

Accessible Transportation Around the World

The Newsletter of

Access Exchange International

June 2015



There are many ways for disabled kids to get to school*



Getting children with disabilities to school

We are well into our 25th year of pioneering inclusive transportation in less-wealthy regions of Latin America, Asia, and Africa. What a difference a quarter of a century makes! The articles inside this newsletter report on many successes as stakeholders around the world work together "to make access happen." We are a part of that story.

But a small agency like Access Exchange International must invest its time carefully, where it is most needed. And it turns out that in many countries children who have mobility or sensory or cognitive disabilities simply do not go to school for lack of transportation. Accordingly, we plan to prepare a guide to promote affordable, safe, accessible transportation to get children with disabilities to school in developing countries, looking at buses, vans, taxis, auto-rickshaws, bicycle paths, safe paths for walking, and more.

I was in Mexico a few weeks ago to help prepare a case study for this guide. We were told that attendance would be 50% higher at our case study school if transportation were not so limited. Please see the article on page 2.

Clearly, it is not enough to make school *buildings* accessible if kids cannot even *reach* these buildings. Nor is it enough to offer expensive modes of transportation to poor parents who can only afford *less-expensive* modes.

We are preparing to work on additional case studies: Richard Schultze in Ohio will lead a team to Santa Cruz, Bolivia, in a few weeks. My wife Susan Rickert will interview disability specialists in Karatu, Tanzania, when she returns there in September for her 15th visit in as many years. Amin Amir Andani in Pakistan intends to visit San Francisco for consultations later this year (see the story on page 3). And Janett Jiménez is continuing her work on our guide in Mexico. The work has begun. And while we work we also seek the resources

to help this guide live up to its full potential: to serve as the foundation for outreach to promote transport to school for disabled kids in years to come. So please consider your role in this work.

- Tom Rickert
Executive Director

Some children struggle to get to school.
And, for many, there is no way at all.



* Five drawings for AEI by Eli Noyes, Alligator Planet LLC
• The photo at left, from India, is from the trailer to "On the way to school," a documentary that we recommend on kids getting to school in India, Morocco, Kenya, and Argentina. Go to <https://youtu.be/p4vimG6oUk0> to see the trailer. Go to distribfilmsus@gmail.com for more information.

. . . . but can we get Yulisa to school?

(Perhaps we can, if the different stakeholders work together.)

In March, Tom Rickert of AEI joined his colleague Janett Jiménez to initiate one of several case studies needed for our guide to promote transportation to school for children with disabilities.

Our visit was to a government school in the town of Valle de Bravo, Mexico, serving 84 disabled children from pre-school age right through their teens. These children have a broad range of physical, cognitive, and sensory disabilities, including several children with severe Downs syndrome or autism spectrum disorders.

The school is called a Center for Multiple Assistance, known as a "CAM" for its initials in Spanish. The staff of 24 were clearly dedicated and the grounds of the school showed loving attention from parents, staff, and volunteers. There was clearly a lot that was *right* with this school!



Photo: Janett Jiménez is shown at left with the school social worker, Sayde Guzmán Durán.

Then we got the news from the social worker at the school: "If we had the transportation we needed, average daily attendance would be 50% higher!" For example, the school had its own van, but it often needed maintenance and was only able to provide service two days a week to a district to the north and two days a week to a district to the south of Valle de Bravo. Those kids were out of luck 3 days a week.

And then there are kids like Yulisa. She is one of six children and is shown at top with her very low-income parents, who we thank for giving us permission to use this photo "to put a human face" on a situation that afflicts millions of disabled kids around the world. Yulisa had been in a regular school and was able to cope with the academics, but she was bullied by other kids, the teachers

were not well prepared and resourced, and they insisted that she go to the CAM for special education classes. This was not necessarily a bad idea, because we noted that other families had "graduated" their disabled children from a CAM to a regular "mainstreamed" school. But Yulisa's parents live on a rutted road that was hard to navigate for the CAM's van (which only provided service two days a week in any event), and carrying Yulisa to the main road plied by this van was not possible.



Yulisa was out of luck. No school for her at this point in her life!

