

# Travelling Together: Learnings from research into transport access by people with disability in PNG

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# What is 'Travelling Together'?



- AusAID funded: Australian Development Research Award (ADRA)
- Participatory research project May 2010-Apr 2013
- Examining access by people with disability to road transport infrastructure and road planning processes in PNG.
- Developing tools and resources to guide in improving transport access



# Transport in PNG



- Primary means of road transportation in PNG is **walking** (World Bank 2008)
- **Buses** (PMVs - Public Motor Vehicles) also important, given limited vehicle ownership
- About 35% of population live over 10 km from a major road; 17% have no road access at all
- Poor & marginalised more likely to rely on walking/ buses; motorisation can threaten these functions
- Evidence in developing countries that road improvements can **negatively** impact poor

# Roads: Necessary but Dangerous



Road development can **reduce poverty** in developing countries by improving transport access to:

- Essential services: schools & healthcare
- Social networks
- Economic opportunities

But roads are also a source of **danger**:

- Road traffic accidents the second biggest cause of death & disability in developing countries
- For PWD, poor road access can contribute to unemployment and social exclusion

# Why consider accessibility?



## Mandated by **UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

- **Article 9: Accessibility.** “States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation ...”
- **Article 32: International Cooperation.** “Ensure that international cooperation, including international development programmes, is inclusive of and accessible to people with disabilities.”



# Why consider accessibility?



- Up to 15% of PNG population are people with disability. PWD are in every community
- PWD a poor and marginalised group: disproportionately affected by inaccessible transport
- Accessible transport is more accessible for everyone
- Cheaper to plan it in than fix later



# Why consider accessibility?



PWD often have varied additional access needs to other road/transport users:

- Do not get visual or aural cues from traffic
- Cannot move quickly or navigate obstacles easily
- Need space and ramps for wheelchairs
- More reliant on walking or public transport, due to poverty/ no vehicle access

# Research: sites and tools



Stretches of roads in five sites: 2 urban, 3 rural  
Combination of completed roads and those under re-development or maintenance.

## Research tools:

- **Interviews** with local road decision-makers
- **Group discussions** with people with disabilities
- **“Moveabouts”**: access audits of sections of roads
- Photographs and **poster making**





# How does transport access influence lives of PWD in PNG?



**Roads facilitate transport access to services for people with disability, mainly via walking**

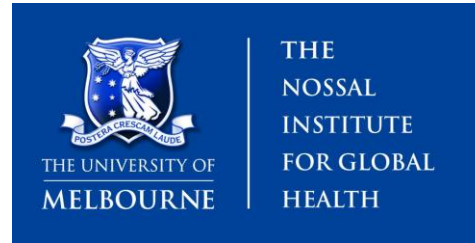
e.g. Schools, stores, health clinics, work

- Well-maintained roads & paths make travel easier

**BUT use of services is severely limited by inaccessible and dangerous roads**

- Improved roads bring more traffic and faster speeds, people fear being hit by vehicles
- Roads and infrastructure are often not accessible for people with a variety of impairments

# What hinders PWD accessing roads and transport?



## **Footpaths are difficult to navigate**

- Too narrow or steep for wheelchairs
- Blocked by parked cars, people, markets
- Flooded due to blocked/absent drains; overgrown
- Road verges covered with loose gravel and rocks
- People are forced to travel on dangerous roads



# What hinders PWD accessing roads and transport?



## **Lack of marked crossings**

- No or inadequate crossings at busy areas
- Signs too close to the crossing, not maintained
- Traffic does not slow down through villages: speed limits not enforced

## **Narrow bridges with limited pedestrian access**

- No footpaths: pedestrians forced to walk on the road
- Overgrown, narrow footpaths; no railings
- Steps rather than ramps





# What hinders PWD accessing roads and transport?



## Poor road drainage and maintenance

- Flooding blocks roads & footpaths, causes damage
- Open drainage ditches hazards for vision impaired
- Potholes and unsealed roads bumpy for wheelchairs; cars swerve and so endanger pedestrians



# What hinders PWD accessing roads and transport?



## No bus stops and poor bus access

- Lack of proper bus stops, no seats or shade: unsafe or uncomfortable to wait at
- No locations marked on buses: people with hearing impairments can't hear driver announcements
- Buses inaccessible for wheelchair users, those with mobility impairments





# What hinders PWD accessing roads and transport?



## Lack of Public Awareness

- Vehicle drivers and other road users do not perceive PWD as road users
- Disabilities can be 'invisible' e.g. hearing impairment, intellectual impairment
- Do not recognise PWD may have different needs e.g. move more slowly, cannot hear traffic

**Roads are planned for cars and trucks, not for pedestrians**

# How do PWD participate in Road Decision-Making?



- Interviewed decision-makers did not report consulting with PWD. PWD report no direct consultation on road issues
- Opportunities for improved consultation with communities: **involving people** in prioritising improvements, not just **informing them**
- Addressing barriers to participation by PWD:
  - Transport/access to reach consultations
  - Enable communication: sign language, Braille
  - Seek to build status of PWD and support DPOs
  - Separate consultations specifically for PWD

# Key Lessons for Donors and Implementers



- People with disability can have **additional transport access needs** to wider community
- Without **specific consultations** with PWD, these needs are often not identified or understood by decision-makers
- **Impacts of exclusion** from transport are typically greater for PWD – already poorer, marginalised and face multiple barriers
- Accessibility measures **benefit all** – children, elderly, pregnant – and promote development outcomes

# Key Lessons for Donors and Implementers



- Disability Inclusion a **key priority** for AusAID
- AusAID's 'Development for All' strategy commits to infrastructure activities being **inclusive** of and **accessible** to PWD
- Inclusion mandated by **UN Convention**
- **Expertise** and **guidance** available: PWD, Disabled People's Organisations, consultants
- **Tools:** AusAID Accessible Design Guide is forthcoming; 'Travelling Together' resources

# Key Lessons for Donors and Implementers



- Many changes to improve transport access are **cheap to implement** (footpaths, signs, bus stops). Others save money over time (drainage)
- It is most **efficient** and **cheapest** to incorporate disability inclusion from the start of a project
- Consider **pedestrians** within transport strategies and projects





# What are the best approaches to consulting with PWD?



- **PWD and their organisations** best placed to inform about their transport needs and usage
- Consider **different impairments**: physical, vision, hearing, intellectual, psychosocial (mental illness)
- Participatory, inclusive processes are **inexpensive & available**: focus group discussions, access audits, photographs
- Address **specific barriers** to participation: do not assume general measures will reach PWD

# Thank you



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