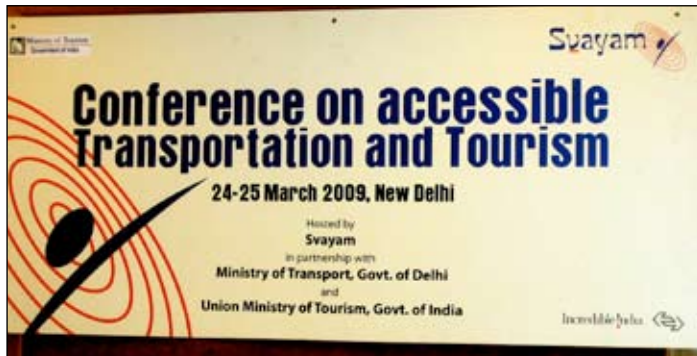


Accessible Transportation Around the World

The Newsletter of
Access Exchange International
June 2009



India continues its long journey toward **MOBILITY FOR ALL**



Sign at March event in New Delhi (top). Below, a press conference with Sminu Jindal, a CEO with a disability who heads up Jindal Saw, a major corporation in India. – Photos by Tom Rickert



A long journey indeed, if one billion people are to benefit from the ramps, flat sidewalks, and features on buses and trains that assist all riders, especially those with disabilities! Yet India, a land of sharp contrasts, provides evidence that even the most daunting goals are achievable if people of good will can work patiently together to make lasting changes. Building on pioneering work over the past decade, a major corporation in India, Jindal Saw, and its non-profit affiliate, Svayam, brought Tom Rickert of Access Exchange International to New Delhi in March for a series of presentations during a two-day workshop. Other international guests were Jamie Osborne, a specialist in bus and rail accessibility in San Francisco (see the article in our last *Newsletter*), and Lalita Sen of Texas Southern University, also with a wide background in mobility concerns and a long-time advocate of accessible transport with many visits to India.

The March conference came exactly three years after an earlier conference on similar topics, hosted by local agencies headed up by Sanjeev Sachdeva and Anjlee Agarwal, persons with disabilities who continue to contribute, along with many other advocates, to a rich ferment of advocacy and technical advances in India.

(continued on page 2)

NEWS & NOTES – Page 7



RUSSIA
Page 4

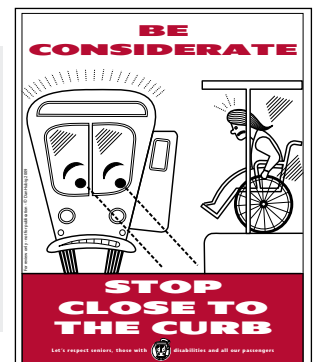


GUATEMALA
Page 5



URUGUAY
Page 6

Learn more
about the World
Bank's
*Transit Access
Training Toolkit*
Page 3



Guadalajara and Ahmedabad

Accessible full-featured Bus Rapid Transit in Mexico and India



Passengers wait to board while others alight at Guadalajara, Mexico's, brand new accessible Macrobus Bus Rapid Transit system. The full-featured 16-km system is serviced by 41 articulated high-floor buses, running every 3 to 5 minutes on exclusive bus lanes and boarded at floor level from 27 stations. All stations have ramped access, tactile guideways, audio and visual information at ticket machines, sliding doors on the station boarding gates, and wheelchair-securement areas. Ten percent of the 100+ buses serving feeder lines to the BRT corridor are ramp-equipped for wheelchair riders.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the world, Ahmedabad, India, is planning to open the first 40 km of a similar, but larger system, called Janmarg, by July. The initial 50 (of 200) high-floor buses will stop at stations with sliding doors opposite the bus entrance, floor level boarding, tactile guideways, and ramps at both ends for accessibility (graphic below). The planning and design team for the system includes CEPT University (Ahmedabad) and the Institute for Transportation Development and Policy (New York) – go to www.ahmedababrts.org for info. The World Bank's BRT Accessibility Guidelines have been used as a resource. We plan to provide more news about both systems in future *Newsletters*.



– Graphics and information courtesy of Yorgos Voukas of CTS México and Aanan Sutaria (CEPT)



The Qutub Minar historic site, made accessible to all under the direction of Svayam. A visit to this World Heritage site was a high point of AEI's work in New Delhi.

