

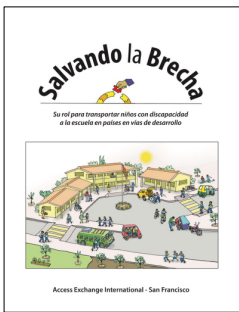
Accessible Transportation Around the World



The Newsletter of
Access Exchange International
January 2019



UN agencies introduce AEI guide in Ecuador



The Spanish version of AEI's guide, "Bridging the Gap: Your role in transporting children with disabilities to school in developing countries," was introduced to South America at a workshop sponsored by UNESCO, the United Nations Development Programme, and Ecuador's transport and

education ministries at a meeting held in Quito this past June. Janett Jiménez Santos presented the guide at the well-attended workshop (photo at top), following up presentations in April in Zacatecas and other states in central Mexico.

20th annual International Roundtable in Washington DC set for January 17

Marking two decades of cooperation between AEI (USA) and ICSA (Canada), the 20th annual roundtable on accessible transportation in developing countries is planned in Washington DC on Thursday morning, January 17, 2019, following the annual meeting of the USA's Transportation Research Board. Space is limited at this no-cost event. Pre-registration is required by contacting AEI. We express our warm appreciation to the American Public Transportation Assn. (APTA) for hosting this event for many years.

A new initiative on inclusive school transportation Matching needs with resources in Mexican & USA border states

The Board of Directors of Access Exchange International has "approved in principle, subject to the availability of funds, an initiative by AEI to promote safe and accessible school transportation for students with disabilities in the Mexico-USA border region." The proposed initiative would sharpen our focus on transport as a missing link in getting children with special needs to school in less-wealthy regions around the world.

The initiative would take advantage of AEI's experience over the past twenty-eight years: sharing best practices between countries, working with colleagues in Mexico and Latin America to promote accessible public transportation, and, most recently, publishing the Spanish version of our guide promoting ways for [To Page 2 →](#)

On the Inside . . .

Page 2: Posters detail school transport advice

Page 3: The predicament facing low-income parents



Pages 4 - 6:
A special report
from South Africa's
Department of
Transport

Page 6: Helping the Paralympics in Tokyo

Page 7: TRANSED In Taipei

Page 8: News and Notes from Around the World



AEI helped match up this donation of accessible used vans from the San Francisco Bay area with an agency in Baja California many years ago, thanks to the initiative of Alex Lodde of MV Transportation. - photo by Raymundo Meraz

Mexican and USA border states (continued)

children with disabilities to walk or ride to school. The initiative could match up USA donors of vans and buses in good condition with schools serving children with disabilities in Mexico (see photo above). And it could deepen existing ties between Mexican and USA colleagues based on their current work within and between Mexico and the USA.

"This project will respond to the guidance we receive from both Mexican and USA transport and education practitioners," noted AEI Board President Richard Weiner. "If we can lend our accumulated experience to help network more solutions, so much the better. And a lot also will depend on how individual donors and foundations evaluate the need for this work," he added.



Research indicates that the six Mexican border states and the four USA border states (California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas) serve at least 1.4 million students with disabilities at primary and secondary school levels. The parents of many others need information as well as transportation if their children are to get to school. See the article on page 3.

Posters detail recommendations in AEI's transport-to-school guide

What would we do without "a little help from our friends," as the Beatles hit in the *Yellow Submarine* had it? Eli Noyes, the San Francisco artist who designed the cover image of our transportation-to-school guide, is again donating his services to create a set of posters and flyers to portray many of the recommendations in the guide.

Eli's art gets the message across in an easily understood format, whether the poster is in English, Spanish, or other language. The posters vary in their target audience. Some could be handouts to parents, others posted in a teachers room at a school or at a transit agency. Some are meant to be viewed from a distance, and others to detail a list of options to help children get to school. Some focus on walking to school and others on riding to school. Some will be more relevant in some countries than in others.

See examples below and on the next page. These and other posters will soon be available for downloading at <http://www.globalride-sf.org>, the AEI website. This is also the place to view videos and download our guide in various languages.



