

PWGD PowerPoint presentation Universal Access to Transport Summit: Speaker 1

Dr Vic McKinney

Notes for corresponding slides.

Slide seven

people with disabilities/disability organisations need to be involved in the planning of new accessible infrastructure – from grassroots community level to urban structures, such as train stations, taxi ranks et cetera – from the outset, i.e. design and concept level.

Slide eight

despite areas of improvement progress has been too slow – key causes = lack of political will and collaboration with people with disabilities – from manufacturers, to government to other stakeholders, such as SANTACO

slide nine

we need investment, along with long-term buy in and monitoring and evaluation of projects, especially those proving successful so far – more research into these areas will encourage collaboration, awareness/education, as well as help to bring down long-term costs of adaptations and be able to incorporate costs in tenders and mainstream budget channels

Universal Access not only helps people with disabilities but a range of others, elderly, including pregnant woman, people living with HIV, scholars, cyclists, et cetera.

Slide 10

Vic being carried down steps off a plane because of no available PAU at the airport, extremely dangerous and life-threatening – other photos show people not able to access transport, not being allowed on a taxi – negative attitudes towards disability – highlights lack of awareness, education and training within the built environment and transport sector in particular – education is key. We need authoritative groups like Engineering Council of South Africa to demand that universities and colleges et cetera include UA/disability as a topic across built environment-related curricula and exit level outcomes, so that students graduate with knowledge of disability and how to include people with disabilities in professional practice. Failure to do this will mean that future professionals will keep repeating the same exclusionary mistakes, year after year.

Slide 11

slide 11 highlight status quo – lack of community involvement, lack of dignity and participation – as a result disability is seen as a liability and social problem, perpetuates negative attitudes where people with disabilities are regarded as not being able to do anything, e.g. work and/or be in relationships, et cetera. Furthermore, South Africa has created a dependency model where most people with disabilities have become reliant on their social grant, or childcare grants for parents. Currently the disability grant is R 2000 per month – there are just over 1 million people between ages of 18 and 59 currently relying on disability grant each month – equals R 25 billion per year – this figure is only going to increase as the number of people with disabilities is not going to decrease.

Simple equation shows that a person receiving a disability grant receives $R\ 2000 \times 12 = R24,000$ per annum

so 10 people with disabilities equal R240,000.

So for every 10 people who are sustainably employed , that will save the State R 240,000 per year – over four years this is a saving of approximately 1,000,000 Rand for every 10 people with disabilities having employment – not only that, long-term unemployment means they become taxpayers and are contributing to the economy. Moreover, we need to develop channels of people with disabilities entering employment so that the new generation of students and children with disabilities will be able to be able to work, participate and contribute to the economy instead of having to rely on disability grants when they grow up.

Dr Vic McKinney

sky@iafrica.com

PWGD PowerPoint presentation Universal Access to Transport Summit: Speaker 2

Shakila Maharaj

I am Shakila Maharaj member of the PWGD, an organisational Psychologist by profession, from ShazaCin Accessible Media providing audio description services and delivering this through our mobile app "describeAT".

Vick has given you a history of the PWGD and how its involvement has culminated in today's event. The objective of this presentation by the four PWGD members is to respond to the adequacy of the DOT UA action plan specific to the disability focus. In so doing provide collectively our recommendations for consideration. These are to be included in the breakaway sessions out of which the resolutions will result and go forward to be actioned. As members we come from different disability subsectors and can speak best to our own transportation accessibility needs.

The DOT action plan is extensive and represents international standard practice and covers well the commonly understood disability needs. However there are gaps that exist in the lesser known disabilities namely invisible disabilities and in my case blindness. I will pause here and hand to Mthoko to read the input on invisible disabilities from Autism SA submitted by Lisa Aziz. (I will provide this separately.)

Blindness

Picking up on the accessibility needs related to blindness, the stereotypical understanding is to put in place a few basic provisions and believe that these remove the barriers to our independent mobility and I see that the same approach is evident in the action plan. This is not unique to SA but is the trend across most countries.