CONFERENCE IN NEW DELHI

(continued from page 1)

Perhaps the brightest spot in New Delhi's accessible transport is the large and expanding elevated commuter rail system known as the Delhi Metro. Tours of the system revealed near state-of-the-art access features, including elevators, ramps, tactile guideways and warning strips, and text and audio signage to assist deaf and blind passengers as well as tourists and everyone else. The great need, however, is for access to pedestrian ways leading to the stations, and work in this area has barely begun. A new Bus Rapid Transit system in New Delhi, although successful in achieving many of its goals and providing improved access for many passengers, has faced a number of design and maintenance issues which have caused it to be less than fully accessible. Meanwhile, Delhi



has tens of thousands of autorickshaws (see inset). AEI observed that the low floor and other existing features – if supplemented with proper seat belts – could improve access for wheelchair

riders able to fold their wheelchairs and transfer to the passenger compartment of the autorickshaw.

Transit Access Training Toolkit nears completion

Free World Bank resources will soon be available to help train bus drivers and transit staff around the world

More than thirty agencies in fifteen countries have already requested a set of the World Bank's *Transit Access Training Toolkit*, now in preparation for the Bank's Human Development Network.

Sponsored by a Norwegian and Finnish trust fund within the Bank's Disability and Development Team, the project will include (1) a set of posters promoting safety and courtesy by transit drivers for passengers with disabilities; (2) pocket-size handouts for bus, taxi, and other transit drivers and staff; (3) public service announcements for the general public and transit staff; and (4) ideas for outreach to bus drivers and others in situations where there has been little or no capacity to provide needed training. The *Toolkit* will be made available free of charge in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. It may be translated into other languages and modified to fit local conditions around the world.

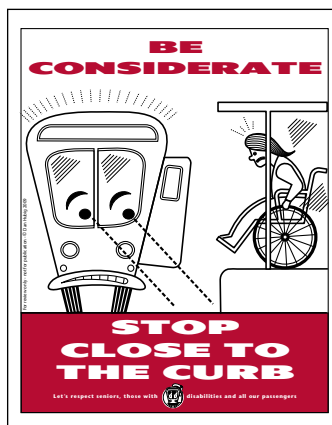
The *Toolkit* materials have benefited from focus groups in Mexico City and New Delhi, India, involving nearly ninety bus drivers and transit staff as well as persons with disabilities. The materials are also being reviewed by transit professionals and disability leaders in other countries. The *Toolkit* is now being completed by Tom Rickert of AEI for distribution by August.

This project will hopefully be followed up with more comprehensive training materials.

Right: A set of 7 posters is being made available in English, Spanish, and Portuguese (draft poster on right says "slow down around curves" in Spanish). **Below:** Sections of draft handouts for bus and taxi drivers.



Organized by Svayam, this focus group with Delhi Transit Corporation staff and disability advocates provided valuable comments to improve the *Transit Access Training Toolkit*. – Photo by Tom Rickert



DRIVER RESPONSIBILITIES (taxi service, continued next page)

- Drive safely and smoothly.
- Treat passengers with disabilities & seniors with courtesy and respect.
- If possible, phone the passenger if you will be more than __ minutes late.
- Phone the taxi office if the passenger is more than __ minutes late.
- Help passengers to and from their door and into the vehicle. Make sure their seat belt is fastened.
- Assist if needed by carrying up to 2 packages weighing not more than __ kg each.
- Fill out log sheets for each trip.

DRIVER RESPONSIBILITIES

(bus service, continued next page)

- Always pick up passengers with disabilities and seniors. Be courteous and respectful.
- Allow time for passengers with disabilities to sit down or hold on.
- Allow time for them to get up from their seat and alight after you stop.
- Drive safely and smoothly. Avoid sudden starts and stops, slow down before curves, and stop as close to the curb as you can.
- Call out major stops and requested stops for blind passengers.
- Speak to deaf or hard-of-hearing passengers in a normal voice, looking directly at the passenger.

TO REQUEST A FREE SET OF TRANSIT ACCESS TRAINING TOOLKIT MATERIALS for bus, minibus, and taxi agencies in your community, contact Tom Rickert:

- E-mail: tom@globalride-sf.org
- Fax to 1-415-661-1543
- Write c/o

Access Exchange International
112 San Pablo Ave.
San Francisco, CA 94127, USA

The *Toolkit* will be available in English, Spanish, or Portuguese as an e-mail attachment (preferred), or in hard-copy or CD versions.

