



**visits4u Case Studies:**

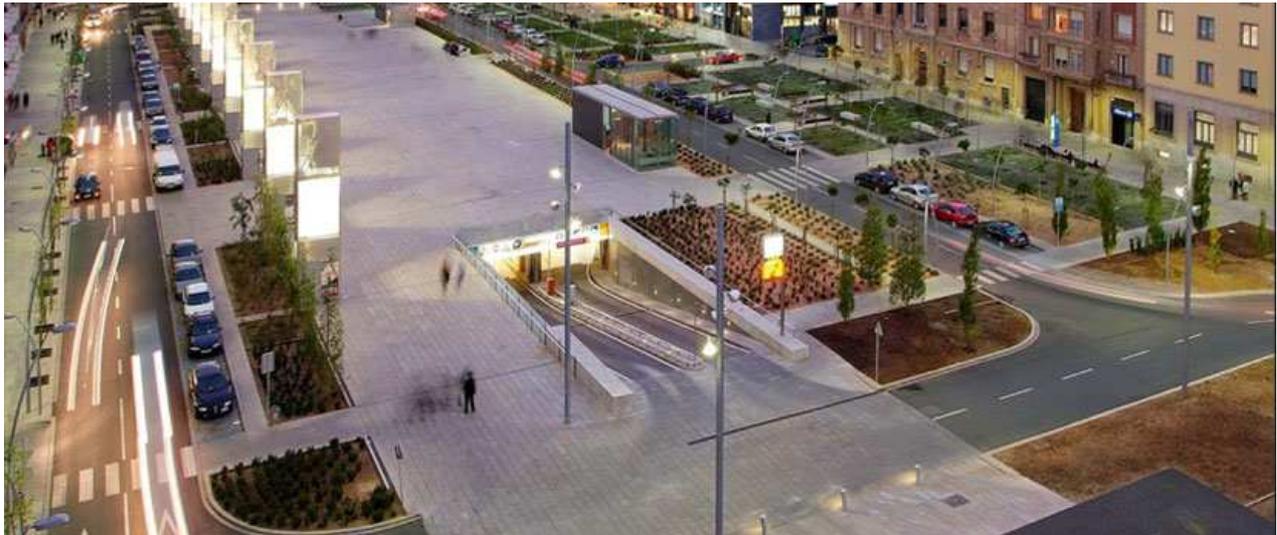
**Amersam**

**Reus, Spain**

## Amersam

### Reus, Spain

**Title: Accessibility in public transport and car parks: welcoming disabled users and staff**



### Description

AMERSAM (Aparcaments i Mercats de Reus SAM) is a non-for-profit organisation that belongs to the municipal group of companies and enterprises created with the aim of facilitating more efficient public services. AMERSAM incorporates social values which aim to account for the efficiency in business management though social commitment and labour integration of people in risk of social exclusion, and promoting the occupation of people with disabilities. Its scope of action is:

- Management and operation of public car parks.
- Management and administration of municipal markets.
- Management and administration of public transport (buses).

Since its creation in 1989, AMERSAM has experienced significant growth, both from the economic point of view and the creation of new job positions (it is also to highlight that an 80% of them are occupied by people with disabilities).

## Becoming inclusive

### 1. Description

AMERSAM, as a public company, has been fighting for the adaptation and accessibility of all their public services since its creation. The management and operation of all public car parks and transport has had as a main goal the complete adaptation of their services to all customers and staff, creating adapted and accessible workplaces and facilities and offering efficient services for all.

When it comes to transport services, 'Reus Transport' provides a punctual, efficient, comfortable and reliable municipal public transport available to Reus citizens. Working collaboratively with the City Council, they continue working to maintain and improve this service and to make it a fundamental tool/facility for mobility in the city of Reus. Their commitment to public transport has given more than positive results: their good performance in the field, the large number of users who take the bus on a daily basis to move around the city and the continuous formation and training of their staff are good examples of this constant improvement of the service for both clients and staff. Besides, in the equipment of new buses, it is necessary to emphasize the air conditioning, the hydraulic inclination system that allows vehicles arriving at a bus stop to incline to a side until the platform is at the ground level or the fact that the floor of the vehicle has no unevenness's, among other characteristics, makes the service totally accessible.

As for the car parks, they are a great example of the combination of accessibility, sustainability and efficiency. All car parks, accesses, offices and workplaces have been 100% adapted according to European accessibility standards and the significant inversions made have translated into an increase of the number of users and better and more efficient provision of services (according to the users and staff satisfaction but also to economic figures).

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

Many steps and initiatives have been taken in the field of accessibility and adaptation of tall services and facilities for disabled people or people with reduced mobility:

In all offices:

- Adapted accesses and entries
- Adapted toilets
- Adapted lifts: wider and adapted buttons for people with reduced mobility and visual impairments
- Adaptations in the lighting systems: use of LEDs, natural sun light in the offices (wide windows and natural light is very important for people with visual impairments and difficulties)
- Computer monitors have been changed for larger ones, all screens are now double the size and low intensity.
- Adapted furniture: adjustable and accessible.
- Architectonic barriers: all unevenness have been eliminated and ramps have been installed.

