

We'd like to share our enthusiasm. 2017 was full of challenges and achievements, and 2018 promises to be as intense, if not more. As we navigate a period of uncertainties, we commit ourselves to strengthen initiatives towards a more just world.

INFLUENCING PUBLIC POLICY: Safe and Accessible Sidewalks

The goal of this program is to guarantee safety for all pedestrians and improve accessibility for the disabled and the elderly, as a way of preventing injuries.

Our systematic survey of Buenos Aires City sidewalks and curb cuts was picked up by the mass media, making Rumbos the expert NGO on the matter.



SURVEY VIDEO

Dates: April thru June 2017

Survey: 114 blocks, 1008 building fronts, 349 curb cuts and 775 trees

Findings:

- 8 in 10 building fronts have impassable sidewalks
- 40% of broken sidewalks are the responsibility of public works companies
- 1 in 10 trees lift or crack sidewalks
- 7 in 10 curb cuts face serious problems
- 3 in 10 curb cuts have a step, often 3 inches high



We took our findings to the City Legislature and to top government officials responsible for sidewalk maintenance. We also met with city legislators and drafted a bill declaring the state of emergency of sidewalks and curb cuts, and demanding that the government, as the owner of public space, assume full responsibility for their construction and maintenance.

Our bill gives a role to NGOs of the disabled in establishing design guidelines and in controlling the final product. It also makes neighborhood organizations participate in establishing priorities and in controlling the work being done during this emergency.

Our bill was backed by 13 key NGOs in the fields of disability rights and urban and environmental protection. It was also backed by thousands of citizens.



BILL VIDEO



VIDEO



VIDEO

By way of response, the Executive introduced its own bill that insists on the responsibility of building owners for repairing sidewalks, even though they are not responsible for their damage. This bill was approved with the exclusive vote of the governing party.



Recognizing our expertise, the Undersecretary for Pedestrian Walks asked to meet with Rumbos. She admitted that this is an emergency and, at our request, committed herself not to fine building owners as long as the emergency subsists, i.e., until public work companies and government repair all sidewalks. She also welcomed our suggestion to work with the city's department of transportation to come up with safe and accessible solutions for pedestrian street crossings.

We have successfully reached out to academia, receiving expert input from the Department of Geography of the University of Buenos Aires; and have joined a network of city NGOs that focus on urban development. Our strategy is for others to make our issue their own, and the response so far has proven highly encouraging.



In 2018 we will work closely with neighborhood organizations that are represented in the different borough governments so that sidewalks and curb cuts be properly designed and repaired.

INFLUENCING PUBLIC POLICY: Changes to the Buenos Aires City Building Code

The City Government intends to limit or outright eliminate accessibility guidelines for the private sector: mainly in apartment buildings, schools and stores.

We have closely analyzed these proposed changes and will lobby in the City Legislature against them.

UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE PROGRAM: Agreement with the Universidad del Salvador

Including accessibility in the undergraduate and graduate programs of the School of Architecture, as well as in research and community outreach programs.

During 2017 we continued to give classes on accessibility in undergraduate courses, and concluded our research Project on “Establishing a library on physical accessibility”.



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In 2018 we will collaborate with the university’s community outreach program via research that will focus on the city of Luján “Detecting conceptual weaknesses in the process of contextualizing physical accessibility” and via an outreach activity “Pedestrian scenarios” that puts undergraduate students in touch with their social and community environments.

We are also programing:

- Courses for faculty at other campuses and in other careers at the university
- Post graduate courses on “Implementing accessibility guidelines” and “I need accessibility, how do I get around?”, which are part of the future Specialization on physical accessibility for an inclusive habitat.



RUMBOS CONTINUES TO MAKE AN IMPACT BEYOND BUENOS AIRES CITY as at the Conference on Accessible Beaches and Legal Tools to Access Rights, jointly organized by the Lawyers’ Bar and Architects’ Associations of Mar del Plata.

Join us to make this possible.

Your donation will help the physically disabled and the elderly gain freedom of movement

DONATE NOW



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