

# **PARA-TRANSIT USERS AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION - WHAT CAN BE DONE TO IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY FOR PASSENGERS?**

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## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to gain knowledge on how public transportation can be made more accessible for para-transit users. This is done by investigating what difficulties the citizens of Mölndal entitled to para-transit services encounter on regular public transportation (buses, trams, trains and ring-and-ride services). In the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* it is stated that everyone should have the same possibilities to partake in society and everyday life. The para-transit service is a part of the city's work to achieve this but it is not as flexible as regular public transport since it needs to be booked in advance, the waiting times can be long and there are no fixed routes. Therefore there is a need to study ways to make the public transportation system more accessible for para-transit passengers.

## Approach and/or Methodology

The data was gathered using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. A survey was sent out to a sample of the population enquiring about travel habits and difficulties they encounter with the different travel options. Those interested in participating in an in-depth-interview sent us their contact information and a couple of them were contacted and subsequently interviewed.

## Expected Results

The hypothesis is that there are many para-transit users who are not interested in other forms of transportation. There are also those who do not like being dependent on the para-transit service but are forced to use it since other means of transport are not accessible for them. Through the survey and interviews I want to learn how to improve access for them.

The survey and interview results will be analysed by means of concepts such as empowerment and marginalization.

## Conclusion

The study is ongoing but some results are emerging. It is clear that many of the para-transit users are completely dependent on the help they receive from the drivers and would not be able to use public transport

without personal aid. Still there are those who try very hard to use regular public transport or wish they could use it and it is important to try to make that possible. Some simple solutions and improvements have been suggested such as stopping closer to the curb to make getting on and off the buses easier. It is getting more and more apparent that the individual's attitude is much more important than the disability when he/she is deciding on which form of transportation to use, This will be explored further.

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