

ISABELA STIEGERT [1]

& YACY-ARA FRONER [2]

[1] Federal Institute of Education Science and Technology of Minas Gerais, Brazil |
isabelastiegert@gmail.com

[2] Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil | yacyarafroner@gmail.com

Accessibility risk management in Brazilian museums.

Abstract

Museums and cultural spaces must be democratically accessible throughout society, including people with disabilities and reduced mobility, who represent a large part of the world's population. In Brazil, accessibility in museums is still moving at a slower pace compared to the world, which occurs for several reasons, among them, the constant and growing cut of resources for investment in culture in the country. The Brazilian Institute of Museums (IBRAM) developed a risk management program in museums that was launched in 2013, and updated in 2021, which still does not address accessibility within risk management and fails to direct greater care to this public in risk management, which interferes with the safety of these people and the safety of museum spaces.

Keywords

Accessibility; Risk management; Inclusive museums; Disability; Reduced mobility.

Introduction

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), in its latest report *World on Disability*, more than a billion people around the world live with some form of disability, among which approximately 200 million live with more serious functional difficulties. Around the world, people with disabilities have worse health prospects, lower levels of education, lower economic participation in society and higher poverty rates than people without disabilities. Regardless of the differences between the world's territories, in part, these inequalities occur because people with disabilities face barriers in accessing services that are guaranteed to others, such as health, education, employment, transportation and information, whose gaps are exacerbated in poorer communities. The tendency for the coming years is that the concern with the subject will increase because the incidence of disability in populations has increased due to world ageing (and consequent increasing risk of disability in people of advanced age), and due to the global increase in chronic diseases, such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer, and mental disorders (World Health Organization, 2012; Cambiaghi, 2017).

Corroborating with the expectation of the WHO about world ageing, the United Nations (UN) agrees that the world's population is ageing in every country in the world and estimates that the number of elderly people, aged 60 or over, will double by 2050 and more than triple by 2100, from 962 million in 2017 to 2.1 billion in 2050 and 3.1 billion in 2100. Also, on a global scale, the number of people aged 80 or over is expected to triple by 2050, from 137 million in 2017 to 425 million in 2050. For the UN, world ageing is about to become one of the most significant social transformations of the 21st century, with implications for all sectors of society, such as the labour market, the demand for goods and services, social protection, and family structures and intergenerational ties (United Nations, 2022). In the Brazilian context, according to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), the result of the 2010 Census indicated 190,732,694 people for the Brazilian population on August 1st of the same

year, with an estimated 145,084,976 people do not have any of the disabilities questioned (hearing, mental/intellectual, motor, and visual).

During the UN General Assembly on December 14, 2020, in Geneva, it was declared that the period between 2021 and 2030 will be the Decade of Aging Healthy, and its Resolution of this assembly expressed concern that, despite the science of global aging, the world is not sufficiently prepared to respond to the rights and needs of elderly people. In addition, studies on the pandemic of the disease associated with the new Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2), the Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19), record that several functional impairments are caused in infected people and that they impair their ability to perform activities of daily living and functionality, alter their professional performance and make social interaction difficult. Although sequelae after recovery from COVID-19 are more representative in patients who developed the disease in a severe form, those who had it moderately (and without hospitalization) may also have some degree of functional impairment. Therefore, strategies are needed for the physical-functional recovery of these people and their social reintegration (Santana et al., 2021).

Another point we would like to highlight is that the concern for the quality of life of people with disabilities and reduced mobility, including the elderly, pregnant women, infants, obese people, and children, is included in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN 2030 Agenda. The UN General Assembly of September 2015 generated discussions that fed the 2030 Agenda, a document (and a commitment) of the signatory countries, of objectives that will stimulate actions to be carried out by nations by 2030 in favour of sustainable development (SD) by next 15 years in areas of critical importance for humanity and the planet. The 2030 Agenda was published on October 21, 2015, and consists of 17 SDGs. For each SDG, goals were set that guide actions in the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental. The 169 global goals indicate the paths to be followed and the measures to be adopted to promote the achievement of the SDGs. We understand

that the 17 SDGs work in a holistic and integrated way and that they are all part of and seek (directly and indirectly) social inclusion and universal accessibility.

1. Inclusion and accessibility in Brazilian museums

Cambiaghi (2017) highlights that inclusion and integration are different concepts, so integrating presupposes that PwD (Persons with Disabilities) and PRM (Persons with Reduced Mobility) need to adapt to situations already pre-established by a world of people without disabilities is a one-way street. Inclusion, on the other hand, concerns a change of perspective on the world, in which diversity is seen as a value and in which all people live in conditions of equality, thus, a two-way street. In exclusion, certain groups do not have any kind of access, and no solutions are offered to connect or between them, while in segregation, previously excluded groups are brought together independently of the social whole. When there is integration, these groups are included in the whole in a different and still isolated way. Finally, in inclusion, the excluded groups are diluted in the whole and begin to occupy the role of subject on an equal basis with the others.

