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There are more than 700 million people with some kind of disability worldwide. Although handicapped they love travelling as much as anyone of us. Accessible tourism is not only about wide doors and greater signs – it is also about people. Come and learn about the trends in accessible tourism and about the ways how to deal with seniors and travelers with disabilities.

BARRIER FREE TOURISM



TOURISM ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL IN EUROPE



For those who associate tourism only with holiday and leisure and luxury it should be mentioned that tourism is a sector of remarkable economic importance. The European tourism economy contributes to about 5 % (depending on its definition up to 11 %) to the GDP of the European Union and provides between 8 and 24 million jobs (depending on the definition of the sector). Furthermore, it should be taken into account that tourism is indispensably linked with travel. Thus, considering tourism for all inevitably also regards the design of many areas of our daily life, e. g. the internet as source of information, the transport sector and, of course, accommodation. Since the European Community in the area of tourism policy does not have an original competence, but coordinates and completes Member State activities, it will, however, not be possible to present a complete picture of the complex issue «tourism for all» in the European Union.



Accessible tourism for all vs. Tourism for disabled people

The term «tourism for all» often refers to very different aspects. Sometimes, in particular in social policy context, it is used to underline the need to facilitate holidays for lower income groups, sometimes to take into account the needs of disabled tourists. To avoid misunderstandings I prefer, when speaking about barrier-free or accessible tourism with regard to people with disabilities respectively activity limitations the term «Accessible tourism for all».



Disability associations in many European countries own special accommodation establishments for their members or disabled guests and their accompanists. Such establishments often have a long tradition and are sometimes supported by the respective government. But as far as they restrict their activities to disabled guests exclusively, they certainly facilitate tourism

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for disabled people, but do not pursue the idea of accessible tourism for all.

Accessible tourism for all is not about creating separated services for disabled people, it aims at full integration, or rather inclusion of people with special needs, in particular disabled and aged people, in the tourism sector. Viewed from the perspective of «Accessible tourism for all», tourism policy in the European Union can be said to unite accessibility targets that are part of the otherwise commerce-related aspects of tourism policy and a disability policy that, based on the UN's Standard Rules, support goals and specific measures at various levels that are designed to enhance accessibility in connection with tourism policy.

«It can be estimated that about 30 % of the population may feel unease when travelling, or rather, would travel more when the environment would be better accessible.»

The long-term goal of the tourism accessible for all movement is the creation of a tourist environment in which all tourists, irrespective of their individual needs (age, size, (dis) ability) can participate actively.

This objective indicates that the definition of tourism must not be restricted to the definition in tourism statistics (hotels/restaurants, tour operators, attractions). To achieve the objective of tourism accessible for all the whole service chain must be accessible. The tourist service chain, however, begins with information about offers, events, destinations and the possibilities to get there. Accessible information, for example, means that the websites of tourism enterprises (including the transport sector) and destinations must be accessible also for blind and visually impaired users.

To achieve better accessibility of the tourism sector would also prerequisite accessible public and private transport facilities and accessible buildings/attractions in destinations.

The definition of Tourism for All adopted by the Nordic Council on Disability Policy underlines this approach: 'Everyone – regardless of whether they have any disabilities – should be able to travel to the country, within the country and to whatever place, attraction or event they should wish to visit'.

To persuade authorities and tourism enterprise to adapt their establishments and services to individual needs the possible economic impact must be considered. The first question to be answered in this context is the number of potential consumers/tourists. About 10 % of the population, 50 million people, in Europe is officially acknowledged disabled. But since about half of them are older than 65 their number will be rising in the forthcoming process of demographic aging. Furthermore, it must be considered that not only people officially acknowledged disabled maybe prevented from travelling because of too many barriers, but also «temporarily disabled» such as people suffering from car or sport accidents or people that

have difficulties in moving around without being acknowledged disabled.

Taking into account all the people with activity limitations irrespective of having an official «disability status» it can be estimated that about 30 % of the population may feel unease when travelling, or rather, would travel more when the environment would be better accessible. A study published in the framework of the OSSATE project estimates the market potential for tourists with accessibility needs at even 230 million people representing travel expenditures of about €160 bn.

Every travel not undertaken because of existing barriers means a lack of turnover in the tourism sector, less economic growth and employment than possible. Furthermore, it must be



considered that a higher degree of accessibility, for example with regard to hotels, simultaneously results in more quality. Wider doors and a larger bathroom containing step less shower results in higher comfort also for the growing number of older but still active tourists.

