



Example 28 **Research and Development Programme for Accessibility ELSA**

Country **Finland**

good practice for people with ...	kind of vehicle	kind of measure/approach
... motor impairment ... visual impairment ... hearing impairment ... cognitive/learning impairment	city bus regional bus tram underground local train long-distance train	organisational/operational support awareness building

Project description

Though the outcome of this programme is already shown in some good practice examples presented in this report, it is worth mentioning the Finish ELSA programme (Research and Development Programme for Accessibility). ELSA is, in and of itself, a good practice example that helps enhance the accessibility of public transport and is worth repeating in other countries as well.

The Ministry of Transport and Communication’s Research and Development Programme for Accessibility, known as ELSA, was a three-year (2003-2006) programme involving several government ministries and non-governmental organisations. It was launched to support the implementation of the Ministry of Transport and Communication’s accessibility strategy. Within the programme good practice information is produced and focuses on public transport and pedestrian environments in particular. Partners in the ELSA programme were the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities as well as public organisations and organisations for the disabled and aged.

The first goal was to increase awareness of accessibility and its importance in the municipal sector and among transport service providers, authorities and the public. The second goal was to trigger research in general, to launch and monitor R&D projects, to organise seminars and educational events, and to report project results.

The ELSA programme has funded 30 R&D projects, three academic Master's theses and educational material for public transport personnel and planners. The programme also included the coordination of a network of accessible municipalities as well as the organisation of several educational events and seminars. As a result of the programme, new guidelines, planning methods and services as well as products for practical planning, construction and customer service are now available

The ELSA working group concludes that enhancing accessibility is an important focus area for increasing equality. Altering existing working methods is important when enhancing accessibility, and should be influenced through education and information as well as through financial incentives.

Sources:

Ministry of Transport and Communication (2007) Ministry of Transport and Communication’s Research and Development Programme for Accessibility “ELSA” Final report of the working group, Helsinki, http://www.mintc.fi/oliver/upl812-LVM19_2007.pdf (26/10/2007); see also http://www.elsa.fi/English/index_english.htm (26/10/2007)