As an extremely broad, complex, and diverse theme and reality, social inclusion needs to include economic, social, gender, sexual orientation, race, ancestry, language, territory of origin, religion, political or ideological convictions, education, and economic situation, among other humanitarian constraints. As in an extremely complex algorithm and related to the geographical, territorial, and cultural location of the being, the unique and personal combination of these questions in each individual places him in a place of greater or lesser acceptance and belonging in the world.

Corroborating this current scenario is the fact that the Brazilian Constitution provides that all are equal before the law, and the State must promote access to culture and the social and community integration of PwD and PRM and facilitate their access to collective goods and services, with the elimination of architectural obstacles and all

forms of discrimination (Constituição da República Federativa do Brasil, 1988 & rev. 2020). The Brazilian Inclusion Law (LBI) of July 2015 makes it clear that people with disabilities and/or reduced mobility have the right to culture, sport, tourism, and leisure on an equal basis with other people (Lei 13.146, 2015) and that their access to cultural goods, places of cultural importance and cultural activities must be in an accessible format.

Accessibility is a relatively recent topic in Western societies, which formally structured the topic only in the second half of the 20th century. In Brazil, we noticed that the theme began to be treated institutionally after the Brazilian Federal Constitution (from 1988) and the Federal Law number 10,098, of December 2000, which establishes general norms and criteria basic elements for promoting accessibility for PwD or PRM, and makes other provisions, regulated by Decree number 5296, of December 2004.

The Brazilian standards (NBRs) of the Brazilian Association of Technical Standards (ABNT) for the promotion of accessibility of built environments, especially ABNT NBR 9050, whose first version was published in 1985 (reformulated and published with updates in the years 1994, 2004, 2015 and 2020) and the Normative Instruction (NI) number 01/2003 of the National Historical and Artistic Heritage Institute (IPHAN, 2003), which provides for accessibility in immovable cultural assets safeguarded at the federal level complement the treatment of the subject at the federal level.

Museums, as cultural memory spaces, according to the Brazilian Institute of Museums (IBRAM), are regularly frequented by people with disabilities and reduced mobility. They visit cultural spaces through family groups (when a family member has a disability), school audiences, groups of companies or public bodies, spontaneous regular audiences, and specialized visitors, such as journalists, writers, and opinion makers (Escola Virtual. Gov., 2020).

For the promotion of accessibility and greater inclusion of these groups of people in museums, we have legislation and regulations in Brazil that are still very recent and face a lot of resistance from society, in general, to be put into practice. In addition, the

technical regulation on accessibility in Brazil has a deep level of detail, which in many situations makes it impossible to promote accessibility in spaces effectively.

Starting from the aspect of social assistance and extending it to the other spheres of sustainable development (environmental and economic), we are able to envision that providing accessibility in museums contributes to the sustainable permanence of these spaces in the urban territory. The lack of free access can also impact the environmental and economic spheres since it reduces local enjoyment, permanence, and varied consumption in these spaces, which may, in the future, make their permanence even more difficult.

In addition to social issues already mentioned so far, another sphere of exclusion happens recurrently in environments built in the past: the lack of universal accessibility and the difficulty of meeting this issue by guarded spaces. Aside from the immediate thought that they were clearly built without regulatory support for accessibility purposes, most of the theoretical basis that we use for the protection of these spaces was structured before to think about universal accessibility in Brazil and in the world.

Discussions on universal design, accessibility and social inclusion began on a global scale in the 1970s and in Brazil in the 1980s; that is, for thousands of years of built environments that we seek to preserve, there are less than fifty years of accessibility discussions and universal inclusion, which have not yet reached basic spaces for human dignity and the right to the city, who will say when it will fully serve cultural heritage spaces.

The inequality of social access in Brazilian museums is, in a way, a more subjective filter. After all, in many cases, the barriers are, in a certain way, form, subtle, and happen, for example, by the high cost of cultural consumption, by the profile of those who frequent them, by the location of the spaces themselves and by several other subjective aspects (or not) that, sometimes, put people in their proper places in the dynamics of the city's interests.

In addition, the lack of representativeness of the image of disability in museums and the negative stereotype that the condition has historically carried feed the lack of accessibility and the distance that exists between cultural spaces and people with disabilities and reduced mobility.

Digitally, we identified another problem, referring to the use of technologies by PwDs and PMRs, which are inferior in quantity and quality in relation to other citizens in museums. With the pandemic of the disease associated with the new Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2), the Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19), this distance from remote access by PwDs and PMRs to cultural spaces has increased negatively.

