

## **TRANSCRIPTION PODCAST SIEMENSSTADT CALLING**

### **- ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION -**

#### **Raúl Krauthausen - Teaser:**

As urban planners one should rather ask the question, where do we create or how do we manage to make every place a place of encounter for people with and without disabilities. This begins with accessibility and then, of course, includes attitudes. But attitudes can only change when we meet each other, not the other way around. We can't change attitudes first and then perhaps build an elevator. That hasn't worked for the last few decades. Maybe we first build the elevator and then the attitudes change by themselves...

#### **Sarah Tietze (Moderator) - Intro:**

Greetings from Berlin, and welcome to Siemensstadt Calling. A new urban district is being built in Siemensstadt Square, and with it a 70-hectare big piece of future. I'm Sarah Tietze and in our podcast I will be talking to some exciting personalities about how our cities will be changing in the future. It seems I'm not the only one who thinks that car-oriented cities are really yesterday's news and that our cities need to become greener, more sustainable, fairer, more inclusive and more accessible. How we get there and what still needs to be done will become apparent. To this end, our guests share their visions, approaches, experience and very personal views with us. Stefan Kögl is always part of our podcast. Stefan implements Siemensstadt Square together with his team. At this point, therefore, a very warm welcome - Hello Stefan.

#### **Stefan Kögl:**

Hello Sarah.

#### **Sarah - Continued Intro:**

Today we're talking about how we can make cities more inclusive and barrier-free. Though I have been living in Berlin for 20 years now, I have never really thought very much about whether Berlin is really barrier-free or not. Is Berlin really a city for everyone? And what do we have to do to make a new district like Siemensstadt Square barrier-free? We now talk about this and much more with Marina Zdravkovic and Raúl Krauthausen.

**Sarah:**

Hello you two!

**Marina Zdravkovic and Raúl Krauthausen:**

Hello.

**Sarah:**

Marina, you've been working at Siemens for more than 20 years. You've been in technical consulting, HR, and ideas management. In 2015, you traded in these really exciting jobs and today you're the chairwoman of the overall representative body for severely disabled employees at Siemens AG. Here you represent around 3,500 Siemens employees. That's 6.5 percent of the entire workforce. That's a really important job. Great to have you with us. Hello.

**Marina:**

Thanks for your introduction Sarah.

**Sarah:**

And Raúl, this is going to sound really weird, but I feel like we've known each other forever. What's awkward for me is that I know you, but you don't know me of course. I have watched you on all your channels and many of your messages strike an absolute chord with me. You're very, very active on social media channels, of course. But you're also a blogger, a podcaster, and you even have your own TV show to raise awareness about inclusion and accessibility and diversity. You're also an entrepreneur, you founded the Sozialhelden and also Wheelmap - a super platform. And for all that, you even received the Federal Cross of Merit. I have absolute respect for that and we think it's wonderful to have you with us today. Hello Raúl.

**Raúl:**

Hi, it's great to be here.

**Sarah:**

Before we jump in to our conversation, I have to share a little bit of a ramble from last week and a personal conversation I had with my family. I was explaining to my kids, they're 8 and 9, that I'm meeting Raúl Krauthausen. I was about to explain why that was so great when they

both said: but we know Raúl, he went to our school in Friedenau. I had to smile a little, and then I said: yes, but that was some years ago. And they said: no, no, everyone at our school knows him. He is really famous. Yes... I was really pleased and we rarely have a famous guest here. So Raúl, once again, a heartfelt welcome.

**Raúl:**

Thank you. Still doesn't feel like being famous. It's still unusual when you are asked about it, but thank you very much. And please send my greetings :)

**Sarah:**

I'll definitely pass those out :)

I would love to start with a certain format. You all know this one, especially Raúl. It's a format where you always learn a lot about your guests. And since I'm curious, it should be really fun. I will give you the start of a sentence and it would be wonderful if you complete them. Raúl, of course because you're from outside of Siemens, we'll start with you:

Accessibility for me is...

**Raúl:**

... to do what I want to do, despite my disability, without having to ask strangers for help.

**Sarah:**

When I hear the word smart city....

**Raúl:**

... I sometimes wonder if the people who say the word know exactly what it means. Or if it's another buzzword, like multimedia, blockchain or artificial intelligence. What does smart mean, who is it smart for? Is it only smart for the big five companies or is it really smart for citizens as well? And I sometimes feel like mayors and city planners often have ideas sold to them by big tech companies without understanding exactly how they may then become dependent on those companies.

**Sarah:**

Stefan, I think you are of a similar opinion, right?

**Stefan:**

Yes, that I can confirm, because we don't use the term smart city here. And not in that context because everybody has a different association with the term. We try to talk about what we really want to implement in terms of smart content, details or techniques.