The manager of a Norwegian hotel said recently that many tourists try to book «barrier-free rooms» without being disabled because they assume that these rooms are larger. And larger letters on doors and information desks or entrances showing good contrast to the surrounding walls are of advantage not

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THE EUROPEAN DISABILITY FORUM

In 1996, disabled people in Europe and their representative organisations decided to create the European Disability Forum (EDF) and its Brussels-based secretariat. The aim of establishing such a pioneer umbrella organisation was to guarantee that no decisions were taken by the European Union without consulting disabled people, as all initiatives and European policies have a direct impact in disabled people's lives. In the past years, EDF's scope of action has covered most areas of EU competence, including transport, employment, the information society, social policy, public procurement, accessibility. Guaranteeing the right to travel for disabled people and to enjoy accessible tourism services and premises is also part of EDF's work programme. It is among EDF aims to encourage a consensus among the 25 Member States recognizing the importance of a «tourism for all» and to promote the adoption of common standards, that will guarantee disabled people the right to travel, for business purposes as well as to enjoy leisure activities.

only for visually impaired guests but for everybody not familiar with the establishment. Thus, measures undertaken towards designing a hotel for all leads to higher quality and improves the competitiveness of the company.

The German Ministry of Economic and Labour in 2003 commissioned a study to evaluate the economic impact of accessible tourism for all with surprising results. Approximately 4000 German disabled people were questioned about their travel habits. About 40 % of them had already at least once renounced at going on holiday because of too many barriers and nearly 50 % said they would travel more, if the environment was more accessible.

Taking into account the amount of money they spent for going on holiday (which was above the amount spent by the average tourist) and that most of them did not travel alone the researchers forecast that the turnover yielded with disabled German tourists might rise from currently € 2.5 bn to € 4.8 bn in an accessible tourist environment resulting in 90,000 additional jobs (currently 65,000). Thus, this study underlines that the creation of an accessible service chain in the tourism sector contributes to economic growth and employment and cannot be considered as social welfare.

Activities in Member States of the European Union

It is not possible to give a complete overview on Member State activities concerning tourism for all because yet there is no European database. Nevertheless some examples and trends will be presented.

Within the last decade in many EU Member States disability acts or antidiscrimination acts with regard to disability entered into force. This legislation improved the accessibility in areas closely related to tourism such as the internet and public trans-

port. In many Member States the authorities are obliged to design their websites according to the international accessibility standards (WAI standard) and at least in larger cities of many Member States low-floor busses with speech announcement of the next station are in use and steadily growing in number.

With regard to buildings, however, in particular to hotels and restaurants the picture is not that optimistic. In most Member States the construction legislation forces hotels to provide a certain number of rooms accessible for wheel-chair users. But little is known with regard to comparable legislation concerning other disabilities.

Even in Member States where legislation and standards on the construction of public buildings invite owners to provide accessibility measures for blind people (e. g. Elevators with synthetic voice, guidance stripes to be followed using the white cane) or visually impaired people (high contrast design) this legislation is, maybe with the exception of the United Kingdom, not applied on hotels and restaurants.

The British Disability Discrimination Act places duties on providers of goods, services and facilities not to discriminate against people with disabilities. Like everyone else in the United Kingdom, tourism providers must take reasonable steps to change practices, policies and procedures to make their facilities and services accessible to disabled people. Tourism providers should also provide step by step and within the framework of national accessibility schemes auxiliary aids (such as installing an induction loop) to make it easier to use a service. However, I do not have any information on the outcome of this legislation with regard to tourism.

In the mid-1990s, the governments of the Nordic countries began to set new goals for tourism policy. These goals involve profitability, social and environmental considerations, and, as a consequence, increasingly integrated accessibility as a quality – with the emphasis on expanded target groups and increased income for the tourism industry.

Irrespective of legislation forcing hotels to provide more accessibility some good examples of hotels devoted to the idea of «tourism accessible for all» are located in Spain, all of them belonging to the Confortel chain. These 12 hotels are different in size, quality and location, but many of them have besides



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rooms and swimming pools equipped for wheel-chair users also adaptations that are important for blind and visually impaired guests such as synthetic voice in the elevators including keyboards with tactile letters as well as tactile room numbers and high contrast design. Furthermore, the hotel staff is well trained to provide some assistance if needed.