In addition, we immediately list one last problem, referring to the budget federal for culture. We are living in Brazil an expressive decrease of federal budget available for culture, which fell 46.8% between 2011 and 2021. According to the Siga Brasil platform, from the Federal Senate, in 2011, the defunct Ministry of Culture by the current federal government had an annual budget of 3.33 billion reais. In 2021 and 2022, the amount authorized by Law Annual Budget (LOA) was 1.77 billion reais, with only 4.3% of this amount being transferred to historical, artistic, and archaeological heritage.

The format of the federal budget currently does not allow for filtering by accessibility; that's why we filter the cultural budget, because it includes the budget of IPHAN, the institution that oversees the good at the federal level. Among the 4.3% of the amount passed on to historical, artistic, and archaeological heritage, 44.41% of this composition, that is, 19.1 million reais, comprises IPHAN's budget for the year 2022. Compared to budget cuts of 46.8% for Culture, IPHAN was even more affected, with a reduction of 56.6% in relation to the budget of 10 years ago.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a loss of budget execution in the culture sector, which can be understood by the impact that the sector suffered, such as the drop-in activities due to isolation and a possible political strategy of investing just

enough for spaces continue to function, as a strategy of the current government to reduce the role of the State in Culture.

2. Universal accessibility in risk management

Accessibility must be considered in all risk management of museums and takes into account whether the good and the place have minimum mobility conditions, whether in the exhibition area, administrative, staff or collection.

IBRAM assumes risk is the probability of something happening, causing different negative effects. Risk in museums is the chance of something happening, causing damage and loss of value to museum collections through the action of one or more risk agents. These are linked to factors related to the building, the territory (geographical and/or climatic characteristics) and to sociocultural, political, and economic factors of a certain region. The risk agents that threaten Brazilian museums, according to IBRAM (Santos, 2021), are physical forces, theft, vandalism, fire, water, pests, pollutants, light and ultraviolet (UV) and infrared (IR) radiation, incorrect temperature, incorrect humidity, and dissociation.

The Brazilian Institute of Museums, as manager of the National Policy on Museums, formally introduced the risk management method aimed at museum heritage in 2013, with the launch of the Risk Management Program for Brazilian Museum Heritage. Brazilian legislation points out important competences for museums in relation to the preservation and security of our museological heritage, dividing them between IBRAM sponsoring institutions, museums, technical teams, and the public.

The conceptual structure of the Program is based on the risk management process described by the technical standard ABNT NBR ISO 31000:2009 (Risk Management - Principles and Guidelines) revised in 2018; the Australian and New Zealand Technical Standard for Risk Management (AS/NZ4360:2004) and tools jointly developed by the

Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI), the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) and by the Dutch Cultural Heritage Agency (Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed - RCE).

The IBRAM Program (Santos, 2021) is divided into 04 (four) axes, which group themes that organize its execution, encompassing the entire risk management cycle (identify, detect, block, respond and recover) and the two fronts of action proposed by legislation current museology: preventive actions and emergency actions in museums, namely:

Axis I - Governance and articulation;

Axis II - Planning and risk prevention;

Axis III - Risk monitoring and control;

Axis IV - Responses and emergencies.

Axis I brings together the guidelines, strategies and actions for the integrated implementation of the Brazilian Museum Heritage Risk Management Program in its dialogue with all areas of IBRAM (headquarters, museums and representations), with the museological field (Brazilian museums, systems and networks of museums and professionals, teaching centres, platforms, national and international councils and committees), public safety institutions and other institutions related to museums. Axis II brings together strategies and actions regarding guidelines for planning and preventing risks to museum assets.

Axis III brings together strategies and actions for monitoring risks to museum assets, with a view to improving the efficiency and sustainability of risk control and treatment, and axis IV brings together strategies and actions for responses to emergency situations in Brazilian museums, considering the containment of loss of value of musealized assets and damage recovery.

Despite the evolution of the program, it still does not address accessibility within risk management, as provided for in the Brazilian Inclusion Law (LBI), which provides for the need for accessible escape routes and emergency exits, in its 4th paragraph, addresses more specifically, issues related to risk and emergency situations in public cultural environments. Considering that they are responsible for their visitors, museums must be able to carry out evacuation procedures for people with disabilities in an emergency situation.

Accessibility and risk management meet in two main moments. The first of them concerns the risks that may be inherent in activities in an accessible format within museums (or the absence of them in this format), and the second is about the evacuation of buildings taking into account people with disabilities and reduced mobility. For example, activities that explore senses other than vision may not pose risks if done with mediators and in safe space conditions.

In building evacuations, for example, people with disabilities or reduced mobility cannot be left behind and must follow the escape route. The Elevator, as a rule, when there is a fire alarm, automatically goes to the ground floor and is disabled. A person with a disability or with some type of limitation should never be left alone, unless it is their will and they have complete autonomy for their evacuation, without needing help from another person. Finally, it is essential that the Emergency Evacuation Plan for People with Disabilities is perfectly integrated with the Museums' Emergency Plans and the Museological Plan.