**Sarah:**

Raúl, back to you. Since 2008...

**Raúl:**

...the earth has continued to turn. Unfortunately, in terms of accessibility and inclusion, not as fast as many people with disabilities would have liked, or as it could have been possible. That's often the case, unfortunately, when a country is governed conservatively, the spirit of innovation tends to become dormant...

**Sarah:**

I would have thought of a different answer to be honest, because in 2008 the UN convention on the rights of persons with disabilities came into force, did it not? And isn't it pretty apparent in that convention that inclusion is a human right?

**Raúl:**

Yes, but paper is incredibly patient. And Germany also signed for the rights of children during the corona pandemic for example, and the children were the ones who were the least heard and the least noticed. We had school debates and not for the sake of the children, but for the sake of the parents so they could go back to work. So, just because a paper was signed, it doesn't mean that anything has really improved in the lives of people. Especially with regard to people with disabilities. The private sector is still not obliged to be barrier-free. And this despite the fact that Austria has already been doing so for 12 years. Germany really hasn't shone in that regard.

**Sarah:**

Hmmm... Then that makes it difficult to jump to the positive question: On a Berlin summer day, I enjoy.... A bit difficult, but anyway, we want to know what you enjoy the most on a sum-

mers day in Berlin :)

**Raúl:**

...extensive walks along the water. There are quite a few lakes and rivers in Berlin. I love Berlin in the summer. In winter it hurts - as Peter Fox says :) But in summer there is no better city for me.

**Sarah:**

In 10 years...

**Raúl:**

In 10 years, hopefully the topic of inclusion will be much more advanced. We will meet and see people with disabilities much more in our everyday lives, and we also hope the private sector will become more accountable.

**Sarah:**

Thank you. Marina, over to you. Cities are...

**Marina:**

...for me, highly complex and interconnected structures in which a wide variety of people with a wide variety of needs live together. And I think that the better we are able to fulfil and implement different needs, the more liveable and accessible cities will become.

**Sarah:**

I'm annoyed...

**Marina:**

I'm annoyed that in 2021 we still have to deal with the same issues as 10 years ago. So it's about equal participation of people with disabilities in education, in work and also the freedom to develop personally and be able to shape their own lives.

**Sarah:**

In the future...

**Marina:**

In the future I would like to have less discussion and talking, and more actual living the topic of inclusion. It should be part of normal life, just like all the other diversity aspects that we have, of course.

**Sarah:**

I really hope so too. With regard to inclusion, technology can be....

**Marina:**

...be of great benefit if you approach it the right way.

**Sarah:**

I am really proud that...

**Marina:**

...that we people with disabilities - I have a disability myself - are now becoming louder, appearing more frequently, appearing more publicly, hiding less, developing a new self-confidence. And internally, that representatives of severely disabled people also take the topic of inclusion very seriously, making noise internally to work out to good solutions together with the employers.

**Sarah:**

Great, thank you Marina. Now Stefan, over to you. New city neighbourhoods...

**Stefan:**

...are still not thought of and planned enough for all residents.

**Sarah:**

In Siemensstadt Square...

**Stefan:**

...we plan digitally from the beginning, which is an advantage because we can incorporate all

aspects of life into the model, starting from the street, pedestrian crossings, but also including the buildings. And to that end, to review and incorporate inclusion themes that will become a component or a foundation.

**Sarah:**

From Raúl, I would love to know....

**Stefan:**

... to what extent digital tools, the topic of digitalization... in which areas it really helps, that is, what experiences are there.

**Raúl:**

Well, digitalization helps, of course. I think we have just learned and understood that during the Corona pandemic through participation in events and conferences from home. E-learning, homework, all these things have become increasingly better. But also only since everyone was forced to use these technologies. Before that, people with disabilities were always told: That's not possible, we don't have the IT infrastructure for it, and so on and so forth.... And now all of a sudden, when everyone had to do it, it was suddenly made possible. People with disabilities sometimes feel, to put it mildly, that they are not taken seriously. And at the same time, I'm a little worried that when we've all learned about digitalization and the corona pandemic is over and we all go back to our offices, the digital space will become a kind of digital sidelining for the disabled. Then we will hear: Okay, we can all go back to the office and the disabled can have a nice home office so that we don't have to guarantee elevators or accessibility in our buildings. Because the work can also be done digitally. This means that there is perhaps a certain exclusion of people who would also like to go to the office, but they can't because of the lack of accessibility. And, of course, digitalization is not... I would say that digitization, like any technology, is both a curse and a blessing. It can exclude or it can include. It's perhaps like nuclear power or X-rays – it can be used for both good or bad. It's value-free just now, but we have to make sure that when we enter the digital space, we also ensure that there is as much accessibility - in the form of sign language, subtitling, and audio description or transcription of a podcast, for example – such that we do not generate new exclusions once more.