Travel to school: A predicament for low-income parents

Parents in Mexico may face a difficult choice when they live too far from school to walk or carry their child with a disability. Go to www.globalride-sf.org to hear parents describe their concerns on videos in Spanish with English sub-titles. Summing up their concerns:

- Specialized school buses are seldom available.
- Public transportation is expensive and lacks access features.
- Most families are headed by mothers who need to earn a living to feed their families. They have neither time nor money to accompany their children to school.
- Yet parents are often required to accompany their children to and from school, either remaining at the school or taking two round trips daily, totaling from two to four hours travel time.
- The result: Many children with disabilities never go to school, or attend only part time, perhaps going to school one or two days a week.

How to mitigate this situation? Solutions include school-operated buses or vans, or subsidizing parents to pay for public transportation or to work together to purchase and operate their own vehicle(s). The provision of trained attendants to care for students when this is needed can enable many more children to go to school.

Attendants can monitor the needs and behavior of students and assure they are



properly secured in the vehicle, while performing many other duties to assure that the school trip is safe for everyone, as shown in the image above by Eli Noyes. Yes, school transportation for children with disabilities can be expensive in any country, but it can make the difference between students having a lifetime of participation in society or becoming isolated for the rest of their lives.

"Bridging the Gap between Home and School"

DOES MY CHILD WITH SPECIAL NEEDS HAVE A RIGHT TO GO TO SCHOOL?

The answer is "YES", but parents need **INFORMATION**

Call your local school district at _____

Illustrations by Eli Noyes

 A poster with a blue border. At the top, it says "Bridging the Gap between Home and School" with a graphic of hands holding a rainbow. Below is a large thought bubble containing the question "DOES MY CHILD WITH SPECIAL NEEDS HAVE A RIGHT TO GO TO SCHOOL?". Underneath the bubble, a woman in a pink shirt sits in a chair talking to a woman in a blue shirt who is in a wheelchair. To the right, there is a redacted phone number and the text "Call your local school district at _____". At the bottom, a woman in a pink shirt is talking on a mobile phone, with a thought bubble showing a yellow school bus. A school building is also illustrated at the bottom left.

"Bridging the Gap between Home and School"

PARENTS AND COMMUNITIES CAN HELP SMOOTH PATHWAYS TO SCHOOL

BEFORE AFTER BEFORE AFTER

Ways to remove obstacles:

- Repair sidewalks and footpaths
- Fill in ruts and holes
- Cover drainage ditches
- Remove obstacles that block the way

• Illustration by Eli Noyes for Access Exchange International (AEI), San Francisco, USA
• Translation of this poster is encouraged.

 A poster with a blue border. At the top, it says "Bridging the Gap between Home and School" with a graphic of hands holding a rainbow. Below is the title "PARENTS AND COMMUNITIES CAN HELP SMOOTH PATHWAYS TO SCHOOL". The main part of the poster shows two pairs of illustrations. Each pair is labeled "BEFORE" and "AFTER" with a red arrow pointing from before to after. The first pair shows a person in a wheelchair navigating a sidewalk with a large hole and a drainage ditch. The "AFTER" version shows the hole filled and the ditch covered. The second pair shows a person in a wheelchair navigating a sidewalk with a large pile of debris. The "AFTER" version shows the debris removed. Below these illustrations is a list of ways to remove obstacles. At the bottom, there is a small credit line: "Illustration by Eli Noyes for Access Exchange International (AEI), San Francisco, USA" and "Translation of this poster is encouraged."



South Africa faces the challenge of inclusive transportation



Special to AEI by Amanda Gibberd of South Africa's Department of Transport

Access Exchange International has long had "a South African connection." AEI's President, Richard Weiner, grew up in Pretoria and represented AEI in a series of meetings in South African cities in the 1990s. AEI then participated in a major publication based in South Africa, titled



Enhancing the mobility of disabled people: Guidelines for practitioners, published in 2004.

Our colleague Amanda Gibberd heads up South Africa's initiatives in the field of accessible public transportation for the national Department of Transport (DoT). Tom & Susan Rickert recently hosted Amanda and her family during their visit to San Francisco. This article resulted from conversations between Tom and Amanda (photo).

