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Create your own visit: a Review of Visually Impaired Visitors access at Museum

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Abstract:

The lifeblood of museum exhibits is visitors. The disabled are a category of visitors whose demands are different from those of the majority of other visitors, and therefore deserve special attention. According to the World Health Organization, anyone who has a limitation or lack of ability to execute an activity in the manner or within the range regarded normal for a human being may be referred to as being "disabled." People with disabilities should have access to museums and galleries, and their requirements should be properly taken into account in many different contexts.

Nowadays, the majority of museums all over the wold focus on "handicapped" people with disabilities and their needs, while few focus on visually impaired people.

The goal of this paper is to support the social rehabilitation of blind and visually impaired persons by making them feel confident museum visitors and by providing them with the chance to comprehend their museum tour more fully.

Accordingly, this paper will show that the blind person has been given abilities by the all-powerful God, but if he desires it and has the motivation to do so, he can invest these abilities to enable him to live independently without the need for anyone else. However, this is only possible when the society makes him feel like a member of it by involving him in the community. How many healthy individuals lack the drive, imagination, and productivity that those who are blind do?

Making Egyptian Museums more accessible for blind or visually impaired visitors is a desired goal. Encourage them to visit the museum without a help from anybody through designing a special lane “Tactile Paving”. This demonstrates that our ability to produce in life is ultimately determined by our inner intelligence, psychology, soul, and inner strength, not by any physical limitations or external factors.

Keywords:

Accessibility; disabled; engaging community; visually impaired; tactile paving; inclusion.

Introduction

The researcher came up with this concept on Saturday, December 12, 2015, at the Egyptian Museum as a result of a personal experience. Imagine being seated when all of a sudden everything goes dark, you lose vision, and all you can see is the blackness. You are only able to hear sounds around you. What would you think? What accomplishments would you have made?

The tour was led by and for people who are visually impaired and was divided into two sections. The first section focused on watching a tour for people with visual impairments led by people with impairments. When the researcher noticed the tour guide was explaining what would happen, she was shocked to see that the guide was a man with a disability rather than a sighted person. In the second section, visitors were described as being led by visually challenged people without any visual information. The area was incredibly cramped and tiny, so the researcher quickly felt uneasy and tense as she started to cover her eyes with the scarf. She attempted to experience their emotions, but she was only able to do so for about five minutes. What bothered her was the feeling of being on edge and lacking resources to feel secure and confident. Although it only takes a few minutes, it felt like the time was too lengthy.

Designing "Tactile Paving" *(Guidance on the Use of Tactile Paving Surfaces, (DETR) 1998)* inside the Egyptian museums in order to make their tour easy and make them depended on themselves without the requirement for a leader or guide. The tactile paving is made up of yellow-colored longitudinal truncated bars that can be felt underfoot or by a long cane. The blind can enter alone thanks to the longitudinal truncated bars, and the yellow color makes it stand out to other visitors so they won't obstruct their path.

He will encounter a warning slab with latitude-truncated bars as he turns his path right or left; the cane will collide with the latitude bars, alerting the blind to the need to turn right or left. He will discover a dome slab [warning surface] at the location of the artefact to indicate that there is a Braille label that he must touch to learn the interpretation of the object. He can understand the object by using the braille label, which also contains the written description of the object's size.

Sometimes the blind can't feel free to spend more time than the tour guide offers to him, he feels bad when someone leads him, in addition the tour guide doesn't always take care of his words when he guides the blind e.g. "look for the artifact", which result in psychological problems for the blind that make him a non-product and non-creative person in our society, he feels also afraid of free moving or clashing with the artifact or somebody or anything through his tour in the museum.

Historical Perspective

According to Ross (1951) in this book she talks about the history of the blind people from 2600 B.C to 1950 AD, meaning that she picked a 3-4000 years journey of the blind people. She said: "when the prophet Muhammed extended his authority on the Arabian Peninsula in the seventh century AD, blind swept a wave of light with far-reaching effects". Notice how Ross described the impact of the prophet Muhammed on the blinds all over the world, because his impact has been already exceeded and spread all over the Muslim world within the spread of Islamic conquests, you will find after the prophet that all the Caliphs and Sultans and Emirs in general have become a keen interest in taking into their account the blind, they even used to hire a leader for each blind person it was one of the State's responsibilities to provide a decent lifestyle for the blind.

