EQUIMOB BOOKLET

2024

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JOURNAL ARTICLES

17 Published

Developing an evidence-informed framework for safe and accessible urban mobility infrastructures for older adults in low- and middle-income countries: a protocol for realist synthesis

Divya Sussana Patil, Uday Narayan Yadav, Sobin George, Marco Helbich, Dick Ettema and Ajay Bailey

Abstract:

Background: Mobility, one of the basic daily activities, helps in carrying out routine work, which contributes to people's well-being. A lack of friendly and accessible infrastructure may act as a barrier, which limits older adults' contributions and participation in society. Hence, it is important to have an enabling environment for older adults to carry out their activities independently at ease. There is ample research evidence about effective interventions on urban mobility infrastructures, but there is a lack of evidence regarding what works, for whom, and in what circumstances. Hence, there is a need to identify the contextual factors for different regions to design region specific interventions. The aim of this realist synthesis is to develop an evidence-informed framework for safe and accessible urban mobility infrastructures for older adults in low- and middle-income countries. **Methods:** A realist review will be undertaken using the following process: (1) development of a program theory, (2) search strategy and information sources, (3) study selection and appraisal, (4) data extraction, and (5) data synthesis. In addition to searching grey literature and contacting authors, we will search (since inception) multiple electronic databases such as PubMed, EMBASE, Scopus, Web of Science, and Cochrane Library. Studies will be included based on their ability to provide data that evaluates some aspect of the program theory. Two independent reviewers will screen and extract data from all relevant sources. A realist logic of analysis will be used to identify all context mechanism-outcome that explains how safe and accessible urban mobility infrastructures for older adults implemented in low- and middle-income countries translate to better health outcomes. The findings will be reported according to Realist and MEta-narrative Evidence Syntheses: Evolving Standards guidelines. **Discussion:** This realist review will help to develop a framework for safe and accessible urban mobility infrastructures for older adults in low- and middle-income countries. The results of this study will support evidence-based decision-making on urban mobility systems and will be of interest to various stakeholders. Dissemination will be done through conference presentations, policy briefs, media, and peer-reviewed journals. Implications for future research will be discussed.

Systematic review registration: PROSPERO CRD42020168020

Keywords: Older adults, Mobility infrastructures, Transportation, Transport interventions, Urban mobility

[Link to the article](#)

On the move? Exploring constraints to accessing urban mobility infrastructures

Saakshi Joshi, Ajay Bailey, Anindita Datta

Abstract:

Urban mobility infrastructures are crucial in connecting people to a city and the prospects it provides. Through a critical review of literature on growth of cities in South Asia, transport initiatives and policies, and the existing transport situation, this paper highlights barriers which impact accessibility to transport and thus, ridership. As Delhi gears up to become the world's most populated city, how does its transport infrastructure fare in enabling users' ease of movement and providing opportunities to access work, education, healthcare, and social life? The paper explores how challenges to access transport are a result of interactions between several inter-sectional factors. These include an individual's social and spatial position in the city, role of transport policies in shaping road-based transport, and Delhi's growth in the form of urban sprawls which has resulted in uneven distribution of and access to services. At the core of these inter-linked factors lie the users through whom the challenges or opportunities to access transport become operationalised. By highlighting transport-related constraints, including who is considered a user and who is not, this paper pushes for more inclusive discussions on the future of transport planning, and interventions for improving accessibility. Identifying opportunities for actions and addressing gaps is imperative as Delhi witness's continuous growth and migration. This review of existing transport literature is beneficial for policy recommendations and strategies for meaningful change.

Reference: Joshi, S., Bailey, A., & Datta, A. (2021). On the move? Exploring constraints to accessing urban mobility infrastructures. *Transport policy*, *102*, 61-74.

[Link to the article](#)

Revisiting inclusion in smart cities: infrastructural hybridization and the institutionalization of citizen participation in Bengaluru's peripheries

Bart A. M. van Gils & Ajay Bailey

Abstract

Smart city development can be traced back in the urban development trajectories of cities, as well as the respective articulations, framing and practices of 'inclusive' and 'participatory' smart cities. As smart city development steadily gains more and more traction among urban policy makers throughout the Global South, many scholars warn for its negative consequences on the accessibility of infrastructure and the processes that transform democratic citizenship practices. Rather than perceiving the transformative power of smart cities as a phenomenon particular to the use of new technologies, this paper aims to analyse societal segregation and marginalization through smart city development and traces these externalities as a continuation or intensification of existing governance practices. This is demonstrated by the case study on the metropolitan city of Bengaluru, that participates in India's national Smart City Mission. Due to massive urbanization, Bengaluru's peripheries are suffering from increasing pressures on its basic infrastructure. In response, state actors have turned to hybridizing the city's infrastructure facilities and governance to market- and civil society actors. Furthermore, the efforts of middle-class civil society groups that contribute to infrastructural governance through the assistance in planning, facilitation and controlling state responsibilities are institutionalized by bureaucratic state actors, at the cost of electoral governance by local representatives. This analysis on infrastructure governance in the peripheries has been set in relation to a discourse analysis of official policy documents on the inclusive and participatory character of smart cities. The practices of hybridization and institutionalization not only undermine the access to basic infrastructure for marginalized groups but also heavily underpin the design of Bengaluru's smart city projects. To be called inclusive, we argue that smart city projects should make an effort to improve the overall accessibilities of infrastructures for all classes and population groups.

[Link to the article](#)

Safe in the City? Negotiating safety, public space and the male gaze in Kolkata, India

Sanghamitra Roy, Ajay Bailey

Abstract:

Negotiating public spaces to reach their destinations is an everyday struggle for women in India. Indian cities have witnessed a considerable increase in crimes against women, compelling women to avoid or minimize their use of public spaces. This study aims to understand how people and their actions in public spaces shape perceptions of safety amongst women, and how women negotiate public spaces to avoid such incidents of harassment. This study comprising of focus group discussions and in-depth interviews was carried out in Kolkata, India. Visual surveys were conducted to spatially contextualize the narratives from the participants. The data were thereafter transcribed, coded, and analyzed. The study finds that the following elements negatively impact women's perceptions of safety: 'male gaze'; negative personality traits, appearances, and behavior of men; presence of middle-aged men and strangers; cultural differences; and places that reported repeated occurrences of harassment. Lively spaces and busy roads on the other hand where daily commuters, hawkers, shopkeepers are engaged in purposeful activities are perceived as safe by women. Women make constant efforts to negotiate unsafe conditions in public spaces through avoidance, protection, and prevention. Most women tend to internalize the process of negotiation than to reclaim their rights to public spaces. Younger women, however, tend to step forward and confront their harassers. The findings of this study can help planners and policy makers co- create safer public spaces for women and facilitate their right to the city.