**Sarah:**

Yeah, we're definitely doing that, Raúl. We definitely learned a lot about that in preparation for the podcast as well. And great answer. So I'm definitely holding my own nose that if Corona leaves us again, that we don't take the step back again.

Stefan, the topic of inclusion...

**Stefan:**

...I think that it is still too little part of society and must be rethought in some places. Because, of course, in addition to people with disabilities, we also have an aging in society, which, for example, takes on completely different dimensions when you plan a city now. There is a lot of talk about offices and elevators. In the offices in everyday working life, people are usually not yet that old. In the urban environment here, 30% will probably end up living with handicaps - and working, of course. In addition to people with disabilities, there are also many older people. Some of them don't see well or can't move well. So, it's another dimension that has to be thought about from the beginning and has to be part of it.

**Sarah:**

As an architect...

**Stefan:**

...it's a basic task in itself - because architecture is often thought about as function - as well as the design. And if I want and need a well-functioning building - to continue the logic - then it should of course work well for everybody. That's a very factual approach, but ultimately it is relevant and important.

**Sarah:**

Absolutely. Why did you actually become activists? Raúl, did you plan this from the beginning?

**Raúl:**

Nope, you can't plan something like that of course. I studied social and economic communication at the University of Arts, and later worked in advertising agencies and then in radio. And somehow I knew that the topic of disability, both because of my own disability and because I was already interested in it, would occupy me more at some point. And I also wanted to



confront it more. So it didn't overwhelm me, but I was curious and I wanted to understand the topic. And I thought it was kind of weird that at that time there were relatively few organizations - at least I didn't know them - that represented the interests of people with disabilities, from the perspective of people with disabilities. And then we simply founded the Sozialhelden and thought about what we could do to contribute to this society for people with disabilities, from the perspective of people with disabilities. And one result was, for example, Wheelmap, the online map for wheelchair-accessible places, which has now become the largest platform in the world on the subject. And there are many other projects - we might come back to that later. But the idea is to bring the topic of disability into the 21st century, to bring it into the mainstream, to make previous obstacles to inclusion and accessibility aware of their responsibility and maintain the pressure to force them to change.

**Sarah:**

And is that an easy task?

**Raúl:**

No, the road is not easy. We still hear the same narratives about why people are not so far along with inclusion or with accessibility. A very common narrative is that people say: We first have to lower the barriers in people's minds. That's the kind of a stalling narrative I've been hearing for 20 years. And I ask myself: What did you actually imagine in the process of lowering these barriers in people's minds? And people often can't think of anything more than saying: We stick up posters, we make commercials, we print brochures. But I think that's completely the wrong question to ask. I don't have to convince women that men exist and that they are also human beings. Why do I have to convince non-disabled people that disabled people are also people? Why do I have to constantly educate? And why can't we remove all barriers? Why does it always need education? And doesn't enlightenment actually takes place through encounter? And that's why I find Siemensstadt so exciting. To ask the question: If we're already starting from scratch to build our own district, how do we create places of encounter? And I don't mean encounters in the sense of a petting zoo where you can look at disabled people. But how can I create encounters so that the non-disabled majority society does not have the opportunity to avoid the topic of disability. So that the daycare centre is barrier-free and inclusive, that the school is barrier-free and inclusive, that everything is accessible without barriers. Even at Siemens headquarters on the roof terrace. So not only all floors, but the roof terrace is

not. Or the fitness room isn't. But 100%. I think that's the goal.

**Sarah:**

You mean in the new city quarter, even the most beautiful spaces have to be accessible? For everyone. And not just the first floors?

**Raúl:**

Exactly, because I know a lot of architects – no offence meant Stefan - they do what is necessary. But when it comes to planning, I don't know, the party cellar or the village disco or whatever, then you think: yes, the disabled have no fun anyway. And then new exclusions take place. This can start with the fact that the disabled toilet is on the ground floor. But the ground floor may only be open until 7 p.m., and then you can't get there if you're in the building until 9 p.m.. There are exclusions that were perhaps not planned at all. That's why you have to think holistically and not just in terms of an add-on. But the wheelchair-accessible toilet, for example, must be just as available and self-evident as the women's or men's toilet. Or best of all make all toilets barrier-free, so that it is not such a man, woman, disabled division, but disabled woman, disabled man or unisex disabled. That's the way to think about it.

**Sarah:**

Yes, absolutely. Marina, you too at some point traded in your very cool professional career to be an activist in the company. You also put your heart and soul into fighting for people with disabilities at Siemens. Why was that so important to you?

**Marina:**

Well, I don't see myself as an activist, but as a advocate of SGB IX. My job is to implement the legislation we have in Germany. Or to point out deficiencies and make things better. So, I think that distinguishes me from an activist. I also have a large labor union behind me that supports me in this. And because you mentioned changing your professional career to stand up for inclusion - career is very individual. I have to say quite honestly, I currently have my dream job now, which makes me incredibly happy both personally and professionally.

