

Making roads safer and more accessible

Guidelines for Policy and Decision Makers

Roads are necessary for economic and social development. But in Papua New Guinea and around the world, roads are often either not accessible or not conveniently usable to people with disabilities, older people, and children. Roads can also be unsafe: traffic accidents are the second most common cause of death and disability in developing countries such as Papua New Guinea.

It is invariably less expensive and easier to incorporate safety and access measures in from the early planning stages, than to try to fix problems later. Local people with disabilities and their families are frequently in the best position to advise on the specific access / usability / safety problems of roads, and therefore should be consulted in the following phases of road development and maintenance.

Planning: in prioritising maintenance works of existing roads and planning new roads, people with disabilities should be a key group to be consulted about problems and ideas for action. For instance, they can lead surveys on where it is most appropriate to have pedestrian crossings

Design: PNG road design standards should incorporate provisions for people with disabilities as a matter of policy. The following priorities have been identified from research: adequate width footpaths and verges; pedestrian crossings and safety islands near schools, PMV stops, trade stores / markets, and health clinics; avoidance of steps with pedestrian ramps at crossings and off bridge footways; speed limits and signage and other speed control measures in built up areas such as villages and towns; pavement repair at crossings and footpaths; seating at PMV stops.

Construction: provide suitable barriers and signage and alternate routes, to maintain safety for those with disabilities as well as general public. Provide traffic wardens full-time whilst work is in progress.

Maintenance: Establish on-going maintenance programs for roads generally and for provisions for those with disabilities.

Employment Opportunities: contractors to include employment opportunities for people with disabilities. For instance, they can be employed in road upgrading, maintenance and / or community liaison.

Budgeting: Adequate funding to be committed to allow for provisions in the design for those with disabilities; and for ongoing maintenance of these provisions, e.g. keeping footpaths clear. Budget separately for national as well as focused road safety campaigns.

Monitoring and Evaluation: evaluate the impacts of road management, design and construction, including in relation to road safety, with particular reference to those with disabilities

Management: Review the results of monitoring and evaluation and make improvements to road design and maintenance standards and practices; conduct road safety campaigns, nationally and locally

The **PNG Assembly of Disabled People** is an umbrella organization for disabled people's organizations in PNG. Local contacts can be provided for your provincial DPO. As part of the *Travelling Together* Project, people with disabilities have been trained across several regions to provide assistance in conducting research on disability inclusive road. Please contact Ipul Powesau for more details: +675 72153047 or pngadp@gmail.com





It is important to get accurate and up to date information on traffic safety issues. Local police and health care providers may be able to help, as can the **National Roads Safety Council** (+675 325 0722). The PNG Assembly of Disabled People and its local contacts are willing and capable of assisting the authorities with identification of traffic 'black spots' and other problem areas on the road systems, and has people trained for this task.

The following methods of finding out more information about how people with disabilities use roads have proven successful in the Travelling Together project:

- One or more **group discussions** should be held with local people with disabilities, and where appropriate (such as for those under 18) their parents or carers, in order to identify particular access and safety concerns and also road networks that are particularly important for pedestrian access. Discussions should include people with a range of different impairments e.g. hearing and vision impairments, mobility impairments, intellectual impairments, mental health conditions. It can be useful to hold separate meetings for people with some

impairments, particularly if they face severe communication barriers. For instance, people with hearing impairments may require sign language interpreters or assistance from a family member who can communicate with them; and people with intellectual impairments may require use of simplified language. Group discussions can take 1–2 hours.

- **Moveabouts** are audits of particularly important stretches of road (e.g. near schools, health care, trade stores and / or Public Motor Vehicle stops) led by people with disabilities. Participants move along the road and identify good and bad features of the road, areas where they have access difficulties etc. These rarely cover more than a 500 metre stretch of road and last about 1–1.5 hours.
- **Photographs, posters, mapping and other visual methods** can be very effective in getting information about good aspects of roads as well as priorities for improvement, particularly with people who have difficulties with spoken language. Photographs during moveabouts or asking for pictures of problem spots can be integrated into consultation.

OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES

- Queensland Australia Department of Main Roads Standards
- Universal Design Guidelines for the Australian Aid Program
- Development for All: towards a disability inclusive Australian Aid Program 2009–2014
- PNG National Policy on Disability Overview (2009)
- WHO / World Bank World Report on Disability (2011)



PNG Assembly of
Disabled Persons

