

Accessibility standards for health facilities in low and middle-income settings



Location and scale

Worldwide; focus on low and middle-income settings

Type of disability

All people with disabilities

Actors involved

- Sightsavers (headquarters and regional offices)
- Organizations of people with disabilities (OPDs) in Mozambique, Bangladesh, Malawi and Pakistan
- Nampula Central Hospital, Mozambique
- Health and social welfare government institutions, Mozambique

1. Description

The Sightsavers' Accessibility Standards and Audit pack aims to improve hospitals and clinics to ensure that people with disabilities access the services they need. This toolkit can be used to:

- Assess the accessibility of existing infrastructure and make recommendations for improvement.
- Develop or revise national accessibility standards.
- Guide the development of new health infrastructure, ensuring accessibility is embedded throughout from the design phase.

The Accessibility Standards and Audit pack includes:

1. Accessibility guidelines
2. Accessibility audit checklist
3. Training materials
4. Bespoke tape measure

5. Accessibility audit report, scoring and costing templates

The accessibility standards include 12 infrastructure components with their standards and pictures/diagrams. For instance: Minimum width of doors and ramps.

This toolkit is aimed at governments, healthcare providers and development organisations. It is recommended that audit teams include people with disabilities and their representative organisations.

2. Origin

- According to Article 9 of the UN CRPD, equal access to the physical environment, transportation and communications is critical for people with disabilities.
- Physical and communication barriers can prevent people with disabilities from accessing the services they need.
- Governments, health service providers and OPDs often lack the necessary tools and knowledge to address accessibility barriers in health facilities.
- Based on international standards and universal design principles, Sightsavers launched this toolkit in 2018 in collaboration with OPDs and governments.

3. Impact

- Training of more than 200 members of OPDs, governments and the private sector.
- Accessibility audits in 50 hospitals in eight countries in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.
- Accessibility renovations in 16 health facilities by September 2021.
- Over 1000 downloads of the online toolkit.

4. Impact statement

"...Our hope is that the toolkit will enable the development community – from small community-based organisations to large multilateral donors – to incorporate accessibility into their work, and promote equitable access to healthcare for people with disabilities around the world"

Andrea Pregel, Global Technical Lead for Inclusive Health, Sightsavers

5. Critical success factors

- Participatory process involving people with disabilities and health service providers.

- Resource available free of charge online and in accessible formats.

6. Lessons learned

- The toolkit is an effective instrument for assessing the accessibility of health facilities.
- Adaptation was required to address also the wider built environment.
- Free online training on the accessibility auditing methodology will be explored.
- Common barriers include inaccessible counters, lack of accessible toilets, steep ramps, poor colour contrast, and lack of information materials in accessible formats.

Sources and links

- Pregel, A., Smith, K. and Bridger, K. (2019). Accessibility standards and audit pack. Haywards Heath: Sightsavers (website [link](#))
- Introduction to Sightsavers' accessibility standards and audit pack - YouTube ([link](#))
- People with disabilities in Mozambique tell us their top tips for making health services accessible - YouTube ([link](#))
- Sightsavers wins Zero Project award for accessibility audit pack ([link](#))