Innovation in Accessible Transport for All

Overview of Issues

Ann Frye
Ann Frye Ltd
Innovation

- Innovation is about challenging traditional ways of thinking and working;
- Innovation is about finding new approaches and new solutions;
- Innovation is needed both in developed and developing economies: solutions can be high tech or low tech, complex or simple;
- But solutions cannot always be transferred from one to the other.
Setting the scene: Demographics

- Today almost 1 in 10 people in the world are over 60 years old;
- By 2050 the figure will be higher than 1 in 5, increasing from 673 million in 2005 to 2 billion;
- As the number of older people rises, the birth rate is falling;
- So there will be fewer working age people to sustain an ageing population without mobility.
Global population trends: Ageing

- Currently 64% of older people live in less developed regions, by 2050 this figure will rise to 80%;
- The number of people over 80 is growing at 4% per annum; the population as a whole is growing at 1% per annum;
- 3.5 million people will be over 100 years old by 2050: Over half will live in Asia.
Population over 60 by Region

Source: HelpAge International
The link between age and disability

- There is a strong correlation between age and disability;
- Two thirds of disabled people are seniors.
Link between age and disability

Percentage with locomotor disability

Age Group

- 16-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75-84
- 85+

Men and women
Global population trends: Disability

- 80% of the world’s 500 million disabled population live in developing countries;
- Ageing populations in developing countries will add to this number;
- There is a strong link between disability and poverty.
Other key trends: Urbanization

- Urbanization will be a universal trend in most societies of the future;
- Since 2007 more than half the world population has been urban;
- By 2025, nearly 60% of the total world population will live in cities;
- There are economies of scale and benefits of higher density in reducing per capita costs for transport infrastructure, and possibly social services;
- But there are greater overall costs per capita in urban areas for basic services (higher quality/quantity of services);
- Urbanization will strain the fiscal capacity of urban areas to respond to new infrastructure needs.
Other key trends: Rural poverty

- Rural communities need very different solutions;
- Transport and infrastructure are often scarce – or non-existent;
- Isolation is one of the key factors affecting poverty: Settlements located away from main routes have little or no access to social services and markets;
- Access to health, education and employment opportunities is very limited;
- Within rural communities, households without assets and labour power are the poorest. They include old or disabled people.
Other key trends: Ageing in place

- Some countries are looking specifically at the impact of an ageing population on their infrastructure;
- Among priorities identified are:
  - Enabling older people to age in place;
  - Creating barrier free and accessible environments;
  - Enabling seniors to be well connected and active in society;
- Accessible public transport within a barrier free pedestrian environment are key to this vision.
Innovation in policy making

- The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability is an important catalyst for change;
- It calls for new ideas and new technology to promote mobility and independent living;
- A key starting point is new thinking about how government structures recognise and support people with disabilities;
- How can we make sure that signatures are translated into policy and changes on the ground?
Innovation in collaborative working

- Accessible transport can bring significant health benefits;
- **Why is it so difficult for these benefits to be recognised in government investment?**
- New accessible public transport is often introduced alongside inaccessible streets and sidewalks;
- **Why can’t different public authorities work together to create seamless travel?**
Innovation in engagement

- The engagement of people with disabilities is crucial to understanding and delivery;
- Their participation must be a non-negotiable part of every legal framework and policy making process;
- Why are they so often marginalised or brought in too late?
Innovation in Finance

- Fiscal and financial innovation are needed:
  - to open up new ways to support investment in accessible transport and pedestrian facilities;
  - To enable people with disabilities to travel so that they can find employment and live independently;

- Too often accessibility is an afterthought – or left out entirely: How can we break that cycle?
Innovation in Research

- Too much research in the accessibility field is theoretical;
- We need innovative research to create real solutions to real problems;
- More attention needs to be focussed on low cost simple solutions that can help large numbers of people.
- How can we change the emphasis of research?
Innovation in Planning

• We need innovative approaches to land use planning so we don’t build hospitals and shops where no-one can reach them;

• We need to re-create neighbourhoods as a basis for sustainable living;

• A good starting point would be to train all our planning and transport professionals so they understand the issues;

• Why is that still not a routine requirement?
Innovation in Design & Technology

- People with disabilities have benefitted from many advances and technology;
- But design effort is seldom directed primarily at understanding and meeting their needs;
- Cost and an insufficient market are often excuses for inaction;
- **What can we do to promote universal design concepts from which everyone benefits?**
Closing the Gap

- We have a significant gap
  - Between rhetoric and reality;
  - Between laws passed and laws enacted and enforced;
  - Between policy statements and financial commitment;

- What will it take to close that gap?
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