

Urban inclusion - city development - the comparison of cities: Barcelona, Dublin and London

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Abstract

Abstract text.

Europe is now essentially an urban community. More and more municipalities are eager to develop accessible and inclusive communities by implementation of the national development goals. How to achieve systematic accessible urban intervention that leads to a high quality of environment, public realm and public buildings? How to both drive the vision to transform a city, promote equality & inclusion and embrace the opportunity to influence and shape the communities around in the long term growth? Hospitality, inclusiveness, accessibility, "open to all", can contribute to urban interventions and indeed play a crucial role in urban public realm. But "Design for All" cannot be achieved overnight, it is a continuous process, and the different stakeholders must work together.

For a better understanding of the success behind the delivery of inclusive design I analyzed three cities: Barcelona, Dublin and London. As case studies I selected sport facilities, museums, and higher education institutions. The research methods used are: qualitative research, as an observer of space, photographic field research and in-depth interviews with decision - makers, designers. The interviews were structured with the Humbles method authors Francesco Aragall and Jordi Montany based on seven interdependent success factors: 1. Decision-maker commitment, 2. Coordinating and continuity, 3. Networking and participation, 4. Strategic planning, 5. Knowledge management 6. Resources, 7. Communication and marketing (Aragall, European Concept for Administration, 2008:p.18). The inclusion and accessibility is general objective for the urban policies in the analyzed cities, but the specific policies, guidance and standards strive higher than minimum standards of accessibility.

Keywords: urban inclusion, accessibility, city for all

1. Introduction

The article presents an analysis of selected cities: Barcelona, Dublin and London in order to determine what factors may affect the perception of the public realm, public institutions as more friendly, open to all and taking into account the aspects of users' diversity regardless of disability, age, origin, social status. Both in London and Dublin, great emphasis is placed on the accessibility and inclusive design. Examples of Western countries show that both networking and active co - design leads to a continuous knowledge transfer and gives a chance to design solutions publicly accepted.

Success in the universal design implementation lies in a planned systemic approach. The example of the London's Olympic Park transformation shows a huge impact of the decision - makers' commitment since a day one which resulted in the sustainable development of the area up to date. The legacy of the Olympic Games 2012 led to sustainable park development and modern and innovative suburb.

2. Methodology

Working as the architect and access consultant within the City of Warsaw, I realised that my role as the architect - translator can lead to a better understanding of the local regulation, but most importantly to endeavour the city's policy implementation in a systemic and repeatable way. The impact of local governments and public institutions on improving the quality of residents' life can be enormous. Therefore I was

looking for the answer, if there are analogous model approach in other European cities and can the case studies be gathered and evaluated using the same criteria: respect users' diversity, strengthen independent and safety use, functional, aesthetic and easy to navigate. The four areas are identified, on which the positive perception of the city's accessibility depends:

- A. internal organization,
- B. services provided by a public entity
- C. infrastructure
- D. external communication (Aragall, European Concept for Administration, 2008:p.18)

In my research, I deal exclusively with the area C - public realm and selected public buildings (sports facilities, museums, higher education buildings).

For a better understanding of the ongoing processes to create accessibility & inclusiveness policies and practices, to implement the requirements and monitor the results, I used the following methods:

- To map the selected parts of the city and indicate the access paths, major landmarks,
- To carry a photographic field research,
- To conduct structured in - depth interviews with regards the policies, practices. The interview were structures on the basis of the HUMBLE method authors Francesco Aragall and Jordi Montany based on seven interdependent success factors: 1. Decision-maker commitment, 2. Coordinating and continuity, 3. Networking and participation, 4. Strategic

planning, 5. Knowledge management 6. Resources, 7. Communication and marketing (Aragall, European Concept for Administration, 2008:p.18),

- To conduct the summary of the case studies in the form of diagrams, which refer to four phases of the universal design implementations: awareness phase, implementation phase, development phase, maintenance phase.

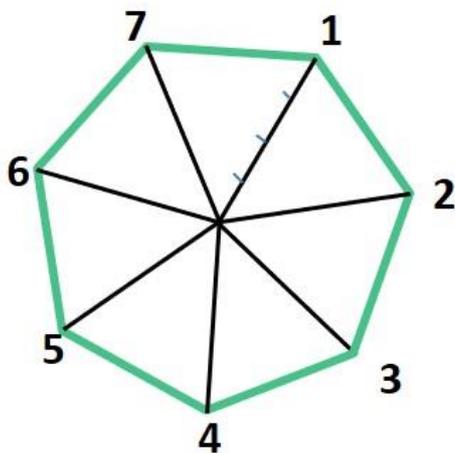


Fig. 1: Figure of the summary diagram - the sample of the most advanced ideal model. The diagram represents the seven interdependent success factors: 1. Decision-maker commitment, 2. Coordinating and continuity, 3. Networking and participation, 4. Strategic planning, 5. Knowledge management 6. Resources, 7. Communication and marketing, in relation to four phases of the universal design implementation (awareness, implementation, development, maintenance phase).

