

Accessible Transportation Around the World

The Newsletter of

Access Exchange International

January 2013



AEI introduces paratransit guide in New Delhi



Our new guide, *Paratransit for Mobility-Impaired Persons in Developing Regions: Starting up and Scaling Up*, was introduced in September at the TRANSED conference in New Delhi, India. Ms. Sminu Jindal, heading up Svayam, the conference sponsor, is next to Mr. Arvinder Singh, New Delhi's Minister of Urban Development, and Tom Rickert of AEI: More on page 2 – Photo by Richard Schultze

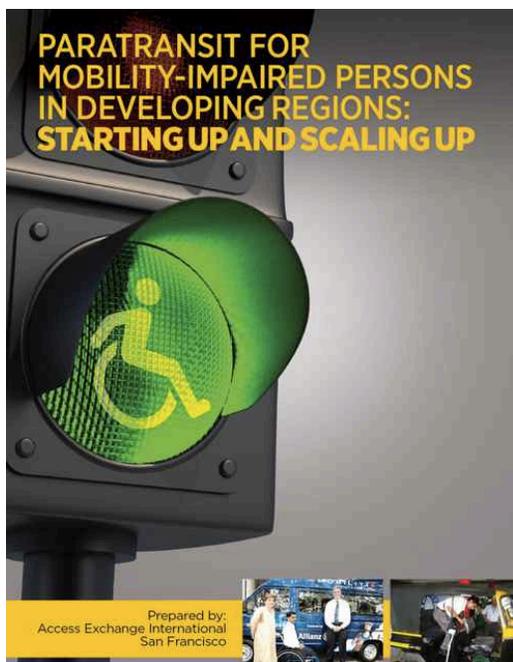
ON THE INSIDE

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Vans, taxis, auto-rickshaws, and cycle-rickshaws: a family of paratransit services

Kickoff at the International Conference on Mobility and Transport in New Delhi (TRANSED) **AEI's new paratransit guide: a first for the developing world**



There are shelves of relevant materials to assist practitioners in wealthier cities and countries to provide door-to-door van or taxi services for seniors and persons with disabilities. And, in many cases, transit agencies can afford – and are even required by law – to provide such services.

This is simply not true in most of Asia, Africa, Latin America, and eastern Europe. Tens of millions of disabled people cannot even get to transit lines which are themselves lacking in access features. Calling for an accessible door-to-door vehicle is often their only solution, yet such systems seldom exist. AEI's new guide is our response to this state of affairs. The 90-page guide explores lower-cost solutions, such as the auto-rickshaw in the photo below, put on display



at the 13th TRANSED held in New Delhi in September, and shown with Sminu Jindal (seated), the Director of Svayam. Note the folded wheelchair in the space behind the passenger compartment, providing a solution for passengers who can transfer from their wheelchairs. The use of taxis and auto- or cycle-rickshaws is only one of many topics covered in the guide, including service models, new technologies, eligibility screening, funding sources, planning, vehicles, wheelchair safety, driver training, scheduling, outreach, budgeting, NGO transportation, and rural paratransit. Separate case studies are provided to learn from paratransit services in New Delhi, Cape Town, Istanbul, Moscow, São Paulo, Kuala Lumpur, and rural France.

Readers can download the guide at our website at www.globalride-sf.org/paratransit/Guide.pdf. There is no charge. Supplemental materials are also being prepared for posting at this site, and helpful links have been added in a new Paratransit category in our Resources section.

The guide is the work of many authors, with primary contributions by Richard Schultze, Tom Rickert, and Richard Weiner, with additional coordination of case studies by Elena Goubenko (Moscow), Tulay Atalay (Istanbul), and Halimah Abdullah (Kuala Lumpur). The work of all those preparing the guide was provided entirely or mainly pro bono, but the project would not have been possible without the financial support of the Foundation Veolia Environnement (France), Unwin Safety Systems (UK), and AZ Bus Sales and Vehicle Technical Consultants (both in the USA).