Moscow: new paratransit & accessible services



This model 71-630 three-section tramcar in service in Russia has a floor only 20 cm above street level, enabling many disabled persons to board easily.

A spectrum of access features are now found on some Russian models of large and medium-sized buses, minibuses, trams, and door-to-door vehicles, notes a report sent to AEI by Dr. Vadim Donchenko of Russia's Scientific and Research Institute of Motor Transport. Accessible lift- or ramp-equipped models include three types of full-size large buses, one model of a smaller-size bus, and three models of minibuses.

The manufacture of accessible transportation vehicles, notes the report, is a result of a policy framework now in place in the Russian Federation, based on the Constitution, human rights documents, various federal laws dating from 1995 through 2004, and a series of technical norms used when universal design features are installed.

From norms and vehicles to action plans

Following a process that AEI has identified as common to all countries seriously committed to providing mobility for citizens with disabilities, Russian authorities have, over a period of several years, put into place a series of projects to implement accessibility at local levels. The report notes accessible transit provisions in place or being planned in the cities of Stavropol and Samara (southwestern Russia), as well as Omsk, Kemerovo, and Yekaterinburg in southern Russia.

Not surprisingly, however, Moscow's own planning is more advanced. Current projects include:

(1) The systematic conversion of most of Moscow's public transportation fleets to low-floor vehicles. An initial 300 low-floor buses (7% of the total) are already in operation.

(2) The ongoing operation of the "Vozrozhdenie" paratransit services, focused on medical and social service trips, which uses some 100 accessible vehicles. This is up from 62 at its opening in 1995 – a moment when an AEI accessible transportation

project in Moscow, funded via US AID and World Learning, was coming to completion. The system utilizes computerized dispatching and specially trained drivers.

(3) Of special interest is the creation of two specialized service routes for passengers with disabilities, utilizing small lift-equipped buses (below) operated by "Mosgortrans," the city's surface transportation agency and a sister-agency of the Moscow Metro, that operates subway services. Each route serves locations noted as being of special interest to those using the route (station sign at right below).



This report may be of special interest to those of our readers who remember the twelve visits to Moscow by AEI's Executive Director, three visits



by James McLary, and other visits by colleagues as part of our work to promote social services and accessible fixed-route and door-to-door transportation in Moscow and

elsewhere in Russia during the period of 1990-95. Valeria Sviatkina, our staff person in Moscow during that period, is shown above in a recent photo she sends with her greetings to the many American friends who worked with us during that period to host study tours by Russian groups visiting accessible transit and paratransit projects in the USA. Valeria has sent us several photos of improvements in access to pedestrian infrastructure in Moscow and we hope to print some illustrations of this important progress in a future *Newsletter*.

Guatemala City's TransMetro: Finding a Way to Universal Design

It is one thing for a transit system to be fully accessible in theory and another to be fully accessible in practice. Like the systems in many other cities, Guatemala City's TransMetro Bus Rapid Transit has found it challenging to uniformly provide the level of accessibility that ramped platforms and level boarding should support. One key issue is the occasional pedestrian overpass where traffic is too heavy for a regular pedestrian crossing to the center-island boarding platforms. A second, even more pressing issue is the need to remove barriers along outlying pedestrian ways leading to the BRT stations.

TransMetro's initial 11-kilometer BRT corridor has completed its first two years of operation. Authorities have thus gained valuable experience which will hopefully help them address these and other remaining accessibility issues as planning and construction proceeds for nine additional lines during the next twelve years.

A Norwegian organization, Norsk Form, has provided expertise to develop a design manual to improve accessibility for seniors and passengers with disabilities. The manual will also address safety, pedestrian access, and the general attractiveness of public transit in Guatemala's capital city. Access Exchange International and our colleague Gerhard Menckhoff worked together to provide some suggestions while reviewing draft materials prepared by Stian Sørli of Norsk Form.

**Please send address changes
and news from your country to
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BEST PRACTICE: This TransMetro station is easily accessed by all passengers crossing the street and navigating a gently ramped walkway into the station. The 65

articulated high-floor buses (shown below) have a flat floor design, thus avoiding interior steps and enabling all passengers to be seated at the same level. The high-floor design enables all passengers to board and alight through three wide doors (arrows) at the level of the station platforms. While the low entrance at the front could permit operation outside of the BRT corridor, in fact it is only used in case of emergencies.



