**Rumbos accessibility**

**Newsletter 2020**

In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, we prioritize accompanying persons with disabilities. At the same time, we focus on having social movements incorporate our agenda for an inclusive habitat.

**WORKING IN THE COMMUNITY & DEFENDING PUBLIC SPACES**

**“*Our struggles cannot prosper fragmented; we are affected by other social problems and the current economic crisis and pandemic, whereby our fates are intertwined …*” (Eduardo Joly, president).**

We have joined the Coordinating Committee of THE CITY ARE THOSE WHO INHABIT IT in the framework of a campaign FOR AN ENVIRONMENTAL URBAN PLAN DESIGNED BY AND FOR CITIZENS AND THE COMMON GOOD.

This plan expresses public policies guidelines for Buenos Aires City as part of the Buenos Aires Metro Area. Among other postulates, it stands for an accessible habitat for persons with disabilities. We bring our know-how so that the disabled may participate in the process, highlighting key elements, such as: accessible pedestrian walkways, citizen monitoring and control of works and services.

We drafted a document on INCLUSIVE HABITAT and participated in online meetings dealing with transportation and mobility, housing, disability, among others. [ttps://docs.google.com/document/d/1cAiGgdmQB5j2vNwW40vT4rJyBsb7GptI/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1cAiGgdmQB5j2vNwW40vT4rJyBsb7GptI/edit)

**COMMUNE 13**

- “COLEGIALES” TRAIN STATION CULTURAL PARK and CULTURAL HUB COOP: Building on the achievements with “Plaza Clemente”, we are reopening the Participative Design Workshop as part of the “Colegiales” Participates and Decides Collective. We link the defense of the Railroad Maneuvers Hub with the neighborhood’s cultural community. Principles of physical and communicational accessibility are intertwined with defending public lands and the common good.

- ADVISORY COUNCIL and SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE: Given the economic crisis, aggravated by the pandemic, community organizations in the commune have been working together to build unity, solidarity and structure.

**NO MORE WHEELING AND DEALING WITH THE CODES**

- LEGAL SUIT TO BLOCK THE NEW BUENOS AIRES CITY BUILDING CODE.

*Legal updates*

In response to Eduardo Joly’s request, the judge admitted handling the case despite the judicial recess imposed by Covid-19 and agreed to consider the recourse of unconstitutionality of the new building code.

The city’s Legislature is repeatedly failing in its appeals. In all likelihood, the case will go to the City’s Supreme Court, which handles matters of constitutionality. If we are not satisfied with the court’s rulings, we will appeal before the Argentine Supreme Court.

- OUR VOICE WAS HEARD AT THE PUBLIC HEARING ON CHANGES TO THE BUENOS AIRES CITY URBAN CODE: “The concepts of a GREEN CITY, PEDESTRIAN PRIORITY, 100% ACCESSIBILITY, INCLUSIVE CITY should cease being marketing phrases and be reflected in city regulations”.

**ACCESSIBLES AND SAFE SIDEWALKS**

In coordination with the Disability Program at the School of Philosophy and Humanities and the Lucioni Chair of the Department of Geography (University of Buenos Aires), we have continued participating in accessibility fieldwork in public spaces. Under conditions of forced isolation, due to the pandemic, students conducted fieldwork in their places of residence across the country. The findings were shared via online classes and proved extremely productive. [http://novedades.filo.uba.ar/novedades/relevamiento-de-veredas-en-cuarentena](http://novedades.filo.uba.ar/novedades/relevamiento-de-veredas-en-cuarentena?fbclid=IwAR1oWwUyCDHoww1yMosL5Y5QlsZ2pJ1TD_lkXOHqjIMKO1RcRalp2-hseeU)

We were invited to speak on surveying accessibility for a class in the Degree program on “Disability as a Political Issue: Accessibility and Rights" (offered by the State Employee’s Union and the School of Philosophy and Humanities of the University of Buenos Aires). The enrollment covered 140 students from different locations throughout the country.

PEDESTRIAN-ONLY STREETS THAT DO NOT TAKE THE DISABLED INTO ACCOUNT: <https://youtu.be/lmijkpUkucY>

**TRAVELING IS A VITAL NEED**

The Board of Directors of Argentine Railways created an ACCESSIBILITY WORK GROUP. We were invited to join along with representatives from the National Transportation Regulatory Commission and the National Administration for Inclusive and Accessible Strategies and Sustainable Development. Our contribution is to guarantee accessible and safe conditions at train stations in the Buenos Aires Metro Area.

Accessible public transportation is the only way to guarantee that the disabled may attend school or work, and eventually earn their living.

**LEGISLATIVE IMPACT**

We hold regular meetings with legislators and legislative aids in the PUBLIC SPACE AND DISABILITY COMMISSIONS OF THE BUENOS AIRES CITY LEGISLATURE, to follow up on last year’s efforts in the Working Group on the Right to Inclusive Public Spaces, and to promote bills that guarantee accessibility and labor quotas for the disabled.

**ACADEMIC INTERVENTIONS IN ACCESSIBILITY AND DISABILITY**

- We joined the NETWORK OF ACCESSIBILITY PROFESSIONALS AND COLLEGE TEACHERS, participating in online meetings as lecturers or moderators. The network’s goal is to promote dialogue between academia, civil society and citizens.

- We conducted our first interdisciplinary SEMINAR ON THE APPROPRIATION OF SPACIALITY (there were neurologists, architects, clinical psychologists, and occupational therapists, among others). We have scheduled two more such seminars.

- WE ARE ANALYZING THE CURRENT PANDEMIC AND ECONOMIC CRISIS. We have joined debates, drafted documents, and spread our perspective in different media, addressing the following questions:

* How does the historical moment we are living through affect us?
* What are its implications for persons with disabilities, for accessibility, and for the future of urban environments?

COVERAGE IN THE MEDIA: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/16o3mtkGsxRQc5Ej1_n3tvH-lzhWCuoiJ/edit>

**ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES**

- We continue with our COLUMN on ACCESSIBILITY AND ASSISTANCE FOR PERSONAL MOBILITY in RADIO SUMEMOS, providing guidance and containment to persons with disabilities during these months of social isolation. In addition, we were invited by organizations, such as Muscular Dystrophy Association and A Zero to the Right, to address these matters and share our experience.

- JANE’S WALK BUENOS AIRES: Online, we have shown how what is closest to us (doors, windows, balconies, patios and terraces) has been resignified offering new forms of visual contact, exchange and family/community collaboration.

SEE JANE’S WALK VIDEO: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQ4C8yJ8-u0>

**MORE THAN EVER BEFORE, WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT TO CHANGE TOGETHER**

**THE REALITY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES.**

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