The best evidence that these Confortels are not only technically barrier-free, but come very close to the principles of a «Design for all», was the answer of a guest in the bar. I asked him whether he recognised any peculiarities in this hotel. His answer: «No, nothing, only talking elevators I never saw before in a hotel.» That means that the owners of the Confortel chain managed to combine good design with the needs of all guests irrespective of disabilities by respecting an old architectural principle: Form follows function.

In the new Member States of the enlarged European Union such organisations are also developing. Up to now the main activity of these organisations is the improving of information on the accessibility of all facilities along the tourist service chain. Many of them also work on the establishment of a labeling system for hotels, labels that can be used in hotel guides and the

home pages of hotels and tourist organisations. Main problems of all these labeling systems, besides the lacking European-wide harmonization are the insufficiencies of the self-assessment of the operating staff and a remaining information deficit from the point of view of a potential guest. For to judge whether a hotel is really adapted for the individual needs he/she must first read the criteria that permit the use of a certain symbol, and even then he only learns that a certain establishment could be suitable, if everything was measured and evaluated correctly. According to my knowledge only in Luxemburg, one of the smaller Member States, establishments using the accessibility label are examined by a third party.

(text shortened)

By Dr. Rüdiger Leidner (The Rolling Rains Report)

<http://www.rollingrains.com/>

<http://www.natko.de>



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CASE STUDY: ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES OF ACCESSIBLE TOURISM IN GERMANY



In November 2002 Germany's Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour commissioned a project group, comprising the University of Münster and the consulting firms NEUMANNCONSULT and Reppel + Lorenz, to conduct a study on the economic impulses of accessible Tourism for All. For the first time reliable data and statements were brought together, which represent the customer's potential and manner regarding accessible Tourism in Germany.

The study shows that persons with activity limitations represent considerable customer potential. Assuming confirmed travel intensity of 54.3 %, 3.64 million persons with severely mobility and activity restrictions travel each year. 41.2 % or 1.95 million of these trips are undertaken within Germany. Thus, the

tourism market for travellers with activity limitations is already highly important, and its significance will continue to rise. By 2030, the old-age dependency ratio 60 will rise from currently 42 to 73. As age correlates positively with disability (more than 50 % of persons with severe disabilities are 65 or over), the share of tourists with activity limitations will rise sharply. The tourism activities of this target group are expected to increase, as the future older generations place far higher demands on their holidays and perceive their personal mobility to be far more important than did the previous generations.

This potential can be addressed and transformed into a significant economic factor for Germany's tourism industry by creating accessible tourism facilities and services. The tourism

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industry is especially called upon to acknowledge and exploit these opportunities. By avoiding and/or removing barriers, tourism service providers can open up new high-growth market segments and gain economic and competitive advantages at domestic and international level.

Tourism in Germany is still far from being in a position to enable all persons including older and disabled guests to enjoy a holiday in an equitable, independent manner. However, accessible Tourism has gained far higher significance among the tourism industry and in politics than it used to enjoy years ago. Moreover, the economic impacts of accessible Tourism are increasingly being acknowledged. As the results of the study have most impressively confirmed, investments in accessible Tourism are worthwhile investments into the future, with the benefits available to all groups of the society.

Accessibility is not only about disabled people but also about older people, families with small children, people with short-term or chronic ailments, etc. In Europe alone, this amounts to an estimated 130 million customers for the tourism industry. In contrast to the huge number of tourists demanding accessible tourism facilities the share of tourism facilities reported by Member States as being accessible – at least for wheelchair users – amounts to only 1.5 % of restaurants & catering facilities, 6.5 % of accommodation establishments and 11.3 % of attractions.

<http://ec.europa.eu/>

Consequently, further improvements to accessibility must be implemented in order to continue this positive trend, transforming Germany step by step into an accessible tourism destination. Planned measures should primarily aim to create a closed tourism service chain in the destinations, thereby enabling as many guests as possible to enjoy a largely independent holiday. Above all, this will require acceptance and implementation of such measures within the tourism industry, along with accompanying measures by the federal government, the Länder and local authorities. Accessible Tourism is a task that affects all of us, and it can be solved only through concerted action.

By Peter Neumann (NeumannConsult)

<http://www.neumann-consult.com>

<http://www.ossate.org/>



MERGING ARCHITECTURE AND ACCESSIBILITY



In the Nordic countries, improving disabled people's access to museums, art galleries and other cultural institutions has been an important consideration for a number of years. It is evident that museum buildings and the way displayed objects are presented should embrace all visitors; one of the challenges confronting museums at the turn of the twenty-first century is to ensure the greatest possible accessibility for all without compromising the architectural expression.

