre for the Disabled: 2025, Jalan Inan, Taman Banjar Baru, 31900 Kangar, Perak. Tel/Fax: 05-6533162
 美门残障语言中心 Seremban Centre for the Disabled: 21, Taman Mambau Baru, 70300 Seremban, Negeri Sembilan. Tel/Fax: 06-8839047
 美门残障马六甲中心 Malacca Centre for the Disabled: 81, Jalan M12, Taman Merdeka Jaya, Batu Berendam, 75200 Melaka. Tel/Fax: 06-5178461
 美门残障巴生中心 Klang Centre for the Disabled: 74, Lebak Tur, Taman Ch'Uang, 41200 Klang, Selangor. Tel/Fax: 03-81766245
 美门残障史里中心 Sitiawan Centre for the Disabled: 205, Taman Bunga Raya, 31000 Sitiawan, Perak. Tel/Fax: 05-6048877

ICAC (Incorporated Ministry for The Disabled 马来西亚残疾人事务) / Member of Selangor Council of Welfare & Social Development

We have already started renovation work last month and hopefully the project will be completed by end of October, and we will be able to begin providing services for the disabled community by next January.

After much hard work in the past, we managed to raise about RM400,000.00 for this purpose but we are still short of our target, especially when we add on the expenses of the interior set up, equipment and an accessible van to provide transport for the disabled.

Hence, we are organizing a fund raising dinner on September 2nd, at 7.00 pm, at an open space near to Puchong TESCO, aimed to raise RM300,000.00 for the said purpose.

We look forward to your support, contribution and prayers. Thank you.

恳请资助美门残障蒲种中心建筑金

美门残障关怀基金会从 1993 年 开始即为残障同胞提供不同的服务，并在不同的城市设立了共 7 间美门残障中心来协助当地的残障群体，各美门中心分别坐落在八打灵、甲洞、金宝、芙蓉、马六甲、巴生和实兆远。

在众多残障朋友的要求下，美门基金会决定在蒲种设立一个新的中心，以服务蒲种、USJ 和梳邦再也的残障人士。美门于 2010 年获得一团体捐赠了一栋一层半的工厂，并决定将之扩建成 2 层楼以准备足够的空间为残障人士提供不同的服务。之后又用了一年多的时间筹备、筹款及准备图测，今年年头刚得到市议会的批准，并已在 6 月份开始装修工程。

整个装修工程需马币 49 万 4 千零吉，我们在之前已筹获了大约马币 40 万零吉，若再加上室内配备、器材和一辆无障碍客货车，我们目前的款项距离所需的目标尚远。因此决定于 9 月 2 日在蒲种 TESCO 旁举办“有爱、就有希望”慈善晚宴，恳请您慷慨解囊捐助，使当地的残障群体可以得到帮助。

谢谢。

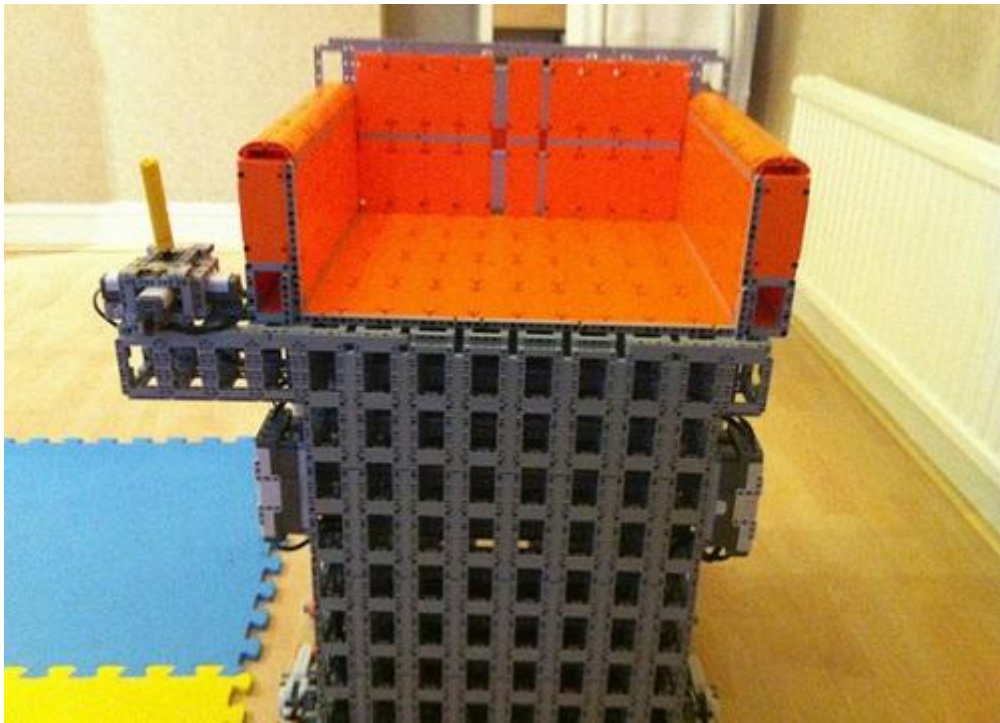
Yours Sincerely,



.....
总干事：谢秀贞
Sia Siew Chin
Executive Director

NEWS:

The World's First Motorized LEGO Wheelchair 1.