Keywords: Gendered spaces; Public space; Perceptions of safety; Women's safety; Sexual harassment; Kolkata

[Link to the article](#)

"When I Need to Travel, I Feel Feverish": Everyday Experiences of Transport Inequalities Among Older Adults in Dhaka, Bangladesh

Selim Jahangir, Ajay Bailey, Musleh Uddin Hasan, Shanawez Hossain, Marco Helbich, and Martin Hyde

Abstract:
Buses are the most common form of public transport for older adults in developing countries. With over 37% of total trips, buses are the principal mode of transport in Dhaka. The majority of older adults are dependent on buses because of their affordability relative to other modes such as auto-rickshaws, rideshares, and taxis. This study aims to investigate key barriers in accessing buses in Dhaka and the consequences of these barriers to the everyday mobility of older adults.

Research Design and Methods
Thirty participants aged 60 and older were recruited from 2 socioeconomically different neighborhoods in Dhaka. We employed a thematic analysis of visual surveys and in-depth interviews to understand older adults' spatial and cultural context and their experiences using buses in their everyday lives.

Results
Boarding and deboarding buses were common barriers for older adults due to overcrowding and traffic congestion. In addition, older adults faced challenges such as ageism, gender discrimination, and undesirable behavior by transport personnel and co-passengers. These barriers affected their independent mobility and influenced their access to work and social life, contributing to their social exclusion.

Discussion and Implications
This study illustrates the challenges faced by older adults when accessing public transport and the need to improve access to work, health care, and social life. Inclusive transport policies are essential in low- and middle-income countries to improve the well-being of older adults.

Reference: Jahangir, S., Bailey, A., Hasan, M. U., Hossain, S., Helbich, M., & Hyde, M. (2022). "When I need to travel, I feel feverish": Everyday experiences of transport inequalities among older adults in Dhaka, Bangladesh. *The Gerontologist*, *62*(4), 493-503.

Link to the article

Framing safety of women in public transport: A media discourse analysis of sexual harassment cases in Bangladesh

Seama Mowri and Ajay Bailey

Abstract:

This paper analyzes the role of print media in framing incidences of sexual harassment in public transport; particularly in the context of Bangladesh, where gender-based violence is highly prevalent in the public sphere. This article uses Douglas' cultural theory to reflect on media practices and its institutional power to reframe the social problem through risk and blame attribution. We conducted a discourse analysis of 71 news articles extracted from four of the widely circulated and influential newspapers of Bangladesh. Our findings reveal that the hegemonic discourse of gender-based violence in public transport is systemic and/or primarily reliant on legal recourse. By contrast, discourses presenting sexual harassment as symptomatic of broader gender inequality is less frequent. Moreover, these media platforms belong to an assemblage of patriarchal social-power holders that collaborate with established law and order to facilitate a blame game, thereby relieving the same stakeholders of ownership and accountability. Given the power of news media in constructing meta-narratives of safety (and nudging policymakers), journalists must tread responsibly on issues of blame, women's safety, and their rights to the city.

Keywords: Bangladesh, blame, critical discourse analysis, news media, public transport, sexual harassment

Link to the article

Contextual factors influencing the urban mobility infrastructure interventions and policies for older adults in low-and middle-income countries: a realist review

Divya Sussana Patil, Ajay Bailey, Uday Narayan Yadav, Sobin George, Marco Helbich, Dick Ettema, and Lena Ashok

Abstract:

Transportation is among the key aspects that influence active ageing. This realist review intends to understand the mechanisms of urban mobility infrastructure interventions and policies in low- and middle-income countries for older adults and to identify factors, which influenced the success or failure of interventions. We followed the steps suggested by Pawson and colleagues for a realist review. Electronic databases were searched from inception until August 2020. Studies were screened based on titles, abstracts and full text. The quality of included studies was assessed based on rigour and relevance. The evidence was obtained from 36 articles with diverse study designs conducted in 36 low- and middle-income countries. Findings were validated through stakeholder consultations from three low- and middle-income countries. Of the various individual factors identified, behaviour change communication interventions were low-cost, had a long-term impact and were efficient in increasing awareness among users to improve safety, social inclusion and about transport schemes for older adults. Improved transport infrastructure resulted in a shift from private to public transportation. For a sustainable urban transport infrastructure, good governance and involvement of stakeholders for planning and implementing transport interventions were considered necessary. Lack of evaluation, experience of transport planners, and inter-sectoral coordination were key challenges to successful interventions. The review highlighted a lack of older adult-specific transportation policies, and gender-targeted interventions for older women, suggesting a need for interventions and policies based on the contextual factors existing in a region.

Reference: Patil, D. S., Bailey, A., Yadav, U. N., George, S., Helbich, M., Ettema, D., & Ashok, L. (2022). Contextual factors influencing the urban mobility infrastructure interventions and policies for older adults in low-and middle-income countries: a realist review. *BMC public health*, *22*(1), 1489.

Link to the article

Devising gender-responsive transport policies in South Asia

Saakshi Joshi, Sanghamitra Roy, Seama Mowri, and Ajay Bailey

Abstract:

Over time, the transport sector has grown more cognisant of gender differences in planning and policy. Yet, extant literature on transport shows that challenges, such as sexual harassment of women still prevail. The value of this study is its contribution towards gender-responsive transport policies with a focus on women by highlighting (1) the spectrum of barriers that prevent women's mobility across origin to destination journeys; and (2) construction of safety by using interventions and tools available to them, namely technology, women-only solutions, and infrastructural design. The findings are based on data from in-depth interviews with women participants in two Indian cities – Delhi and Kolkata. Drawing from our research, key policy suggestions include framing interventions in a rights-based manner, institutionalising gender-disaggregated data to inform interventions, and sensitising institutions such as the law enforcement on gender equity and women's rights to the city. This research would be especially beneficial for regions in and beyond South Asia sharing similar contexts.

Reference: Joshi, S., Roy, S., Mowri, S., & Bailey, A. (2022). Devising gender-responsive transport policies in South Asia. *Gender & Development*, *30*(1-2), 59-76.