This article looks at two architecturally exceptional museums located in the Danish capital of Copenhagen: a recently built extension to an art museum designed by Zaha Hadid, and a new museum that focuses on Jewish history and culture, designed by Daniel Libeskind, and housed within a listed building.

The new extension to Ordrupgaard

An extension to the state-owned art museum Ordrupgaard in Charlottenlund, on the outskirts of Copenhagen, was inaugurated in the summer of 2005. Since 1918, this country house has formed the setting for Ordrupgaard's collection of French impressionist art and Danish art from the Golden Age period of 1800 to 1850. In contrast to this, the 1150 sq m charcoal-grey concrete building, which conjures up visions of a beached whale, houses a new step-free entrance, a reception area, rooms for temporary exhibitions, a multi-purpose auditorium and a cafe. The extension overlooking the beautiful Ordrupgaard park was designed by the British-Iraqi architect Zaha Hadid, acknowledged as a designer who constantly pushes the boundaries of architecture.

The construction of the extension proved to be a most demanding task. The pouring of the carapace concrete required

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much skill to solve; the extension's organic curves meant that it had to be done in situ. It was difficult to mould the curves that connect floors, walls and roof, because the concrete had to be pushed upwards from the bottom of the forms in order to reduce the amount of air bubbles in the surface. In addition, because of their atypical curved shapes, the large glass panels in the cafe area and elsewhere in the building had to be specially manufactured for this project.

The new extension is connected to the old museum building, but since the country house is not accessible for all, it was imperative that the new extension should be designed in such a way as to accommodate people with disabilities. Designated parking spaces are provided close to the extension, set apart from the large car parking area. A footpath covered with concrete flagstones guides visitors to a step-free entrance that has been created in the extension, providing access for everyone. The reception desk can be clearly seen from the new entrance. At the desk, manual wheelchairs and audio guides that relay information about the permanent collection are available on request. Furthermore, each carer who accompanies a disabled visitor gains free access to the exhibitions.

Next to the cloakroom, three toilets are available for the use of visitors; one of these is a unisex accessible corner toilet equipped with drop-down grabrails that comply with the accessibility requirements of the Danish Building Regulations. The washbasin's water supply is activated automatically when hands are placed under the tap.

Wheelchair access is provided throughout the exhibition rooms in the extension. The exhibition rooms and the cafe are

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connected by internal ramps, which have rest landings and continuous handrails on either side. In addition, the floors of the ramps are lit to help with wayfinding; this provides directional guidance to people with impaired vision.

The Danish Jewish Museum

The Danish Jewish Museum is the first minority museum of its kind in Denmark. It is housed in the Royal Boat House in the old part of the Royal Library located on the island of Slotsholmen, the seat of the Danish Parliament. It is especially poignant that the Royal Boat House should house a museum dedicated to Jewish history and culture in Denmark; the building dates back to the reign of King Christian IV (1588-1648) who invited the first Jews to Denmark in 1622. At the turn of the twentieth century the Royal Boat House was finally converted, enveloped by the walls of the Royal Library.

Within the context of this historically important building, Polish-born American architect Daniel Libeskind, of Studio Daniel Libeskind, has designed the interior of The Danish Jewish Museum, which was inaugurated in 2004. Previously, Libeskind, having lost most of his family in the Holocaust, designed the controversial Jewish Museum in Berlin, which opened in 2001. It focused on the history of Jews in Germany and the repercussions of the mass killings of Jews. In the case of Copenhagen, however, Libeskind's underlying idea of the design originated from the Hebrew word 'Mitzvah'. This translates as 'deep response', 'commitment', and 'precept', referring to the fact that

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the majority of the Danish Jews were saved from Nazi persecution by their fellow citizens during the Second World War.