UK-based IT developer and LEGO fanatic, Simon Burfield, has claimed to have built the world's first motorized LEGO wheelchair—capable of carrying a person weighing up to 200 pounds.

According to his website, he said that the wheelchair uses six LEGO Mindstorms NXT's for moving and one master NXT to control its direction.

It is powered by 14 LEGO mindstorms motors and moves on 12 Rotacaster multi-directional wheels.

He also said that this is only a prototype and he will be updating his site once it has been perfected.

Other than his LEGO wheelchair, Burfield also creates other nifty LEGO robots and mechanics.

2.

'Universal Design' has very beneficial resale advantages

We all need a helping hand from time to time, but prefer to remain as independent as possible. Accessible features in a home are a way of lending ourselves a hand, and staying in our own house for much longer than we otherwise might.

"As more members of the baby boom generation, which comprises the largest segment of America's population, reach retirement age, many of them show a preference for aging in place, in their own homes rather than moving to traditional assisted living communities," said ERA Justin Realtor professional Fara Espandi. "This trend has created more interest in the designing and retrofitting of homes for maximum ease of use. Heightened awareness of the needs of disabled people of all ages, and increased legislative attention to their rights, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), has also helped drive a trend which can benefit all homebuyers."

What has come to be called 'Universal Design' is a set of standards for making every house a welcoming home for inhabitants of all ability levels. These include placing light switches and thermostats low enough, and electrical outlets high enough, for anyone to reach; outfitting hallways with railings and showers with grab-bars and stools; replacing doorknobs with levers; offering ramps as well as stairs, and doorways that can accommodate wheelchairs; and minimizing falling risks through secure, low-pile carpeting. Attitudes and demographics have changed, and Universal Design is now considered a resale advantage. This potential extra salability can be achieved through minimal effort and expense. For instance, in many cases a room can be made wheelchair-accessible simply by changing the direction of a swinging door.

Espandi continued, "The ease of doing this, and the popularity with potential homebuyers, makes it equally desirable to build a new home with these considerations, or to retrofit an existing home with them, using simple methods that enhance convenience and are common sense for all homeowners.

Talk to one of our Realtor professionals about accessible-home options in any area where you may be interested in buying. He or she can also assist about financing opportunities and other ways to keep your path to secure homeownership a clear one."

ERA Justin Realty, a leading area Realtor brokerage serving Bergen, Passaic, Hudson and Essex Counties is a Top-100 ERA office of the global real estate network had been named the recipient of the J.D. Power and Associates Award for 'Highest Overall Satisfaction For First Time Home Sellers Among National Full Service Real Estate Firms.'

This marks the second time that ERA Real Estate had received an award from this prestigious organization, previously receiving the 'Highest Overall Satisfaction For First Time Home Buyers Among National Full Service Real Estate Firms.' The awards were from a study based on responses from 4,834 homebuyers and sellers surveyed by J.D. Power and Associates.

PROGRAM & EVENTS:

1.



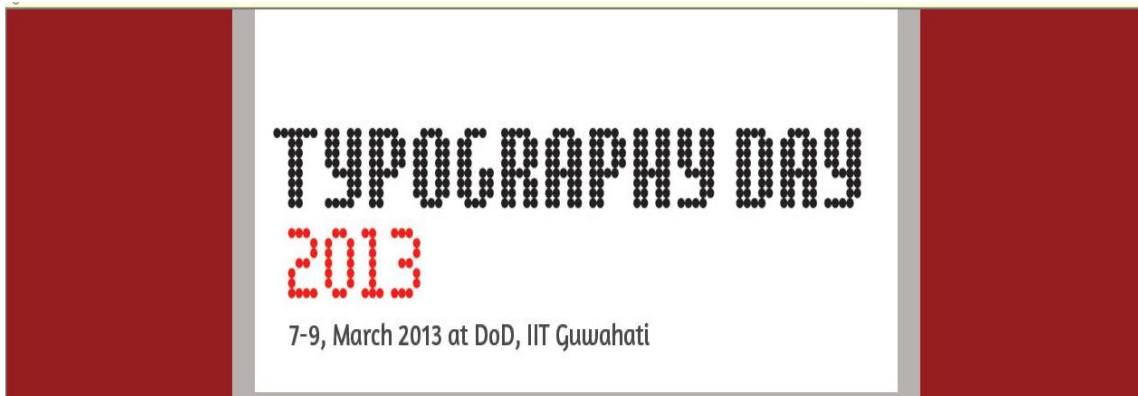
'Expo CD'

