

Authors: Javid Mostamand, Hamzeh Baharlouei, Saba Sadeghi

Disability and inclusion as social and cultural phenomena: Comparative analysis of public attitudes toward disability in Hamburg and Isfahan Accessibility

Institution: Isfahan University of Medical Sciences, Isfahan, Iran

Introduction

Disability is a worldwide social challenge (1). People with any deficiency, disease, problem and limitation are in need of more supports from governments (2). Providing the equal opportunities is an essential citizenship right, therefore the governments have to consider a disable-friendly city and increase the accessibility for all citizens. One of the prevalent discriminations about people with disability is their rights on accessibility (3).

The term of accessibility has been changed and improved since recent decades .In 1990s the “Universal design” suggested a new definition for accessibility, consisting more aspects including public transportation, entrance of public buildings, audio, video and touch guides.

Such a suitable environment increases accessibility for disabled people, resulting in independency, social justice and equal opportunities, leading to a better interaction with society (2).

The architecture and urban planning for people with disability was passed in 1989 in Iran. However after about 30 years there are lots of physical barriers in the city which interfere the accessibility of people with disability (4). The aim of current project was assessing the accessibility of some faculties and clinics in Isfahan and also improving the knowledge and attitude of students about the “disability” and “universal design”

Methods

Phase I:

The original version of DIN standards translated to Persian version by professional translators. This translation discussed in expert panel by academic staff of Rehabilitation school, NGOs and architectures. After that, a number of rehabilitation students invited to a workshop entitled “inclusion”. The concept of universal design and preliminary Persian version of DIN were introduced in this workshop. In a pilot study the students assessed the accessibility of Rehabilitation School and reported the physical barriers in the school. Besides they took part in a reflection panel to discuss about suggestions, improving the usability of DIN questionnaire in Iranian-Islamic culture.

Phase II:

Two faculties of Isfahan University of Medical Sciences including Rehabilitation School and School of New Technologies and also a Rehabilitation Center were assessed based on three following scenarios: 1- wheelchair user who came with his/her car, 2- wheelchair user who came with public transportations 3- person with visual deficiency

Each group reported three data; the first report was about the physical barriers of each building. The second report was some suggestions for removing and modifying the barriers and finally the third one was related to comparison of their feelings and attitude about “disability” before and after playing the role of a person with disability.

Results

Assessing the accessibility

The most important physical barriers observed were:

- Inconsistency in barrier free pathways
- Absence of any special pathway for those with visual deficiencies
- Low distance between slops and stairs, no appropriate handle
- High gradient of slops
- No marker on stairs and doors for people with visual deficiency
- No special parking place for people with disability

Student's feedback

- After playing the role of a person with disability it was too difficult for me to cover my every day activities.
- The rights of people with disability did not take into consideration well.
- I was hot with shame that I had not paid enough attention to the difficulties of people with disabilities.
- Disabled having well participations in societies take more self-steams during acceptance of different activities.

Steps toward providing a barrier free university

The results of accessibility assessment were discussed with some experts and the authorities of Rehabilitation School to decide about priorities of structural alterations in school. In the first phase we decided to make some modifications which needed less supplies. In this phase four parking places were marked and painted for people with disabilities and the entrance doors and stairs marked for these persons.

In the second phase we are going to make some structural changes in Conference Hall of the Rehabilitation School to make it accessible for people with all types of disabilities. The building plan was redeveloped after applying the views of some architects and NGOs about current structural barriers in the Hall. It is expected that all required alterations would start in the near future in this Hall.