Also Kirtley (1975) stated, “In early Islamic countries, that state of the blind was somewhat more satisfactory than in Europe” Lowenfeld (1973) and Ross (1951) pointed out that other nations were just as horrific towards newborns with disabilities. For instance, according to Lowenfeld (1981): Annihilation of blind and imperfect children was, for example, practiced by the Spartans who set them out in the wilderness of the Taygetus Mountains and left them to starve; in Athens, they were put into clay vessels and left by the wayside; and in Rome, baskets were sold on the market so that infirm children could be put into them to be floated on the Tiber River in which they drowned.

Thus, the prophet Muhammad is credited with making intellectual advances for integrating blind individuals into community during his lifetime, which occurred 1400 years ago. This paper's main goal is to outline how we might treat blind people fairly, equally, independently, and as complete members of community. This paper should also contribute to a better understanding of the needs of those who are blind or visually impaired and to their inclusion in community as productive and innovative members of its.

About the blindness

There can be no successful installation without understanding a few points about visual impairment and visually impaired people themselves.

In recent years there has been a swing from using the “blind and partially sighted” term to using the phrase: “visually impaired people”, with the emphasis on the word “people” as opposed to “the” visually impaired. The type of visual loss varies greatly from person to person.

The overall picture is a complex one, but generally the result of different eye conditions will lead to the following types of impairment according to (*the culture for the future of healthcare architecture proceedings of 28th international public Health Seminar, Prof. Romano Del Nord, Firenze 2009)*:

- A limited field of vision - being unable to see to the sides or up and down;
- Some loss of central vision -limiting the ability to see fine detail;
- Acute shortsightedness - seeing the world as a continuous blur;
- Uncontrollable oscillations of the eyeball- leading to an inability to see objects clearly;
- Night blindness - sensitivity to light and a tendency to be dazzled by glare.

Visually impaired people will either move around independently or with the aid of a sighted person who will act as a guide; and here is the problem that there are some aspects must every guide put into consideration as *(the sighted guide told us according to the Office for the Blind and Visually Impaired web site):*

- The sighted guide gives verbal cue ("take my arm/wrist") and/or nonverbal cue (touching the back of the person who is blind's hand with the back of the guide's hand).
- The sighted guide is responsible for the safety of the person who is blind at all times, regardless of the errors on the person who is blind's part.
- The guide is also responsible for holding the door, he should indicate the presence of a level change, particularly novel types of stairs (deep, narrow, curved, etc.) Tell the person that they are facing the front, back or side of the chair.
- Never leave that person unless you first inform them where you are going and when you will return, etc.

Therefore more aspects such like these we should be aware of when we are treating with the blind, because not all persons can pay attention of that and there are who intend to annoy the visual impairment people, so I suppose this idea in order to be responsible for themselves and not be depended on someone else. "WHO' has proposed the following definition for blindness: A physical, psychiatric, intellectual or sensory impairment, whether temporary or permanent, provided that it lasts for a significant period of time that limits the capacity to perform one or more essential activities of daily life and which can be caused or aggravated by economic and social environment. There are about 285 million people are estimated to be visually impaired worldwide: 39 million are blind and 246 have low vision. About 90% of the world's visually impaired live in low-income settings. (Fact Sheet N°282, Updated August 2014 according to world health organization http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs282/en/
Therefore this large percentage of visually impaired people makes us being in attention for it, we have to engage them in the community to feel independent and can be responsible for his life.

