



## The Friendship Park Montevideo

A BARRIER-FREE PLACE  
TO PLAY AND LEARN

### Summary

The Friendship Park (Parque de la Amistad) is the first ever inclusive park in the city of Montevideo and in Uruguay with universal accessibility, geared towards the recreation of children, young people and adults.

Recreational and educational schemes are used to foster aspects of socialisation, inclusion and learning, which stimulate curiosity, empathy, imagination and creativity. It's an open space, where people with and without disabilities can play, meet up and enjoy themselves in a friendly and safe environment. The games are adapted to the functional diversity of visitors in order to maximise independence.

The park currently has a plaza space and a technological space, featuring motor coordination games (twisting,

balancing, climbing, jumping), sensory games (touch, hearing, smell and sight) and cooperative games that stimulate the collective experience. The proposals include hammocks, slides, mazes, carousel, waterfall, children's corner, board games, amphitheatre, photo gallery, relief murals, exercise station, etc. The technological space boasts computers, tablets, audio description programs, and technology-enabled body games, among others.

What's more, educational, recreational and cultural activities are programmed around the idea of barrier-free play and learning, while training activities are carried out to raise awareness on issues such as accessibility, disability, inclusion and the use of ICT for people with disabilities.

**City:** Montevideo  
**Country:** Uruguay  
**Inhabitants:** 1.319.108

**Topics:** Social inclusion, People with disabilities, Living together, Children rights, Values education, Socio-cultural awakening, Urban quality

**Principles of the Charter of Educating Cities:** 1, 2, 4, 8, 20, 11, 16, 17, 10.

The Friendship Park was launched by the Department of Accessibility for Inclusion of the City Council of Montevideo.

## Goals

- ▶ To stimulate the change in social thinking towards diversity based on social plurality, diverse identities and collective challenges in order to foster this process.
- ▶ To create an intergenerational meeting point for the sharing of meaningful experiences, as well as opportunities for playing and learning.
- ▶ To lay on training activities for the general public and professionals in the socio-educational field.
- ▶ To encourage participation through volunteer-based activities, aimed at promoting social awareness processes based around inclusive play.
- ▶ To mentor family members, teachers and professionals, providing them with strategies, games and educational resources for their homes, educational communities or other types of institutions.



## Context

Montevideo is the capital city of Uruguay, with 1,319,108 inhabitants according to the latest national census from 2011. Its cultural diversity and history have created an ethnic, social and cultural mixing pot.

The Friendship Park is located in a densely populated neighbourhood, with a predominantly medium and medium-high socioeconomic level. The Park is open to all citizens. Fundamentally, it's a meeting point for children and young people from schools, communities, social centres and sporting institutions. The experience is aimed at people of all ages, backgrounds and conditions.



# Methodology

The Park is open to all audiences and the facilities can be used at the established times. The programme also includes organised educational visits aimed at groups and schools in which a team of educators receives the groups and guides them through the various educational activities.

The cultural and recreational activities that are carried out mainly at the weekend and on holidays, and which are open to the general public, include shows, workshops, games and talks.

What's more, there are training sessions related to accessibility, disability and inclusion, which are aimed at professionals, family members and the general public, addressing topics such as recreation, motivation and awareness-raising.

The Park is also partly run by volunteers, with activities being coordinated with the Volunteering

Unit of the City Council of Montevideo.

At the Reference Centre for Inclusion Technologies, located inside the Park, activities are held to introduce the use of ICT to people with disabilities and their families, while also allowing all people involved to play.

The activities of the Park are organised into various themed areas:

- ▶ - Movement: games with fabrics, hammocks, ramps, slides, balloons, etc. These are fun activities to explore different forms of communication.
- ▶ Interaction with the environment: touching the water of the waterfall, playing with soap bubbles or exploring the garden.
- ▶ Perception: the senses are tested through musical and

auditory perception activities, tactile exploration games, experiences about sight, taste and smell.

- ▶ Creation: board games, jigsaws and even musical instruments. There are also art, drawing and story-writing activities.

A special administrative unit has been formed for the Parque de la Amistad, under the auspices of the Department of Accessibility for Inclusion.

A Technical Advisory Board has also been created, made up of representatives from each department of the Social Policy Division, the Gender Equality Advisory Division and other divisions.

What's more, there's a Participation Council composed of citizens and a Children's Council.



## ★ Evaluation

Between 2015 and 2017, the Park welcomed around 50,000 people on institutional visits, as well as many more people on an individual level. During this period, more than 1,000 institutions visited the Park, while 120 inclusion-related activities and 40 arts and recreational events were held at weekends. What's more, over 200 people were trained here in motivating and fostering inclusion.

### Strengths:

- ▶ The Friendship Park is the first and only park in Uruguay designed under the concept of universal accessibility.
- ▶ Its infrastructure and its recreational, sporting, learning and engagement activities are designed with the idea of removing barriers for children and their families.



## ➔ Future proposals

- ▶ Extension works slated for 2020 include an increase in the total area and activities on offer.
- ▶ They will include a rollerblading rink, basketball court, aerial acrobatics area and skateboarding park.
- ▶ An official boccia court will be installed, as this is an increasingly popular paralympic sport in Uruguay. Boccia is a bowls-like game which since 1970 has been adapted for wheelchair users with cerebral palsy and motor disability.

- ▶ What's more, there will be a multi-purpose indoor pavilion, designed for children and families on rainy days and for training activities.

This extension, in addition to incorporating educational and recreational elements linked to the environment, inclusion and accessibility, will enhance the space in general as another green lung of Montevideo.



## Contact



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