3 Day Workshop:

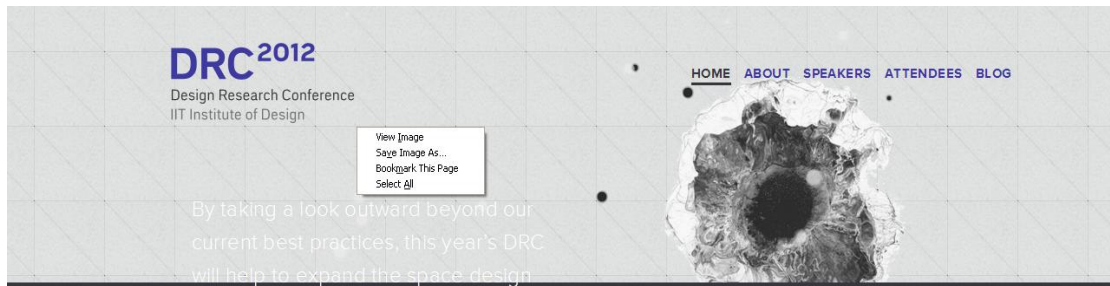
'Communication Design for IT and Media Professionals'

23rd - 25th August 2012 from 9.30am - 5.30 pm
at IDC, IIT Bombay

2.



3.



October 9-10, 2012 | Chicago

4.



Light Up the World!
Open call for the 2nd "Design Inspires Humanism"
2012 Cumulus International Competition of LED Lighting Design

"Morals make us feel sorry for those who are hungry. Ethics oblige us to feed them."—Emmanuel Levinas.

Let us be inspired by these words, because they define exactly the responsibilities of design and designers: creating new uses, new scenarios, to participate in shaping the world into a more enlightened place. More than our job, it is our duty.

As heads of training, we have a responsibility to ensure, as much as we can, the professional placement of our students in the profession for which they have been trained. As a university, we have the responsibility to change the world.

I wish a great success to this competition "Cumulus-Inspires Humanism Competition-2012"

Let it reveal the talent of our students and light up the world.

—Christian CUELLERIN
Cumulus President

When disaster strikes and the world falls into darkness, what can we do to save lives? We ask: How could design make impact on humanity? When China and other developing countries gradually go rich and strong, and the night sky bright up in those rural and urban areas, we ask: How can design bring in long-term insight and close caress for our future life?

We are looking for talent designers who are young, having dream, and ambitious to make the world a better place. If you are one of them, join us for this international lighting design competition. To light up the world!

In 2009, soon after the disastrous earthquake in China, Cumulus teamed up with Tongji university to successfully launch the 1st "Design Inspires Humanism" in 2009: a Cumulus International Competition for Earthquake Disaster Relief. This competition had attracted over 400 young student designers from Cumulus membership schools. This year, Cumulus will cooperate with Tongji University again to hold the 2nd "Design Inspires Humanism" international design competition, and this time we will focus on how to use LED technology to design new hope and new life.

Why join this competition? Because Cumulus gathered world's best universities and colleges of art, design and media, and you will have opportunity to compete with the most brilliant talent young designers worldwide. Our jury are those professors coming from Cumulus leading design schools, architects from international architecture studios and heads at world famous design and innovation companies. We will also invite insiders from LED lighting industry to join the jury so as to guide the competition participants to learn the market need and technology feasibility for their products. The reward is attractive with the highest prize of RMB 60,000. In addition, you will have more opportunities to gain high recognition, visibility and media coverage etc. Moreover, after this competition, we will invite winners to China to join in a follow-up workshop for commercial projects together with our business sponsors, in which you may have much more chance to prove yourself by turning out your design concept into reality, to gain insight in China market and even start up your own business in China!

Registration to this competition will start from June 15, 2012. For more information, please visit our website: www.cumulus-DIH.org, or contact us via email: cumulus-DIH@gmail.com.

TEL: 011-49495367

E-mail: cumulus-DIH@gmail.com

ADD: Sino French Centre, 4th Floor, Shaanxi Building, 100 Changping Road, Tongji University, Shanghai

5.

11th International Workshop on I18N of Products & Systems (In-cooperation with ACM)

Transformation Through
SoLoMo
Social Local Mobile

5th - 8th
Sep '12

Bangalore, India

sponsors

Human Factors International

YUJ Designs
Partners in Design

IIMB
वैदिक वास्तुशास्त्र

xerox

UIC
International User Interface Consulting

6.