I propose reasons for this limited understanding, is also contributed to, by blind persons coping methods to overcome these deficiencies in accessibility. The convenient route is to resort to sighted help from another human being. I am equally guilty of this. It is easier to hold the arm of a person and be led than to navigate independently our environment as a pedestrian or a passenger regardless of the modes of transport. So much so, that sighted assistance has become professionalised and our dependency entrenched.

In countries like SA where blind accessibility features minimally exist in the design of our built environment and transportation systems, combined with crime, inappropriate use and poor maintenance of pavements, roads, not to mention public ignorance, it becomes necessary to resort to sighted assistance to safely get to where we need to go.

This is a catch 22 situation, The more we depend on sighted help and abdicate our independence to another the less the understanding of the barriers we face and the less is known on how best to address them. Limited understanding results in compromised solutions. I believe the starting point is to understand a few key principles on how we function as blind persons.

Visualisation- A basic premise to grasp is that **blind persons see**. Through words, sounds and all our senses we constantly in-vision and live in a highly visual colourful world created by our imagination and definitely not in darkness. The majority of us 80% become blind later in life and carry a strong visual frame of reference and even those who are congenitally blind still perceive the visual world. It is a myth to focus exclusively on our other senses. We live in a visual world and must be part of it. Audio description is the access tool and artform to describe imagery and must be used to convey

visual information enabling us to see our environment as we navigate it. Being informed empowers us to make our own choices and contribute to accessibility solutions.

cognitive mapping- We mentally plot the route from departure to arrival, whether within our homes or to our work. Accessibility means providing an overview, the total picture and not piecemeal fragmented information. Scale down models, tactile maps accompanied with audio description may work effectively.

Memorising- We retain in our heads the twists and turns, the sounds, rises and falls of a terrain whether indoors or outdoors. Accessibility means Repetitive engagement, consistency and reliability of layout and cues.

Familiarisation- Orientation and being inducted to new accessibility features, layouts and routes is vital. Providing braille signage, QR codes, manual voice prompts without us knowing exactly where these are and how to locate them and use them is of little value. Would it not be amazing if I could book at a train station an orientation session with an assigned and trained official which would familiarise me to everything and thereafter, allow me independent movement. Since we will never be in a perfect world familiarisation equally helps us to understand the accessibility gaps/deficiencies and enables us to accommodate them and navigate around them.

Defined spaces- Effective navigation works best in clearly defined spaces. Vast open plan layouts serve to confuse. Braille trails provides effective means to navigate such situations e.g. foyers, airports, train stations etc.

White cane technique- It is horrific the number of blind persons in SA that do not know how to use the white cane correctly and do not have the opportunity to O&M training. M&O is a critical life skill and every visually impaired person must be taught to use this from preschool level or whenever the onset of blindness occurs.

Smart sighted assistance- The need for support from sighted persons is very relevant and necessary. However how this support is provided must be reengineered. It should be provided to enhance our independence and not foster dependency. It should liberate us and empower us to navigate confidently our world freely.

All these principles need to work together. If we understand these simple principles on which we operate we can design accessible transport systems irrespective of the mode of transport to facilitate our independent and effective movement in whatever the context. Pockets of excellence:

Safe and independent mobility is not an utopia but a reality. In my travels over the years I have experienced pockets of excellence in blindness accessibility.

In some USA cities like Manhattan, New York the grid layout of streets and avenues and building numbering provides a perfect cognitive map effective to navigate. Together with the consistency of tactile paving, street crossing ramps, traffic light buzzers empowered me to take on the city and use over-ground transport systems independently.

In a suburb in Tokyo, Japan The consistent design of tactile tracks/braille trails on pavements lead you effectively to street crossings and different locations. My tour guide amazingly was a local blind colleague who guided me from my hotel to the under-ground subways which we travelled together and explored fascinating places. The protective design of the walled off platforms and consistent location of opening doors and perfect alignment of platform and train floors was a thrilling and liberating experience.

