

## **Do we have a barrier free transportation system for people with disabilities?**

According to statistics available with Leonard Cheshire Disability Resource Centre, 5 to 6% of the Sri Lankan population comprises of persons with disabilities. In Sri Lanka , despite the increasing numbers of disabled, such people often need to rely on others especially while commuting or traveling long distances for obtaining education, earning livelihood or to engage in leisure activities.

The misery they have to encounter are manifold: the uneven pathways, open drains, slippery/ glazed floors, improper lighting prove to be highly dangerous for persons with poor vision as these could cause accidents and injuries. Where as, lack of visual sign boards prevent the hearing impaired from being self-reliant. This is when everyone, regardless of their abilities and disabilities, have the right to use any form of transport with dignity and independence. But the disabled often get a raw deal when travelling.

In order to create a dialogue on barrier free transportation infrastructure for people with disabilities in Sri Lanka the Development with Disability Network- an initiative of Practical Action, in collaboration with Volunteer Overseas Services, BASIC NEEDS, Lanka Forum for Transport Development and Leonard Cheshire Disability Resource Centre has organised a workshop on the 23rd of June 2009 from 2.30 p.m at the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute.

While exploring the current situation on disability and transport in Sri Lanka, policies related to disability sensitive infrastructure development and comparing with the situation in other countries there will be a panel discussion involving key authorities from the transport sector such as the National Transport Commission, Road Development Authority, Ministry of Policy Planning, Ministry of highways and civil society representatives.

**For more information about the workshop, please get in touch with:**

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