So, why do I do this in the company? As we have already seen, we have very little legislation in the private sector that obliges private companies to be barrier-free. My job - and I have a certain amount of power and opportunity to push things forward in the company - is to look

at areas where the legislature doesn't really support us, which is why we have concluded an inclusion agreement at Siemens AG. We have regulated how we want to deal with accessibility in the buildings, in IT, and also in recruiting. And that's what I really enjoy, what gives me courage and gives me strength. That I can implement these things in the company with the employer on my side and also feel and see a direct result. And that is of course... yes, what better career can you wish for than to see things that you tackle yourself really grow. And also having to fight for it and then finally finding a good solution in the end.

**Sarah:**

Definitely. You can directly see the effect of your work. Stefan, Raúl just gave such a perfect image: not only a handicapped-accessible toilet, but also a handicapped-accessible roof terrace. You and your team are, so to speak, designing this new Berlin district. Right from the start, you said that two topics, sustainability and inclusion are very important in the project. Did you already have this image of the handicapped-accessible roof terrace in mind?

**Stefan:**

Not the picture. But I would perhaps answer it like this. Of course, it has been an issue at Siemens for a long time, not just since Siemensstadt, and we have corresponding regulations and principles. I have been responsible for all new buildings for more than 10 years, to put it in terms of construction. This has always accompanied me at Siemens. And it has certainly become even more so in recent years. I remember various projects where, due to planning deficiencies - also because Raúl just mentioned this, I can unfortunately confirm this - for example, everything was barrier-free somewhere, but at the entrance there was suddenly an offset and then there was a step and this was then discovered at the inauguration. And then they reworked it and the ramp didn't fit. So such issues have accompanied us again and again. However, 15 years ago I had a trainee who - to name something else - was unable to hear. And we hired him, he was a clever young man. When such a subject then becomes part of the team, we had to change all kinds of things, even routines. Because you couldn't just give him a call - you had to reach him via email. I'll put it this way, the lamp on the phone was still the easiest thing. But we also had to - well, he could lipread - you had to approach meetings differently. He had to be able to see when you were speaking. But to have experienced that once... you can talk a lot about it... but if you have personal experience of what it means to deal with it, it becomes part of the environment. Then your own consciousness also changes. I think that is also not

something new, but I have had some experiences and they were very helpful.

**Sarah:**

I already said it in the intro: I've been living in Berlin for so long now, but I don't have a real understanding of whether Berlin is barrier-free or not. If you could express that in percentages, the cities you live in, Raúl, Berlin for example. What percentage of Berlin practices inclusion, from 0 to 100?

**Raúl:**

Yes. Sorry, but that's a typical journalist's question, because that can sometimes lead to the non-disabled majority society thinking: Ah yes, yes, well, 30 percent isn't bad. Or: at least 3 percent... I don't think we would ask that question: what percentage is Berlin women-friendly?

**Sarah:**

Yes, you're right...

**Raúl:**

That's a hard one to answer. Or redhead-friendly... That's why it's hard for me to answer, because I only have a certain perspective.

Disabled people usually know their routines and procedures. My apartment itself is not 100 percent barrier-free. But I have assistance and thus create accessibility for myself, for example.. Well, I think that's a very individual story. But now I've had an elevator built into my apartment. In an apartment that actually couldn't be barrier-free at all. That is, what I want to say is that it is a very subjective question and above all, I think, it also changes over time. So what we would define as barrier-free today will have a different definition in 10 or 20 years, even from an architect's point of view. Perhaps in the future accessibility will also mean that we say it is no longer enough for someone to enter, but the condition is now that someone must be able to enter without outside help. Take the classic bus. The bus driver still has to fold out a ramp, whereby the goal should actually be that as a person with disabilities you should be able to jump in and out of the bus at the last second, just as a non-disabled person would. That would be the ideal situation. Or that I can sit on top of the double-decker bus, with my wheelchair. Now to really stimulate the imagination, imagine one hundred percent accessibility. That's probably why it grows according to the needs of those affected - which also have to

grow. I don't know, take the conversation I had with a Canadian lawyer who ensured that the Canadian Toronto Metro, i.e. the subway in Toronto, would be barrier-free for blind people, and that they would finally announce the station displays acoustically. And they always said: that's not possible. And for years they were always told: we can't expect the subway drivers to do it, the conversion to automatic announcements costs four million. We can't do that. So he sued them and won. And then they had to do it. Then there was no more debate about it. And he became a real hero in Toronto, because a lot of newspaper readers in the subway suddenly knew which station the train was stopping at, because it was announced acoustically. This means that accessibility is not just great for the 10 percent of people with disabilities; we all benefit from the elevator at the main train station when we have luggage with us or from subtitles on Netflix because we don't happen to speak Norwegian. That's why accessibility always has benefits for the non-disabled as well. A politician's answer :)

**Sarah:**

Good, exactly. A politician's answer. But it's good that you already put me in my place with the journalist question, because it's interesting and you realize that rethinking is necessary. And if this normal is supposed to be standard, so to speak, then it is of course difficult to think about the future, because we don't imagine how it could look. Marina, how could it look? If you were to look at your city today, where you live - Munich, right?