[Link to the article](#)

Visibility matters: Constructing safe passages on the streets of Kolkata

Sanghamitra Roy, Selim Jahangir, Ajay Bailey, and Femke van Noorloos

Abstract:

Perceptions of safety influence women's access to public spaces. This study aims to understand how visibility, vigilance, and surveillance influence "eyes on the street," perceptions of safety, and construct (un)safe passages for women on the streets of Kolkata. The study is based on in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and visual surveys. This study finds that permeable street edges enhance visibility and visual engagements with the observant; whereas impermeable street edges, poorly lit streets, empty streets, and up- market areas instill fear because of low visibility and the presence of fewer people. Women perceive routine activities and vigilance by the shopkeepers, hawkers, and passersby as safe as they can call out for help if needed. Surveillance by the neighborhood people too extends a feeling of safety whereas disciplinary visibility makes streets less accessible. An integrated approach to visibility, vigilance and surveillance can aid in the formulation of comprehensive gender-sensitive urban development guidelines for cities.

Reference: Roy, S., Jahangir, S., Bailey, A., & van Noorloos, F. (2022). Visibility matters: Constructing safe passages on the streets of Kolkata. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 1-22.

[Link to the article](#)

Introducing Remote Qualitative Research Methods

Saakshi Joshi and Tess Osborne

Abstract:

Abstract Methods for qualitative remote research. The restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic brought together re searchers from the Netherlands and India in the research project EQUIMOB to assess effects of the pandemic on social life. This paper describes the opportunities and limitations of methods for conducting remote research, and in additional papers we will discuss two examples of qualitative remote research (telephone interviews and graphic elicitation). Based on first-hand experience, the authors provide an overview of their work in using these methods.

[Link to the article](#)

Telephonic interviews as a remote method of collecting qualitative data

Prajwal Nagesh, Selim Jahangir, and Divya Sussana Patil

Abstract:

Telephonic (audio only) interviews provide a safe, accessible, and feasible option for remote qualitative research, more so amidst the physical distancing norms of the pandemic. As part of the EQUIMOB project, this research used telephonic interviews to understand older adults' subjective experience of navigating to work, religious places, healthcare, and other places of interest in the megacities of the Global South such as Bengaluru and Kolkata in India. The severity of the COVID-19 pandemic including health crisis, death, and trauma accentuated the alarming narrative of older adults' increased vulnerability to the virus, making them inaccessible for on-field research. Sixty-eight telephonic interviews were conducted across Bengaluru in Kannada, Tamil, Hindi, and English; in Kolkata using Bengali language. This article reflects on the authors' experiences of conducting telephonic interviews and their bearing on research during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Link to the article

(Im)mobile ageing: risks of exclusion in later life in liminal urban peripheries

Prajwal Nagesh, Ajay Bailey, Sobin George, Martin Hyde, and Lekha Subaiya

Abstract:

Despite the recent policy impetus for age-friendly cities, there is still scope for more geographical insights into ageing in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Cities in LMICs, such as Bengaluru (India), are witnessing an increase in the size of the older population in their peripheral urban regions, but there is relatively little understanding of the risks of exclusion in later age in these liminal zones. This study, set in a peripheral ward of Bengaluru, focuses on the experiences of exclusion/inclusion of socio-economically marginalised older adults and their access to work, health care and leisure. The research uses a multidimensional old-age exclusion framework to highlight how the domains of neighbourhood, material resources, mobility infrastructure and social relations influence the risks for social exclusion. We use a qualitative approach by combining behavioural mapping and in-depth interviews. Our findings highlight some ways in which institutionalised exclusion from civic infrastructure accentuates the precariousness of ageing. The rigidity of traditional hierarchies in peri-urban regions has meant that older adults who were poor, women and belonged to marginalised castes experience constrained mobilities to access labour markets, health care and social life, compounding their place-based exclusion. Despite social networks and solidarities, older adults on the periphery faced individualisation of risks while trying to access the basic amenities, thereby falling between the gap of the urban–rural milieu and governance. Age-friendly cities need to accommodate such hybrid transitionary urban processes, in the absence of which, active ageing in these rising peripheries can be impeded.

Reference: Nagesh, P., Bailey, A., George, S., Hyde, M., & Subaiya, L. (2023). (Im) mobile ageing: risks of exclusion in later life in liminal urban peripheries. *Ageing & Society*, 1-24.

[Link to the article](#)

What happens next? Exploring women's transport motility through the story completion method

Saakshi Joshi, and Ajay Bailey

Abstract:

This paper explores the three elements of motility (access, competence, appropriation) through women's perceptions of travel using the metro rail in Delhi, India. Studies on metro rails are a recent phenomenon in developing countries where this is a relatively new transport mode. The concept of motility to explore gendered use of metro is useful in context of this South Asian city where women's movements (potential and actual) are contingent upon their ability to travel safely. Data was collected using story completion methods. Participants were asked to complete an online semi- structured form that presented five fictional story stems/openings. Data in this paper is based on stories finished by 84 female participants across Delhi with varying demographic profiles. This paper advances qualitative research on women's mobility and transport use by highlighting situation-specific metro access; necessary skills to optimize access; and how women actually use the metro system. Feelings of un/safety related to fear of sexual harassment, getting lost, and risk of contracting diseases in unhygienic conditions results in specific access of the metro to feel safe. Diverse skills to manage the access include: coping (e.g., adapting to delay in services), performative (e.g., mannerisms to feel safe from threat of violence), spatial (e.g., location of coach), cultural (e.g., awareness of norms), and sanitary skills (e.g., bodily modifications to feel safe from unhygienic conditions). Based on travel priorities and past mobility experiences (personal/shared), the skills and access shape how women travel and what they decide to do to travel safely. This paper advocates for gender inclusive guidelines and collecting disaggregate data in transport, especially for newer metro systems being planned or constructed. It presents an opportunity to consider the barriers to women's potential mobility; how/where transport systems can play a part; and the use of qualitative research methods to appreciate the diversity of women's travel experiences across different segments of their journeys.

Keywords: Motility Gender Women's safety Delhi Metro Story completion Qualitative research

[Link to the article](#)

Affects and assemblages of (un) safety among female bus commuters in Dhaka

Seama Mowri, and Ajay Bailey

Abstract:

By examining the lived experiences of 30 female bus commuters in Dhaka using in-depth qualitative approaches, this paper argues for an enhanced understanding of socio-cognitive undercurrents of gendered mobilities. By privileging a feminist-affective lens, and tracing the emotionally and politically charged everyday negotiations of space, power struggles, (dis) comfort, and encounters between gendered bodies, the paper contends that women's agency to act and respond to harassment in public transport is contingent on multi-scalar assemblages comprising socio-technical infrastructures, lifestyles, cultural histories, personal dispositions and situated knowledge. Moreover, by applying assemblage thinking and affect theories in transport spaces, the study links discussions on gender, violence and mobility beyond the common economic tropes as is common in transport studies of the Global South.

