



**visits4u case studies:**  
**Wheelchair Accessible Tuk-tuk**  
**Phnom Penh, Cambodia**

## Wheelchair accessible tuk-tuk

### Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Title: The world's first accessible tuk-tuk in Phnom Penh, Cambodia



### Description

Phnom Penh is a capital in Cambodia where the world's first wheelchair accessible tuk- tuk was created. It is an access project that opened Cambodia to wheelchair travellers by breaking down the accessible transportation barrier.

## Becoming inclusive:

### 1. Description

Transportation options for people with disabilities in the capital was limited when Megan Smith arrived to Cambodia to work. While she was researching and speaking with locals, she found out that transportation was a huge problem for people with disabilities through the country.

When she wanted to use a vehicle to get somewhere, the tuk tuk drivers had to lift her and her wheelchair onto vehicle and she used a power wheelchair which made the lifting process even more complicated.

Inaccessible transportation affected various aspects of her life in Cambodia. Tuk tuk drivers refused to take her so she would need time to dismantle her wheelchair and that meant she would frequently arrive late to the destination or not go at all. Once when she laid up with the flu, she founded that it is faster to roll 2 kilometre walk to the clinic in wheelchair than to go through the process of trying to find a tuk tuk willing to take here. And it was twice or more expensive to drive by tuk tuk in wheelchair, because drivers charged exorbitant prices if they need to help to get in tuk tuk.

With these barriers in her mind she started to talk and discuss with other people and the idea about a Tuk tuk with a ramp was born.

### 2. Description of steps taken, changes and progress

She stayed at House Boutique, a hotel with disability accessible bedroom, where she met Ian Jones, the executive director of Agile Development and one of the hotel's co-owners. He had already been thinking about the lack of wheelchair-accessible tuk tuks ever since he and his business partners had begun the design of the hotel in 2014. Having a purpose-built, accessible room couldn't solve the problems for his guests once they went out into the streets.

"I couldn't figure out for the life of me why there were no tuk tuks that could take a wheelchair, you know?" he said. "A tuk tuk is just a box on

wheels so all it would need is a slight redesign. When Megan checked in he was just like ‘ok, we should really do something.’”

Jones gathered some friends, including some consultants for Engineers Without Borders, for a design session at the hotel. By the bar, they laid out the plans. The EWB consultants drew up a formal design, and the group found local tuk tuk driver Mao Vanny happy to retrofit his existing tuk tuk.

They took the drawings down to a fabricator in a tiny storefront on street 271. He installed a steel ramp that pulls down to allow a wheelchair to roll in and a harness to clip in a chair. And accessible tuk tuk or how they have called Mobiltuk was created.



### 3. Main stakeholders / actors

The main stakeholder in the creation of the accessible tuk tuk was Megan Smith, a woman who came to Phnom Penh, in Cambodia, for some months, to work as a volunteer with UNICEF’s Local Governance for Child Right program; there she worked with the UNICEF team to support the inclusion of persons with disabilities within all aspects of Cambodian society.

The House Boutique Hotel owners who were opened to idea of accessible tuk tuk and invested in the reation of accessible tuk tuk.

The Tuk tuk driver who adjusted his vehicle.

## Results and Impact

Phnom Penh becomes more accessible and friendly for people with disabilities. Mobiltuk made possible to explore this magnificent Cambodian city which has previously been off-limits to wheelchair users. Now thanks to the motorcycle-drawn carriage and its skilled driver Vanny it is possible to get know Cambodian culture, tours to many of the popular sights in and around the capital city.

The accessible tuk tuk helps local inhabitants with disabilities to get to their destinations it's not only for tourists but it helps to all society.

## Lessons learnt

It is necessary to talk about accessible problems and involve people with disabilities to get their opinion how to solve the problems. Often solutions are not expensive, but if it is possible to find solution it's helps to many people.

## Further information

If you are considering a trip to Southeast Asia, add Phnom Penh to your list. You can book the Mobilituk by calling +855 (0) 87 78 2200, or by reaching out to the House Boutique Hotel.



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