

Editorial

To participate as a guest editor for this special issue dedicated to the theme of “Inclusive Cartography”, has been a major opportunity to gather several different authors who have been working for more than a decade in the area of visual disability fundamentally. The results of this in various of the experiences described and included, enable all those who can use their sense of touch, with or without disability, to be benefited.

The policies for inclusion that have been established in several countries of Latin America have made it possible to take an important step towards vulnerable groups, at risk socially and particularly those with disability, being able to gain access to a more inclusive school and university education, where the teaching methods based on the research and production of specially adapted learning material such as maps, have lead to the transfer of geographic knowledge by means of creating and using multisensory cartography.

With considerable care and dedication, each of the authors who present their research and experiences in this issue of the *Cartographic Journal* show us different approaches and results applied to children and young people who have visual disability in various countries.

Experiences such as those described by authors from Hungary, who present some cartographic products created for persons with visual disability and, in another sphere, promote research projects that seek solutions for themselves, based on international activities, are efforts that contribute to the development of inclusive cartography.

The articles presented in this special issue by brazilian authors shows how one can make progress in research on the creation of tactile symbols for maps made with 3D printers. In this work, the participation of blind persons was fundamental and the results were useful for the spatial information provided, through tactile symbols in large scale cartographic portrayals, in order to facilitate mobility within buildings for visually disabled persons.

The other work experienced and shown by brazilian authors is about the creation and assessment of thematic tactile maps using pictorial symbology, used on the basis of Universal design for Learning (UDL). Maps were modeled in 3D software, then making the perception tests through students with and without visual disability. In accordance with the progress obtained in the use of pictorial symbols printed in 3D, the creation of maps with universal design could be researched.

Researchers from Chile have wanted to make known their experiences in researched performed since the year 1994, which have had an effect in Latin America. Their alliance with Argentina, Brazil and Peru has enabled progress to be made and

to contribute in the area of tactile cartography and multisensory teaching with Universal Design.

The research into how to adapt a map, and, ultimately, how the symbols that it contains in its linear, area and point dimensions, has been one of the major challenges for the construction of tactile cartography. At the Tactile Cartography Centre of the Metropolitan Technological University, work has continued on the creation of inclusive cartography, in various themes, to be used by visually disabled persons, with the purpose of making more about geographic space - both near and far - known and in a better way. The continuing creation of cartographic symbols together with the use of Braille for each map, has been an opportunity for the research teams to recently propose a study about the standardization of how tactile cartography is built and of symbol design.

For some time in Chile, work has been undertaken on the issue of accessibility during leisure periods, which has led to tourism activity being one of the areas preferred, so that visually disabled persons can have available surroundings with an accessible infrastructure under universal design, with the installation of a suitable tactile cartography for continuing in their trip.

Other Chilean authors, from the design perspective, have been concerned with studying geographic space for visually disabled persons, concentrating on the landscape and how humans live without light, with the aid of suitable technical images that facilitate their enjoyment.

Each one of the articles of this special issue will enable the reader to enjoy the new studies and research which make it possible for persons who do not have the capability of seeing, to gain access to spatial information in an easier, more game-like and more entertaining way, such that they may get to know the various geographic zones of their planet and of their immediate environment by means of touch and multimedia.

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Guest Editor