In Florida I encountered the most empowering deployment of sighted assistance. We were several thousand visually impaired persons attending a convention and exclusively occupying an enormous high-rise hotel. The building was like a self-contained city with numerous entertainment and shopping areas not to mention the countless convention venues which we had to find. Hotel staff were appointed as marshals outside elevators, along corridors, vast foyers, gardens, and what felt like every turn you took. These marshals spotted you and verbally pointed you in the right direction and ushered you along. I lost all my fear of leaving my room and navigating this enormous space and developed total confidence that I will reach my destination, and I did. The freedom to be in charge, in control of your own time and make choices that you could act on, not to mention the vital growing knowledge of what was available in your surroundings, empowered me to use the gym,, shop crazy, meet with friends in different restaurants, visit the bathroom when I needed, and especially attend the many convention sessions that interested me. This is a wonderful example of sighted assistance used to liberate and not limit you.

In India there is an excellent initiative in progress constructing replicas/scale down models of tourism venues for blind visitors to touch. An overview of a facility like an airport, station, aircraft train, ship, immediately enhances your understanding of the bigger picture and supports your orientation and navigation. Information provided in peace-meal only serves to keep you insecure and restricts your ability to be mobile, reinforcing dependency on sighted help.

Smart technology has contributed phenomenally to blind accessibility. The growing number of mobile apps with increasing assistive features are equipping us to travel independently with e-hailing services, walk, shop, bank, work, be entertained, hold meetings and interact socially from the comfort of our desks. Accessibility teams consisting of persons with disabilities, at the core of the design is resulting in a greater understanding of the end-user experience and alignment of service to needs. However online freedom and navigating cyber space does not equate to physical freedom and navigating our world. The risk of becoming invisible in society is already apparent in certain north European countries. We must strike a balance. We require to find a way to take the various assistive technology apps and begin to work them into an integrated multimodal transportation model and create a mobility eco system for blind persons.

In conclusion I wish to reiterate the PWGD's position in recently reprioritising the priorities presented to government. The Disability Act(the power to litigate) and the Disability Development Agency (funding the disability agenda) are 2 non-negotiables that we are focused on. Without these in place the DOT Action Plan will remain an academic exercise. Successful implementation requires adequate budget and noncorrupt usage and enforcement and accountability are achieved through exercising legislative rights. Looking back we have come a long way and each small step as they say leads to big strides. Thank you.

SHAKILA MAHARAJ

Managing Director ShazaCin Accessible Media(PTY)Ltd.

Mobile: +27 (0)83 263 9870

Email: shakila@shazacin.com

Website: <https://www.shazacin.com>

LinkedIn: <https://za.linkedin.com/company/shazacin-accessible-media>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/shazacin>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/shazacin>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/shazacinofficial>



shazacin

[ShazaCin Logo – White headphones with black eyes for earpieces]

PWGD PowerPoint presentation Universal Access to Transport Summit: Speaker 3

Alex Msitshana

Good morning, esteemed guests and participants. Today, I stand before you as a member of the Presidential Working Group on Disability, driven by a common purpose:

To advocate for the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities, particularly in the realm of transportation. The theme for this summit today resonates deeply with our collective mission - "Accessible Transport for All."

My colleague Dr. McKinney has already highlighted, the action plan and priorities that we as the PWGD set forth for universal access and I would like to take that further, focussing specifically on how it pertains to persons with hearing impairments and the Deaf community.

We are all aware that South Africa boasts a robust legal framework aimed at promoting accessibility and inclusion in various sectors, including transportation.

Key legislation such as the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (PEPUDA) and the White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities underscore the government's commitment to upholding the rights and dignity of all citizens, regardless of ability.

In the transport sector, the National Land Transport Act and the Integrated National Disability Strategy set forth provisions for the universal accessibility of transport infrastructure, services, and facilities.

These policy instruments lay the foundation for our collective efforts to ensure equitable access to transportation for persons with disabilities, including those with hearing impairments.