Readers in twenty-two countries have expressed appreciation for the guide. Sample comments:

- "Great guide and resource!" (a U.N. official)
- "It is the first of this kind and . . . much needed for the sector that serves the majority of poor rural people with disabilities." (Sri Lanka)
- "This document will help us." (Ghana)
- "This is quite useful to understand how small things can make a huge difference in providing inclusive mobility." (India)
- ". . . a really practical down to earth assessment of what is needed and how to achieve it." (UK)
- "Nothing in the guide is superfluous; all the necessary detail is there." (France)

Where do we go from here?

Jan. 17 Washington DC Roundtable on starting up and scaling up paratransit

Our guide (see page 2) is only a beginning. Now we need to review strategies to help implement the findings of the guide. This will be the theme of the 14th Annual Roundtable on accessible transport in the developing world, to be held on Thursday, January 17, 2013, 9 a.m. to 12 noon at facilities provided by the American Public Transportation Assn. (APTA) at 1666 "K" Street, NW, in downtown Washington, DC. The Roundtable is co-sponsored by AEI and the International Centre for Accessible Transportation (ICAT) of Montréal, Canada. The Roundtable will utilize a group-brainstorming format clustered around key themes. There is no charge for the event. However, space is limited and interest seems high! We encourage you to contact AEI to pre-register if you wish to participate.

Not just another conference: it is a launching pad **New Delhi TRANSED puts access on the agenda in India and beyond**

Access Exchange International strongly promoted the decision to hold TRANSED this past September in New Delhi – the first time ever under the leadership of a person with a disability and the first time ever in a developing world city. The greater New Delhi metropolitan region is the eighth largest in the world, with nearly 19 million residents. A megacity in every sense, New Delhi brings together extremes of wealth and poverty that require new thinking to address the mobility needs of more than a million persons with disabilities and, by extension, to grapple with the challenge of creating livable cities for the exploding populations of Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

What made this event happen was the vision of Sminu Jindal, who heads up the host agency, Svayam, working with her staff and in partnership with the Delhi Government, the Delhi Transport Corporation, and the Indian Ministry of Tourism. Presentations were reviewed by a Scientific Committee headed up by Prof. Geetam Tiwari of the Indian Institute of Technology. An International Steering Committee included Tom Rickert of AEI and others who gathered in New Delhi a year ago to help plan the conference.

The nearly 600 participants present for the inauguration of the event came through with an



A typical interaction among accessible transport champions at TRANSED: From left, Gerhard Menckhoff, a consultant for the World Bank; Aychesh Molla, a disability leader in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Sonal Shah of EMBARQ India; and Jim Stanbury of Cape Town, South Africa, at a poster presentation explaining access features of Bus Rapid Transit systems in the Indian cities of Ahmedabad and Indore.

array of urban and rural accessible transport solutions which provide an agenda for practitioners to implement in years to come.

Merely to sample a menu that included twenty-one sessions with multiple presentations, a single session co-chaired by Tom Rickert of AEI and Sonal Shah of EMBARQ featured (1) an evaluation of progress toward accessible transit in Sweden, (2) research in India to assist blind persons to use buses, (3) recommendations to improve access to India's huge rail system, (4) a report on the new accessible rail system in Mecca (see story on p. 5), and (5) research on integrating accessible transport systems in Taiwan.

After recent conferences in Hong Kong (2010) and India (2012), the next TRANSED will be hosted in 2015 by the Instituto Superior Técnico in Lisbon, Portugal – go to www.ist.eu as the conference takes shape in months to come.



General view of plenary session at TRANSED – AEI photo



Persons with disabilities and other stakeholders work together in coordination with Kuala Lumpur's city government as they are trained to perform access audits for local facilities.

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

A city works with the community to "make access happen"

Cities need champions to convert the dream of an inclusive society into a reality. And Kuala Lumpur – a city of 2.2 million within a greater metropolitan area of more than seven million – is no exception. One such champion is Ch'ng Gaik Bee Abdullah (photo at left), called by one disability leader an "in-house activist . . . inspired to get it right for disabled persons' rights" at Kuala Lumpur City Hall (KLCH).



