An International and Developing Economy View: Some Personal Observations (ABC)

Dr. Ken. Parker  FCIBSE
Liverpool John Moores University

kjparkern@mac.com
• This presentation is a collection of personal thoughts, ideas and prejudices. It does not necessarily reflect the views of employers past or present.
• The alphabetical approach avoids background/context setting and there are many other items that could and should have made it into this presentation.
• One day my “dream” is to produce a book or on-line document “The ABC of Accessibility” – perhaps this Workshop marks the start of my writings… I hope you enjoy, and are challenged by, the content.
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• **Awareness** – this does nothing!

• There is a progression – Unknowing, Awareness, Sympathy, Empathy, Advocacy

  In order to make change we need supporters (empathetic) and agents of change (advocates).

• **ADL** – **Activities of Daily Living**.

  But there is more to a good Quality of Life than meeting basic ADL criteria.

• **Aging** / **Ageing** – remember to search for both terms!
Braille – not all blind persons can read Braille, and only a small proportion of the vision impaired are blind – so is Braille appropriate for signage/information in the built environment? The National Federation of the Blind (U.K.) are Braille advocates:

http://www.nfb.org/default.htm

International Braille Research Center: -

http://www.braille.org/

Plus many others…

• **Barriers** – there are many (physical, sensory, cognitive, religious, sexual, social, racial, cultural, etc.). Some barriers are necessary (e.g. for security and fire safety) whilst many are discriminatory outside of their purpose.

• **Bifocals** – these eyeglasses are dangerous for those using steps/staircases!
• **Baby-friendly** washroom design (with baby seat and seat-belt).

For seminar papers on Barrier-free accessibility go to:-
http://www.bca.gov.sg, then “Public info” and “Barrier-free Accessibility”.
• For a pdf copy of the Code go to the above address and join CORENET for free. As a member you can search for and download the Code – well worth the effort.
• Centre for Accessible Environments (CAE), a U.K. information provider founded in 1969:– http://www.cae.org.uk/

• Ceiling fans require higher ceilings (which increases the danger when cleaning them or relamping ceiling-mounted luminaries). One solution is wall-mounted fans and double lamp luminaries that may not require immediate attention if one lamp fails.

• CIB - the International Council for Building Research Studies and Documentation CIB/TG19 "Designing for the Ageing Society" group and the CIB/WG84 "Building Non-handicapping Environments" group:– http://www.cibworld.nl/
D

• **ADA**: Americans with Disabilities Act (1990).

• **Deafblind U.K.** – about 24,000 persons in the U.K. are dual sensory impaired: -
  http://www.deafblinduk.org.uk/
  This is a larger group than guide dog users (approximately 21,000) and yet they seem to receive relatively little design attention.

• **Developing Economies** (don’t use “Developing Country/Countries”).
Design for Dementia – this is a very difficult area to study and there has been some great work done and in progress.

Disabled persons – over 8.5 million in the U.K.

Source: http://www.ability.org.uk/index.html

Dignity – design for dignity, sensitive design.

Details - very important…
(tripping at stairs)
• **Enforcement.** Do Codes and Standards mean anything if they are not enforced? An example, in my opinion, of poor enforcement exists in Indonesia (though not in major projects in major cities) where many Codes and Standards are simply ignored!

• **Experiential Discrimination** – the “next big thing”!

• “**Elderly**” – this is an adjective, there is no such thing as “the elderly” – instead try to use “elders”, “seniors”, “elderly persons”, etc.
• The **Esplanade** (Theatres on the Bay, Singapore, a recently opened national performing arts centre) has accessibility problems. A ramp cuts across stairs so there is a danger of tripping/ falling and the floor surface is slippery when wet – avoidable problems with proper design attention and choice of surfaces.
“Follow up, follow up, follow up” – the advocacy mantra! Minute progress, confirm progress and latch on to opportunities (e.g. when a politician breaks a leg, etc.).
G

- GOLD: Growing Old and Living Dangerously (Brisbane City Council, Australia) :

• Curved **Ground Surface Indicators** (tactile flooring) doesn’t work!
• Health – “38% of Americans will get Cancer. This is more than one in three. At the turn of the last century it was 3%! By the end of this century it is expected to approach 100%!
Diabetes has risen 400% in the last 20 years. Alzheimers now hits 50% of people over the age of 70. And it is affecting people in their 50's and 60's.”
Source: http://www.health-doc.com/products/pHpaper.html

• Holistic solutions – solutions should be complete, always take an overview of every project.
• “Handicapped Toilet” = broken/ vandalised. Correct term is “accessible toilet/ washroom”.