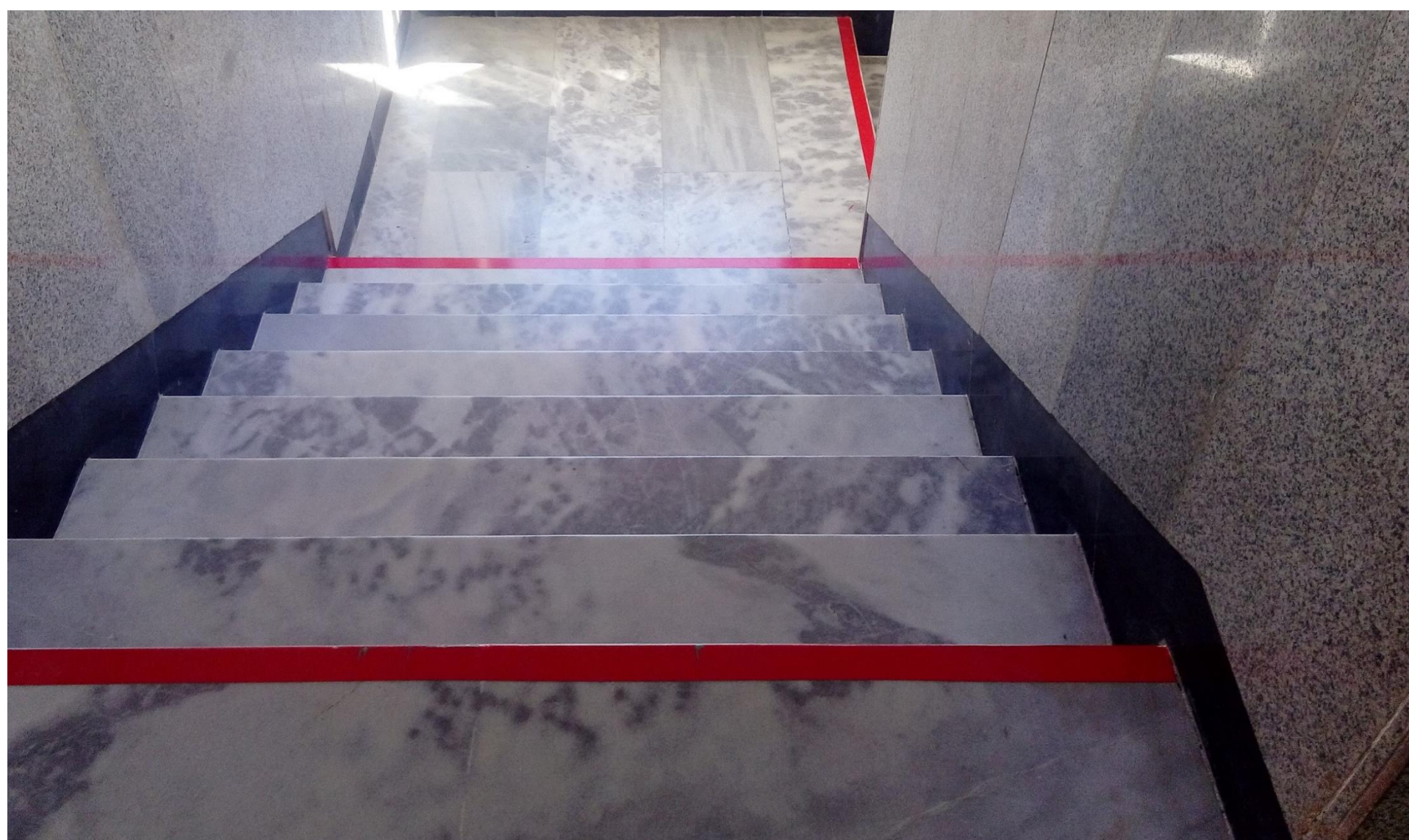


Figure 2- steps toward providing a barrier free university

Conclusion

The urban management have to try more to provide more facilities for disabled. This process needs good collaboration between NGOs, experts, university to overcome the current barriers for achieving the “universal design”. It seems that making some simple and cost-free changes in the available buildings is so easier than making new buildings and even towns people with different disabilities.

References

1. Nobakht Sobhani MB, Majid Akbari, Fatemeh Souri. Evaluation of city accessibility characteristics in public spaces for disable people in Khoramabad. Journal of geographic research 2016;4(2):283-98.
2. Ali akbar Gorgi aznaderyani ZSn. Disable people rights in city journal of Motaleate rahbordi iasatgozari omumi. 2018;8. (26)
3. Doyle B. Disability, Discrimination and Equal Opportunities: A Comparative Study of the Employment Rights of Disabled Persons. London: Mansell :Publishing Ltd.; 1995.
4. Rafizadeh N. recognizing the cause of inappropriate accessibility for disable people after the cunstruction of Tehran sidewalks. Memari va shahrsazi armanshahr. 2015:37-51.