Resources were provided to the school and its teachers, but funding was neglected for adequate transportation. A failure to understand transportation issues is a common concern among even the strongest advocates for the rights of children with disabilities. But perhaps all is not lost. The CAM's parents committee (photo at right) formed a Transportation Committee right after our visit, once they realized they had not been involved and that transportation was not just an isolated concern. Janett is following up with them.



So stay tuned! This is not business as usual here at AEI. We are passionate about this. **And we need champions in the development banks and local governments and schools to be passionate also.** Disabled kids have a right to get to school and to attend school five days a week. We have ideas, ranging from the use of smaller vehicles with lower fares, to ride-sharing concepts, to new funding mechanisms and more. See the next page for more news about resources on hand and needed to prepare our guide. →



Students at the UAM meet with Tom Rickert and Janett Jiménez (front row center) and Professor Alejandro Ramírez Lozano, at right, of the UAM design department.

Students research accessible design in the Mexico City suburb of Chimalhuacan

The Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana in Mexico City serves the 22 million residents of the greater metropolitan area: 9 million in Mexico City's Federal District and another 13 million in the neighboring State of Mexico. The Design & Sustainability Group of UAM's Azcapotzalco campus brought Tom Rickert of AEI to Mexico in March to address a seminar for some eighty students and then to work more closely with a research group of eight students. The research group, under the leadership of Professor Alejandro Ramírez Lozano and with input from Janett Jiménez, will work with residents of the Mexico City suburb of Chimalhuacan as they plan to meet a range of community needs, including the inclusive design of transportation services. The work will continue into the coming year.



Educator from Kenya discusses transportation for children with disabilities

Brother Patrick Misiati, the head of the Kenyan section of a Catholic order that operates primary, secondary, and vocational schools, met recently with AEI's Executive Director in San Francisco to discuss issues regarding transportation for disabled children to school. He stressed the need to integrate disabled children into their local community and to avoid where possible the isolation of students at facilities remote from their extended families. He stressed the need to teach independent living and vocational skills.

Accessible auto-rickshaw prototype completed in Karachi, Pakistan

Our colleague Amin Amir Andani hopes to found Pakistan's first door-to-door paratransit system for persons with disabilities. Photos of the prototype vehicle exhibit numerous access features, including seat belts, storage for a folded wheelchair for the driver or passenger, a crutch holder, and improved seats and better shock absorbers for passengers with spinal cord injuries.



Go to www.nowpdp.org for information on the project. Andani began his work with a view toward accommodating drivers with disabilities to serve as an example of independence. He expanded the project to address access for passengers with disabilities at the suggestion of Access Exchange International.

AEI receives a bequest to promote transportation for Spanish-speaking children

Access Exchange International is pleased to announce our receipt of an \$8,000 bequest from the Paul Chavez Memorial Fund of Temple United Methodist Church in San Francisco. The grant is in support of ministries to Spanish-speaking persons through our guide to promote transportation to school for children with disabilities. In addition to covering expenses for translating the guide into Spanish, the bequest will assist in preparing case studies for the guide from Latin American countries.

An additional \$37,000 is needed to complete funding for this guide and initiate followup around the world. We urge individuals and agencies to consider support for this project.

With mainly women drivers . . .
Montería, Colombia, uses *motocarros* to connect from bus to home



Some transit experts see small "three-wheelers" as unwelcomed competition with larger bus systems. A city in Colombia has stood this perception on its head. Montería is leading the way in well-regulated "last mile connectivity," using three-wheeled low-floor *motocarros* to provide free feeder service between its bus terminals in southern Montería and the homes of often-poor residents who also feel safer with women drivers (themselves heads of their households) in their high-risk neighborhood. The photo shows a MetroSinú bus at far left, with passengers transferring to three autorickshaw-like motocarros operated by ProMovil. The use of low-cost "three wheelers" is seen as an effective tool to combat the proliferation of 5,000+ unsafe and unregulated motorcycles being used to carry passengers seated behind the drivers, holding on for dear life.