**Marina:**

Exactly, right.

**Sarah:**

If you think about the jump from Munich to Siemensstadt Square now, what are the essentials that really need to change? The things that we're not thinking about now because they're just not standard yet?

**Marina:**

Yes, thank you for your question and thank you Raúl for your statement earlier. It's actually like this - I'm extremely fond of traveling, both domestic and abroad. So, I would have the opportunity to compare many countries and cities as well. And something that is accessible for one person is not necessarily accessible for another person. So, I see a bit of a gap between the

wheelchair user, who needs it nice and smooth, and the visually impaired person, who needs signs to guide him or her. And that's why I'm not a big fan of DIN standards, for example, because DIN standards only give some people the opportunity to enjoy barrier-free access. Instead, I think we really have to pay attention to new technologies. On things that you can, for example, move electrically, adjust heights and so on. To really give everyone the opportunity to create accessibility for themselves individually. Maybe also in cities and places that you would normally exclude because they are not barrier-free.

I think that in Germany or in Berlin - Berlin is quite an old city - we also have a lot of old buildings, we have protected buildings. In addition to accessibility, there is also the protection of existing buildings. It's a big task to combine the new and the old and also to incorporate accessibility. But from my point of view, it is definitely feasible. And we also need a good infrastructure and, above all, specialists from all areas who can take a close look: What can be done? How can it be done? We need to gather the opinions of those affected and then look at how we can achieve accessibility, despite the lack of legislation in this area and despite the frequent lack of understanding. Raúl is absolutely right: Accessibility benefits everyone. The mother with a baby carriage, the elderly person with a walker, and of course people with disabilities. And it gives us all freedom. And yes, that's... I think there's just an incredible amount that can be said about that as well. You simply have to sit down together, rattle your brains and ask: How can we collectively turn something old, something semi-old, or something new, into something positive?

**Sarah:**

If we think about a city of the future, for example in Siemensstadt, and we look at different areas, let's take mobility. Everyone is now talking about changes in mobility, i.e. multimodal streets, less car-oriented, rather pedestrian, bicycle oriented. Wheelchair users and people with other disabilities are not included in the narrative. How to make it right? A very banal question...

**Marina:**

The question isn't banal. As I just explained, we have different needs. But I think when people think of mobility, we actually think of four wheels. How do I get in somehow? How do I get out? But there's a lot more to it than that. We also need to offer technologies and empower people to even know: How do I get from A to B? What do I orient myself too? For example, are

there enough parking spaces for people who have a parking permit, a special one?

How are the pavements and crossings designed? For visually impaired people? For people with walking difficulties? Now let's dream about the future: autonomous driving. Yes, we also have to equip our cities, from my point of view, so that we are prepared for autonomous driving later on. This mobility will also enable many people, with and without disabilities, again offering completely new perspectives.

**Sarah:**

Raúl, how do you view it? Mobility in the future?

**Raúl:**

Yes, I'm a bit cautious about playing these target groups off against each other. I think that basically every new topic that is tackled now... well, when it comes to mobility, mobility in the countryside, accessibility is always central. And if the idea is that people should no longer have cars, then we have to ask ourselves the same question: How then do we guarantee the same mobility, or quality of mobility, e.g. for wheelchair users or walking stick users, without a consequent qualitative deterioration.

I believe that people with disabilities are just as willing to do their part for the environment, environmental protection, traffic-free cities. But we must not throw out the baby with the bathwater. That is a big fear that is often made. Disabled people are often called the brake blocks of car-free cities and are often used to avoid having to change anything. That's why I think we have to ask the question: If we want to move in the direction of a call bus, is the call bus barrier-free? And are 100 percent of all call buses barrier-free? And why not? And I don't want to, I mean, in Berlin - I don't have a driver's license, I don't have a car - but in Berlin I have to book a cab three weeks in advance if I want to get from A to B, because there simply aren't enough cabs. And that also shows how little thought is given to barrier-free mobility, spontaneous mobility for non-car owners. So public transport is largely barrier-free. One does not know only so exactly whether cabs are now also considered public transport...