Ch'ng is an architect with the title of Deputy Director of the Kuala Lumpur City Hall Training Institute. The photo at top documents one of many workshops sponsored by KLCH as Kuala Lumpur seeks to improve its capacity to turn access regulations into reality as new facilities are constructed in this growing city. The list of agencies cooperating to make the workshops a success tells a story of coordination between city hall, government ministries, and the community. These include -

- the City Hall Disabled Persons Development Committee
- the International Islamic University Malaysia
- the national Ministry of Housing & Local Govt.
- the national Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development
- the Malaysian Association of Standards Users
- the national Association for the Blind

- the Malaysian Federation of the Deaf
- the Society of the Orthopaedically Handicapped, and
- the Beautiful Gate Foundation for the Disabled

We list these agencies because our experience around the world shows that coordination among government ministries (departments), academic and similar institutions, and both public and voluntary disability agencies is critical to getting the job done.

But it takes more than champions and coordination among interested parties. Kuala Lumpur City Hall has also produced training courses and workshops that emphasize the "continuum of access" required to have an unbroken trip chain between trip origins and destinations. KLCH also emphasizes checking on access compliance at all stages of development, including (1) the planning stage, (2) the construction stage, and (3) the monitoring stage.

Malaysia has a long history of activism in the accessibility field.

As an example, go to [youtube.com/watch?v=5Wj_KrLzvK0&feature=plcp](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Wj_KrLzvK0&feature=plcp) to view one of a series of YouTube videos put up by disability advocates in Penang, in this case to document obstacles faced by Khu Li Fang, a wheelchair user. (Info from Kuan Aw Tan in Penang) Kuala Lumpur's KTMB rail service is becoming more accessible. And the First South East Asia Conference on Accessible Tourism was held in Kuala Lumpur at the end of November, organized by the Beautiful Gate Foundation for the Disabled.

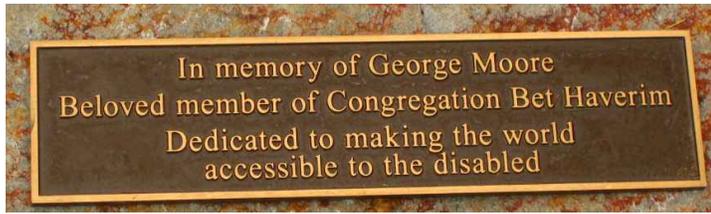


Pilgrims with disabilities are now able to use a new accessible rail line during the Hajj in Makkah (Mecca), Saudi Arabia. The high-speed elevated 18 km Makkah Metro was constructed by Saudi Arabia as a means of transportation between the Hajj sites. Nine 300-meter long stations average 36 meters in width in order to handle up to 72,000 pilgrims/hour during the period of the Hajj pilgrimage. The rail project reduces the carbon footprint during the Hajj by replacing tens of thousands of buses. For Mexico City Metro news, see page 7. (Photo courtesy of Mukhtar Al Shibani, President of the Global Alliance on Accessible Technologies and Environments [GAATES], info@gaates.org)



The photographs above illustrate a correctly secured wheelchair and occupant and a new 'Passport Plan' which has recently been introduced in the UK by the British Standards Institute. The 'passport' carries information about the occupant's needs, specific securement requirements of his/her wheelchair and any other information to ensure safe transport. The 'passport' has been introduced to facilitate transit when the passenger is unknown to the transport provider – often on long journeys. If this system were copied around the world, safer travel would be available for wheelchair users, however far their travels take them. (Information and photos from Unwin Safety Systems, go to www.unwin-safety.com for advice on this topic and wheelchair safety.)

Franklin Roosevelt his role model as a child Accessible transit pioneer George Moore honored in Davis, Calif.



Plaque in memory of George Moore at a landscaped bus stop built by Congregation Bet Haverim

During the tumultuous decade of 1930-40, George Moore and Franklin Delano Roosevelt had one thing in common. Both underwent rehabilitation for polio at the Warm Springs Rehabilitation Center that FDR founded in 1927, the year of George's birth. George was there as a child between ages 3 and 13. Roosevelt, then President of the United States, was frequently there as well. Both used wheelchairs for mobility.