Reference: Mowri, S., & Bailey, A. (2023). Affects and assemblages of (un) safety among female bus commuters in Dhaka. *Geoforum*, *144*, 103802.

[Link to the article](#)

Shrinking labour geographies: Transport access for paid work in later ages

Prajwal Nagesh, Ajay Bailey, Sobin George, and Lekha Subaiya

Abstract:

Background and objectives: In developing countries, a substantial share of the older population is employed (WHO, 2007), which is anticipated to triple between 2020 and 2050, bolstered by the rise of bridge employment in later life. Bridge jobs are part-time, informal work arrangements that serve as a transitional phase between full-time employment and retirement. While transport access for older adults is a primary policy concern in the age- friendly cities framework, their experiences of encountering and negotiating labour geographies, particularly transport systems to access bridge employment, are understudied. Research design and methods: This paper used a qualitative and interpretative approach to analyse how older adults engage in nonlinear work patterns and commute to workspaces. We use a combination of visual mapping, observations, and in-depth interviews with older adults in Bengaluru, an urban metropolis in southern India. Results: Older workers engage in regular mobility routines to access informal bridge jobs. Our results suggest that the precarity of their bridge jobs permeates into their mobilities. Class, gender, and spatialities create additional layers of barriers to their already constrained transport resources. Economically disadvantaged older individuals encountered shrinking labour geographies due to unaffordable public transportation and first-and-last-mile journeys. For reasons of safety, older women were forced to depend on shared and public transport options, which were often unreliable. Lastly, older workers residing in geographically marginalised areas find more difficulty in organising transport to bridge jobs. Discussion and implications: Bridge jobs in informal arrangements are important means of livelihood for older persons in countries like India. Apart from the already precarious working conditions, the weak systemic transport support induces strain on the working conditions of older workers. From the purview of labour ge ography, adding to the natural limits of ageing, induced limits such as ageism and precarity at workplaces and non-age-friendly transport infrastructure create situations of vulnerable employment among older adults in the cities of the Global South.

Keywords: Older adults; Work; Urban transport; Accessibility; Bengaluru

Link to the article

Unpacking the role of transport inequalities among older adults for accessing healthcare in Bengaluru, India.

Divya Sussana Patil, Ajay Bailey, Sobin George, Martin Hyde, and Lena Ashok

Abstract:

Mobility, access to transport and healthcare play a crucial part in healthy ageing. However, these often pose challenges for older adults in the global South. This study applies the three concepts of 'motility' (access, competence and appropriation), to explore transport inequalities and barriers to access healthcare services for older adults in Bengaluru, India. The paper draws on interviews with sixty adults, aged 50 years and over, residing in urban Bengaluru. A semi-structured in-depth interview guide was employed to explore the transport inequalities. Applying thematic analysis, we present the mobility and transport barriers to access healthcare. Restricted access to healthcare services due to unavailable and unaffordable transportation resulted in missed appointments, delayed care and deterioration of health conditions. To cope with the barriers, older adults often visited less specialised clinics for regular check-ups and those with financial constraints resorted to self-medication. These actions further deteriorated health and led to adverse health outcomes. Our findings suggest that integrated health and transport policies must be designed to ensure equitable access to transportation services. Enabling older adults to have more independent lives and improve access to preventive healthcare is essential for better health outcomes.

Reference: Patil, D. S., Bailey, A., George, S., Hyde, M., & Ashok, L. (2023). Unpacking the role of transport inequalities among older adults for accessing healthcare in Bengaluru, India. *Global Public Health*, *18*(1), 2274438.

[Link to the article](#)

"We do not go outside, though We want to": Unequal Access to Public Transport and Transport-Related Social Exclusion of Older Adults in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Selim Jahangir, Ajay Bailey, Musleh Uddin Hasan, and Shanawez Hossain

Abstract:

This study investigated key physical and social barriers to accessing public transport in Dhaka, Bangladesh, and how the unequal accessibility of transport leads to the social exclusion of older adults. Employing a transport disadvantage perspective and drawing on visual surveys and in-depth interviews, the study explores the context and lived experiences of older adults using public transport in their everyday lives. Difficulty in accessing buses due to overcrowding and congestion, struggling to get on rickshaws due to height, avoiding CNG (an autorickshaw) and cabs due to high fares, disliking Laguna (a small four-wheeler human haulier for carrying passengers) for compact seating arrangements, undesirable behavior, and social attitudes discourage older adults from participating in social activities and produce a feeling of social isolation and exclusion. Hence, more inclusive transport policies are essential in low- and middle-income countries to reduce transport-related social exclusion and improve the well-being of older adults.

Keywords: accessibility, public transport, social exclusion, older adults, mobility

[Link to the article](#)

BOOK CHAPTERS

4 Published

Ageist Transport Infrastructures: Rethinking Public Transport amid COVID- 19 Lockdowns in India

Prajwal Nagesh, Ajay Bailey, Sobin George, and Lekha Subaiya

Abstract:

The hypermobile cities of India stood still with the onset of COVID- 19- induced lockdowns. Public transport services were the first to be suspended, and older adults in particular were instructed not to leave their homes (Press Information Bureau (PIB), 2020). Even with the easing of lockdown and the resumption of limited public transport, older adults were 'restricted' from using services as per the pandemic- related advisories issued by the state. Mobility, which is central to active aging, health status, and well- being (World Health Organization (WHO), 2007) of older adults, was affected by this exclusion in the public transport system. The short- and medium- term implications of such lockdown protocols towards the (im)mobility of older adults requires attention. Given the Indian urban transport scenario, the dependence of older adults (particularly those from low- income groups) on public transport and the inadequate public transport infrastructure is relevant to contextualize the pandemic advisories.

This chapter uses the case of Bengaluru city in southern India to highlight how transport protocols issued during the COVID- 19 pandemic impacted older adults' (im)mobility. Even before the lockdown was rolled out on March 24, 2020, Bengaluru's public transport system had been struggling to cater to passenger demand. With physical distancing norms in place, which reduced ridership and trip number, it has become more difficult for passengers in general, and older adult passengers in particular, to access public transport. In Bengaluru, a large proportion of older adults are mobile, work in the informal sector, and earn a low income. They cannot afford private transportation and are therefore dependent on public transport (Baindur and Rao, 2016).