Then the administrative bodies communicate with each other and then the state communicates with the federal government. And no result. That then leads to the fact that no cab is obliged to be barrier-free. There are a few that do it voluntarily but that's not enough to meet the demand. It is assumed that we need 250 cabs in Berlin that are barrier-free, which I think is too few. Right now, as far as I know, we have 12.

**Marina:**

Yeah, I can confirm to Sarah what Raúl is saying.

**Raúl:**

Out of 7000 cabs.

**Sarah:**

Wow...

**Marina:**

When I travel from Munich to Berlin to attend meetings, for example, I now also have my cab driver whom I contact at least two weeks in advance in Berlin so that he can take me from the main train station to Siemensstadt. Currently, Siemensstadt doesn't have an elevator at my stop, so it's zero barrier-free for me. And even worse, in Munich we don't have any real barrier-free cabs at all, only handicapped ride services. So there will never be complete accessibility. But what we can do is think further and get away from the idea: I'm only doing this now for the - I don't know - the 6.5 percent people at Siemens. Towards the thought: I'm doing it for all of us. Because you know, and I'm sure you know this in your circle of friends and family, how quickly you can fall ill and suddenly your body doesn't work the same way anymore. The mind doesn't work as it did anymore and we all get older. So the fewest... Statistically, we will live to be over 80 years old. And how do we want to live in old age? Do we want to live in a community, e.g. a Siemensstadt in apartments, where I know there is an older neighbour, someone with a wheelchair, maybe a family with many children. Maybe we want to say as a community: How do we benefit from each other? If I am incapacitated and at home, can't I perhaps look after the children of the large family for a while? In return, the mother or father goes shopping for me or supports me at the doctor.

Why do we not want to live in such a society? We no longer live in the original families, as we did back then, where several generations lived under one roof, where people helped each other. We live spread out over Germany, we live spread out over Europe and the world. That's just the way things are. You go where there is an exciting job. You might also go where the quality of life is better. So one has to build up an environment.



**Stefan:**

So, maybe I can jump in there briefly. So, this elevator at Rohrdamm. That was the subject of the start of the Siemensstadt project in 2018. And I hope that it will also be implemented at some point very soon. No more on that. So, the subject is present and I would still like to add one thing. There is a big difference emerging in the cities. I thought it was interesting what Raúl said, that of course we still need some form of means of transport that people with disabilities can use.

Absolutely right. But there is a difference - and let's assume that this will be the case in the future - in that the roads will no longer be so differentiated and the city will no longer be planned exclusively with respect to cars. That's how it was in the past. And the car then - even if I now think of pedestrians or people with walking disabilities - always took priority. The difference will become apparent in public spaces - also especially when you think about autonomous driving. And I am convinced that in 10 years it will no longer be a topic of the future, but a contemporary reality - that we will of course have advantages through technology, because the car will then be able to, if necessary, orient itself to pedestrians or to people who may be standing or walking along the route. And we work with multimodal outdoor spaces, that's what we call it. That is to say, there is no longer this clear separation between footpath, bike path and road, but it will be an area that certainly has certain differences in the design, but which just also smoothly transitions and thus of course has advantages, in the movement of all people, even people with disabilities.

**Sarah:**

Why are there no goals? Well, if I think about sustainability again, there are clear targets until 2045. Germany is climate neutral. Why isn't there one for accessibility?

**Raúl:**

Yeah, should I get political now?

**Sarah:**

Sure...

**Raúl:**

I can well imagine that any form of regulation is initially a thorn in the side of a transport

minister like Mr. Scheuer - who is also a conservative politician, of course. He simply doesn't want it. He just wants to somehow, I don't know, secure the future for his economic buddies and wants to regulate as little as possible. That has always been the case with conservative transport ministers. Accessibility was discussed very quickly and over a long period of time, thus being proclaimed as an impossibility or simply dismissed. This is a conflict between the federal and state governments. This means that the federal states operate the public transport system, but the obligation to ensure accessibility is then a federal matter. And that's where responsibility is shifted from A to B. And that then, I don't know, with the electric mobility in Hanover with the provider MOIA, they could force the introduction of buses that have to be electric as a private transport provider, parallel to the public transport. The city of Hanover came to that decision, as did Hamburg.

But they did not stipulate that the vehicles had to be barrier-free. In other words, Volkswagen is operating brand-new transport services in both cities for the public as spontaneous mobility, for people who don't own a car, electric, everything as it should be, as we imagine the future. And yet people have forgotten about accessibility. And I don't think the urgency is that clear to people.

**Sarah:**

Wow. Very impressive. So are there any countries where the urgency is made clearer that maybe we should be looking at?

**Raúl:**

I mentioned Canada earlier. We were in Toronto a few years ago with our team. Several wheelchair users were there and we were able to order 3 accessible cabs within 4 minutes on a Wednesday, on a Wednesday night at 3 o'clock with the Uber app. That's unthinkable here.