Legislation, policy, and regulations are crucial pillars supporting universal accessibility. In the context of persons with hearing impairments, this entails ensuring that transport regulations accommodate accessible communication methods such as sign language interpretation and visual notifications.

Equitable and dignified access to customer service is paramount. Persons with hearing impairments deserve not just access but also the opportunity to engage and provide feedback. This can be facilitated through accessible communication channels and training for transport personnel in sign language and deaf awareness.

Inclusive processes and timely information are vital in order for persons with hearing impairments to navigate the transport system seamlessly. This includes leveraging innovative technology for real-time communication, ensuring equal access to emergency services, and providing comprehensive information on disruptions and events through visual and text-based mediums.

When it comes to accessible Infrastructure: Universal design principles should be embedded in all facets of transport infrastructure development. For persons with hearing impairments, this translates to ensuring visual cues, tactile guidance, and clear signage to complement auditory information, thereby fostering independent navigation.

Additionally, accessible to diverse modes of transport is essential for inclusivity. For persons with hearing impairments, this means advocating for features such as visual alerts, induction loops, and captioning services to enhance communication and ensure a safe and comfortable journey.

Current Successes and Ongoing Challenges: While commendable strides have been made in recent years to improve the accessibility of South Africa's transport system, challenges persist, casting shadows on our progress.

Success stories abound, from the implementation of accessible buses equipped with induction loops for hearing aid users to the integration of real-time text alerts for disruptions in public transport services.

However, our journey towards full inclusivity is far from over. Gaps remain glaring, particularly concerning the lack of consistent provision of sign language interpreters at transport hubs and the absence of captioning services in multimedia communications.

Moreover, inadequate awareness among transport personnel regarding the needs of persons with hearing impairments poses a significant barrier to meaningful access.

The images behind me on the screen (images illustrating accessible information on public transport, we see a dynamic screen inside both a train and a bus, commonly known as Passenger Information Displays (PIDs). These screens provide crucial real-time updates to passengers, including notifications about approaching stations, ensuring that all travellers, including those with hearing impairments, are informed throughout their journey. Additionally, one image showcases the availability of a loop system at a train station. This loop system, also known as an induction loop or hearing loop, enables individuals with hearing aids or cochlear implants to wirelessly receive audio signals directly to their devices, enhancing communication accessibility in public spaces such as train stations."

These images tell the story of some of the successes we have registered as a country to making transport services accessible to persons with hearing impairments while some depict the daily frustrations encountered.

Colleagues from the Association of Persons with Disabilities in the Western Cape shared how experiences of a journey they recently took to test Cape Town's new blue Electrical Multiple Unit (EMU) trains, which are dubbed "the people's trains" revealed both improvements and gaps in the universal design of the trains themselves and the stations through which they travelled.

For example,

- The glass window at the ticket office caused communication difficulties due to reflections.
- Despite the presence of a telecoil at the ticket office, the staff were unaware of its existence and how to activate it.
- Visual emergency evacuation signage has not been adequately addressed.
- The wide corridors between train coaches, without any separation, require heightened awareness from individuals with hearing impairments.
- Recent enhancements include auditory announcements signalling upcoming stations and auditory cues for door operations, aiding individuals who are blind or visually impaired in navigating their journey.

- Conversely, LED signs displaying the station's name are prominently visible at both ends of the carriage, benefiting those with hearing impairments. However, it remains unclear if the emergency button near the wheelchair area accommodates individuals with hearing impairments.

As a person with a hearing impairment, my own personal journey tells a frustrating narrative of encountering barriers at every turn.

Take, for instance, the image behind me depicting an individual standing before a ticket booth at a parking lot, ready to pay for his parking ticket. If the ticket machine malfunctions, leaving him stranded and reliant on the intercom for assistance, the absence of functional communication channels exacerbates the situation.

Similarly, embarking on a flight amplifies these challenges, as airport announcements remain inaccessible. Safety protocols, both pre-flight and in-flight, lack provisions for individuals with hearing impairments, depriving us of crucial information and leaving us vulnerable.