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Policy frameworks in South Africa

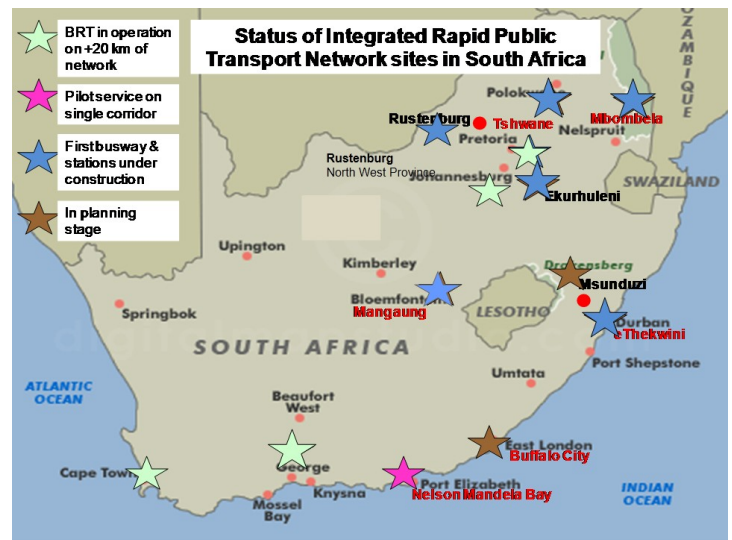
One of the first post-apartheid documents to identify South Africa's lack of accessible transport was the *Moving South Africa* study (DoT, 1999). The study found that people with disabilities were isolated due to the inaccessibility of transport. This was one of the reasons that their participation in everyday life was impossible. The difficulties experienced by other passengers needing universal access were also identified as a significant problem, given that public transport systems had never been designed to accommodate them.

South Africa signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2007 and public transport is recognised by the UN as an area where South Africa has made progress. The UN's Sustainable Development Goals and the UN's New Urban Agenda have also been signed by South Africa, speak to these new and exciting kinds of developments, and are implemented through the National Development Plan.

A goal of South Africa's Public Transport Strategy (DoT, 2007) is for public transport to be 100% or universally accessible throughout our country. Universal access is an underlying principle of social

inclusivity. Transport has thus become a mechanism for overcoming the separation imposed by apartheid.

Our *Implementation Strategy to Guide the Provision of Accessible Public Transport Systems in South Africa* covers the creation of universal access across the travel chain for new public transport projects, upgrading existing public transport, and monitoring and evaluating our progress. In addition, our strategy requires the development of national standards for the universal design of public transport and public space. Finally, the plan promotes liaison between NGOs, government departments, the private sector, and the travelling public. This includes taking and registering complaints from passengers with disabilities, pregnant women, elderly passengers, children, and passengers accompanying children.



The DoT targets grants for thirteen municipalities implementing the national transport networks under the Public Transport Strategy. These municipalities, shown on the map above, include the most populated areas of the country, which host just under half the national population (43%). This figure is projected to increase.

Implementing the policies

The disability sector is involved in evaluating the implementation of better accessibility (photo next page). Some of the new transport systems began as high floor bus rapid transit (BRT) systems. New systems are all low entry.



Level boarding with no gap between the vehicles and the station or stop is an important access and safety feature for all universal access passengers, including the school children shown in the photo below. Level boarding at the kerbside is far easier to create with low-entry vehicles. The new buses have a kneeling function so that the vehicle can closely align with a raised kerb and the boarding bridge can operate effectively. Some cities are not operating bus rapid transit systems, but are operating a quality kerb-side service that accommodates universal access passengers equitably and safely. New standards are developed for all aspects



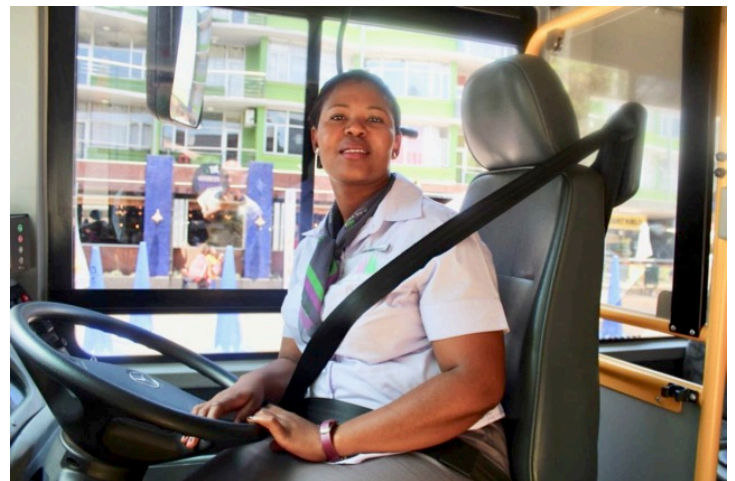
of the travel chain, called *national technical requirements*. The first set of requirements covered pedestrian crossings. Future standards will be for buses and bus stops and stations, for operations and standards of service, then for information technology usage. All standards must be developed with input from people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups.