'Expo PDi'

3 Day Workshop:

'Exposure to Product Design and Innovation'
27th - 29th September 2012 from 9.30am - 5.30 pm
at IDC, IIT Bombay

7.

EPIC 2012
renewal

October 14-17, 2012
Savannah College of Art and Design

8.

CEA Issues Call for Entries for Innovations 2013 Design and Engineering Awards

Submissions accepted through Sept. 14

The Consumer Electronics Association announced that entries for the International CES Innovations 2013 Design and Engineering Awards will be accepted now through Sept.14. The 2013 Best of Innovations Honorees will be announced Nov. 12, at CEA's New York Press Preview and showcased at the 2013 International CES. CES is scheduled Jan. 8-11, 2013 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

9.



JOB OPENINGS:

1.

We are expanding our team of the strategic Robert Bosch GmbH User Experience (UX) Initiative and are looking for a highly motivated individuals for the following positions:

1. Senior Visual Designer

User-oriented, product-related Graphical User Interface design in the context of Human Machine Interaction (HMI).

Your tasks:

Developing product-oriented motion graphics, animations and movies in close collaboration with the divisions, research teams, the UX team and external companies.

Your profile:

Diploma, or bachelor's/master's degree in media animation, motion graphics or a comparable field. Preferably several years (> 3–5 years) experience acquired in an agency or industrial environment. High level of proficiency in After Effects, Premiere, Photoshop, Maya, 3ds Max and/or other current tools. Interest in storyboarding, visual FX, supervising on set, graphics for video production and other multimedia animations. Ability to solve problems in a pro-active and creative manner and work under time constraints on several tasks and projects simultaneously, as well as a marked ability to work in cross-functional teams.

Well-organized personality with outstanding creative and conceptual skills, interested in innovative HMI technologies and ideally experiences in interaction design, interface design and styling.

High level of English language proficiency required.

2. Visual Designer

User-oriented, product-related Interaction Design.

Your tasks:

Developing product-related interaction designs, from early concepts and prototypes to production-ready solutions in close collaboration with the divisions, research teams, the UX team and external companies.

Your profile:

Diploma, or bachelor's/master's degree in interaction design, interface design or a comparable field of study, ideally with product interaction design as the

main focus and with several years' (> 3–5 years) work experience in user-centered interaction design, creation and application of wireframes, flows and interaction guidelines for products in the areas of consumer goods and/or embedded automotive systems.

High level of proficiency in interaction design tools (e.g. Visio, Sketchflow) as well as Adobe CS (esp. Photoshop, Illustrator, Flash) and/or other current tools. Proficiency in current SW prototyping (e.g. AS3, .NET WPF) as well as HW prototyping desirable (e.g. using Arduino boards)

Work experience in a successful product-oriented design agency and/or experience working in an environment with an industrial client base or comparable experience in a UX team of an established industrial company.

Ability to solve problems in a pro-active and creative manner and work under time constraints on several tasks and projects simultaneously, as well as a marked ability to work across cross-functional teams.

Well-organized with outstanding analytical and conceptual skills, interested in innovative HMI technologies and and a high level of motivation to develop ideas from paper to production.

3. Product GUI Designer for User-Oriented HMI Design

User-oriented, product-related Graphical User Interface design in the context of Human Machine Interaction (HMI).

Your tasks:

Developing product-oriented GUI designs, design prototypes and design style guides in close collaboration with the divisions, research teams, the UX team and external companies.

Your profile:

Diploma, or bachelor's/master's degree in media design, interface design or a comparable field of study, ideally with Product GUI as the main focus. Preferably several years (> 3–5 years) experience in user-oriented, product-related UI-Interaction and screen design, motion design, icon development, creation and application of style guides for product GUIs in the areas of consumer goods, mobile devices and/or embedded automotive systems.

High level of proficiency in Adobe CS (esp. Photoshop, Illustrator, Flash, Fireworks) and/or other current tools.

Ability to solve problems in a pro-active and creative manner and work under time constraints on several tasks and projects simultaneously, as well as a marked ability to work in cross-functional teams.

Well-organized personality with outstanding creative and conceptual skills, interested in innovative HMI technologies and a high level of proficiency in interaction design, interface design and styling.

High level of English language proficiency required

You can also refer to our UX recruitment brochure to learn more.

Apply now!