Key words: COVID-19, ageing, urban mobilities, metro rail, India

Link to the article

Population Aging and Everyday Challenges for Older Adults in Bangladesh

Selim Jahangir, Ajay Bailey, Md Musleh Uddin Hassan, and Shanawez Hossain

Abstract:

Population aging is an emerging demographic issue in Bangladesh as the number and proportion of older adults are increasing faster than other segments of population. The continued growth of older population will challenge the existing health care services, social and economic security, family structures, and public policies. Moreover, the current COVID-19 pandemic has also profoundly influenced the socioeconomic status, public health services, and subsequently well-being of older adults. This chapter used a range of data sources such as Census data (2011), in-depth interviews with older adults (N ¼ 30), and an online survey on implications of COVID-19 on older adults (N ¼ 221). This chapter aims to highlight the challenges of population aging in Bangladesh. Older adults in Bangladesh tend to face greater challenges in terms of income support, health services, access to public transport, and mobility. Traditionally, the older adults in Bangladesh were being taken care of by the family members but the changing sociodemographic and family structure is likely to influence their living arrangements, social interactions, and mental health. To address the challenges, it is essential to understand the complexities of socioeconomic characteristics, law of property inherence, health, family structure, and cultural perspectives toward older adults for framing better policy that would lead to improved quality of life of older adults.

Keywords: Ageing; Older adults; Challenges; Health care; COVID-19; Social support

Link to the article

Older adults' mobility amid COVID-19 pandemic in Bangladesh: safety and perceived risks of using public transport

Selim Jahangir, Ajay Bailey, Seama Mowri, Md. Musleh Uddin Hasan, and Shanawez Hossain

Abstract:

The COVID-19 pandemic is likely to have profound impact on the human activities including mobility and social life globally. Being most vulnerable to Covid 19, the older adults' risk perceptions and safety issues of using public and shared transport is likely to affect their modal choices. Based on 221 participants' responses through a unique online survey in Bangladesh, the study aims to assess older adults' mobility patterns pre and post-lockdown during COVID-19, and perceptions of risks and safety around transport post-lockdown. The results demonstrated that over 50% of respondents were unsure of their risks of contracting the virus. If contracted, 37% respondents felt it could be very critical for them. Only 13% respondents perceived little to no likelihood of contracting it. Non-motorized transport (NMT) modes such as walking and cycling were considered the safest to travel amid pandemic. There was substantial preference for private cars (67%) and rickshaws (54%) over shared modes of transport such as taxis, trains and buses. Older adults perceived that high risks are associated with activities such as using public toilets (92%) and going to a salon (80%), going to a hospital (86%), and fetching water from a public tap (62%). On the other hand, the three lowest-risk activities are going to the office (33%), essential grocery-shopping (19%) and walking as a form of exercise (only 3%). Besides public transport, improved walking infrastructures combined with increased public awareness on the risks of COVID-19 transmission are key to achieve sustainable urban mobility.

Keywords: Safety; Risk perception; COVID-19; Older adults; Transport

Link to the article

Mental Well-Being of Older Adults and Access to Healthcare During the COVID-19 Pandemic in Karnataka, India.

Divya Sussana Patil, Ajay Bailey, and Sobin George

Abstract:

Introduction: While older adults face inequalities and discrimination based on their age in everyday lives, COVID–19 pandemic has further multiplied their sufferings. They are at higher risk of morbidity and mortality due to not only COVID-19 but also other chronic underlying health conditions. It is possible that healthcare seeking of older adults can be delayed with imposition of restrictions on their movement on one hand and diversion of healthcare system's focus on COVID 19 management on the other. We attempt to understand how COVID-19 restrictions affected the mental well-being and access to healthcare of older adults in Karnataka, India. **Methods:** A unique online survey was conducted in Karnataka, India during June 2020. The survey was open to older adults above 50 years. A total of 300 older adults participated in the online survey. The survey was circulated through personal and professional contacts, and social media applications. **Results and Conclusion**: The findings show that nearly 81% older adults reported a poor quality of life and 20% suffered from depression. Nearest healthcare facility for nearly half the respondents was more than one-kilometre away from home, making them dependent on transportation to access healthcare facility. Experience of COVID-19 restrictions among older adults varied based on interactions with other factors such as gender, working status, and living arrangements. The chapter argues that blanket strategies followed currently increased the vulnerability of older adults and it is important to ensure that tailored strategies are developed based on the current pandemic experience to prepare for future.

Keywords: Healthcare; Older adults; Access; Mental health; COVID-19

Link to the article

OPINION EDITORIAL

7 Published

Bengaluru

Bus travel in times of COVID: How BMTC can accommodate senior citizens

by Prajwal N and Prof. Ajay Bailey   •   August 28, 2020   •   Commute

COVID has posed many barriers to senior citizens' use of buses. A recent study indicates five measures BMTC can take to remove these barriers and ease commute for seniors again.

Bengaluru

It's high time BMTC got people with disabilities on board. Here are five steps to ensure this.

by Euan Morrison, Prajwal N and Prof. Ajay Bailey   •   September 4, 2020   •   Commute

A recent survey finds that even the bus stations included under the Accessible India campaign are unfriendly towards people with disabilities. Lower fares, better infrastructure and participatory planning can ensure the BMTC is equally accessible to all.

Mobility gaps delay healthcare for older residents in Bengaluru's outskirts

Unreliable modes of transport from Bengaluru's peripheral areas were cited among the major barriers. The respondents listed long waiting time for buses (15 to 60 minutes), dependence on multiple transport modes to reach Metro stations – that added travel time – and frequent cancellations by drivers in app-based services as grouses, the article said.

R Krishnakumar | DHNS

Last Updated 20 December 2023, 03:13 IST

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Members of low-income groups without health insurance were seen as depending more on bus services and multiple transport modes or delaying hospital visits. (Representative image)   Credit: PTI Photo

DownToEarth

GOVERNANCE

To sit or not to sit?: Using intermediary public transport during COVID-19 pandemic

More women rely on shared public transport compared to men; steppig out during a pandemic means paying a greater fare or risking exposure to the virus

By Saakshi Joshi
Published: Monday 04 January 2021

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LIFESTYLE

Burden of safety: Public buses need to work for women

Women's everyday travels put the burden of manufacturing the experience on them, when they should be tapped into building a more inclusive public infrastructure

NEXT BLOG ›

By Saakshi Joshi
Published: Tuesday 10 November 2020

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▬▬ THOUGHTS

Seama Mowri, Dr Selim Jahangir, Professor Ajay Bailey, Professor Musleh Uddin, Dr Shanawez Hossain

07 December, 2020, 12:40 pm
Last modified: 07 December, 2020, 12:51 pm

How are older people in Bangladesh coping with the pandemic?