So, while strides have been made in implementing accessibility measures, gaps persist, hindering the full realisation of universal access for all citizens.

The Consumer Protection Act of 2008, though comprehensive, has not been fully harnessed to address accessibility issues in the transport sector, leaving a critical void in our pursuit of inclusivity

Recommendations for Enhanced Accessibility: To address these challenges and pave the way for a more inclusive transport ecosystem, we humbly submit the following recommendations to the Department of Transport;

- **Mandatory Training and Sensitization:** Implement comprehensive training programmes for transport personnel at all levels, focusing on deaf awareness, communication strategies, and the use of assistive technologies.
- **Policy Integration:** Integrate universal design principles and accessibility standards into all transport-related policies, ensuring that the needs of persons with disabilities, including those with hearing impairments, are systematically addressed.
- **Investment in Technology:** Embrace innovative technologies such as mobile applications with built-in sign language interpretation and audio-visual announcements to enhance communication and accessibility for all passengers.
- Invest in the development and implementation of assistive technologies, such as real-time captioning systems and mobile applications.
- **Collaborative Partnerships:** Foster partnerships with disability advocacy organizations, Deaf associations, and academic institutions to co-create solutions and ensure that the voices of persons with hearing impairments are heard and heeded in decision-making processes.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establish robust mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of accessibility measures, with a focus on gathering feedback from persons with disabilities to inform continuous improvement efforts.

- **Policy Alignment:** Align regional agreements, such as those within SADC, with national legislation to ensure consistency and adherence to disability equality principles across borders.
- **Investment in Research:** Prioritise research and academic inquiry into accessibility issues within the transport sector, filling the knowledge gaps and informing evidence-based policy decisions.

In closing, let us heed the call for action outlined in the Integrated National Disability Strategy White Paper of November 1997, which emphasizes the fundamental right to accessible transport for all individuals.

By working collaboratively and prioritizing inclusivity in our transport policies and practices, we can break down barriers, empower individuals with disabilities, and create a more inclusive society for all.

As we prepare to break into the commission sessions after this plenary, let us reflect on the rich discussions we've had today and the imperative ahead.

Our gathering comprises a diverse array of voices, and each perspective brings unique insights and experiences to the table, enriching our collective understanding of the accessibility challenges facing South Africa's transport sector.

In guiding our discussions within the commissions, we urge each delegate to embrace the following principles;

First, recognize the intersecting nature of accessibility challenges, considering not only physical barriers but also socio-economic, cultural, and institutional factors that impact the lives of persons with disabilities.

Let us ensure that our discussions are inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs and experiences within our communities.

Let us centre the voices and lived experiences of persons with disabilities in our deliberations. Embracing participatory approaches that empower individuals to contribute their expertise and insights, fostering a sense of ownership and agency in the decision-making process.

Realising that all our discussions will bear minimal impact without the Disability Act in place, let us advocate for the development and implementation of a comprehensive Disability Act in South Africa, echoing the urgent call by the Presidential Working Group on Disability and the broader disability sector. Such legislation is not just a legal imperative but a moral obligation, providing a robust framework for protecting the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities across all facets of life, including transportation.

We need to foster collaboration and partnership across sectors, recognizing that meaningful change requires collective action.

Finally, let us situate our discussions within the broader global context of disability rights and accessibility, drawing inspiration from international best practices and frameworks that assist to leverage knowledge exchange and collaboration in our pursuit of inclusive transport systems.

Let us seize this opportunity to chart a course towards a more inclusive and accessible future for all.

I thank you

Alex Msitshana

alexsiki@deafempowerment.co.za

PWGD PowerPoint presentation Universal Access to Transport Summit: Speaker 4

Mr Ari Seirlis

Mr President, Minister Nkosazama Dlamini-Zuma, Minister Chikunga other Ministers and MEC's / MMC's present

Thank you to DoT for this Summit, allowing us to engage with you on this matter of transport. A human right so flawed with shortcomings and inaccessibility.