3. London case study

One of the case study analyzed was the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in London. The concept of

London Games 2012 legacy was a key part of London's successful bid. The report on the successful legacies from London 2012 reveals, that it was a catalyst for positive long-term economic, social and sustainable legacies. "More than one million people have visited Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park since it reopened to the public, while 2,800 homes have been created after the Athletes' Village was converted into residential housing. The further work is currently underway to transform the Olympic Stadium in to a multi-use venue, while a major new arts and cultural centre is also set to be built within the park, in cooperation with University College London and Victoria and Albert Museum. Planning permission has also been granted for up to 10,000 new homes, including more than 2,800 in the former Olympic Village, which has now been renamed East Village" (<https://www.olympic.org/news/london-2012-legacy-continues-to-be-felt-across-the-uk>)



Fig. 2: Entrance from the train platform

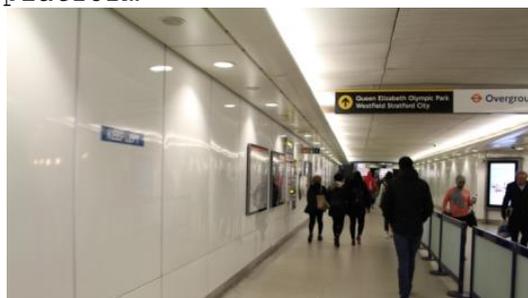


Fig. 3: Easy to navigate approach towards the park



Fig. 4: The tactile pavement system to highlight the border with the cycle lane.



Fig. 8: The audio and visual tactile info board



Fig. 5: The accessible information point



Fig. 9: The Olympic village converted into the housing scheme development

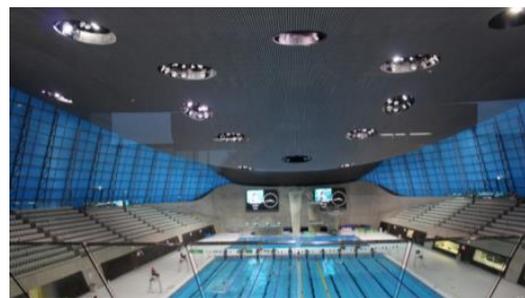


Fig. 6: The aquatic centre with innovative poolpod lift



Fig. 7: The aquatic centre with innovative poolpod lift, image source:https://poolpodproducts.com/pool_platform_lift/#iLightbox/gallery_image_1/3

Analysis of the Queen's Elizabeth Olympic Park in relation to 4 implementation phases and 7 interdependent success factors:

1. The highest and successfully maintained commitment resulted in the Olympic Delivery Authority's (ODA) mission to transform a neglected area into an innovative and accessible Olympic Park that is further developed with the Para Olympic legacy in mind.

2. ODA is responsible for coordination, therefore the Park Transformation Strategy and the Public Procurement Policy, the Inclusive Design Standards was established.

3. ODA brought in life an Access and Inclusion Forum - a forum for experiences and information exchange.

4. ODA developed two spatial development plans for duration of the Olympic Games and further for transformation the park after the games up to date.

5. ODA appointed Access &

Inclusive Experts to work with the ODA Design Team

6. ODA created BEAP Built Environment Access Panel - a panel of experts, people with disabilities and construction knowledge.

7. ODA created the Technical Forum - a forum supporting the process of social consultations

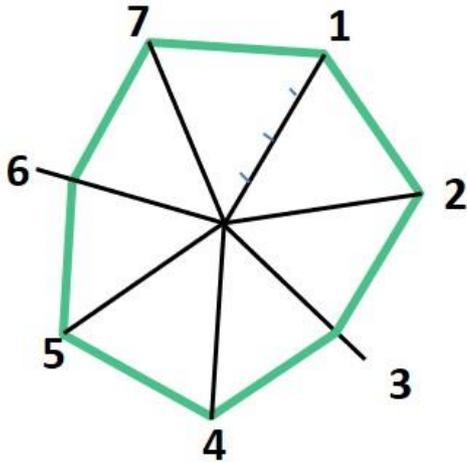


Fig. 10: Figure of the summary diagram of Queen's Elizabeth Olympic Park in London

4. Dublin case study

In Ireland since 2005 the national anti - discrimination law (Disability Act 2005) is very ambitious and imposes many positive practices within the construction process. One of them was to establish the Centre of Excellence in Universal Design. It promotes best practices, develops the standards, supports the education and promotes the greater awareness within the society. The case study of the Irish National Gallery in Dublin presents that recent refurbishment of the historic wings enhanced accessibility at the Gallery.



