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Employment and Disability Project
Morocco Tunisia Benin Senegal

Accessibility
in the company

Factsheet

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Why this factsheet?

- To enable businesses, employment stakeholders and more generally public-access buildings to become aware of the issue of accessibility for their staff and users.

- To enable these facilities to identify accessibility barriers and possible improvements to mitigate them.

What is accessibility all about?

- **Definitions**

Article 9 on accessibility of the The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) states that "in order to enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure, on an equal basis with others, access to the physical environment, to transportation, information and communication, including including systems and technologies for information and communication, and other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and rural areas."

Article 2 of the CRPD defines **universal design** as the design of products, equipment, programmes and services that can be used by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without requiring any adaptation or special design.

Designed for all: Universal design improves the accessibility of workplaces for all employees. It benefits everyone, not just disabled employees!

The use of automatic doors, a lift, and signs indicating where each office or workshop is located, improve flow for everyone.

Bachir works in a customer contact center. This company has made considerable efforts to make its working and dining areas accessible (ramps, lifts, slopes, open space with large circulation spaces.)

The staff have access to a lovely terrace. It is a sociable sport where the workforce gathers together at break times.

However, Bashir cannot access it because he has to go down three steps to get there and he is in a wheelchair.

- **Accessibility can be improved in the following three areas:**

1. The built environment: individual and multi-unit housing, public-access buildings, including businesses.

2. The urban environment: highways, transport, public spaces, facilities open to the public (IOP)

3. Information and communication: signage, new technologies (NTIC), learning resources

- **The principle of the chain of movement and RECU.**

Accessibility is not just about building access ramps, but about making it easier to move around as part of a global vision of the chain of movement, from home to the workplace, for instance, travelling by public transport.

One missing link is enough to negate the benefit of all the others and, potentially, prevent access altogether!

Good accessibility is built around the RECU principle:

Reach, Enter, Circulate, Use.

>**Reach:** getting to the service you need.

>**Enter:** being able to enter buildings.

>**Circulate:** being able to move around inside buildings.

> **Use:** being able to use all the services offered and available spaces in buildings.

The principles of universal design should be taken into account when designing a new project.

Where the infrastructure is already in place, it is often more appropriate to to consider what accommodations are possible under real conditions and with existing constraints. According to the CRPD "**reasonable accommodation**" means modifications

and adjustments which are necessary and appropriate and do not impose a disproportionate or undue burden, as required in a particular case, to ensure that disabled persons can enjoy the full benefit of enjoyment or exercise, on an equal basis with others, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.
For more information, see Factsheet 5: Integration and reasonable accommodation

Sanaa is in a wheelchair. She was recruited for an internship in an industry. She is in the quality department. She has no major difficulties in accessing her workstation and handling the equipment provided. The break room is also accessible and the equipment such as the microwave and fridge are at the right height.

The accessibility assessment

If you have a disabled employee, take the time to at least offer him or her a tour of all the spaces in your company.

This will allow you to check if these spaces are accessible. If they are not, and these spaces are essential, then you will probably need to plan some workplace adjustments :

*For the toilet she has to go to the sickbay. This is the only toilet wide enough for her to access with her wheelchair. It has no support bars and the nurse has to help her.
The sickbay is located in the production area. Sanaa has to make her way through the whole factory to get to the toilet.*

It is not uncommon for disabled workers to leave a job because they cannot access the toilet for the duration of their working day, even to the point of making themselves sick!

To review the current situation (the first necessary step for all accessibility improvements) you can call on specialists to carry out an accessibility assessment or audit.

It will allow you to :
- Identify existing barriers

- Identify possible corrective actions, their priorities and their cost

- Lay the foundations for joint work, enabling the start of a consultation process, which can be continued beyond the assessment phase, by prioritising, monitoring and evaluating the work.

There are universal accessibility standards. These standards have been adopted by the different states. Find out which accessibility standards apply to your organisation in your country.