Mr President your speech was eloquent and you said the right things. You seem well informed. Let me fill in some gaps and reality.

I serve on the PWGD, SADA and QASA Board.

I want to start with a short and articulate *summary* of the definition of disability

-“Disability is an experience that arises out of the interaction between a person with a health condition and the context within they live”

It is not our health condition that disables us, it is the environment within which we live.

Slide15

Minister DZ. i met you in 1998 when you were Minister of Health at Hinton College when you and late Madiba gave 600 Wheelchairs to children. The conundrum is.

They are mobile. BUT Where do they go? How do they get there?

They have mobility aids now they need the freedom of transport & infrastructure.

Let me set the tone and state some facts... excuse me if i fail to mention all issues..

Public transport

- Our most essential mode of transport with the biggest footprint is way behind in UA compliance and availability.
- Besides BRT, most busses are inaccessible and the Minibus taxi industry hasn't transformed
- BRT need to expand to all cities
 - We do appreciate Rea Vaya in Jhb , Are Yeng in Tshwane, Go George, IRT in Capetown.
- rural areas are off the radar

Road transport

- our pedestrians are always at risk and sidewalks are seldom accessible
- we are long overdue for a national parking disc policy
- Many NGO's provide accessible transport for their members and this is unsubsidized. A huge burden for them. Subsidize these initiatives.
- the RAF fails their beneficiaries in undertaking delivery
- we are grateful the E-Tolls are now scrapped

Rail

- the Metro & long distance rail services are not accessible and platforms don't match rolling stock requirements
- most wheelchair users have never been on a train
- we miss out on this cheaper and potentially effective form of transport

Aviation

- for some of us privileged few who fly, the CAA guidelines are discriminatory
- airports are surprisingly accessible but the airlines call the tune and exploit the CAA guidelines to exclude us often
- Kerb to kerb has still not been achieved but progress has been made in this sector

Maritime

- the cruise industry looks far more accessible than most modes but so few of us have the means to enjoy this.

INFRASTRUCTURE

- infrastructure often doesn't comply with PartS10400 of the building regs and Infrastructure compliance is an equally important element of the travel chain.

RURAL TRANSPORT

- is sadly lacking affecting thousands of our comrades. We are confined to our villages as the foot print of accessible transport is not broad enough.

SAFETY

- we suffer from inadequate safety regulations in transport and are vulnerable at ranks, platforms and pick up points without shelter and security
- QASA BUCKLE UP – WE DON'T WANT NEW MEMBERS

SENSITIZATION / TRAINING

- across all sectors there is very little sensitization of operators and service providers. We are not understood and still discriminated against.

We want to experience SEAMLESS TRANSPORT facilities which are UA, safe, affordable and dignified.

Only then will there be ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT FOR ALL

Programme delivery dates move out and 30 years down the line we feel no better off

We want to be included into the ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OPPORTUNITIES in the transport sector.

A DISABILITY ACT is the future for our all encompassing rights and rightful place in south Africa

Slide16

Next month we cast our votes .

we are a value proposition to all political parties. If only 25% of all persons with disabilities with a registered vote cast their vote and one other (brother, sister, husband, wife etc) in favour of the same party, that is worth 30 seats in the NA.

we are an asset to society, not a burden

society must now include us. Accessible TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE are the critical elements of our freedom.

This Freedom month must soon give us reason to celebrate.

we would rather go to war with someone who is blind and cannot see than someone who has no vision

we would rather go to war with someone who is deaf and cannot hear than someone who does not listen

we would rather go to war with someone who cannot walk than someone who does not walk their talk.

Show us that you have VISION. Show us that you LISTEN. Show us the you WALK YOUR TALK.

In this summit, We expect answers, strategy, political will and outcomes that will see us mobile, experience freedom, have access to schools, skills and employment and the opportunity to see SOUTH AFRICA.

VIVA DISABLED PEOPLE VIVA. Thank you

Ari Seirlis

aris@iafrica.com