Fig. 11: Entrance hall



Fig. 12: Information desk with the lower counter and readable information



Fig. 13: The bookshop cash desk with the lower counter



Fig. 14: platform lifts or passengers' lifts



Fig. 15: continual handrails and protected rescue area with the evacuation chairlift



Fig. 16: accessible toilets

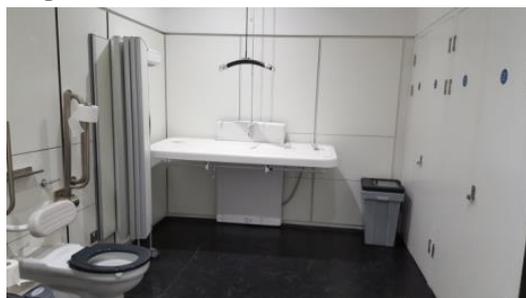


Fig. 17: enlarged accessible toilets with the changing place

Analysis of the Irish National Gallery in relation to 4 implementation phases and 7 interdependent success factors:

1. The National Gallery of Ireland is committed to

providing a fully accessible experience for all visitors. This includes free entry for carers to all ticketed exhibitions, education events. In addition the all education program, courses are tailored to the need of each Individual (for people who are blind, partially sighted, are deaf or hard hearing).

2. Two Access Officer are appointed, who are responsible for providing, arranging for, coordinating assistance, guidance to persons with disabilities to access services provided by the Gallery, and to act as a point of contact.

3. In Ireland any person may make a complaint to the Access Officer, if he / she feels that the Gallery has failed to comply with the law. There is no structured, defined users group which would promote the co - design and diversity in f.ex. the Galleries' program consultancy.

4. The Gallery is currently developing a Universal Design and Accessibility policy which will indicate the commitment to maximising access for all people regardless of age, size or ability.

5. The Accessibility Statement - a brochure with regards the building facilities, provision and restriction. It is based on the access audit, but does not include any personal opinion. It contains very useful information, however It is not mentioned how the knowledge and the experience is shared with other institutions.

6. Two members of staff are provided. No information of their experience and this unit is financially independent, how diverse employment is within the organisation. The Gallery is well equipped with the facilities such as: bathroom

facilities, hearing Induction loops, noise-cancelling headphones, large - text booklets, audio - guides,

7. The Galleries website contains many useful information available to the tourists.

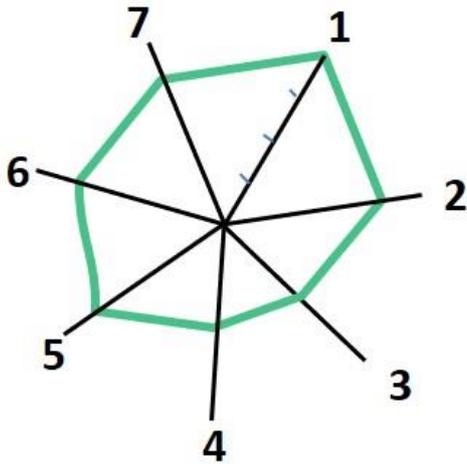


Fig. 18: Figure of the summary diagram of Irish National Gallery in Dublin

5. Barcelona case study

Disseny Hub Barcelona is designed to be a facility for all. The museum works closely with the Municipal Institute for People with Disabilities in order to cater for people with disabilities, improve accessibility in all the areas of the centre and make the content, programm accessible.



Fig. 18: The Design Museum (Museu del Disseny de Barcelona) in Barcelona. Image source:

<http://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/dissenyhub/ca>

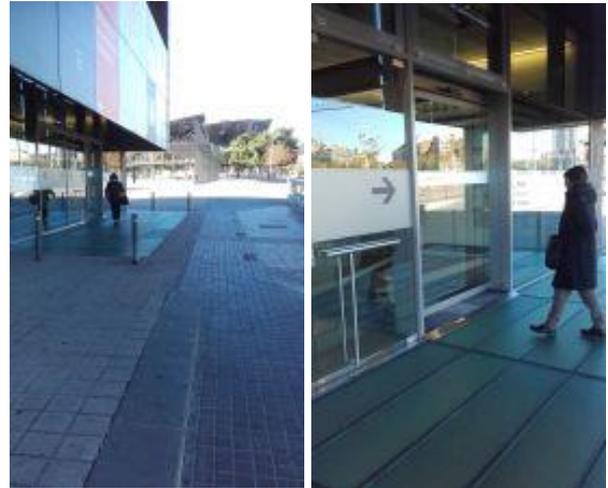


Fig. 19: Approach to the entrance with the tactile surface.