The city is testing a prototype ramped bus to connect with schools and other destinations and will decide by August on the size of its proposed accessible bus fleet. We hope to keep our readers posted on future developments. - Photo from Ana María Loaiza Méndez of MonteríaAmable, with thanks to Mauricio Cuellar of the World Bank for leading us to this source.



Access features of Mexico City's new ramped taxis were demonstrated at the forum on March 23 - AEI photo

AEI joins Mexico City agencies at a public forum on door-to-door services

A panel of experts met together in March to reflect on progress and opportunities facing Mexico City's new ramped taxi system as authorities grapple with the challenges facing the pioneering service. Tom Rickert of AEI provided a presentation on "Taxis for persons with disabilities: International trends and lessons from San Francisco, California," at a session chaired by our colleague Janett Jiménez, an accessibility consultant in Mexico City. Service design, vehicle design and driver training were presented within the wider context of disability rights and integration with other transport modes, with Rickert providing a summary of comments at the conclusion of the well-attended forum. Participants included the city transit agency (SEMOVI), the city disability agency (INDEPEDI), the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, and several other key agencies.

Encouraging numbers from our work

During the past 25 years, AEI's Executive Director and volunteers have made presentations on behalf of accessible transportation in **58** cities in **30** countries, not counting the USA. The most visited cities: Mexico City and Moscow (the latter in the early 1990s), each with **12** visits. Bogotá, Colombia; New Delhi, India; and Cape Town, Johannesburg, and Tshwane (Pretoria) in South Africa have each been visited **3 or more** times.

Please send address changes, news, and photos
from your country to

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A report from the front

Mexico City's metro and bus rapid transit make major gains



An elevator on the new Line 12 of Mexico City's Metro is shown above ground (left) and at the underground station platform level (right). - AEI photos by Tom Rickert

There was a time when Mexico City had virtually no access to its underground Metro stations. Gradually this is changing. Currently, around one quarter of the approx. 160 stations in the Metro have full or partial elevator access and some ground level stations are accessible as well. Mexico City's new Metro Line 12 provides elevator service to all twenty stations.

Progress is even greater in the expanding grid of bus rapid transit lines. Some 95% of the 150+ stations on the city's five BRT lines have enhanced



access including reduced gaps that wheelchair users can (usually) cross, or bridges to serve this purpose when needed, as shown in the photo at left on Line 5 through the city's historic district. Also note the tactile guideways. Other features include good color contrast, priority seating, and improved audio and text signage.

Go to www.metrobus.df.gob.mx/accesibilidad.html for helpful information on access features on their website. - Photo provided by Janett Jiménez.

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- Robert Penn, in memory of Helen Moore
- Susan Pearson, Linda Oqvist, and Katherine Randolph, in memory of Edward Pearson
- Tom & Susan Rickert, in memory of Evelyn Horton Rickert, Edward Pearson, and Elizabeth Zimmerman
- Martha Milk, in memory of her mother



AEI & ICAT hold their 16th Annual Roundtable on Accessible Transport in Washington DC

Twenty-five international practitioners met together for our 16th annual roundtable on accessible transportation in January, held at facilities donated by APTA, the American Public Transportation Assn. Presentations ranged from overviews of progress in India and Mexico City to pedestrian safety in Bangladesh, access to BRT and rail systems in Asia, the latest developments in technology in the USA, and an app developed in Mexico for performing accessibility audits of the built environment. Other presentations addressed issues of transport for special education in Bolivia as well as door-to-door services for disabled and elderly passengers in Taiwan and Hong Kong. Readers may request electronic copies of the presentations from AEI. We salute Ling Suen upon her retirement from the International Centre for Accessible Transportation (ICAT) of Montreal, Canada. ICAT is winding up its work which included co-sponsorship of these initial sixteen years of collaboration on the roundtable series. AEI will continue to sponsor the series.