New Addition

The DDA defines a disabled person as someone with a: 'A physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities' (DDA 1995) The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 has been amended by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 so that it now places a general duty on all public authorities to better achieve disability equality when carrying out their functions (*DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME British Museum).*

The general duty of DDA requires public authorities to demonstrate due regard to six key principles:

• To promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
• To eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act
• To eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities
• To promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons
• To encourage participation by disabled persons in public life

Building standards and regulations relating to access for disabled people apply to new buildings and refurbishment according to *(Accessible Environments2004MLAUK)*. Compliance with the Building Regulations 2000: Access and Facilities for Disabled People is mandatory they occur in all aspects of the physical environment such as: architecture and structure; location; design, materials and finishes used in fittings, fixtures and furnishings; signage; acoustics and sound enhancement; visual acuity (effected by lighting, contrasts in color and tone and decoration); changes in level; external and internal doors; layout and use of space.

The researcher agrees with all the goals of DDA but feel that more might be achieved to put into consideration the tactile paving and attach to new buildings refurbishment.

Complementary factor

Tactile paving is a complementary factory for all the tactile elements such as "Smithsonian Guidelines for Accessible Exhibition Design", "tactile exhibits the tactile exhibits were set in the Memorial Museum of Cosmonautics." (*REHABILITATION OF DISABLED PERSONS BY THE MUSEUM MEANS)* all the tactile programs which the British museum is offer for the visual impairment people http://www.britishmuseum.org/ and also the MoBIC Project ("Mobility of Blind and Elderly People Interacting with Computers") is to increase the independent mobility of visually disabled people**, etc.** According to *(GUIDELINES ORIENTATION GUIDE RNIB)* MoBIC has the primary goal of helping blind and elderly people in locating their position and finding their way in urban environments.

The researcher sees that it is necessary to have tactile paving in museums to complete the whole system of tactile.

A. Tactile Paving:

Tactile paving- tells a blind person about the road, also called truncated domes, detectable warnings surfaces, Tactile Ground Surface Indicators is a system of textured ground surface indicator found on footpaths, stairs and train station platforms to assist pedestrians who are blind or visually impaired.

There are seven different warning surfaces recommended by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) (Guidance on the Use of Tactile Paving Surfaces, 1998), to use for the benefit of people with visual impairment.

The successful use of tactile paving also depends on visually impaired visitors understanding the different meanings assigned to the paving and being made aware of the presence of such facilities in their area.

And this will be by explaining it in a map in braille way which the blind person take before the visiting to know the way of the tour and different sign for each place in order to recognize it well, such as follows *(Guidance on the Use of Tactile Paving Surfaces, (DETR) 1998)*:

1- Blister surface: to provide a warning to visually impaired people who would otherwise, in the absence of a kerb, find it difficult to differentiate between where the footway ends and the carriageway begins, The blister is in red color surface, This will further assist partially sighted people to distinguish the presence of it. It shall be used at the places of the artifacts of the museum to make the blind distinguish that there is a braille label.(Figure 1)

2- Corduroy Hazard Warning Surface: The purpose of the corduroy surface is to warn visually impaired people of the presence of specific hazards: steps, level crossings. It is recommended that the surface be in a contrasting color to the surrounding area so as to assist partially sighted people (Figure 2). It will be applied at the stairs of the museum.(Figure 3)

3- Platform edge (off street) warning surface: The purpose of this surface is to warn visually impaired people of the edge of all off, street railway platforms**,** The surface can be any color other than red, but should provide a good contrast with the surrounding area to assist partially sighted people. It can be applied at the library. (Figure 4)

4- Platform edge (on street) warning surface: The purpose of this surface is to warn visually impaired people that they are approaching the edge of an on street light rapid transit platform. The surface is normally buff colored but can be any color, other than red, which contrasts with the surrounding surface. This will assist partially sighted people. It can be installed at the ticket office. (Figure 5)

5- Segregated shared cycle track/footway surface and central delineator strip: This will not only assist visually impaired people, but will also be helpful to other vulnerable visitors such as those with impaired hearing and those with walking difficulties. The purpose of the tactile surface used in conjunction with a segregated shared cycle track/footway is to advise visually impaired people of the correct side to enter. It can be installed at the garden and some parts inside the museum for the blind to be aware of the wheelchairs.(Figure 6)

