Universal Design in Public Transport

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WHO GATE Forum on Assistive Technologies
Organisational background

The National Development Plan (NDP) is the South African Government’s plan to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030. The NDP provides the strategic framework against which government monitors progress.

The National Department of Transport published *The Public Transport Strategy* in 2007. It requires new public transport systems to be 100% (universally) accessible. Existing public transport systems must be upgraded over time to the same standard.

The Implementation Strategy to Guide the Provision of Accessible Public Transport Systems in South Africa identifies how the goal of universal access will be met by all levels of government.
1. To implement universal access across the travel chain for new public transport projects (on all modes; whether road, rail, air or sea), to upgrade existing public transport, to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Strategy.

2. To identify where universal design standards for public transport, public transport systems and public space are lacking, to develop these as national standards.

3. To coordinate liaison with national NGOs, other government departments, and the travelling public. This includes taking and registering complaints from universal access passengers: passengers with disabilities, pregnant women, elderly passengers, children, and passengers accompanying children.
Innovative aspects

- A dedicated grant to assist municipalities to fund new universally accessible public transport. This is called the Public Transport Network Grant (PTNG)

- It contains conditions on universal design with which municipalities have to comply

- Municipal development of a Universal Design Access Plan (UDAP). Municipalities have to implement the UDAP in the new integrated public transport networks (IPTNS)

- Targeted development in 13 of the largest municipalities to develop IPTNS. Together these municipalities account for nearly 50% of the national population
The impact created

- IPTN systems are connecting up areas of cities that have never been connected before due to apartheid spatial planning

- People with disabilities have never been able to travel on public transport (both road and rail) before and are now able to

- People with disabilities are involved in transport planning and development of standards in a new way

- Municipalities are gaining knowledge and are now able to implement existing legislation that they did not understand
## Successes and life stories

| Number of municipalities operating services | 4/13 |
| Number of municipalities operating services in 2018-2020 | 10/13 |
| Weekday passengers in all 4 municipalities | 145,000 |
| Average weekday passengers with disabilities* | 10,875 |
| Average weekday universal access passengers* | 87,000 |

*Based on a national statistical estimate, 7.5% & 60% respectively

| Jo’burg | Length of time in operation | 8 years |
| Passengers boarding per weekday | 54,000 |
| Number of new accessible buses | 261* |
| Municipal population | 4,434,827 |
| New Public Transport Network | 55 km² |

* Buses are high floor; level boarding only at trunk stations, moving to low entry over the next 5-10 years
# Successes and life stories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Length of time in operation</th>
<th>Passengers boarding per weekday</th>
<th>Number of new accessible buses</th>
<th>Municipal population</th>
<th>New Public Transport Network</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tshwane</td>
<td>2.75 years</td>
<td>5 000</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>2,921,488</td>
<td>31 km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Town</td>
<td>7 years</td>
<td>74 000</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>3,740,026</td>
<td>400 km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George</td>
<td>2.5 years</td>
<td>11 500</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>193,672</td>
<td>45 km²</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. **Universal access standards**: not thorough enough & not well-known enough
2. **Speed of delivery**: lack of historical implementation in universal access leads to a slow pace of change
3. **Ethics**: professional lack of responsibility from some service providers (of professional bodies – architects/engineers, and some operating companies)
4. **Teamwork**: lack of national, provincial and municipal teamwork
5. **Silo thinking**: tunnel vision of government departments at all levels of government – main UA focus is on new road-based public transport
6. **Unintended costs**: mistakes made due to lack of knowledge, or lack of coordination between implementing departments and spheres of government
7. **Finances**: costs driven up by over-charging, national budgets cut due to Rand uncertainty
8. **Evaluation**: different ways of measuring success, due to different unspoken goals
9. **Car-based focus**: trying to please everyone means not meeting the needs of the priority group – vulnerable public transport users
10. **Ambitious**: is the jump too big? Too much too soon…..
Next steps....

- Geographical transformation by linking universally designed housing with accessible public transport in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals to create inclusive cities for everyone
- Translating policy into practice, building alliances within government and in the private sector to achieve more effective implementation
- Implementation of other existing disability rights-based legislation on service delivery for more responsive municipal government
- Developing indicators for municipal self-assessment on progress towards accessible integrated transport systems, and reviewing the Accessible Transport Strategy
Thank you

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