**Sarah:**

Then how do you do it here? You don't go out at night or you prepare?

**Raúl:**

Well, I just take public transportation. I just went to an outdoor concert the day before yesterday and it took me two hours to get back because an elevator on the subway was broken and I had to make a huge detour. Ah, yes, otherwise I probably would have taken a cab if there had

been an accessible one....

**Sarah:**

Would there be a way to find out which elevators work and which don't? So kind of like a traffic jam notification, I know which streets work and which don't.

**Raúl:**

Yes, we have built a project together with the Berliner Verkehrsbetriebe and the S-Bahn. It's called BrokenLifts. It's a real-time display of elevators, whether they are working or not. It will soon be rolled out in other cities. You always have to talk to the local transport providers about data standards and data interfaces. And that goes over to your initial question perhaps quite well: that would be a smart city for us. That is, to make the information that, let's say, the cities generate, such as the availability of elevators, available to the general public. Then perhaps even interpretable, so that apps can be built on top of it, so that I can, for example, get a navigation of barrier-free routes where the elevators really work. And that this chain is simply also made available by the city – the information chain. Because it's tax-funded for the most part. This means that the information should also be available to the general public and not just to the companies, so that the services can be improved. For example, such data and information could also be used to measure which manufacturer of which elevators is actually particularly prone to faults. Or which stations might need two elevators because they are regularly out of service. And this data can then also be given to the citizens who can then formulate demands from it. Because politics and administration don't seem to be able to do that on their own.

**Sarah:**

Yes, very exciting ideas. Marina, you also said that you love to travel. Is there a country where you feel comfortable and taken seriously as a woman in a wheelchair?

**Marina:**

There's no country that actually brings all perspectives. So what has particularly amazed me is Spain, for example. Spain Wheelchair accessible cab: no problem at all. It's practically in front of every hotel. Another country, e.g. the United Arab Emirates - the countries have different levels of inclusion and accessibility and also deal differently with people with disabilities - but

what I liked in Dubai, for example, is that the subway is actually completely barrier-free. As Raúl said earlier, I can hop through the door at the last second and get out on my own without assistance. I think that's the norm in Asia, too. And as I said, if I put different countries together like this, then I would already come to the degree of accessibility that I would say: Wow, this is accessible. But you don't find that in one place, in one city, in one country.

**Sarah:**

Marina, what does the opportunity to work on a new district like this mean to you? What are your expectations and what are you perhaps looking forward to?

**Marina:**

Yes, my expectations are that we, as we are doing today in our podcast, put different people around the table, subject matter experts from construction, architecture, urban planners, politicians, but also people who have different types of disabilities and are also specialists for this type of disability, to see together how we can take step by step action. I like something I found on Twitter, a great hashtag. It's called: thinking disability. So everything must be considered in advance, everything we discussed or even dreamed about. Then it must be implemented step by step, or at least be recorded in the preparation phase, so that you're not surprised later when you realize: Oops, maybe you forgot something or it wasn't quite optimal and you have to spend a lot of money to rebuild or completely redesign something. That is often the great fear of companies, of investors who say: Yes, accessibility is so unbelievably expensive and only so few people benefit from it. And that's not how it is. We really have to talk about it in advance. So, from my point of view, before the first stone is put down somewhere, we have to talk about it - openly and directly. We also have to explain our fears and concerns to each other in order to see how we can approach each other. And this is the only way, in my opinion, that a new district can grow successfully. If we leave out certain aspects, then we will not have the desired result.

**Sarah:**

Raúl, what are your expectations for such a district of the future?

**Raúl:**

That the issue of accessibility and inclusion is really thought about in all areas. From the garba-

ge cans to the daycare centre, the pavements and the roof terraces. So really everywhere where people could be, maybe also a barrier-free – forget the maybe - a barrier-free playground. There's some great creative ideas there. Even... I saw the other day: a trampoline for people in wheelchairs. That's fantastic! And to design it in such a way that no one feels restricted, neither people with disabilities, nor the non-disabled people think: oh, that's not just for the disabled, I'll try that out too, the wheelchair trampoline. That would be true inclusion. And maybe when you build a district like this, you can also link it to conditions. So that you say: Okay, all apartments are barrier-free and not just 10 percent. Yes, that you say that the rental of such apartments should preferably go to people with disabilities, because there is far too little barrier-free housing anyway. That when you open a daycare centre, you make it a condition that it must be an inclusive daycare centre, and so on and so forth. Maybe you can also develop concepts with the local mayor, mayoress, so that in the end it doesn't become a luxury city for non-disabled people.

**Sarah:**

Stefan, I see you nodding?