Vehicles:

- 100% of bus drivers are disabled.
- All buses are adapted and accessible.
- Automatic ramps and a hydraulic inclination system has been installed in all buses.
- Removing of some seats to create more space for people with reduced mobility.
- Driver's seats are also adapted.
- In the buses car parks: all shared zones and spaces where the buses are adapted and accessible.



### Car parks:

- The nine public car parks in Reus have been designed following the accessibility standards both in staff workplaces and costumers facilities.
- Adaptation of the lightning system: adapted to people with photosensitivity.
- Adapted lifts: wider and adapted buttons for people with reduced mobility and visual impairments
- Architectonic barriers: all unevenness have been eliminated and ramps have been installed.
- Adapted accesses and entries.



### **3. Main stakeholders**

AMERSAM has collaborated closely for many years with the non-for-profit organisation Federació Mestral - COCEMFE TARRAGONA. It is a federation of different associations that work to improve life quality of people with disabilities (mental or physical) in the province of Tarragona, Spain. This federation was created with the aim of achieving the highest degree of personal autonomy of this group of people and normalising their relationship with social life and labour market. This entity belongs to Cocemfe Catalunya, larger organisation fighting for the rights of people with functional diversity, which has participated in several international project, such as the Erasmus+ programme. Their experts were involved in many phases of the adaptations of the services provided by AMERSAM, any many of the workers that have some kind of disability belong as well to Mestra Cocemfe.

**Taller Baix Camp:** The Association Taller Baix Camp is a non-profit organization declared of public utility with its headquarters in Reus that works and fights for all adults with physical or intellectual disabilities

and their families. Their main goal is to offer the necessary support to these groups of people to improve their quality of life. All means at their disposal are used to seek and manage quality services that meet their needs and demands aiming to achieve the maximum social, labour and personal integration of people with disabilities in society. AMERSAM collaborates with them in many ways, but the main one is through training and through labour integration.

*Advisors, supervisors and audits:* as a public entity, all the process are supervised by experts and advisors from the city council's department of social integration and accessibility. The development of all activities and actions guarantees the provision of a quality service, as well as the establishment of information and control mechanisms that allow the monitoring of the service.

*Staff:* AMERSAM carries out training and communication activities aimed at promoting the awareness among civil servants with direct treatment of PMR in the area of disability. Moreover, as it has been mentioned, an 80% of their total staff counts with some degree of disability.

Other town halls from Catalonia have shown their interest in AMERSAM services and have visited their facilities. They are interested in implementing some of the measures and adaptations in their own public car parks.

#### **4. Costs of the changes**

All costs have been assumed by AMERSAM and no public grants or fundings have been used. AMERSAM's policy is to create long term benefits and profit from all inversions and adaptations.

For AMERSAM, the reinvestment factor is crucial in all this adaptation process: all profit has to be reinverted in growth and improvements of the services and never directly for the company's self-profit. For years, this has proved to be the most efficient and direct way to keep the services in constant and continuous improvement.

## Results and Impact

Surveys, questionnaires and other feedback channels have been used in the evaluation of all new adaptations and changes. Both staff and users claim to be happier after every adaptation in the field of accessibility. Figures and number support such opinions and perspectives, as over 2.5 million people use AMERSAM car parks annually and around 2 million, public transport services. Among these users, there is an approximate 15% of people with reduced mobility or disability.

AMERSAM plans to continue introducing changed and adaptations to their services, always seeking for accessibility, sustainability and efficiency at the same time.

## Lessons learnt

The 3 key factors that have guaranteed the success of such changes have been:

- 1) **Listening to the costumers:** as mentioned before, the evaluation process has been crucial in the constant and continuous improvement of all services and facilities. Through questionnaires, surveys and a suggestion mail and mailbox available in all points of contact with the users, opinions and suggestions have been gathered, analysed and sympathised into proposal for future improvement.
- 2) **Raising awareness:** AMERSAM believes that public administration needs to be more aware that all public services have to be 100% adapted and accessible, this is way they have been developing a training and information campaign among civil workers and people working close to them.
- 3) **Accessibility, efficiency and sustainability:** a key factor has also been the implementation of measures that are accessible, efficient and sustainable at the same time. This fact, guarantees that money

and efforts invested will generate long-term profit which will be reinvested in the improvement of the service itself. Some examples are:

- Adjusting light intensity through movement sensors.
- Using electric vehicles or vehicles that use low-carbon and low-polluting fuel.
- Humidity sensors in plants watering systems, which are highly sustainable in terms of energy and water saving.
- Installing more smart cameras.

One of the greatest challenges faced is the fact that all this structural and system changes and adaptations have a very high cost. AMERSAM has invested a lot of money believing that this will (and already is) bring long-term improvements and benefits to the whole service. However, they have detected a strong need of public funding on this field to promote and boost the improvement of accessibility in public services.

### Further information

- NGO's website: [www.amersam.cat](http://www.amersam.cat)
- Reus Townhall website: [www.reus.cat](http://www.reus.cat)
- Collaborator's NGO: <http://mestralonline.org>
- Reus public transport website: [www.reustransport.cat](http://www.reustransport.cat)
- Taller Baix Camp: [www.tallerbaixcamp.org](http://www.tallerbaixcamp.org)



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