• “Handicapped people” – try “persons with disability (puts “the person” first) but do not use the short form of “pwd” as this again becomes a label!
• **Handrail** – on both sides of stairs, with 300 horizontal lead-in.

Here’s an example of how not to do it - my blind friend does not know of the bottom step!
• **Inclusive Design** – probably the natural successor to Universal Design
  

  However, in Developing Economies it may be best to stay with “Universal Design” to avoid confusion when introducing basic concepts of “design for all”.

• **U.K. Institute of Inclusive Design (UKIID)**
  

• **Include 2003 Conference**, March 2003 :-
  
  [http://www.hhrc.rca.ac.uk/events/include2003/index.html](http://www.hhrc.rca.ac.uk/events/include2003/index.html)
• **Joseph Rowntree Foundation.** (And NO, this is not because they are also represented at this Workshop!). Pioneers in the U.K. of practical, adaptable, housing design and Lifetime Homes.  

• **Joint Mobility Unit** Access Partnership (JMU) – an arm of the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) – very modern and practical in approach.  
  [http://www.rnib.org.uk/jmu/welcome.htm](http://www.rnib.org.uk/jmu/welcome.htm)
Kiasu – an adjective pronounced “kee-a-soo” derived from the Hokkien dialect meaning “afraid to lose out to others” or “not to lose face”. This explains why in Asia it is good to have examples of what other countries have done and are doing (rather than a simple “this should/must be done” approach).
Level Thinking.
The alternative to “a step” is “no step”.
• **Lifts** – for accessible features see British Standard BS8300: 2001 – “Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people.”

Which button to press?
Miconic 10 – a lift control system where one enters one’s destination and is then directed to a particular lift car.


The manufacturers, Schindler, have incorporated good wheelchair user-friendly features. However, how friendly is this system to the vision impaired or those with cognitive impairment? (as the use is different to typical lifts and there are no lift floor buttons inside the lift cars!).
N

• **Network.** There is an amazing number of people ‘out there’ who know things you don’t and who want/need what you know!
• **Occupational Therapists.** They work at the front line of the interface between persons with disability and the built environment. A tremendous resource, ideal persons to oversee simulation exercises (seniors and/or disability).
• **Population** - “Notwithstanding how remarkable becoming 100 years is and how many we have now, if demographers' projections are anywhere near accurate, by the middle of the next century when many of our children and grandchildren will be living, there may be as many as 2.5 million centenarians! If that astounds you, say "wow," because that is an astounding prospect to ponder: Who will take care of them? Who will train their care givers?”

http://www.bcm.tmc.edu/hcoa/burns.html
• Principles of Universal Design (7) :-

http://www.design.ncsu.edu/cud/univ_design/princ_overview.htm
Quotation – George Burns, comedian (1986-1996)
"First you forget names, then you forget faces. Next you forget to pull your zipper up and finally, you forget to pull it down."

Picture from Houston Chronicle, page 1D, Jan. 18, 1996: "100 Facts about Centenarian George Burns" by Andy Edelstein of Newsday.
http://www.design.ncsu.edu/cud/
• **Ramps** can have multiple uses...
• “Special needs” – perhaps a more politically correct term is “complex needs”, where we all have more or less complex needs for particular activities at different times of our lives.
Shopmobility. A brilliant systematic approach to accessing U.K. towns and cities. Once achieved a scheme should never be considered expendable by a local authority.

National Federation of Shopmobility.