Photo: Presentations on door-to-door services were provided by Eileen Lu and Joe Nien-Tsu Wang of Taiwan's Eden Social Welfare Association, shown with Rex C. K. Luk, at right, manager of Hong Kong's door-to-door services. They are shown at a dinner under the auspices of ICAT, celebrating the completion of its international activities. A major conference in our field will be held in Taiwan in 2018. - AEI photos

They are shown at a dinner under the auspices of ICAT, celebrating the completion of its international activities. A major conference in our field will be held in Taiwan in 2018. - AEI photos

Donations honoring others, received by AEI

- Louise L. Chu, in honor of Joe & Mo Blumenthal
- Carol Bloom, in honor of Richard Weiner
- Janice Miller, in honor of the birthday of her sister, Nancy Lyon

A full list of donors is found on the following page →

A list of the donors who sustained our work during the past year. (We could not have done it without you!)

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in 2014 was matched by \$2
in donated staff time and
services for our work.**

News & Notes from Around the World



AFRICA From South Africa, Amanda Gibberd sends us this photo of a Citroen prototype mini-bus taxi representing a blending of good bus stop design, a low-angle ramp, and a wide door on the vehicle. Ms. Gibberd is the Director of Universal Design in Public Transport for South Africa. A universally accessible mini-bus taxi has long been sought by South Africa and we hope testing of this vehicle produces positive results. . . . HelpAge International is working to improve transportation for rural elderly and disabled people in Tanzania, with a focus on Kilolo District as a case study. Information is available from Amleset Tewodros at Atewodros@helpagetz.org. . . . Half of more than 1200 disabled respondents to a survey in southern Nigeria have not acquired any form of formal education and only 21% have gone beyond primary school. Not surprisingly, 82% were unemployed. The report concludes that "stigmatization and marginalization" of persons with disabilities in Nigeria is on the increase. (Report in Spyghana).



MIDDLE EAST Ali Isalou in Tehran, Iran, is looking for ideas to prevent situations as shown in his photo of a wheelchair rider in a roadway with an inaccessible curb while a motorcyclist uses the sidewalk. While Tehran is working to improve its accessibility (see our June 2014 newsletter), it shares this kind of problem

with *many* of the world's fast-growing cities. Thanks to Todd Litman in Canada for referring this situation to AEI. . . . Doha in Qatar may be on a fast track to accessibility as it readies for the FIFA World Cup in 2022, according to presentations at a conference held there in March.

EUROPE A major Accessibility Resource Center in France is found at www.accessibilite.gouv.fr, listing scores of events as France moves ahead in our field . . . Contact Mary Crass of the International Transport Forum at mary.crass@oecd.org for a series of excellent European publications on accessible transport. . . . Aristotelis Naniopoulos in Greece reports on progress in making tourist attractions accessible to those with physical and sensory impairments. One example: the ancient 4th century "Rotunda of St. George" in Thessaloniki, the UNESCO World Heritage Site of one of the oldest Christian churches in the world. . . . Our colleague Dragan Djordjevic has sent us photos from Belgrade, Serbia, illustrating the deployment of low-floor buses, trolley coaches, and light rail vehicles. . . . The city of Borås, Sweden, is the winner of the European Commission's Accessible City award. . . . Istanbul, Turkey, is



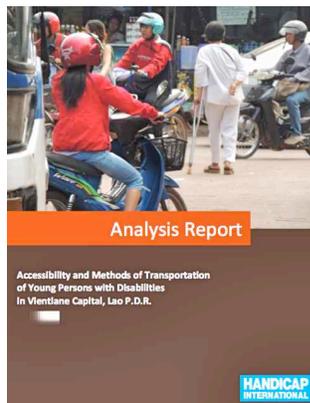
constructing ten new accessible high-tech ferries to replace its current fleet, one of which is shown above. (Hurriyet Daily News)

TRANSED, the 14th International Conference on Mobility and Transport for Elderly and Disabled Persons, will be held in Lisbon, Portugal, July 28-31, under the auspices of the Instituto Superior Técnico (IST) of the Universidade de Lisboa. Registration and all other conference information is available at the website at <http://transed2015.com>. The previous TRANSED was held in New Delhi, India, in 2012, and Taiwan's Eden Social Welfare Foundation will host TRANSED in 2018. The triennial TRANSED series is co-sponsored by the USA's Transportation Research Board. The permanent secretariat for the TRANSED conference series is located in New Delhi under the auspices of Svayam, an initiative of the S.J. Charitable Trust. Go to www.transedconferences.com for information.