**Stefan:**

I can't add anything to that now. My take away is that it is crucial not to put it on a certain percentage in relation to any other numbers. I think that's the most important thing I take away. And it's also totally understandable. It doesn't work, because the cab is not there, the apartment is not there, or the electric bus is not there. It's about an attitude that has to be consistent. And only then - I would go so far as to say - only then is it a sustainable city.

**Sarah:**

Yes.

**Raúl:**

Absolutely.

**Sarah:**

Dear Marina, we announced on social media that you and Raúl are our guests, and a few questions came in for you. One question was why we are actually only talking to wheelchair users

today and not, for example, to people with a visual impairment.

**Marina:**

That's a good question - and I would like to answer it. So, today's constellation is such that I happen to be a wheelchair user. But I can assure or indeed confirm that we don't make any distinctions within the company between people with walking disabilities, with visual impairments, with hearing impairments, with psychosomatic illnesses, or tumorous sicknesses. For us, they are all colleagues with the most diverse types of limitations and disabilities. And, of course, we make sure, especially in Siemensstadt Square and other new buildings, that we understand the needs of all our colleagues and then observe how and in what way we can create the best level of accessibility and inclusion for everyone involved.

**Sarah:**

And a Siemens colleague asked on the Twitter account what factors actually make a city particularly inclusive and accessible. So what are some of the low hanging fruits that could be implemented really quickly?

**Marina:**

Yeah, that..., as Raúl said earlier, is very subjective and individual. You can't answer that at all. From my perspective as a wheelchair user, mobility and also accessibility are of course a very central factor. How do I get from A to B? Can I drive spontaneously? Can I do that without help? And when I arrive somewhere, can I move around freely? In other words, can I get in and out on my own? Can I provide myself with food in the canteen or can I take care of myself independently, e.g. in a barrier-free washroom? And these factors are of course different for a visually impaired person or a hearing impaired person. One would really have to ask actually those people that are affected.

**Sarah:**

It's amazing, but we've been talking for an hour and we're almost at the end of the podcast. I've learned quite a lot. I'd like to leave with closing words from you two, Raúl and Marina. Raúl, is there anything that we haven't talked about today? About what's very important to you when you think about cities, about the future, about urban planning, something you would like to leave us with?

**Raúl:**

I had already briefly alluded to that. So I think the most useful thing would not be to ask the question of enlightenment. So, how can we educate and sensitize the majority of society to people with disabilities? Because when it comes to it, my neighbour does not have the mandate to change things, because he or she is simply not in a position of power to change things. This means that these people do not necessarily have to be educated, but as urban planners, one should rather ask the question: Where do begin to create, or how do we begin to create spaces that become a place of meeting for people with and without disabilities? This starts with accessibility and then, of course, extends to attitudes. But attitudes can only change when we meet each other and not the other way around. We can't change attitudes first and then maybe build an elevator. That hasn't worked for the last few decades. Maybe we build the elevator first and then the attitude changes by itself.

**Sarah:**

Marina, is there anything you want to take away that we haven't talked about here?

**Marina:**

Yes, two points. First, the pandemic has shown us that we can achieve much more in many areas if we want to, or in this case, if we have to. Yes, the pandemic has shown us a lot and I share Raúl's concerns. But I can assure you that in our company we will of course make sure that flexible working is available to everyone and that everyone can choose how and where they want to work. And the other thing... there's an example that I always like to take. I'm sure you all know this movie from the 80s, „Back to the Future“. I'm sure everyone watched it when they were young. And if you consider the innovations that were shown that are actually available today. That was an innovation back then. That was an invention. And I think, as far as accessibility is concerned, we must not focus on what we have today.

Because that's set. That's what works. We already have that. But rather really pay attention to it together: What is future-orientation? What technologies could be available to us, for example, to make urban districts or residential buildings, business areas truly digital, innovative, barrier-free, like really thinking out of the box.

**Sarah:**

Thank you very much for thinking with us, have a great afternoon and we will hopefully see you soon. Bye.

**Stefan:**

Bye.

**Raúl:**

Bye.

**Sarah - Outro:**

So that was Marina Zdravkovic and Raúl Krauthausen as guests on Siemensstadt Calling. I don't know about you guys, but I definitely learned a lot. What surprised me the most was that inclusion is not yet a reality of everyday life in today's cities. I would never have thought that in a city like Berlin, which seems to be so tolerant and open, a wheelchair user would have problems finding a cab or getting home at night. What struck me today is that there is still a lot of work to do.

So I'm all the more pleased that we're still at the very beginning of developing Siemensstadt Square, and that we now have the opportunity to think about and design a neighbourhood that is barrier-free and truly open to everyone. But I also realized that I, as an individual, can already make a big difference on a small scale. And that my personal attitude and everyday approach to the issue of accessibility can also already make a big difference. Thank you very much for listening. I'm already looking forward to the next time. Goodbye and see you soon in your Siemensstadt!