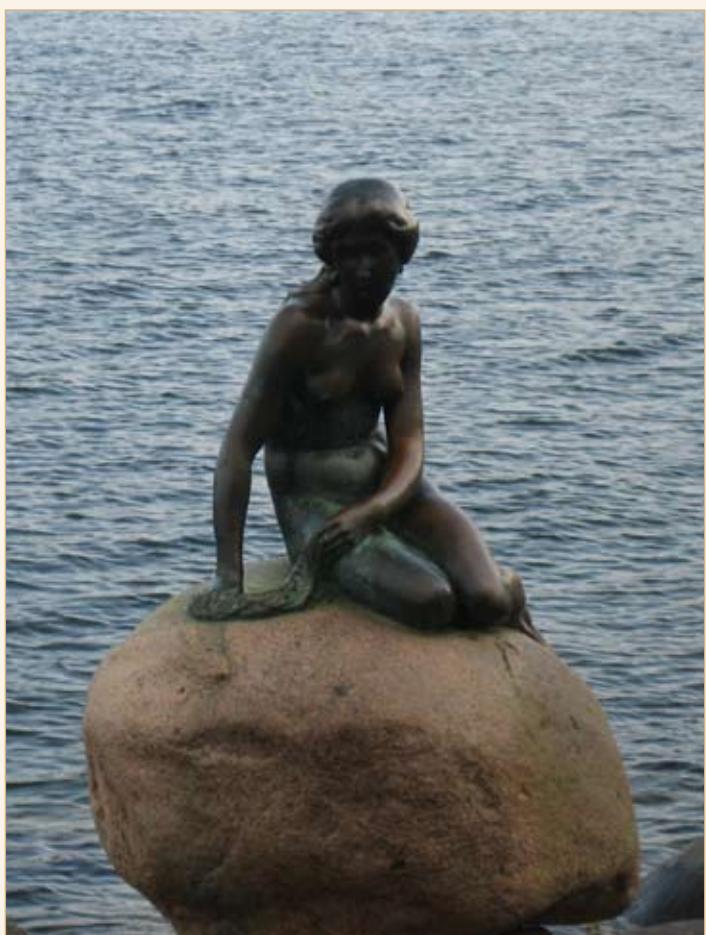
The word 'Mitzvah' has served as an inspiration for the actual construction of the space; the corridor area is shaped in the form of the four Hebrew letters, so visitors actually walk inside the huge letters. The oblique birch plywood walls, the sloping oak floors, interspersed with display cases of varying sizes, combined with the original vaulted brick spaces of the Royal Boat House together create a unique museum experience.

Early in the planning process, the Danish architectural firm Fogh & Folner Arkitektfirma A/S, acting as a consultant to Studio Daniel Libeskind, approached the now defunct Danish Centre of Accessibility for an access statement. The Centre subsequently advised the architectural firm, commenting specifically on circulation routes within the building including gradients of internal sloping floors, space requirements for an accessible toilet, low height viewing of display cases and other installations, and large typeface signage.

Two designated parking spaces are provided for disabled motorists. The distance from the parking spaces to the entrance of the museum is approximately 50m; the access route, being partly covered with cobblestones, is not ideal at all. There is also a setting-down point close to the museum's entrance. Access to the museum is via a new concrete ramp clad with granite.

Once inside, but before entering the permanent exhibition Space and Spaciousness, a cinema presents short introduc-

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tions to the architecture and exhibition themes in Danish and English. The visitors are then guided through a space with gently sloping wooden floors and oblique walls that link the five exhibition themes: Arrivals, Standpoints, Mitzvah, Traditions and Promised Lands. The sloping floors are designed to give the visitors a sensation of being at sea, creating a slightly nauseating feeling of imbalance; the purpose is to evoke the perilous escape, via fishing boat, of the Danish Jews to neutral Sweden back in 1943.

Throughout the exhibition, continuous black metal grillage between the floor edges and walls, primarily designed to increase the air supply, can be used as tactile directional guidance. Both the exhibits and the text accompanying them are presented in display cases placed at a wheelchair – and child-friendly height. To cater for partially sighted people, the text on the signs is in large print, and information folders in large writing (magna print) in Danish and English are available on request. Several interactive touchscreen displays, easily reached from lower, accessible heights, offer detailed audible and visual information on selected exhibits.

In a group of three toilets, one unisex accessible corner toilet with drop-down grabrails is provided for disabled visitors, conforming to the accessibility requirements of the Danish Building Regulations. In addition, the accessible toilet is equipped with three emergency assistance alarm buttons, one operable from the toilet seat itself, another from the wall opposite the washbasin, and the final one from floor level. The washbasin itself is

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fitted with a mixer tap that can be easily operated using minimal force or a clenched fist.

