



Closing session presentation

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At the social development session we heard from speakers and had a panel discussion. As inclusive transport was our main theme and we had quite a short time period we covered something of a grab bag of issues which I will do my best to summarize here:

1. HIV/AIDS – Prevention is the key. We need to keep up the pressure on this. Having buy-in at the country-level is important but in Asia it can be difficult to get this because there is still as perception that it's not a big problem.
2. Gender – Progress has been made but the gender issue has many dimensions. We can't assume that we have a complete understanding of it. We need to keep investing in research and monitoring.
3. Human trafficking – Little concrete or accurate information is known. Critically, we need a new approach. The campaigns undertaken to stop trafficking have been ineffective and their messages have been conflictive and confusing. A new approach is badly needed, perhaps incorporating some of the successes that have been made in the HIV/AIDS prevention field.
4. Disabilities – This needs more attention and mainstreaming of universal access design standards and guidelines. In some countries pressure needs to be brought to bear at the political level to really push these issues. In some countries universal access designs are still considered to be variances on normal planning codes and need special permission to go ahead. This needs to change. There is also a perception that the expense of interventions is too high. This needs to be challenged, and the benefits need to be spelled out more clearly, particularly as universal access design opens transport to many excluded people, not just those with physical disabilities. It can make transport accessible to mothers with pushchairs, the elderly, people carrying heavy loads, etc. You often solve more than one problem when introducing greater accessibility.
5. Maternal health – Women and health lobbies at the country level have experienced some success. These should be supported and expanded. There have also been some successes in cases where Health Ministries and Transport Ministries have worked together.
6. Remote communities – Decision-makers never go to remote communities so they are often left out of the process. It is difficult for them to get attention. Solutions need to be realistic by considering and implementing low-technology options. For example, by incorporating non-motorised transport and engineered pathways into planning of road networks.



7. Maintenance – Needs more funding and attention but tends to be unpopular at the political level. This is equally a problem in rural and urban areas.

Some major discussion points included:

- We can't assume that building a road/bridge is universally a good thing. It may open up a community to disease and exploitation among other things. Strong social analysis needs to be applied and safeguards put in place.
- Donor-funded projects do have guidelines and requirements but these are not enough because enforcing them is often left to governments. In cases where political will is low they are often disregarded. This is particularly a problem in countries where civil society is weak and undeveloped and the government cannot be challenged effectively.
- Sometimes lower-technology, short-term solutions for providing access, such as better pathways, encouraging intermediate transport, should be sought and promoted.
- There is obviously a strong need for country/locally driven support but this can be difficult to achieve. Yet these initiatives still need to be pursued.
- All stakeholders need to keep pushing social development issues at all levels and be well-enough informed to recognise where there are opportunities to enhance inclusiveness. E.g. there is a need to be better at communicating and providing information on good practice.
- We need better cost-benefit analysis because it can be quite convincing. For example, the low cost of providing condoms to truckers compared to the high cost of treating them for HIV.
- Users and stakeholders need to be strongly involved. This was particularly felt in our discussions to be necessary for disable access in transport because this group has been excluded for so long. Also they can offer practical design help for testing access.
- Many of these solutions have a political dimension so politicians need to be engaged and held accountable.
- Finally, much of what we talked about is well-known already but only superficially applied. We need to keep pushing for better and more profound uptake.

Some recommendations:

- that a certain percent of the cost of all infrastructure projects funded by donors be automatically spent on social/community improvement



- transport projects should identify and prioritise, with stakeholder participation so resources can be better allocated from the start.
- Guidelines on disabled access need to be mainstreamed.
- Maintenance needs to be elevated in importance because it can make a huge difference in terms of on-going access.
- Need for knowledge exchange and advocacy.