To say that George had a good role model is a massive understatement. And when he died at age 83 in 2011 he left behind a world that was more accessible. Successful in many fields, he was a key member of San Francisco's advisory committee to make its bus and rail systems accessible. He also was a founding member of the Board of Directors of Access Exchange International. When he retired to Davis, California, he then helped make that city more accessible as well.

Acknowledging his contributions to Davis, George's synagogue, Congregation Bet Haverim, gifted the city with a landscaped bus stop outside their place of worship on Anderson Road, where a recent ceremony inaugurated the stop. The photo at bottom shows George's widow, Diane Moore, assisting a friend who uses a wheelchair onto a bus at the stop. Transit officials and synagogue representatives were on hand to celebrate the occasion. Diane carries on George's work as a member of the Davis Senior Citizens Commission. (Photos by Tom Rickert of AEI)



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Access Exchange International

112 San Pablo Ave., San Francisco, CA 94127, USA
Telephone: 1-415-661-6355
Web: www.globalride-sf.org
Email: tom@globalride-sf.org
Executive Director: Tom Rickert

Board of Directors: Marc Soto, President; Cheryl Damico, Vice-President; Bruce Oka, Secretary; Lucy Crain, Treasurer; Ike Nnaji; Tom Rickert; Peter Straus; Richard Weiner, and Susan Worts

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San Francisco, USA, celebrates 35 years of building access to public transportation

More than a hundred San Franciscans came together in October to celebrate a long history of working together to create access to the city's buses, trolley-coaches, metro light rail, and door-to-door paratransit services. As part of the ceremony, access director Annette Williams presented awards to outstanding paratransit staff. (Photo by AEI)



News and Notes from Around the World

AMERICAS



• **Canada:** Calgary continues to expand its accessible services, opening its latest light rail line (West LRT) in December. See photo at left and, yes, it gets cold up there! Meanwhile, Calgary is adding another 55 taxis to its current fleet of 100 taxis with rear-mounted ramps (photo below). Karim Rayani, Manager of Access Calgary, points out that the new vehicles must be available for late-night trips along with other requirements to assure service quality. . . . A global summit on "Destinations for All" will be held in Montréal in May, with information at www.keroul.qc.ca/en/ . . . A new report by Transport Canada takes a look at the increasing use of three- and four-wheeled scooters, complete with recommended signage which may prove helpful in other countries when such vehicles use public ways, notes Uwe Rutenberg.



• **USA:** Jim Yong Kim was appointed President of the World Bank some months ago, moving from the presidency of Dartmouth College. He brings with him a strong background in health and development issues. . . . Looking for updates on technology and accessibility? A recent issue of *Public Roads* by the Federal Highway Administration describes "the new frontier in accessible transportation." Go to <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/advancedresearch/pubs/11041/> for information on how technology that helps travelers with disabilities can also help everyone else. (Information from Mohammed Yousuf of the FHA.) . . . And go to www.worldbank.org/disability/cc2012 and then to "Presentations" for a helpful series of training modules developed under the oversight of Aleksandra Posarac and others at the Bank. For example, Module 8 contains four excellent summaries of accessibility issues, including Julie Babinard's presentation on "accessibility and transport" that provides a fine overview of implementation issues.

• **Brazil:** Transportation for passengers was a key topic at the "Rio+20" conference held in Rio de Janeiro this past year. In an action promoted by EMBARQ

and the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy, the world's eight largest development banks, including the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, pledged to provide more than US\$175 billion over the next ten years to support sustainable transport in developing countries. For those who benefit from inclusive design, this provides an unparalleled opportunity to "build it right the first time" when it comes to including access features in transportation projects. These features go hand in hand with a package of reforms that also cut congestion and limit the pollution that contributes to global warming. . . . Rio de Janeiro is also "front and center" with new Bus Rapid Transit corridors planned or in operation for the upcoming World Cup in June and July of 2014, as well as the Summer Olympics in 2016. Rio's recently-opened *Transoeste* BRT stretches out for 56 kilometers with 64 stations – one of which appears below – with less than two minutes between buses. *Transoeste* appears accessible to seniors and persons with disabilities, although concerns have been raised about the angle of some ramps leading into the stations, need for better contrast between some tactile guideways and the platform, as well as access to ticket vending machines for people using wheelchairs. It is hoped that lessons learned from the initial line will make the next three lines even more accessible: Watch this space as *Transcarioca*, *Transolímpica*, and *Transbrasil* come on line in the near future. (Photo & information from Angela Costa Werneck in Rio)