Conclusion

I believe that these two museums have been successful in merging high quality architecture and general accessibility. Both museums meet the accessibility requirements stipulated in the Danish Building Regulations and, in several instances, go beyond them. As the Danish Building Regulations mainly focus on wheelchair users and people with mobility-related disabilities, it is encouraging to note that the museums have considered the needs of other groups of disabled people, particularly people with visual impairments.

In the case of Ordrupgaard, provision of illuminated directional guidance embedded in the ramps makes for safe and easy access to and from the exhibition rooms and the cafe. However, whereas the new extension itself provides greatly enhanced facilities for disabled visitors, the surroundings are inadequate in terms of accessibility and usability. The difference in level between the cafe and the outdoor serving area could be rectified by using a temporary external ramp or, better still, by installing a ramp like the one at the new entrance. The surfacing of the serving area, however, consists of loose gravel, which is unsuitable for most people using mobility aids; concrete flagstones would have been a far better choice.

As for the Danish Jewish Museum, textual information about the exhibits placed at an accessible height, interactive touch-screen displays, and provision of text in large print are fine examples of providing accessible information for all. For a great many people, though, a planned visit to a museum often begins at home with a perusal of the website. As expected, both Ordrupgaard and the Danish Jewish Museum have descriptive and informative websites in Danish and English. However, at the time of writing, neither website provided any information about facilities and access for disabled people, such as provision of designated parking spaces, or loan of audio guides, manual wheelchairs and large-print information folders. The websites also do not offer a choice of formats or typefaces for those with impaired vision. In order to provide everyone with the opportunity of appreciating Ordrupgaard and the Danish Jewish Museum to the full, it is strongly recommended that the museums' websites should be adapted to cater for the wider needs of the general public.

(text shortened)

By Philip Henrik Jensen – accessibility consultant for the Department of Building Design and Technology at the Danish Building Research Institute, Aalborg University

<http://www.cae.org.uk/>

<http://www.ordrupgaard.dk>

<http://www.jewmus.dk>

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PROVIDING SERVICES IN AN ACCESSIBLE MANNER



Access is about the absence of barriers to the use of facilities. Although this is usually seen in terms of physical access or access to information and communication, poorly trained staff can represent a serious barrier for disabled people if they are unable to provide services in an appropriate, non-discriminatory way.

Providing services

The key to providing good service is to understand that disabled people are like any customer, wanting to be treated with respect. However, because many non-disabled people have little experience of disabled people's needs, there are some points that are useful to know in order to make sure that this respect is properly extended.



People with visual impairments

When offering assistance to a blind person, allow them to take your arm. You should guide them rather than lead or propel. You must also advise on steps or other obstacles. To help a blind person sit down, place their hand on the back of the chair and tell them what you have done. When talking to a blind person, always introduce yourself and the people with you and always say when you are leaving.

People with hearing impairments

Establish if a deaf person can lip-read. Look directly at the person and speak clearly and slowly. Do not shout or exaggerate lip movement. Face the source of light and keep your mouth free. If there are difficulties in communicating, use written notes. If there is a need to evacuate the building, make sure deaf people understand what is happening.

Wheelchair users

Never attempt to push a wheelchair without asking if help is needed. Do not lean on someone's wheelchair. This is a major intrusion for most wheelchair users.

WORLD STATISTICS

3.6 million people in Canada with a disability

8.5 million people in the UK with a disability

54 million people in the USA with a disability

60 million people in Europe with a disability

700 million people worldwide with a disability

<http://www.2010legaciesnow.com/>



People with learning difficulties

Be patient. Listen carefully. Do not patronize. Speak clearly and give clear messages. Make sure messages are understood. Let people make their own choices.

Providing information

Information on accessibility should be easy for disabled tourists to obtain, preferably in a variety of formats. Where possible, information for disabled tourists should be incorporated into general tourist information. If separate guides or brochures are produced these should be updated annually, well advertised and, preferably, free of charge.

Good communication is essential to improving access. People make their decisions on the information provided to them,

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1. It is fine to offer assistance to a disabled person. However, staff should wait until the offer has been accepted and they should not assume to know what is needed. This is not only unwelcome, it can be dangerous.
2. Staff should always speak directly to the disabled person and not through their companion, if they have one. Eye contact is important.
3. Staff should never ask a person what their impairment is. If a person wants you to know they will tell you.
4. People with what might seem similar impairments often cope differently. Staff should not expect uniformity, as disabled people are all individual.
5. Most importantly, disabled people should be treated as any other person, with consideration but without condescension.

based on factors which they consider to be important. Their expectations are shaped by the information they receive and they prepare themselves for travel accordingly.