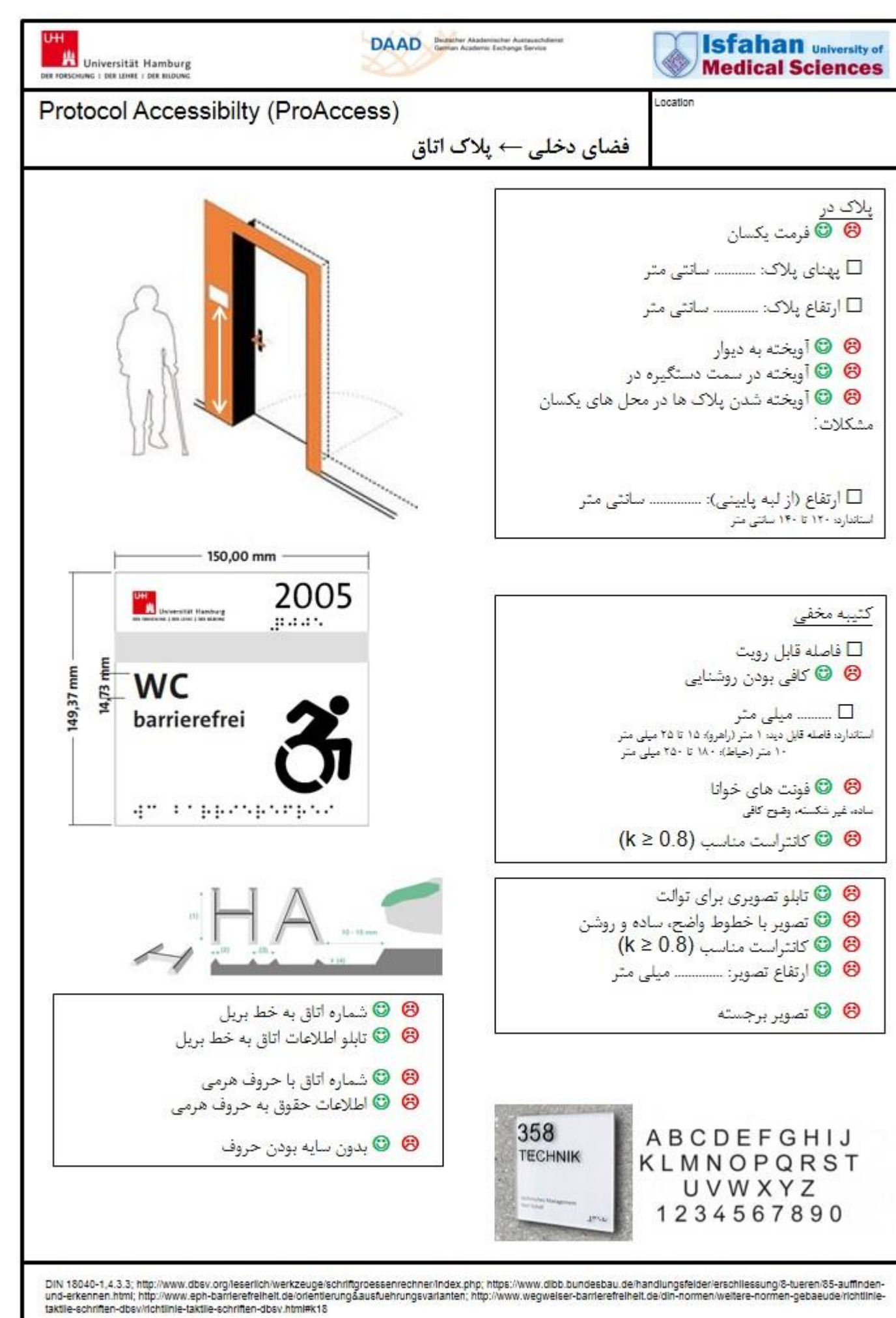


Figure 1. Students measuring the dimensions of different places to conform the standard accessibility for the people with disability