• **Mexico:** One of the largest subway systems in the Americas, the Mexico City Metro took a giant step toward "access for all" when it opened its new Line 12 in October to serve the southern portion of one of the world's largest megacities. The twenty stations on the 26 km line are stated to be accessible for everyone. For many years, the Metro limped along with only five underground stations – out of more than a hundred – whose platforms could be reached by those unable to climb stairs or use escalators. Officials had backed away from plans to make **(continued on page 8)**

News and Notes

(continued from page 7)

nine additional stations accessible when another line was planned a dozen years ago. But times have changed, and the Metro now joins a global trend to make new subway lines accessible to all. Now local advocates want Line 12 to serve as an example of good practice to foster improvements to the sidewalks and crossings leading to the stations.

ASIA



- **Vietnam:** TalkVietnam reports that two additional buses with low-floors, wide doors, and wheelchair ramps are now in service in Ho Chi Minh City, as shown in the photo. The goal is to make 150 of HCM City's 3000 buses accessible by 2020, which is a discouraging figure for the nearly 100,000 persons with disabilities who live there.

- **China:** Bus Rapid Transit development continues to flourish in China. Unfortunately, there are growing concerns that access to BRT stations, as well as access from station platforms to the buses, is often inaccessible to many categories of passengers with mobility impairments. . . . We thank Rex Luk in Hong Kong for introducing us to Lingo Lin, the provider of commercial accessible taxi services in neighboring Shenzhen. Mr. Lin notes that paratransit for less-wealthy disabled Chinese remains under-developed and needs to become more available to the average disabled person. . . . The central government issued a new regulation promoting accessible transportation that went into effect in August, notes a People's Daily Online report cited by GAATES.

- **India:** Bus Rapid Transit projects, often with many accessibility features, are operating or under construction in more than a dozen major cities, with more than forty additional BRT corridors being planned in six other cities. As with many cities, the biggest problem is lack of access on the sidewalks and crossings leading to the stations. . . . A BBC News report notes an effort by an organization of car owners to allow private cars to use what were built to be exclusive BRT lanes in Delhi, using the remarkable rationale that people who drive cars are "decision makers" while bus users can wait because they are engaged in less important jobs. "Less than 10% of people in Delhi use private cars. More than 33% travel by buses and 30% walk to work," noted Prof. Geetam Tiwari of the Indian Institute of Technology in Delhi.

EUROPE

A European Accessibility Act is expected to promote access to public transport throughout the 27 countries of the European Union, notes Ann Frye in the UK, with final proposals expected in coming months.

- **France:** AEI congratulates Maryvonne Dejeammes upon her retirement from CERTU, a leading transport research institute where she has worked for twenty-six years as one of Europe's outstanding champions of access for all.

- **Southeastern Europe:** A recent report indicates that Croatia is more supportive of independent living for disabled persons than other countries in the region. Serbia may present the greatest challenge. (SETimes, as reported by GAATES.)

- **Turkey:** A number of articles passed on by "GAATES global accessibility news" focus on the fluid situation in Turkey, where a deadline recently passed for cities to comply with access regulations for the nation's 8 million persons with disabilities. Advocates state that compliance has at most reached 10%.

- **Sweden:** Google "Rural Transport Solutions EU" for reports on a successful project to enhance paratransit in sparsely populated rural and coastal areas of Nordic countries (report by Richard Schultze).

AFRICA

- **South Africa:** Cape Town has been designated the World Design Capital for 2014 by the Intl. Council of Societies of Industrial Design. The city's accessible BRT system was a major factor, notes Jim Stanbury.

- **Tanzania:** Oscar Kikoyo reports that the first phase of Dar es Salaam's DART Bus Rapid Transit system is under construction, with access planned via ramped platforms leading to floor-level boarding of high-floor buses. The photo below sent by him shows officials inspecting the work.