Please apply with full CV, cover letter and portfolio to shilpa.bhat@in.bosch.com

2.

looking for a graphic/web designers in Delhi with 0-2

years experience or looking for students interested in long internships,

for a very interesting website called www.dineout.co.in

Interested people, please do not reply to this email and directly can

directly contact the CEO Ankit at ankit.mehrotra@dineout.co.in

Company Profile :

Dineout is a table reservation website which enables the customer to book a table, online and through the phone, at their favourite restaurants in town and provides them fantastic discount for FREE, which they would not be entitled to if they go to the restaurant directly. We also plan & organize

parties, corporate lunches and dinners, anniversaries etc for the customer

for FREE without any hassle at all thus saving their time and effort. We

specialize in organizing gatherings even in the tightest of budgets

Founded by an ex Investment Banker, an IIM graduate, an ex Fund manager & a Chief Officer, dineout is the one stop shop for all dining out solutions.

It has already received its first round of funding within 4 months of operations and has grown from a team of 4 to a current team of 12.

Job Description :

We are looking for a graphics/web designer with 0-2 years of experience for the following

1-Updating the website and dineout's facebook page daily with new creative's.

2- designing e-mailers, tent cards for restaurants etc.

3- Creating Banners according to the marketing requirements.

4-Designing creative's for marketing on various social media channels, etc.

5-Working on new layout for the website and other products.

We want someone who ;

- Who thrives in a start-up environment, i.e. is a highly motivated self-starter who can work independently with minimal supervision.**
- Who loves taking responsibility for their work and have a can do/will do attitude.**
- Who is a team player and will support his team members when required**
- Who maintains an extremely high attention for details.**
- Who has good communication skills and can express their ideas in an efficient, persuasive and concise manner.**
- Who is fluent in English.**

3.

Intuit India is looking for a contract Interaction Designer & Visual Designer with good credentials and dynamism to work with high performance teams. This person will be working with teams in the U.S. and India for Quickbooks products & platforms. Candidates with experiences of developing simple yet powerful E2E experiences for cross channel/device agnostic applications will have an advantage.

The candidate will be given preference if there is a permanent position in the same or a different business unit.

If you are interested please reply with your CV and Portfolio.

Intuit India , www.intuit.in

4.

Required: Executive- PR & Communication

Baaya Design, Lower Parel, Mumbai

Baaya Design is a folk art and specialised skill based styling store and studio. We work with a wide range of crafts and arts from across India. We offer a creative, young, energetic and learning environment.

Responsibility:

- To develop communication and promotional materials like e-mailers, catalogues, presentations, PR material, social media updates and other**

strategic promotions as required, and thereby develop the Baaya Design brand..

- Create and implement store events.
- Create database of customers, analyse the data and initiate meetings. provide retail and institutional sales support as maybe required.

Experience:

App 2 years in a relevant field.

Qualification:

- Graduate from an Communication design/advertsing/PR/event management school
- Must have excellent English communication skills- written & verbal
- Must possess a good understanding of social media marketing

Email us at : baayadesign@gmail.com

Call us at: 02265210165

5.

We are expanding our team of the strategic Robert Bosch GmbH User Experience (UX) Initiative and are looking for a highly motivated individuals for the following positions:

1. Senior Visual Designer

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Interest in storyboarding, visual FX, supervising on set, graphics for video production and other multimedia animations. Ability to solve problems in a pro-active and creative manner and work under time constraints on several tasks and projects simultaneously, as well as a marked ability to work in cross-functional teams.

Well-organized personality with outstanding creative and conceptual skills, interested in innovative HMI technologies and ideally experiences in interaction design, interface design and styling.

High level of English language proficiency required.

2. Visual Designer

User-oriented, product-related Interaction Design.

Your tasks:

Developing product-related interaction designs, from early concepts and prototypes to production-ready solutions in close collaboration with the divisions, research teams, the UX team and external companies.

Your profile:

Diploma, or bachelor's/master's degree in interaction design, interface design or a comparable field of study, ideally with product interaction design as the main focus and with several years' (> 3-5 years) work experience in user-centered interaction design, creation and application of wireframes, flows and interaction guidelines for products in the areas of consumer goods and/or embedded automotive systems.

High level of proficiency in interaction design tools (e.g. Visio, Sketchflow) as well as Adobe CS (esp. Photoshop, Illustrator, Flash) and/or other current tools. Proficiency in current SW prototyping (e.g. AS3, .NET WPF) as well as HW prototyping desirable (e.g. using Arduino boards)

Work experience in a successful product-oriented design agency and/or experience working in an environment with an industrial client base or comparable experience in a UX team of an established industrial company.

Ability to solve problems in a pro-active and creative manner and work under time constraints on several tasks and projects simultaneously, as well as a marked ability to work across cross-functional teams.

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Preferably several years (> 3-5 years) experience in user-oriented, product-related UI-Interaction and screen design, motion design, icon development, creation and application of style guides for product GUIs in the areas of consumer goods, mobile devices and/or embedded automotive systems.

High level of proficiency in Adobe CS (esp. Photoshop, Illustrator, Flash, Fireworks) and/or other current tools.