There are over 250 schemes in the U.K. used by about 200,000 people/year (over 1.5 million trips/year). If you live in the U.K. and your local town/city doesn't have a Shopmobility scheme - why not try to raise interest in creating one? A great student project/dissertation topic too! (not just the accessibility aspects, but the social/financial/economic aspects are also worthy of investigation).

http://www.justmobility.co.uk/shop/
Simulations. This is a part of some medical training. If done properly it can help persons without disability appreciate the problems and solutions for persons with disability. If done poorly it mocks disability. Some are opposed to all forms of simulation exercise. Personally, I have found this an effective tool if conducted over a suitable period and with adequate professional personnel. In Singapore there was a “day in a wheelchair” event that had 150 participants and good press/TV coverage. A key component of some UNESCAP and ATCOA (Asian Training Centre on Ageing, University of Chiang Mai, Thailand) courses.
An extended simulation exercise in progress :-}
• **Squat toilets** are dangerous, an elderly person’s foot can be caught and serious damage with a fall. Converting to a pedestal w.c. may also leave a plinth which may make it inaccessible by a wheelchair user.
Tourism. This is another “way in” to bring non-discriminatory built environments to the fore, as tourism is a major industry and many seniors and persons with disability in nearby countries may wish to travel if their wants and needs are accommodated (and the improved infrastructure will benefit the local population). The "Bali Declaration" of the rights of travellers with disabilities considered the input of about 250 delegates from, at least, 15 countries. The "Bali Declaration" was adopted and presented to the Indonesian Minister for Tourism and Culture in September 2000 and may eventually form the basis of a full United Nations Declaration/Resolution.

http://www.disabilityworld.org/10-12_00/news/bali.htm
Easy Access Australia - A Travel Guide to Australia, ISBN 0 646 25581 9
• **Thresholds** are very prevalent where floors are tiled and wet washed. Unfortunately, they can trip users and exclude wheelchair access. Scupper drains are a good design solution, as are gentle slopes towards the shower drain, etc.
Note the thresholds!
• **Tiled floors** are often wet washed and become slippery. The washroom tiles that are not stood on can be smooth (and easily cleaned) whereas other tiles can have a rougher surface texture for more grip.
• **Universal Design** – see entry for Ron Mace and for Principles of Universal Design at the North Carolina State University.

• **Universal Design Handbook.**
• UN ESCAP United Nations Economic and Social Commission for the Asia Pacific. An amazing group who have done so much to promote and encourage Universal Design in the built environment. The “Training of Trainers” course (2000, 2002, 2003) will make a huge impact in developing economies.
• “Visually impaired” = ugly! Correct term is “vision impaired”. Only a small percentage (about 4%) of the vision impaired are blind.

• 10 million blind or vision impaired in America of which about 1.3 million are “legally blind”, some very interesting statistics have been compiled by the American Foundation for the Blind :-

• **Wayfinding** – pictograms are very useful.

On the right is a confusing pictogram from the Hard Rock Café, Pattaya, Thailand.
“Water supply and sanitation access and use by physically disabled people”, WEDC literature review, September 2002, available at:

http://www.lboro.ac.uk/wedc/projects/auwsfpdp
• Web links :-

  www - DisabilityWorld's links page (about 5000)
  http://www.disabilityworld.com/links/links

  www – Ability :-
  http://www.ability.org.uk/i1.html
• X?????? – perhaps “x” can mean “no”! To avoid “no” in developing economies, try to use a “partners” approach (not “senior-junior” relationship). Also, in a Southeast Asian context, if something is growing from “bottom-up” get the details right at the outset (don’t rely on details being easy to change later – as the project grows them more are involved and a change may be seen as a mistake and there could be a loss of face issue!).
• **Yokohama** (Japan) – there is a building estate of showhomes where one can simulate being old and ‘test drive’ houses!
Z

• ZZZZZZZ
  ZZZZZZZZ
  ZZZZZZ

WAKE-UP!!!!! I’ve finished....
The End

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Dr. Kenneth J. Parker  FCIBSE  kjparker@mac.com