While a few centimeters difference in the height of a door handle, a slight change in floor level or the exact size or placement of a sign may not seem significant for most non-disabled people, disabled people work with far smaller tolerances. These differences can, therefore, be crucial to being able to gain access.

For this reason, independent verification of accessibility information by an access – or disability-related organisation is encouraged. Independent verification will provide greater credibility and increase the market potential for facilities which invest in this approach.

However, organisations which are unable to make this investment can still provide access information, provided that care is taken. All organisations are encouraged to plan for further improvements and investment when appropriate. Several suggestions for improvements follow:

Standard text – printed information should be in simple, straightforward, nontechnical language. Alternatives should be provided for people with visual impairments or reading difficulties.

Accessible Internet – a website should be operable with the keyboard alone and provide meaningful text descriptions in place of pictures.

Email, fax/text phone – means of communication for many people, including people with hearing impairments. Text phones assist communication, but may be more appropriate for larger facilities.

Large print – most people requiring large print prefer it in the range of 16 to 22 point and in a sans serif font. Simple large print documents can be produced using photocopiers or PCs.

Braille – standard information, such as fire alarm procedures or guide books, which rarely change, could be provided in



Braille. It may be costly to provide information which requires constant updating in Braille.

Audio recordings – assist people with visual impairments and people who have difficulty reading. Information should be presented slowly, with key messages repeated.

Sign language – allows people with hearing impairments to communicate; however, sign languages are as diverse as spoken languages.

Induction loop system – helps people who use a hearing aid by reducing or cutting out background noise. They can be useful in a variety of public situations including theatres, meeting rooms and ticket counters.

By European Commission

(Excerpts from Improving information on accessible tourism for disabled people)

<http://ec.europa.eu/>

BARRIER-FREE ASIA?



People with disabilities represent a specific market segment for barrier-free tourism. Like all market segments, this one has its own set of needs, wants and desires. The overriding need is for good information, followed by good barrier-free access and its desire for an exhilarating stimulating experience just like all other travellers.

This market has been emerging in various parts of the world for at least a decade now, but the tourism industry has not yet focused on this group as a market. Yet it has targeted «Seniors Tourism». Due consideration should be made of the relationship between ageing and disability. Many experts have identified the existence of «a Market of Millions» of people who experience reduced functioning, and yet they could still and want to travel even more than they already are if the products, services, destinations were adequately adapted to their needs.

There is a definite lack of statistical data as it relates to Barrier-Free Tourism. However global research does indicate that



East Asia and the Pacific Region registered the highest growth rate from 1999 to 2000 both in terms of receipts (9.6 per cent) and of international tourist arrivals (12.7 per cent). In addition many of the countries subjected in this study receive a significant number of tourists from the countries identified as top tourism spenders such as United States of America, Germany, United Kingdom, Japan, France, Italy, China, the Netherlands and Canada.

Oceania is tipped to grow ahead of the world average over the next decade. How does it achieve this when a large proportion of its arrivals from the west, is exhibiting an ageing population with an increasing number of people with disabilities?

The potential for barrier-free tourism in the Asia-Pacific region comes from two sources. First, it generates from countries of origin where there are millions of people with disabilities, like United States of America with a disabled population of 54 million; Canada with 3.6 million; United Kingdom with 8.5 million; Germany with 14.2 million; and France with 9 million. This makes total of almost 90 million of additional travellers to the region. Second, from countries in the Asia-Pacific region where numbers of people with disabilities have become significant. These are Australia with 3.6 million of disabled people; New Zealand with 700,000; China with 6.2 million; India with 47.2 million; Thailand with 500,000; and Sri Lanka with 100,000. This represents a total of 148.3 million potential travellers available within the region. Japan is not included as relevant statistical data was not available. Today several countries successfully provide barrier-free tourism products: Australia; Hong Kong, China; Japan; and New Zealand. However, they still can improve significantly in certain key areas; information provision and transport.

The Asian and Pacific region has the opportunity to benefit significantly from future expansion of global tourism. Developing a barrier-free tourism segment would be one way for the Asian and Pacific region to achieve the numbers being forecasted.



By *United Nations*

(Excerpts from *Barrier-free tourism for people with disabilities in the Asian and Pacific Region*)

<http://www.unescap.org/>