Older people in Bangladesh face multiple health and social inequalities which get exacerbated during the pandemic

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⌂ / 27th Anniversary Issue-III

Covid-19 lockdowns: A test for mental well-being of older adults

▲ Selim Jahangir, Syeda S. Mowri, Shanawez Hossain, Musleh Uddin Hasan and Ajay Bailey | ⏱ December 07, 2020 00:00:00

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POLICY BRIEFS

1 Submitted

POLICY BRIEF by

EQUIMOB

Inclusive-Cities through Equitable access to Urban Mobility Infrastructures for India and Bangladesh

INTRODUCTION

This policy brief is addressed to the notification KST/CO/CPRO/0745/2021-22 inviting public feedback and suggestions regarding services of state road transport corporations. We present research-based insights derived from an ongoing (since 2019) rigorous fieldwork among older adults in Bengaluru using qualitative research methods such as in-depth interviews, field observations, visual surveys and stakeholder consultations.

BMTC - networking older adults to the city

Age-friendly cities is a global initiative gaining traction with more older adults migrating and living in cities. Bengaluru, long known by the sobriquet of 'pensioner's paradise' is faced with the challenge to make its public bus transport accessible across ages, particularly for older adults. The 6,000 odd bus network of BMTC is an integral mode connecting older adults from low-income households to vital urban services such as hospitals, banks, post offices and so on. In this context, BMTC carries the responsibility to be age-friendly. In this brief, we share evidence-based insights for inclusive mobility.

RESULTS

Affordability

- There are older commuters who often support their families economically and encounter challenges with respect to low income, ageism in the job market and a lack of social security.

- The current fare for a senior citizen bus pass and the fare in general is unaffordable for low-income older workers in informal labour such as flower vendors, domestic housekeeping workers and security agencies.

Acceptability

- Transport personnel can often be rude to older commuters without using the age-appropriate terms that show respect.

- Lack of hygiene at the bus stops and inside the bus as well discouraged the use of buses

Availability

- The quality of infrastructure at the nearest bus stop impacts their transport experience. Often shelters are unavailable (figure 1) where the bus stops. Older commuters sit on the ground or wait on the road, which poses additional risks of accidents.

- Bus shelter with poor lighting and seating arrangement makes waiting for bus laborious.

- Estimated arrival time of buses is unavailable at bus stops. Older low-income commuters are not tech-savvy to use apps. With no real-time bus arrival information, older commuters wait longer in bus stops with no waiting infrastructure.
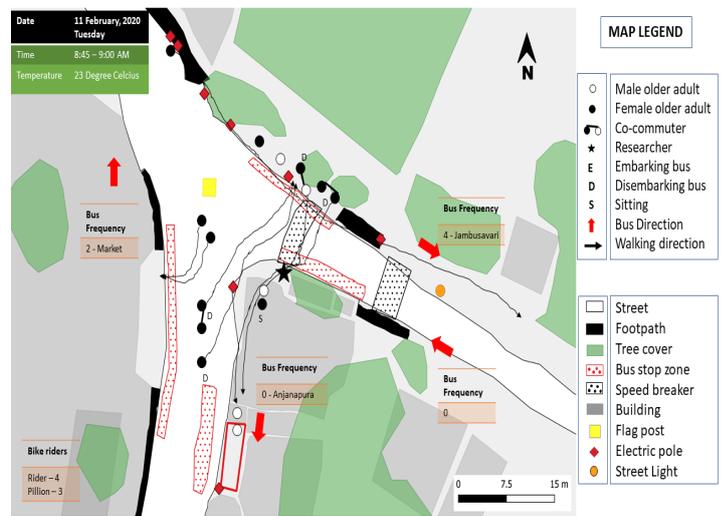
Figure 1: Older adults predominantly preferred bus but only 1/4 stops had bus shelters (visual survey)

Accessibility

- Buses without low-floor posed a physical challenge for older commuters, especially women. Given the increasing physical ailments such as knee pain and buses not stopping in allotted space forces them to climb steep steps. This design barrier often results in a fall or increasing the risk of fall.

- The access to bus stops was also difficult owing to poorly maintained pedestrian paths

- The number of seats reserved for 'senior citizens' are few and many are forced to travel standing.

- Availing the senior citizen bus pass involved approaching the local political patronage or multiple visits to different bus hubs in either Majestic or Shanti Nagar and numerous confusing steps for paperwork.

Figure 2: Missing shelter: Older adults struggling to find shelter while waiting for bus

IMPLICATIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

Reduction in fare of bus pass for older adults will improve their access to work, healthcare and psychosocial wellbeing.

Sensitise drivers to **stop bus at the kerb** - making it easier for older adults to board the bus

Sensitise personnel to be **considerate** towards older persons - wait until they board/ alight, to stop the buses at designated bus stop
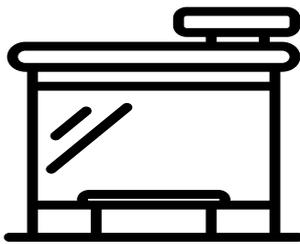
Installation of **comfortable bus shelters**, sitting space and lighting inside the shelter will improve waiting experience

Providing a **digital display board** with real-time information of estimated arrival of buses will help them plan their trips with minimal waiting.

Ward level monthly camps to issue and renew 'senior citizen' bus pass will help increase bus usage among low-income older adults

Introduction of **low-floor non-A/C buses** for easy access to older commuters

Rationalising routes considering trip patterns of older commuters will help better access to healthcare and wellbeing

To know more about EQUIMOB project:

BRAC INSTITUTE OF GOVERNANCE & DEVELOPMENT

MANIPAL
ACADEMY *of* HIGHER EDUCATION
(Institution of Eminence Deemed to be University)

THESIS

4 Masters Thesis

Thesis: Evaluating the Attempts to Improve the Accessibility of Public Transport for People with Disabilities in India

Title of thesis:

Evaluating the Attempts to Improve the Accessibility of Public Transport for People with Disabilities in India

Name: Euan Morrison

M.Sc: International Development Studies

Year: 2019–2020

Thesis project: The Potential of the Smart City in the Peripheries of Bengaluru, India: on the inclusivity of infrastructures for marginalised groups

Title of thesis: The Potential of the Smart City in the Peripheries of Bengaluru, India: on the inclusivity of infrastructures for marginalised groups.