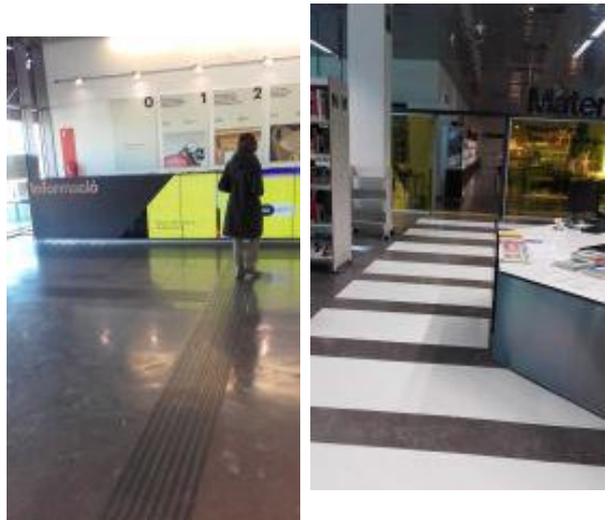


Fig. 20: The information desk with no lower counter, but with the tactile surface system. The approach to the material lab contrasting path.

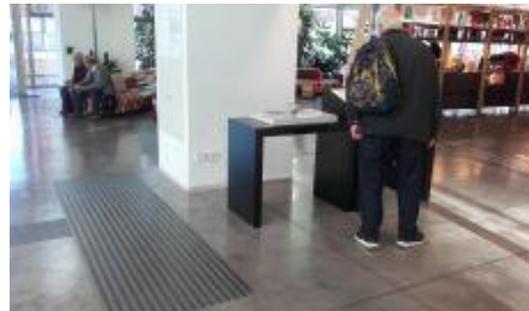


Fig. 21: The tactile information board



Fig. 22: The building's model



Fig. 23: The internal glazing with no demarcation



Fig. 24: The internal glazing with contrasting demarcation



Fig. 25: The internal glazing with contrasting demarcation



Fig. 26: Toilets facilities

Analysis of the Disseny Hub Barcelona in relation to 4 implementation phases and 7 interdependent success factors:

1. The Museum is committed to constantly work in line with the criteria of universal accessibility, to ensure the centre and its program is open for all.

2. The staff is trained to assist visitors with disabilities. There is no further information how the implementation of museum's strategy and goals are coordinated with the organisation.

3. In order to apply the article 30 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the museum works closely with the Barcelona Culture Institute and the Municipal Institute for People with Disabilities. There is not information with regards how the actions are coordinated

4. Apart from the partnership with the Municipality Institution, there is no information on the accessibility plan or any strategic clear vision.

5. There is very basic information with regards the available facilities. No Accessibility statement is

provided. It is unclear how the knowledge and the experience is shared with other institutions.

6. The museum is equipped with the facilities such as: bathroom facilities, hearing Induction loops, tactile paving. The passengers' lift is provided, however the assistance with the visitors to use it is required. There is no information on the availability of the Access Officers

7. The museum website contains some information with regards the accessibility but it is very limited.

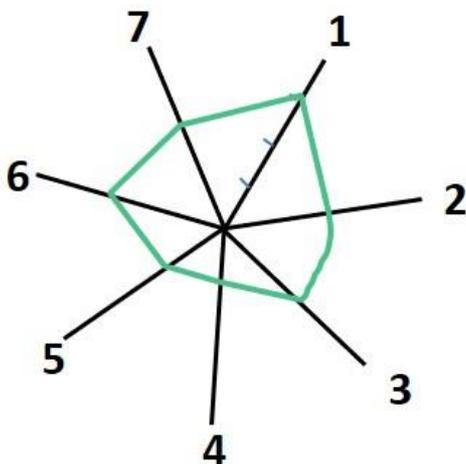


Fig. 10: Figure of the summary diagram of

6. Conclusion

"Universal design in most countries of the world is defined as a concept that not only goes beyond the accessibility of the so-called built environment, but also includes social, cultural and economic issues; these issues are responsible for uniting people regardless of their abilities, physical, mental or psychological. Universal design should be understood as an approach that takes into account human diversity" (Preiser and Smith, 2011:3)

The systemic approach can positively affect the efficiency of the urban inclusive interventions and it consists of both the universal design and inclusive design implementation. It also means that the architectural accessibility although it is important, does not play the crucial role and other factors should be considered. These are:

- a high level of decision makers' commitment and involvement of the senior staff managers.
- definition of the strategic access plan, and necessary actions, indicators,
- continuous monitor of the quality of the service and client's satisfaction
- coordination and continuity of the operational aims by an independent entity - access officer or consultant,
- divers promotion and active participation of the experts and co - design of the strategic users,
- structure the networking platform to share the knowledge and promote the Institution's ambitious,
- optimise the human, financial and technical resource,

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