Access for blind persons & wheelchair users

As a result of the research, as well as new specifications for surfaces and gradients, warning tiles are provided over the entire section of the dropped kerb. Directional tiles lead to the warning tiles, forming



an L shape (photo above). On a controlled crossing, this also guides the user to the location of the push button. This L shaped layout proved to be the safest and most convenient design for pedestrians, including people who are blind or partially sighted. However, one of the major concerns remains traffic calming to reduce speeding vehicles and careless driving. The new standards have now been developed into an interactive model to use with people who are blind or partially sighted to give them the information they need. The prototype has been developed with organisations of people who are blind and partially sighted, as a very low-cost model so that it can be replicated in rural areas. A city is able to provide universally accessible service when transport operators provide good customer services and driver training (photo below).



Smaller vehicles are easier to use in residential areas, and help provide passenger-oriented stops near to trip origins and destinations. South Africa still has a problem with unpaved roads, and in those situations it may be necessary to have a lift on a bus. Where boarding and alighting times are slower, using a well-maintained and smoothly operating lift is feasible as long as it provides kerbside entry. Smaller vehicles (photo on next page) can provide level access, include space for a wheelchair, and link with BRT stations in the median strip. Buses are fitted with systems providing audible and visual information. [To Page 6](#)



(from page 5) At least one passenger space for people in wheelchairs is provided on all new buses from 6-12



meters long, with two wheelchair spaces in longer buses. The door configuration must allow wheelchair users to leave and enter, which is more difficult to accommodate with a conventional bus chassis. Where no door is provided in the median, two wheelchair spaces can be provided on smaller buses. Where one wheelchair

space is provided these are rear facing, as this is safer for wheelchair users. There must be a grab rail and a bus stop alert button in the wheelchair space, and flip up seating is provided for parents with prams. The space can be used for passengers with luggage. These access features are new to passengers, and information on the system requires constant engagement. Municipalities use media and social media to communicate with residents. This includes radio and newspaper cartoon strips as well as Facebook and web pages.

We have a lot to do! Stay tuned.

- All photos are provided by the South African Dept. of Transport

Access Exchange International needs your donations as we continue our current work and consider new initiatives, subject to availability of funds, as described on pages 1-3.

You can donate via PayPal on our website or send your check to our address in the box on page 7.

Focus on Asia

Group from Tokyo prepares for Japan's 2020 Paralympics games

It is no small thing to provide seamless accessibility to thousands of athletes with disabilities at the summer Paralympics coming up in Tokyo in 2020. As part of their preparations for the event, Prof. Tetsuo Akiyama of Chuo University – a long-time colleague who has worked with AEI in the past – asked us to set up meetings in San Francisco for Japanese guests to learn more about the city's inclusive bus, rail, and door-to-door services.

As with groups in past years from China, Mexico, Japan, Nigeria, and Russia, we turned to San Francisco's Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) for a full day of presentations at the end of October for the seven guests from Chuo University and Narita International Airport in Tokyo. Tom Rickert of AEI also provided an overview of our work on school transportation as part of our strategy of encouraging highly developed countries to reach out to less-wealthy countries in their regions.

We especially thank Annette Williams, who heads up the SFMTA's accessible services, and former AEI President Marc Soto, who serves with Transdev as the city's paratransit broker, for putting together a rich menu of technical presentations based on San Francisco's many decades of experience.



Japanese experts and San Francisco staff pose for this photo following a demonstration of paratransit vehicles for our guests - photo by Tom Rickert

Follow AEI on Facebook as well as on our website at www.globalride-sf.org.