Author: Bart A.M. van Gils

M.Sc: International Development Studies, *cum laude*

Year: 2020

Thesis: Road Safety: the Traffic Environment and its Social Impacts

Title of thesis: Road Safety: the Traffic Environment and its Social Impacts.

A study about the experiences concerning road safety among young adults in Bengaluru, India.

Name: Rose van der Laan

M.Sc: International Development Studies

Year: 2020

Thesis project: The potential of non-motorised transport for last-mile connectivity in Bengaluru, India

Title of thesis: The potential of non-motorised transport for last-mile connectivity in Bengaluru, India

Author: Nils Steinhäuser

M.Sc: Sustainable Development

Year: 2022

INFOGRAPHICS

7 published

1. <u>EQUIMOB Online Survey 'Older Adult Mobility During COVID-19 in India', key highlights</u> *published as an infographic on EQUIMOB website.*

2. <u>EQUIMOB Online Survey: Mental well-being of older adults during COVID-19</u>, *published as an infographic on EQUIMOB website.*

3. <u>EQUIMOB Online Survey: Perceptions of COVID-19 risk among older adults in India</u>, *published as an infographic on EQUIMOB website.*

4. <u>EQUIMOB Online Survey: COVID-19 and older adults' mobility in Bangladesh</u>, *published as an infographic on EQUIMOB website.*

5. <u>EQUIMOB Online Survey: Perceptions of COVID-19 risk among older adults in Bangladesh</u>, *published as an infographic on EQUIMOB website.*

6. <u>EQUIMOB Online Survey: What impact did COVID-19 have on the mental well-being of older adults in Bangladesh?</u> *published as an infographic on EQUIMOB website.*

7. <u>EQUIMOB Online Survey: Gendered Differences of Mobility among Older Adults during COVID -19 in India,</u> *published as an infographic on EQUIMOB website.*

# EVENTS

PANELS ORGANISED

EQUIMOB – IGU Conference 2023: EQUIMOB researcher presented a panel on the 'impact of transport inequalities on life course transitions' at the International Geographical Unition conference in Lesbos, Greece.

Round table (virtual) discussion: Art for Decolonising Mobility Research EQUIMOB hosted an online roundtable discussion on 'Arts for decolonizing mobility research' on 13th October 2022.

PANELS ORGANISED

Researchers from EQUIMOB presented findings from their on-going research at online WU Gender and Diversity Conference in 2022.

SEMINAR/WEBINAR HOSTED

International Seminar in Dhaka, Bangladesh: EQUIMOB researchers in collaboration with the Urban Regional Planning, Bangladesh University of Engineering & Technology [BUET] organized an international seminar on inclusive mobility of older adults, women and people with disabilities in Dhaka, Bangladesh on 11th May 2023.

EQUIMOB project organized an international seminar on Navigating intersectional realities through smart urbanism: Gender, Media & Design at Utrecht University on 12th April 2022.

SEMINAR/WEBINAR HOSTED

EQUIMOB and ISEC (Institute for Social and Economic Change) organised Golden Jubilee International Seminar on 'Cities on the Move – Inclusive Transport and Mobility for South Asian Cities' in Bengaluru on October 13 and 14, 2022.

EQUIMOB webinar on 'Mobility Matters': Over 50 attendees from different parts of the world attended the EQUIMOB webinar – Mobility Matters.

WORKSHOPS CONDUCTED

Photovoice workshop for youth by EQUIMOB in collaboration with one of our stakeholder 'Samvada' in 2023.

Research methods workshop: EQUIMOB and Meaningful Mobility research projects coorganised and conducted a research methods workshop 'Behind the Scenes: Discussions around Research Methods' in association with the Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE).