Ability to solve problems in a pro-active and creative manner and work under time constraints on several tasks and projects simultaneously, as well as a marked ability to work in cross-functional teams.

Well-organized personality with outstanding creative and conceptual skills, interested in innovative HMI technologies and a high level of proficiency in interaction design, interface design and styling.

High level of English language proficiency required

You can also refer to our UX recruitment brochure to learn more.

Apply now!

Please apply with full CV, cover letter and portfolio to shilpa.bhat@in.bosch.com

6.

We at Bang Design Pvt Ltd (www.bang.co.in) are looking for people with 2-3 years of experience in managing design programs. We are looking for creative individuals who love to :

- * Diagnose client needs and create clear statements of work
- * Create and manage budgets and schedules
- * Maintain work life balance for team members involved
- * Resolve tricky issues that crop up along the projects lifecycle

We would like you to be:

- * The client's champion to our work groups.

- * Create measurable goals that resonate for both the client and our internal teams.
- * Independent and proactive in resolution of issues and changes in scope. You need to be an affable individual here who can clearly articulate issues to both parties.
- * A business development asset able to ferret new opportunities for us within the client's domain.

In addition we would like you to have:

- * 2+ years of work experience in a creative services organization with proven record of managing projects/teams
- * Understanding of product design/development activities and their relationship with brand strategy
- * Working knowledge of current project management methodologies and tools.

Please reply to bang@bangid.com stating Job Openings-Program Manager as your subject. Remunerations are negotiable.

7.

We Require a Design Manager for our retail store and studio in Raghuvanshi Mills, Parel, Mumbai. We offer a highly creative, learning, innovative and young environment to work in. We like people with the passion and the belief that they can make a difference.

Responsibility: To manage the design team and customised art styling projects, develop lifestyle product ranges as maybe required for Baaya Design.

Baaya Design works extensively with folk art & crafts from across the country and offers customised skill based solutions for interiors like murals, partitions, art furniture, etc.

Qualification: Graduate in Interior Design/Design Institute in Furniture Design/Hard Materials Designer/Design Manager

Must be very articulate and with a positive can-do attitude.

Experience: At least 2 years' experience in relevant field

Salary: as per background

Send your cv to baayadesign@gmail.com, Tel: 022 65210165

8.

Senior UX Specialist – Imaginea Hyderabad (/Pramati Technologies Pvt Ltd)

Responsibilities

Work closely with product managers, development teams and other internal stakeholders to build storyboards, proof-of-concept mockups, demos and prototypes of proposed and planned applications and features for Imaginea Customers

Conduct ongoing research of web-based user interface development best practices.

Creating art assets and resources

Requirements

>5 years of experience in web applications design / development, with specific expertise with Web2.0 based design.

Fluency with web standards and technologies, including: CSS3, HTML5

Knowledge of usability, cross-browser issues and coding practices for accessibility

Strong web graphics production capability and practitioner experience with Adobe Photoshop, Macromedia Dreamweaver and Illustrator

Creative approach to problem solving, innovation and issue resolution

Superior interpersonal skills and the ability to collaborate actively and proactively with others in a cross-functional team

Self-motivated and self-managed with a high degree of analytical ability and intellectual curiosity

Strong attention to detail, and a commitment to delivering highly-polished web-based prototypes under tight time constraints

Preferred Requirements

Exposed to and understands latest design trends specially adopted by Web2.0/social applications

Familiar with best practices in CSS development

Have some experience/knowledge with Flash, Javascript and libraries e.g. JQuery, prototype etc

Ability to communicate effectively in writing, verbally and as a presenter

Enjoy fast, agile software development

Websites: visit www.imaginea.com for more info on imaginea www.pramati.com

9.

The Design team at Yahoo, Bangalore, has two open positions for Visual Designers with 6+ years of experience.

If you are a Passionate , talented and highly motivated designers interested in working with Yahoo , please send in your resume and portfolio [or a link to the same] to join-ued@yahoo-inc.com

10.

Polycom is currently looking out to hire a designer who has experience working on web products.

Brief Job Description

We are looking out for a Visual Designer with Interaction Design experience or an Interaction Designer with great Visual Design skills. You should have a good understanding of graphic design as it applies to making enterprise web products. You will be working closely with the design and development team to create top class video-collaboration products.

Summary of the skills

1. 2+ years of experience designing web-based application user interfaces. freshers can apply too if you have good skills
2. Graphic design ranging from web design, design for various screen layouts, iconography, typography using CSS, general pixel perfect eye for aesthetics.
3. Graphic design suited for web products Eg. Optimised download times, responsive design.
4. Good knowledge of usability.
5. Understanding of front-end technologies like xHTML, CSS box model, JavaScript.
6. Experience in enterprise application design.
7. Experience in data visualization.
8. Excellent interpersonal skills with the ability to collaborate in a cross-functional team.
9. Clear, concise interpersonal communications.