Specialists offer accessibility improvement work. Two solutions are possible:
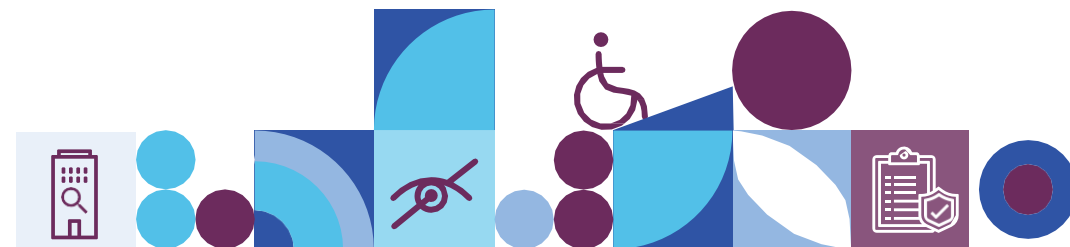
> Either a complete accessibility upgrade of your company, taking into account your present and future requirements;

> Or a smaller, one-off intervention aimed at improving

the accessibility of specific areas for specific people.

This second option does not benefit everyone in your facility, but it does address the needs of a particular person and is more affordable.

Your choice will depend on your budget and your vision, whether you want to solve a problem in the short term or improve accessibility in the long term. An accessibility assessment contains several sections that analyse all the links that make up the chain of movement necessary for a person with a disability to reach, enter, circulate and use all the building's facilities. For each criterion, the assessor will check whether the building complies with accessibility standards (width of doors and corridors, absence of steps, height of handles, space for turning around, etc.) and, ideally, summarize their observations and recommendations in an assessment report.

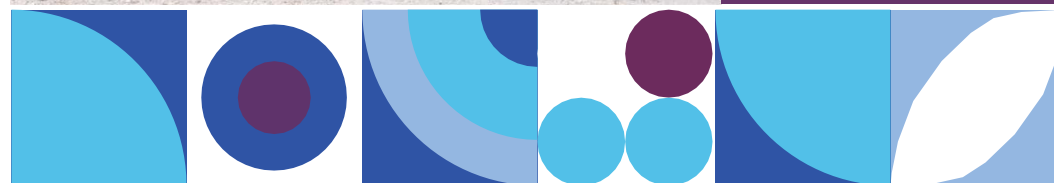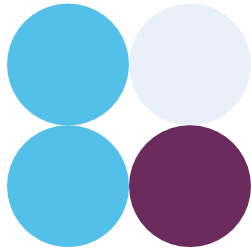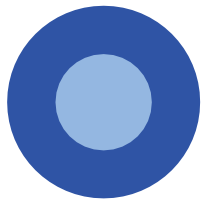| Accessibility dimensions	Assessment criteria (headings and sub-headings)
Reach	> Public or private transport stopsnearby. >Nearby parking:number of accessible parking spaces available, route to the building entrance, etc. >External routes to reach the building:ground, slopes, steps, holes, obstacles, etc. >Signage for public transport, car parks, building entrances, etc.
Enter	> Accessible main entrance and service doors >Manoeuvring space for a wheelchair user in the reception area. >Rest platforms on stairs and ramps >Ramps and stairs with handrails. >Exit door (if different from entrance) and emergency exit accessible to all. >Etc.
Circulate	> Width of doors and internal corridors. >Flat pathways (slopes, landings, width of corridors, steps, obstacles along the corridor, etc.) > Vertical pathway (stairs, lift). > Direction signage in place and accessible > Etc.
Use	> Accessible reception, counter and display heights. > Switches (height, colour, ergonomics, etc.) > Facilities: toilets, changing rooms, photocopiers, workshops, work areas, rest and eating areas, coffee machine area, etc. >Door handles, easy-to-use locks, lever taps, etc. > Etc.