WORKSHOPS CONDUCTED

EQUIMOB-PUTSPACE online workshop: EQUIMOB-PUTSPACE online workshop was conducted on "Methods for mobilities research" on 6 December 2021.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT
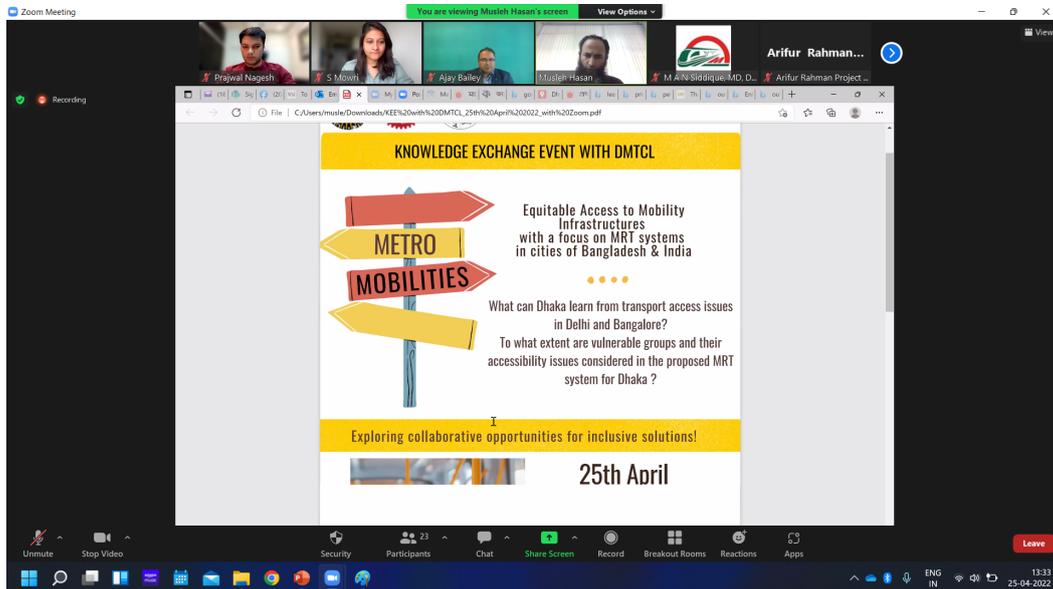
Knowledge exchange event on Metro Mobilities: EQUIMOB organised a knowledge-exchange event titled 'Metro Mobilities: equitable access to mobility infrastructures with a focus on MRT systems in cities of Bangladesh & India' with the Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited (DMTCL) on 25th April 2022.
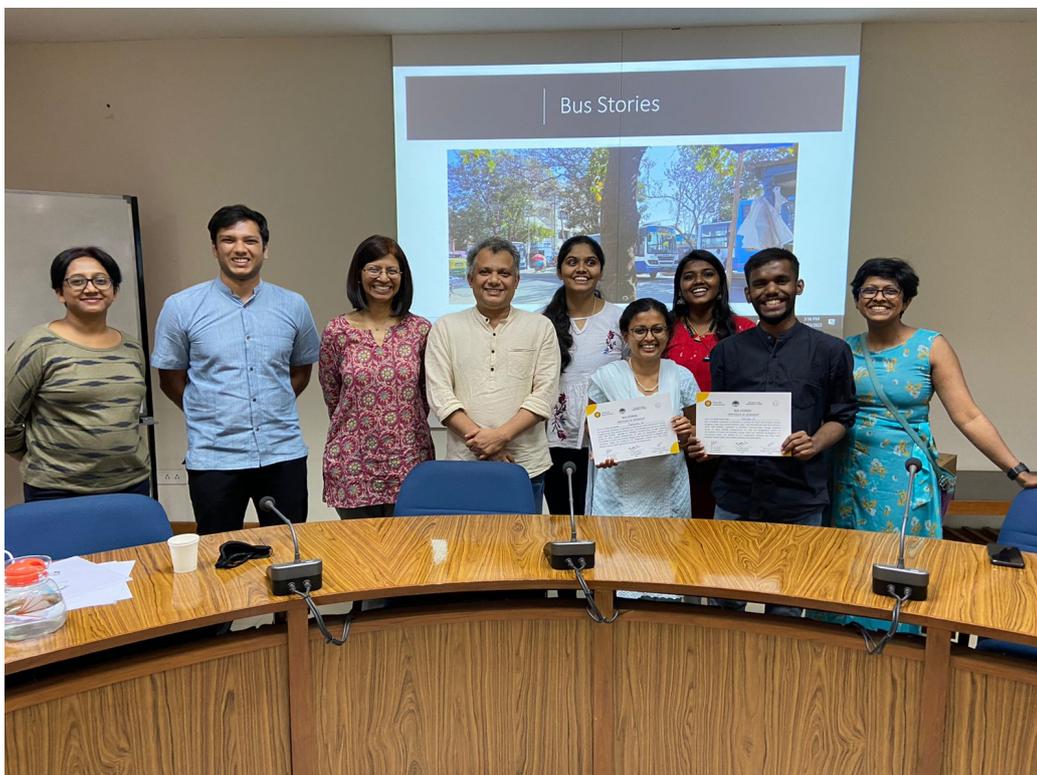
Collaboration with stakeholders: A knowledge-sharing session from 'Busina Kathegalu' (Bengaluru's Bus Stories) was organised on 7th March 2022. 'Busina Kathegalu' is a collaborative effort of EQUIMOB, Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC), SAMVADA, and Bengaluru Bus Prayanikara Vedike.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholder consultation workshop on social barriers to mobility for people with disabilities: An online workshop on social barriers to mobility for persons with disabilities was organized to focus on social barriers, besides environmental barriers, that affect the mobility of people with disabilities (PwDs) in their everyday activities.

Stakeholder consultation workshop on women and transport inequalities: On 23 August 2021, a consultation workshop with experienced stakeholders was held to contribute to the cocreation of an evaluative framework for inclusive urban mobility in India and Bangladesh.
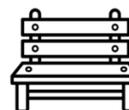
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholder workshop on ageing and equitable access to urban transport infrastructures: A stakeholder consultation workshop on ageing and equitable access to urban transport infrastructures was held on 25 August 2021.

INVITED TALKS
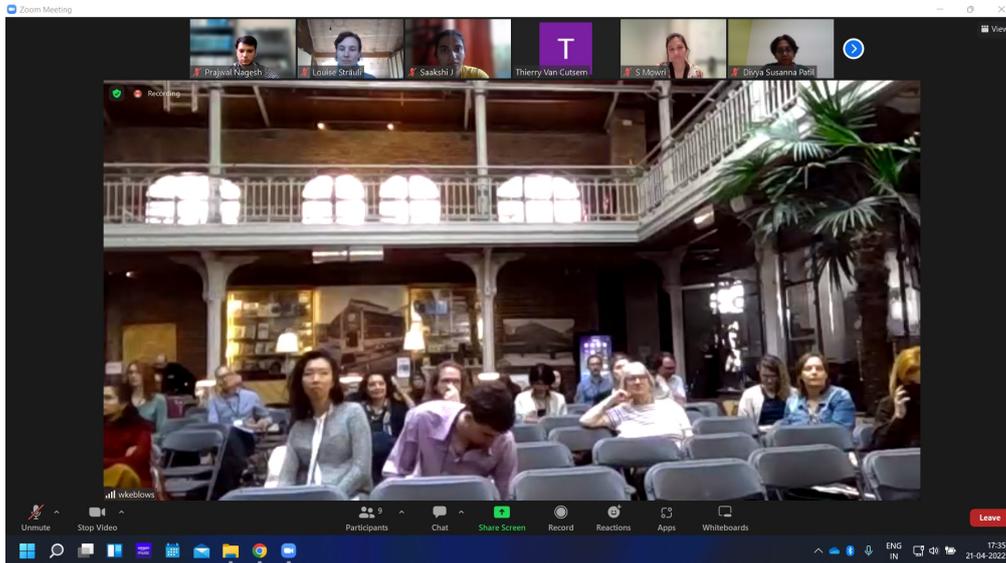
Keynote talk by Prof. Ajay Bailey at PUTSPACE conference: Prof. Ajay Bailey, the principal investigator of the EQUIMOB project, delivered a keynote talk at the PUTSPACE conference on 21 April 2022.

EQUIMOB - McGill Lecture Series: EQUIMOB researcher Divya Patil delivered a lecture at 'McGill Summer Institutes in Global Health' program under the theme "Global Considerations of Disability for Rehabilitation Providers" during 13-15 June 2023.

Faculty development programme: EQUIMOB researchers delivered lecture at 'McGill Summer Institutes in Global Health' program under the theme "Global considerations of Disability for Rehabilitation Providers.

Contact us

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