Games, Events and Accessibility

Abhishek Ray DRDF Mumbai,India (Presenter); Jani Nayar SATH, New York, USA

Accessibility of a place can gain a lot of traction from events such as the Olympics, World Cup tournaments for different sporting modalities, mega music shows such as Rock in Rio, or religious events as the World Youth Day.

The countries, cities and municipalities that host these event have made available a large amount of funds to prepare for these events mainly to welcome the high number of visitors and participants. Brazil's budget for the World Cup is $13.3 billion and $18 billion for the Olympics in the hope of getting over 500,000 visitors. In order to accommodate around 100,000 people Rio will undertake a transformation over the forthcoming years.

The host cities lose out on a lot of visitors due to lack of information.

Through the pedagogy of awareness and training in benchmarking which is on international quality level, this project deploys a team of experts comprised of people with disabilities in each local community.

Methodology: Audits will be done by experts which would set the benchmark for accessibility. Thus problems can be identified and last minute corrections done to solve minor/certain major problems.

This process will result in a Participatory Online Platform which is an internationally standardised Tourism for All website considering tangible and intangible results and meet needs across all disabilities.. This will result in a comprehensive guide about travel, stay and tourism, ratings/viewpoints of the experts, public and other stakeholders, best practice model for accessible websites which can be replicated worldwide.

Initial work using a standard tool for future audits will be done by experts who will train a local team. This will mushroom into a bigger arena, post event when this team will be left to themselves to elaborate and use the technology.

Since this is people driven, everyone gains from this web site which will also be used by general tourists, pregnant ladies and the elderly Scale of the program starts disability based but will scale up to general population.

The work would be done with the participation of various stakeholders such as experts, owners, users. Being accessible across the disability sector, this would be a pioneer program which will provide information about accessible tourism on a virtual space, sharing of viewpoints, pictures and videos across stakeholders.

Universal application program for accessibility includes intra/inter city transport, accommodation etc. Participation along with PwDs, balloons into a larger community benefit through this. Use of technology and social networking with this people centric Project requires less capital investment.

Info will flow into mainstream such as Lonely Planet, Trip Advisor etc. Ease of Access is another important factor. Info will be available on tablets, smart phones, and other handheld devices. Problems PwDs faces and good practices can be added easily with access to this technology. Organic process under monitoring will make it grow into the community at large and build the platform and operate it which will be then transferred to the people.