Design for HABITAT
HOMES FOR GREATER MIAMI

SEMINAR 3: ACCESSIBILITY DESIGN IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING

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What is Universal Design:

-Universal Design: *http://www.universaldesign.com/*

Refers to broad-spectrum ideas meant to produce buildings, products and environments that are inherently accessible to older people, people without disabilities and people with disabilities.
The term "universal design" was coined by the architect Ronald L. Mace to describe the concept of designing all products and the built environment to be aesthetic and usable to the greatest extent possible by everyone, regardless of their age, ability, or status in life.[1] However, it was the work of Selwyn Goldsmith, author of Designing for the Disabled (1963), who really pioneered the concept of free access for disabled people. His most significant achievement was the creation of the dropped curb - now a standard feature of the built environment.
(For more information visit: *http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal_design*)

In the United States we find the ADA and REHAB ACT as guidelines for best practices when implementing accessibility design. Nevertheless these are only the min. measures required to make a space accessible, therefore it is advisable to go with bigger dimensions.

When designing it is good to consider the following:

-Aging population needs. What happens when children grow up and move out?
-The 7 principles of Universal Design:
    1. Equitable use: a building/space that is useful and marketable for people with disabilities.
    2. Flexibility in use: a building/space that can accommodate a wide range of preferences to abilities.
    3. Simple and Intuitive
    4. Perceptible information: it means that the space communicates information to the user in an easy way through different mediums to make it accessible.(Textures, lighting fixtures, sounds, etc.)
    5. Tolerance for error: a design that leaves room for changes.
    6. Low physical effort: spaces are confortable and easy to go from indoors to outdoor areas.
    7. Size and Space: the building provides areas with appropriate size to allow mobility.

-Goals of Universal Design:

1. Wellness: promotion of healthy environments.
2. Comfort for all the users in a building.
3. Promote Social Integration
4. Possibility to personalize a space. Make the users feel a sense of belonging.
5. Promote sustainable design and environmental awareness.
6. Provide a sense of security to everybody.

Suggested References:

-Neufert Architects Data in google books - Accesible Buildings Chapter: (measures are in the metric system but are bigger than American standards and easy to understand)
http://books.google.com/books?id=6N68sMtqXSUC&printsec=front-cover&dq=neufert+online&hl=es&sa=X&ei=RSGrUsnqLsX1kQfJ2YDIBA&ved=0CDQQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=neufert%20online&f=false

-ADA Standards: PDF available to download. *http://www.ada.gov/adastd94.pdf*

-Vasey Residence: *http://www.universaldesign.com/general-content/case-stud-ies/1749-vasey-residence.html*