Before and after

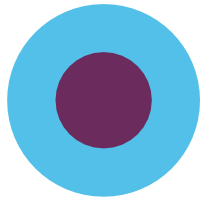*Accessibility works at the entrance of ULPS (Unité Locale de Promotion Sociale) Boum'hal Ben Arous (Tunisia)*

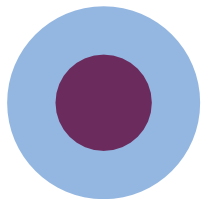• Structural, organisational and methodological improvements

The assessment identifies the existing barriers and makes proposals for improvement for each type of disability and prioritizes them. These improvements can be:

• **Structural:** modification of the built environment by applying one or more architectural adjustments (e.g.construction of a ramp, addition of lighting, installation of handrails, etc.). Structural work can be very costly, e.g. installation of a lift. In such cases, other solutions that do not require changes to be made to the built environment should be considered.

• **Organisational:** changes is building layout (relocation to the ground floor of a department on an upper floor in which a wheelchair user works, or a department that welcomes the public, for example).
Organisational changes require a thorough knowledge of the building's operation and organisation.

• **Methodological:** adapting machines or equipment to the needs of the disabled people who use them (computers, furniture, tools, etc.);adapting team communication methods to facilitate understanding for workers with hearing impairments, changing filing and how materials are stored to facilitate usage by people with visual impairments, etc.
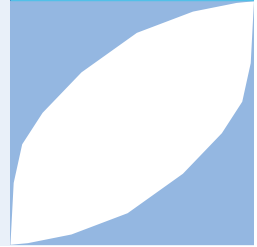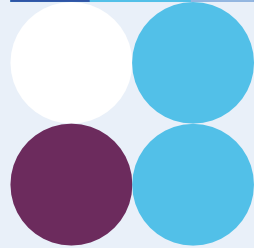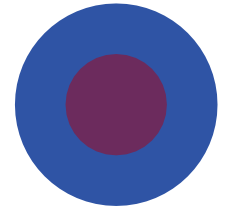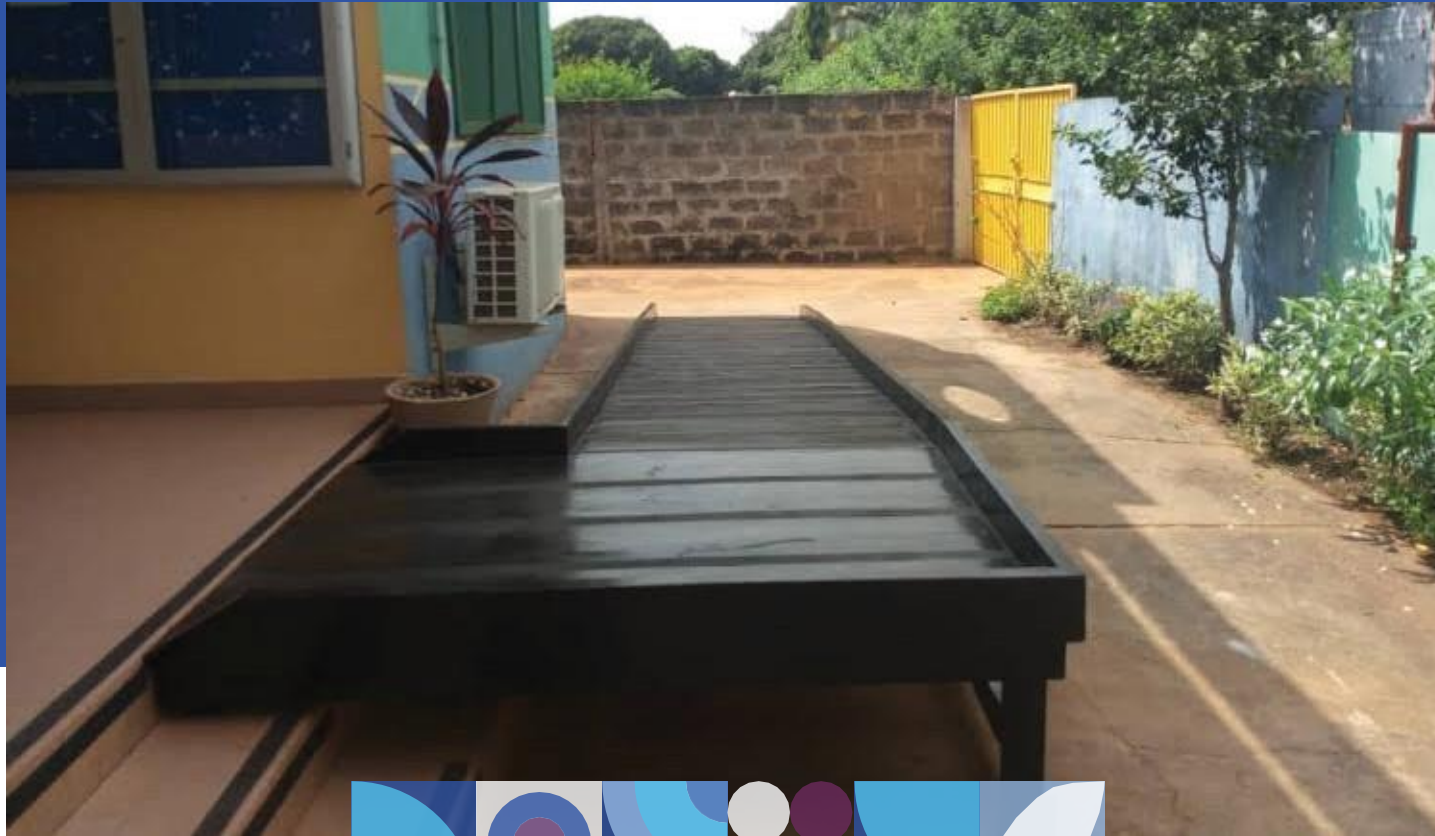
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Hatem, a short young man, runs a computer services shop, selling computer accessories and mobile phones. He had to raise a heavy metal shutter to open up.