Focus on Asia

15th international conference on mobility and transport (TRANSED) hosted in Taipei by Eden Social Welfare Foundation

Access Exchange International has reached out to participants from around the world, sending Janett Jiménez Santos to the triennial TRANSED conference held November 12-15 in Taipei, Taiwan. Jiménez led a pre-conference workshop introducing our recently published guide to promote school transport for children with disabilities.



Participants from Japan, India, and Thailand at the AEI pre-conference workshop on our guide, led by Janett Jiménez Santos of Mexico.

Several hundred attendees made the conference a big success, highlighted by the accessible public transport services in Taipei as well as the excellent preparations for the many persons with disabilities who were thus able to participate in the conference.

At one time the TRANSED series was only in European and North American venues but in the past two decades this has changed, with conferences held in Hamamatsu, Japan; Hong Kong; New Delhi, India; and Perth, Australia. The conference just held in Taiwan now takes its place as another step forward in assuring that inclusive transport is truly a global reality.



From left: Yoshito Dobashi, author of a case study from Japan in our guide; Judy Wee of Singapore; Janett Jiménez; and Hideto Kijima from Japan.

AEI congratulates our colleague Dr. Billie Louise Bentzen, of Accessible Design for the Blind in the USA, upon her receipt of the William G. Bell Award for "excellence in accessible mobility

research and practice," shown at right in the photo, following the award ceremony at TRANSED. The award is from the Committee on Accessible Transportation and Mobility of the USA's Transportation Research Board, a co-sponsor of the TRANSED conference series.



In Memoriam

William F. Crandall, Jr., a pioneer in research to assist blind persons to use public transportation, retired from the Smith-Kettlewell Eye Research Institute in San Francisco, and a dear friend of Access Exchange International.

* * *

Kalle Könkkölä of Helsinki, Finland, one of the original pioneers of the independent living movement and an advocate of disability rights throughout Europe and beyond.

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

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AEI is tax exempt under Article 501(c)(3) of the USA's Internal Revenue Code. Contributions to our work from USA donors are tax-deductible. Our financial report for 2018 will be available shortly.

News and Notes from Around the World

Mexico: WRI Mexico recently sponsored a webinar on safer travel for all children and youth: a growing concern as the world's cities become more congested.

Brazil: Rio de Janeiro's subway and BRT systems "are almost totally accessible," reports our colleague Angela Werneck.



Chile: Until recently, Chile's only accessible city buses were in the capital of Santiago. In a breakthrough, the city of Puerto Montt now boasts a fleet of 29 new lift-equipped buses (photo above). . . . A pilot project with new electric buses in Concepción also incorporates access features. . . . And Santiago's subway system has been installing elevators in its older stations, which



previously lacked accessibility (photo above). Graphics from SoyChile, news from Pamela Prett Weber of Ciudad Accesible in Santiago.

USA: We welcome Heather Thompson as the new CEO of the Institute for Transportation & Development Policy (ITDP) in New York. The ITDP has work around the world and its promotion of more

accessible sidewalks and footpaths – as well as access features in bus rapid transit systems in Asia, Africa, and Latin America – are only two of several areas where their presence has resulted in improved mobility for all passengers including persons with disabilities Coming up on April 15-17, 2019: An international conference on demand-responsive and innovative transportation services in Baltimore. More information is available at the website of the USA's Transportation Research Board.

Portugal: A task force in Lisbon's "Accessibility to Public Transport Network" has held a series of meetings (photo) to prepare recommendations to make mobility scooters more accessible for persons with disabilities



and seniors. Recommendations will be focused on how to allow mobility scooter users to use public transport and how to prepare future improvements to be ready for such scooters. The task force is part of Lisbon's Pedestrian Accessibility Plan that aims to promote accessibility for all public transport users by improving access for persons with disabilities. *Editors Note: Lisbon is not alone: There is a growing global discussion around access to new urban transport modes emerging around the world. An array of personal mobility aides includes different designs of bikes, trikes, scooters, and wheelchairs, all of which find their niche alongside new designs of motorized auto-rickshaws and other small vehicles designed to carry passengers.* - Information and photo from Diogo Martins

Tanzania is preparing personnel to promote more and better schooling for children with disabilities.

Promoting the ability to walk or ride to school is part of this larger story. The photo shows Susan Rickert (a member of the team that prepared our guide on this topic) presenting AEI's publication to Augustino George as he prepares for further training in special education in Tanzania.