About Polycom

Polycom is the industry leader in unified collaboration solutions. Companies choose Polycom for solutions that enable their geographically dispersed workforces to communicate and collaborate more effectively and productively over distances. Using Polycom telepresence, video, and voice

solutions and services, people connect and collaborate from their desktops, meeting rooms, class rooms, and mobile settings. Organizations from a wide variety of industries and the private sector work with Polycom standards-based solutions to:

- Gain a fast return on their investment as their teams easily collaborate "face to face" wherever they are
- Cut the time, cost, and carbon emissions associated with gathering the right people in one place to solve problems
- Apply saved resources, time, and energy to primary business and organizational challenges

Please forward your resume and portfolio with a few lines about yourself to parasar.das@polycom.com

11.

IITDelhi Invites applications from exceptionally bright and motivated persons In Its **INSTRUMENT DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT: Industrial Design with specialization preferably In Aesthetic/Human Factors I Product Prototyping. Design management In Industry/Consultancies/Education.**

POSITION PAY BAND

Professor Rs,37400-67000 (minimum pay of Rs. 48000/-) +AGP Rs.10500/-(Pay Band-4)

Associate Professor RS.37400-67000 (minimum pay of Rs. 42800/-) +AGP Rs.9500/-(Pay Band-4)

Assistant Professor and Assistant Professor (on contract) Candidates can apply any time during the year against rolling advertisement which is already on the Institute Website (Qualification, Experience, updated areas of Specializations and Pay Band available on website (<http://www.iitd.ac.in/content/faculty-positions>))

Qualified

persons Include:

(a) Indian Nationals,

(b) Foreign Nationals who are "Persons of Indian Origin" (PIO) or

Overseas Citizens of India (OCI), in whose case, if selected, permission will be sought from Govt. of India before he/she can Join IIT.

or

(c) Other Foreign Nationals, in whose case, If Selected.

2. A cumulative Professional Development Allowance of Rs. 3 Lakhs for every block period of 3 years (Rs. One lakh per year) is available to every member of the faculty to meet the expenses for participating in both National and International Conferences, paying the membership fee of various professional bodies, books and periodicals and contingent expenses.

3. Reimbursement of telephone bills up to a ceiling of Rs.1500/- per month.

4. There is provision for payment of traveling/moving allowance to faculty joining the Institute from abroad or from elsewhere in India as per Institute rules. details of which are available on the Institute website.

5.

Institute has a Young Faculty Incentive Scheme sponsored by Alumni or Industry that enable newly recruited young faculty members 10 a research grant of Rs. 2.00 lakhs per year with an option to draw an additional Rs.10,000/- per month as honorarium from this grant. The research grant is available till the faculty member is in PB3 grade.

6.

Institute has numerous Chair Professor positions sponsored by Alumni or Industry that enable Professors. to a research grant ranging from Rs. 2.00 lakhs -Rs.6.00 lakhs per year for upto 5 years with an option to draw an additional Rs.10,000/- per month as honorarium.

ACCOMMODATION:

Suitable residential accommodation as per rules shall be provided on the Campus on joining the Institute (this is subject to availability). With the allotment of 96 new Professors apartments, almost all interested new faculty members would be able to get an apartment soon in the Campus.

ABOUT

THE CAMPUS: Extending into an area of 320 acres. the campus is imaginatively laid out with a picturesque landscape with clean and wide roads. The campus provides all essential amenities for community living including Staff Club, Hospital, Shopping Centre, Banks, ATMs, Post Office, Community Centre, etc.

It is a requirement that candidates visit the IIT Delhi website, prepare and submit the completed application for Appointment against the above position.

The website also contains useful Information on various aspects of working and living at IIT Delhi and on The recruitment process.

As a precaution, after submitting the application through the website, please retain a printed copy of the application with you. Candidates employed with Government/Semi-Government Organization or with Autonomous Bodies must print a copy of the electronic submission and submit the printed version through proper channel at the address given below.

However, only In those case. where Internet is not available an application form may be obtained from the Deputy Registrar (E-I) by sending a self addressed envelope (26cms x11Cms) to the address given below. The completed application may be sent by postal mail to the address given below. In those cases where Internet access Is available, the application must be submitted only through the website. The last date of receipt of applications Is16thAyyuat 2012.

All Purpose Address:

Deputy Registrar (E-I).

IIT Delhi. Hauz Khas, New Delhi ;

110016 (INDIA)

Telephone : +91-11-26591716.

Fax: 011•26597216,

E-mail: ar_e1@admln.iitd.ac.in

12.