Final considerations

In addition to normative and legal compliance, the inclusion of accessibility in risk management in museums is shown to be a way to strengthen the importance of the theme among the agents of power within the institutions and to strengthen the enjoyment of the museum as a social right for all.

Stiegert, I., & Froner, Y. A. (2023). Accessibility risk management in Brazilian museums. In P. M. Homem (Ed.), *Integrated risk management in museums. Past lessons, future ways* (pp. 23-36). Porto: FLUP. <https://doi.org/10.21747/978-989-9082-15-1/inta2>

In Brazil, the Museum Heritage Risk Management Program represents a new paradigm with regard to preservation actions in the cultural sector, as it articulates different technical and planning perspectives, demonstrating its efficiency for managers and institutions that incorporate the widespread strategies by him. However, since its launch in 2013 and its update in 2021 by IBRAM, accessibility has not been included in risk management.

This scenario proves to be wrong in relation to international recommendations and Brazilian legislation, which demonstrates a gap that needs to be filled for the safety of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in museums and for risk management that contemplates these audiences. into a more inclusive museum.

References

Cambiaghi, S. (2017). *Desenho universal: Métodos e técnicas para arquitetos urbanistas*. Editora Senac.

Constituição da República Federativa do Brasil. (1988 & rev. 2020).

http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/constituicao/constituicao.htm

Escola Virtual. Gov. (2020). *Acessibilidade em museus* [Online course, January 18-22, 2020_ Lecture notes]. IBRAM. Retrieved March 12, 2022, from

<https://www.escolavirtual.gov.br/curso/268>

Lei 13.146 (2015, 06/07). *Institui a lei brasileira de inclusão da pessoa com deficiência (Estatuto da pessoa com deficiência)*. [http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2015-](http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2015-2018/2015/lei/l13146.htm)

[2018/2015/lei/l13146.htm](http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2015-2018/2015/lei/l13146.htm)

Santana, A. V., Fontana, A. D., & Pitta, F. (2021). Pulmonary rehabilitation after COVID-19. *Jornal Brasileiro de Pneumologia*, 47(1), e20210034. doi:10.36416/1806-3756/e20210034.

Stiegert, I., & Froner, Y. A. (2023). Accessibility risk management in Brazilian museums. In P. M. Homem (Ed.), *Integrated risk management in museums. Past lessons, future ways* (pp. 23-36). Porto: FLUP. <https://doi.org/10.21747/978-989-9082-15-1/inta2>

Santos, T. V. (2021). *Programa de gestão de riscos ao patrimônio musealizado brasileiro. Diretrizes gerais, objetivos, eixos e linhas de atuação*. IBRAM.

United Nations. (2022). *Ageing*. Retrieved March 12, 2022, from <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/ageing>

World Health Organization. (2012). *Relatório mundial sobre a deficiência* (Lexicus Serviços Lingüísticos, Trans.). Governo do Estado de S. Paulo (Original work, World report on disability, published 2011). https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/44575/9788564047020_eng.pdf?sequence=4

Notes on the authors

Isabela Stiegert is an Architect and Urbanist with a PhD in sustainable Cultural Heritage and research interest mainly in the following topics: Universal accessibility, social inclusion, computational tools related to teaching and architectural design, planning, management and sustainable maintenance of public works and spaces. Currently, she works with physical accessibility in educational spaces of the Federal Institute of Education Science and Technology of Minas Gerais, in Brazil.

Yacy-Ara Froner graduated in History from the Federal University of Ouro Preto (1988), holds a master's in Social History from the University of São Paulo (1994) and a PhD in Economic History, with emphasis on cultural heritage from the University of São Paulo (2001). She is a specialist in restoration by the Centro de Conservação e Restauração-CECOR (1992) and in the conservation of collections by the Getty Conservation Institute-GCI (1995). She is also a specialist in Baroque Art and Culture by the IAC-UFOP (1992). Currently, she is a professor at the School of Fine Arts at UFMG, working with undergraduate courses in Visual Arts and Conservation-Restoration. Permanent professor of the Graduate Program in Arts at the School of Fine Arts of UFMG and of the Graduate Program in Built Environment and Sustainable Heritage at the Faculty of Architecture of UFMG, having served as coordinator between 2018 and 2020. She is a consultant and researcher in the areas of History of Art, History of Collections and Preventive Conservation, a researcher at LACICOR (Laboratory of Conservation Sciences), and she coordinates the ArCHE research group (Environments - Art, Conservation and History). Between 2015 and 2016, she was a senior postdoctoral fellow with research at ICCROM.