A MORE COMPLICATED SOLUTION: At this station with an inaccessible pedestrian overpass, TransMetro has relied on staff to usher disabled persons across traffic lanes. Two city employees are shown assisting this passenger using crutches, having opened the special gate provided to enable disabled passengers to access the station. While effective in this case, such a staff-intensive approach could be less reliable in the long run. – Photos courtesy of Gerhard Menckhoff. Stian Sørli and the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy also contributed information for this article.



Access improved to historic city in Malaysia

A conference on accessible public transport for people with disabilities was held in Penang, Malaysia this past December to mark the initiation of a project to



promote accessible transportation in that city. City officials report that all of 200 new buses currently being added to the Rapid Penang bus fleet are "disabled-friendly" (photo left). The new buses come at a timely moment during a United Nations Development Fund project that will also address further improvements in pedestrian access in the historic city.



12th Int'l. Conference on Mobility and Transport Registration is open for June 2010 TRANSED in Hong Kong

With the theme of "Sustainable Transport and Travel for All," the 12th TRANSED conference will take place at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Center, June 1-4, 2010. Go to www.transed2010.hk for detailed



information from the Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation, the sponsor of the triennial event that is co-sponsored by the USA's Transportation Research Board. The Society has long been a major force in provision of access to Hong Kong's disability community, with a fleet of more than 100 accessible door-to-door vehicles (see photo inset) supplementing Hong Kong's accessible bus, rail, ferry, and air services, making it one of Asia's most inclusive cities. An in-depth report on the growth of Hong Kong's accessible transportation over the past

30 years appeared in our January 2007 *Newsletter*. Issues to be addressed at the upcoming TRANSED include affordability, environmental concerns, new technologies, accessible tourism, and travel solutions for those with cognitive and sensory disabilities. AEI urges our readers to participate in this conference, which will be followed by optional post-conference tours planned for Shanghai, Beijing, and Guangzhou.

Proposals solicited to host TRANSED in 2013: A Request for Proposals is available for institutions and agencies with an interest in hosting the TRANSED conference in 2013. Contact the international section of the Committee on Accessible Transportation and Mobility of the USA's Transportation Research Board by e-mail to the Co-Chairs: Ann Frye at Ann@Frye.demon.co.uk or Tom Rickert at tom@globalride-sf.org. Proposals are due by December 31. Draft proposals are appreciated by October 31 if possible.

Montevideo, Uruguay, expands its accessible transport fleet

The city of Montevideo inaugurated a new accessible low-floor bus route in December (photo). Service is provided every six minutes on the new "CA 1-Central" line. . . . In other news from Uruguay, Eduardo Alvarez, an architect and champion of accessible transit, has received an Award of Recognition for his outstanding work with the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) in developing standards for access to the built environment. – Photos by Teresita Amarillo.



News and Notes from Around the World

- **Argentina:** Eight thousand curb ramps were built in Buenos Aires this past year, according to the city's new disability office known as COPINE. Contact lmontoreano@buenosaires.gov.ar to receive their newsletter, which COPINE notes will address issues of inclusive transportation.

- **Australia:** Interested in social issues in transport? The accessibility of public transport is one of a range of issues examined by the SORT Clearinghouse of the Institute of Transport Studies at Monash University in Melbourne. Visit their site at www.sortclearinghouse.info.

- **China** will promote the construction of a barrier-free environment in 100 cities by 2010, according to their National Human Rights Action Plan for 2009-2010 issued in April. China reports 83 million people with various kinds of disability. (Reported in *Disability News Asia*)

- **Colombia:** Three accessible Bus Rapid Transit trunk lines opened in March in Cali, Colombia, with plans for major expansion to cover the entire city during the next three years (from *El Tiempo*). . . . Meanwhile, Pereira, Colombia's accessible BRT trunk line has caused local disability advocates to seek more access to pedestrian ways and bus feeder routes in order to take advantage of the service.

- **France:** A pioneering publication on accessible transit for those with cognitive impairments has been prepared in English and French versions by the International Transport Forum in Paris. For information on how to obtain *Cognitive Impairment, Mental Health, and Transport: Design with Everyone in Mind*, go to www.internationaltransportforum.org.