This is an invitation to UI/UX members to EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES within the SOCIAL GAMES domain.

Zynga Games is looking at expanding their team of UI members at the India office in Bangalore.

Contact : mkumar@zynga.com

Few of the games developed by Zynga are Bubble Safari, CityVille, FarmVille, CastleVille, Mafia Wars, Zynga Poker, Empires & Allies, Scramble, Words with Friends and a few other top titles on the charts.

13.

DREAM:IN NEXT GENERATION ENTERPRISE REQUIRES URGENTLY

1. Junior Graphic Designer / Visualiserwith a minimum of 2 years of work experience preferably at a design consultancy

Responsibilities:

- * Ability to create graphic design solutions and systems with a consistent visual tone for a variety of applications, across different mediums, and for diverse audiences.
- * Can articulate brand positioning through graphic design.
- * Enjoys the challenge of developing, defining, and refining visual design solutions to support brand personality traits.
- * Possess solid presentation skills that convey the strategy behind design decisions.
- * Demonstrate professionalism to DREAM:IN staff and clients.
- * Collaborate with team members from varied backgrounds effectively.
- * Work both independently and team based while providing creative and technical contributions to projects.
- * Ability to prioritize multiple tasks and manage time appropriately.
- * Possess expertise in graphic design software applications, including Adobe Creative Suite.
- * Understand the production process and possess the ability to work with a production artist, production team, and production vendors.

To Apply

In addition to a resume and cover letter, please provide an example of your work, for example:

- * A portfolio showing sample projects
- * A document describing a project where you had an integral part

Email: rahul.jvk@idiom.co.in OR ampat.varghese@idiom.co.in

Phone: +91-9880251787

<http://dreamin.in>

14.

Tech Mahindra Ltd (<http://www.techmahindra.com>) is looking for UX Designers (multiple positions)

Required Experience: 4-7 years

- Experience in designing for Mobile Apps and Tablets
- Experience in user research and usability testing
- Exposure to Telecom domain will be an added advantage

Qualifications:

Graduate/ PG Degree/ Diploma in Design - Interaction Design, Visual Communication, Industrial Design or related field.

Role & Responsibilities:

- **Work closely with stakeholders for project requirements**
- **Interact with users to research and document user requirements, task analysis, workflows and user scenarios for complex multi-user tasks. Design and develop user surveys, questionnaires, usability test protocols etc. Conduct usability testing and analysis. (May involve extensive travel for user research)**
- **Design the interaction and prepare wireframes of the proposed design.**

Knowledge of Axure is mandatory

- **Participate in Practice activities such as preparing project proposals, POCs, and developing collaterals.**

To set the expectations right - this is NOT a managerial role. However, we are looking for senior designers who will work hands-on with the design, and can co-ordinate the visual design and UI development for a given project.

Location : Mumbai/ Pune

Interested candidates please forward your resume and portfolio to Mrinal.Mazumdar@techmahindra.com

15.

Endeavour Software Technologies (<http://www.techendeavour.com>) is looking for Sr. Visual Designer

Required Experience: 4-9 years

Experience in designing for Mobile Smart Phones, Tablets and Web Media

Qualifications:

Graduate / PG / Diploma

Role & Responsibilities:

- **Having experience in Visual Design using Photoshop, Illustrator, Fireworks etc.**
- **Design the interaction and prepare wireframes of the proposed design.**

Knowledge of Axure is a plus

- **Participate in Practice activities such as preparing project proposals, POCs, and developing collaterals.**

We are looking for senior designers who will work hands-on with the design, and can co-ordinate the visual design and UI development for a given project.

Location: Bangalore

Interested candidates please forward your resume with portfolio to uxjobs@techendeavour.com

16.

Announcing openings in Samsung Electronics, Bangalore for Senior UX Designers with *8 to 12 years* experience.

Description

- The candidate must come with proven experience in creating UX concepts and detailed UI design for the best in class products at a global level - Candidate should be hands-on and willing to take on challenges of creating new UX paradigms of interaction on handheld products (experience with enablers like gestures, multi-touch interactions, voice recognition etc. would be important)
- Candidate should have very strong visual design sensibilities to design UI for global audiences
- Ability to think creatively about problems and challenge existing norms of design is a must. At the same time, candidate should have solid grounding in design principles and practices enabling creation of usable solutions
- Understanding of product life-cycle and ability to co-work with advanced R&D teams in creation of UI for cutting edge software technology products is important
- Proven experience designing detailed GUI including visual language for mobile apps would be a plus

Role

To architect and lead the design of UI for top-of-the-line products of Samsung Electronics. Candidate will have an opportunity to participate in the GUI definition of important solutions for global handset releases in multiple diverse domains that Samsung is involved in.

mail your resume and portfolio to debayan.m@gmail.com.



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