6- Guidance path surface: The surface is designed so that people can be guided along the route either by walking on the tactile surface or by maintaining contact with a long cane. It will be applied at the whole museum vice versa in order to make the blind distinguish the direction.(Figure 7)

7- Information surface: The purpose of the information surface is to help people locate amenities, for example, a telephone box or a ticket office. It will be helpful to visually impaired people who are regular users of a particular area and will become familiar with the type of amenity indicated. The surface can be used to draw attention to any amenity, such as: tactile or talking information boar, ATMs, toilets, chairs, etc.(Figure 8)

B. The role of color and contrast:

The Department of Transport guidance on the installation and use of tactile paving places a heavy emphasis on the role of contrast. The guidance repeatedly states that tactile paving should be chosen to provide strong color contrast with the surrounding paving material as studies have shown that this aids partially sighted individuals. Most tactile paving is available in a range of colors and materials making good color contrast easy to achieve with appropriate choice of tactile paving.

There are only two cases where the color of a tactile has a specific meaning:

- Red is reserved for use with blister tactile to denote a controlled pedestrian crossing
- Buff blister tactile are reserved for use at uncontrolled pedestrian crossings

Where installation of tactile paving of a specified color e.g. red blister paving at a controlled crossing, would result in the tactile paving being of a similar color to the surrounding paving a contrast strip of at least 150mm should be installed to clearly demarcate the tactile area, according to (*Study concerning the colors of tactile blocks for the visually handicapped – visibility for the visually handicapped and scenic congruence for those with ordinary sight and vision).*

Conclusion:

All public services offered by the museum, as well as outside of them, cater to the unique requirements of the disabled. Due to the significance of the issue and its ramifications, it is necessary for the majority of museums to create a clear policy regarding how they will treat visitors with special needs.

Any advanced country recognizes that one of their development needs is to offer special accommodations to people with impairments. The researcher honestly feels that blind people are not considered "handicapped" or "disabled," since they are completely healthy persons who lack nothing and have understanding that is superior to sight.

The researcher is a curator at the Graeco-Roman museum, which is undergoing restoration; as such, she may provide her thoughts to help the museum thrive in the future. Additionally, she intends to provide braille instructions and information on how to use the tactile pavement surfaces at the museum. Therefore, "tactile Paving" is a complimentary element to all tactile ideas that have been implemented in museums around the world. It serves to include visually impaired persons in society and respect their feelings. Since the museum is a gathering place for all segments of society, it serves as a reflection of society on the streets of the entire city. People who are blind or visually challenged should live dignified lives. The researcher therefore hopes that the information in this paper will help museum employees efficiently meet the needs of people with vision impairments while also making them feel at ease and confident.

For the purpose of assisting other organizations in making their facilities and programs easily accessible to people with vision impairments, Access "Tactile Paving" for Blind and Visually Impaired Visitors was created. Additionally, the researcher hopes that this concept will someday be implemented at all Egyptian museums in order to establish justice and equality.

Whoever doesn't see something in his day that is deserving of a grin, it is claimed, can close his eyes for ten minutes and still know that just the presence of light merits a smile.

Figures:

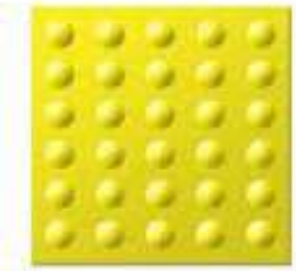
Figure 1	 Block indicates "Stop"
Figure 2	 Block indicates "Go"
Figure 3	
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Figure 6	
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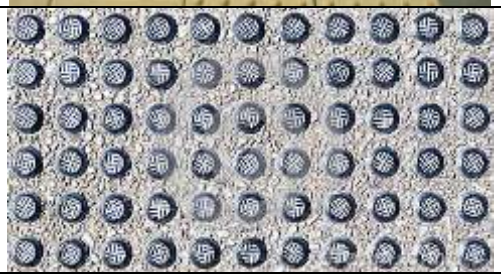
Figure 8	

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