INDIA Our colleague Gerhard Menckhoff reports marked improvement in access features for Pune's latest bus rapid transit line, scheduled to begin operations later this year. Pune appears to have achieved a narrower bus-to-platform gap, which aids all passengers and especially those using wheelchairs. . New apps to improve the reliability of motorized →

News & Notes: Continued

auto-rickshaws continue to come into use in India: the latest in Bangalore in March. And bicycle-rickshaws now have a dial-a-rickshaw service in some cities, taking advantage of improved designs which make them more comfortable for passengers and easier to operate for the drivers, reports ITDP's Sustainable Transport newsletter. . . . Court decrees in Mumbai should result in more access features at railroads there. Meanwhile, field testing moves forward on a device to help visually impaired persons board Mumbai's buses.



SOUTHEAST ASIA Todd Litman forwards two publications by Handicap International, shown above, on "accessibility and methods of transportation of young people with disabilities in Vientiane Capital," Laos, as well as a document on how to promote an accessible environment for all. . . . Ho Chi Minh City appears to be taking the lead from Hanoi in the creation of accessible bus routes in Vietnam, reports Bui Toan in Danang. He notes that at this point a World Bank-funded bus rapid transit line in Danang will exhibit accessible design . . . Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, has drafted an Accessible Tourism Master Plan, reports Dalilah Bee Abdullah at Kuala Lumpur's City Hall. The photo below shows Mayor Ahmad Phesal in dialogue with persons with disabilities in the



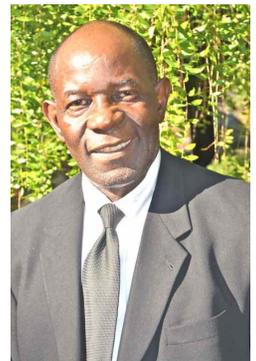
city. The mayor noted the need for cooperation between the different city departments and transport agencies to enhance mobility for all in Kuala Lumpur.

We highly recommend an article co-authored by Ms. Abdullah with Isabella Tiziana Steffan on "monitoring and enforcing accessibility standards" in Kuala Lumpur, at www.designforall.in/newsletteroct2014.pdf, pp. 83-95. The article discusses Kuala Lumpur's exemplary program, which should be a model for others to follow.

CHINA In a major paratransit expansion, Beijing announced plans in April to procure 800 additional accessible taxis during the current year as well as replacing the current fleet of 70 vehicles acquired in connection with the 2008 Olympic Games. Advanced reservations ranging from two hours to one day will be required to arrange a ride. (Wantchinatimes) . . . China Railway Corporation has announced that guide dogs are now allowed on trains (Xinhua). Beijing approved a regulation last year allowing guide dogs on subways.

USA We congratulate Michael Replogle, the founder of the Institute for Transportation Development and Policy (ITDP), on his new role as Deputy Commissioner for Policy for New York City's Department of Transportation. . . . For the excellent publications and services offered by Project ACTION in Washington, DC, go to www.projectaction.org . . . The United States Access Board is updating its requirements for information and communication technology. For information, go to www.access-board.gov or contact 508@access-board.gov.

NEWS FROM OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS Closer to home here in San Francisco, AEI Board members elected Richard Weiner as our new President and Marc Soto as our new Vice President at their meeting in January. Weiner is Chairman of the Board of Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates and Soto works with Transdev as San Francisco's Paratransit Broker. Other Board members have also been "acting locally" as well as globally. AEI Treasurer Lucy Crain recently co-chaired the 14th annual conference on Developmental Disabilities under the auspices of the University of California School of Medicine, while Bruce Oka, our Board Secretary, made a presentation at the conference on the history of disability rights. And Board member Ike Nnaji, photo at right, spoke on the subject of transportation equity at the University of California Berkeley, also in March.



Several items from Nigeria, Qatar, China, and India are from the GAATES news service. Readers may subscribe at www.gaates.org.