The counter was non-functional and the products were stored on very high shelves.

Following work, the metal shutter was replaced by an electric shutter and the old shop fittings were replaced by functional, custom-made fittings.

As a result Hatem is more independent in his workplace. This process has also taught him to assess his needs, to detect physical barriers and to identify solutions to overcome them.

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For further information, please refer to worksheet 8 on examples of workplace adjustments.

By clicking on the following link, you will find an accessibility checklist

for use in the non-technical accessibility diagnosis (NTA) of a building [1]:

https://hinside.hi.org/intranet/front/publicDownload.jsp?docId=pl1_25 26322&authKey=cHJvZF8yMDA1 NzIxOjE1OTc5Mjk5MzU3MTE6JDJ hJDA0JFMvcVdsL21Pb3hBVGNua 3EzbXBoZ3VnVWljUHE0NkJqdGkx c0o0YnpUN05oMWI1Unc1NE1x

1 A Non-Technical Accessibility Diagnosis (NTAD) consists of a site visit and a diagnostic report. The site visit is carried out with the help of a basic accessibility checklist that the responsible person should fill in with the required information.

During the assessment, the person responsible should take as many photographs as possible of the general environment and relevant details, to be included in the diagnostic report. If a building plan is not available at the time of the assessment (or afterwards), as many hand-drawn sketches as possible should be made of the relevant areas where accessibility problems are detected; in this phase only major measurements are needed.

NOTE 1: To be more precise, an assessment should be carried out by a technician accompanied by one or more persons with disabilities in order to benefit from their experience and, on the other hand, to strengthen their capacity to advocate for accessibility on a more technical basis.

NOTE 2: The assessment can also be an opportunity to raise awareness of the accessibility of the built environment among local actors; it can be carried out as a group exercise involving decision-makers, technicians, NGOs and all other actors involved, directly or indirectly, in (re)construction activities.

NOTE 3: An assessment is a very good exercise to include on the curriculum of basic accessibility training; it can be carried out by groups of trainees on site and the observations can then be discussed collectively. People to involve (where possible): manager, building owner or equivalent, building manager, project manager, people with disabilities, building users.

This factsheet is part of a kit of eight factsheets designed for businesses and services supporting people with disabilities into employment.