- **India:** A three-day "Train the Trainer" accessibility workshop (photo) was carried out in Bangalore with



Mobility India in February. Anjee Agarwal and Jamie Osborne are shown seated at center. – Photo courtesy of Jamie Osborne.

- **Japan:** Disabled Peoples' International of Japan and the Ecom Foundation are collaborating in

training younger leaders of the disability community regarding laws and practices to improve accessibility at the community level, a practice which needs to be replicated around the world (Report by Taisuke Miyamoto). . . . Correction: The leader of the Center for Independent Living of Sapporo is Tamotsu Takeda, rather than Rika Takeda as stated on page 4 of our last newsletter. AEI regrets the error.

- **Latin America:** Go to www.riadis.org to learn about the activities of the Latin-American Network of Non-Governmental Organizations of Persons with Disabilities and Their Families. RIADIS has held seminars in seven countries to promote action plans to implement the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

- **Mexico:** Mexico City's 26-km-long "Suburbano" rail line includes access features such as the elevator shown in this photo sent by Jesús Franco. . . . AEI notes that accessible bathrooms are planned in the new stations of Mexico City's "Eje 4" Bus



Rapid Transit corridor, now nearing completion. Johannesburg also plans accessible bathrooms on its BRT corridors. Perhaps it is time for European and North American BRT systems to begin to consider this added convenience for all of their patrons.

- **Peru:** El Metropolitano, Lima's Bus Rapid Transit system now under construction, has received an award for accessible design from Peru's First National Competition for Innovative Projects. Gerhard Menckhoff of the World Bank notes that their *BRT Accessibility Guidelines*, prepared by Tom Rickert of AEI, were a planning resource for design of the system. The system is scheduled to open during the first half of 2010.

(continued on page 8)

News and Notes

(continued from page 7)

- **Singapore:**

The Handicaps Welfare Association has a fleet of 17 wheelchair-accessible vehicles (photo)



providing door-to-door service for a range of trip purposes. An electric stepboard assists riders with limited mobility to board (inset). Learn

more at www.hwa.org.sg.

- **South Africa:** Planning is moving forward to provide door-to-door service on a periodic (e.g., weekly or monthly) basis in rural areas, noted Christo Venter at an AEI Roundtable in Washington. (Ed. note: This may be one solution to the vexing issue of providing access to public transportation where none currently exists. For example, France plans to institute periodic door-to-market service even in rural areas where there are no fixed-route bus lines. This would exceed current USA standards.)

- **Turkey:** The city of Konya has obtained its first 20 accessible buses.

- **United Arab Emirates:** GAATES (The Global Alliance on Accessible Technologies and Environments in Canada) has won the Dubai International Award for Best Practices for its publication, *International Best Practices in Universal Design: A Global Review*. More at www.gaates.org.

- **United Kingdom:** Europe has pioneered the concept of “shared spaces” where cars and pedestrians have equal access. But how does

this impact pedestrians with disabilities? The PAMELA research laboratory at University College in London has recreated research environments ranging from urban streets to train and bus stations. Contact Mr Kim Morgan, pamela@transport.ucl.ac.uk for information.

- **USA:** Go to www.projectaction.org for a newly published resource on travel training to enable young adults with disabilities to use public transportation. . . . New York City won the 2009 Sustainable Transport Award at a January ceremony in Washington DC under the auspices of the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy. New York has taken a leading role in creating more accessible pedestrian environments. . . . International disability leaders were brought to the USA in recent months by Project ACTION and the Federal Transit Administration’s International Office of Accessibility and Disability. Representatives from Australia, Canada, Mexico, Peru, Thailand and the UK joined USA representatives to discuss accessible transportation issues in their countries.

Meet Some Champions of Accessibility

The Transportation Research Board elected new officers for its Committee on Accessible Transportation and Mobility at its annual meeting in Washington in January. From left, Russell Thatcher and Lalita Sen, new Committee co-chairs, and outgoing co-chairs Kit Mitchell and Kate Hunter-Zaworski. AEI expresses deep appreciation to Kit and Kate for their commitment to international accessibility. Tom Rickert and Ann Frye remain as co-chairs of the Committee’s International Subcommittee.

