



## Highlights - Urbanlogue - S02 E06 - 24th June, 2020 at 3pm IST Effective Communication and Outreach for Sustainable Mobility

### Summary ([Link to full Video](#))

Ms. Aswathy Dilip, Senior Programme Manager, Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP), led the session by welcoming the speakers, panellists, and participants.

The three presentations were by: Ms. Aswathy Dilip on 'Effective communication and outreach'; Mr. Shashi Verma, Director of Strategy and Chief Technology Officer at Transport for London on 'London's response'; and Mr. Arun Bothra IPS, CMD-OSRTC and Managing Director, Capital Regional Urban Transport (CRUT) on 'Lessons from Bhubaneswar'. The presentations were followed by a panel discussion and Q&A session, moderated by Ms. Aswathy Dilip and co-moderated by Mr. Gerald Ollivier, Lead Transport Specialist, The World Bank with Ms. Rushda Majeed, Country Representative, Bernard van Leer Foundation, and Mr. Kunal Kumar IAS, Joint Secretary, Smart Cities Mission, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs as panellists.

**The sixth episode had over 600 registrants from over 100 Indian cities and 10 International cities.** The participants from various universities, organizations, media houses, and city corporations raised nearly 100 questions. This webinar is the sixth and final one in the series organised by the Smart Cities Mission in collaboration with the ITDP India Programme aimed to help Indian city officials develop robust transport solutions in response to the pandemic. The Transport & ICT Group of the World Bank and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ) are knowledge partners of the webinar series.

### **Effective Communication and Outreach - Ms. Aswathy Dilip, Senior Programme Manager, ITDP India Programme ([Link to Video](#))**

- Cities should communicate with their citizens to inform, persuade, and engage.
- **Inform** - Apps, digital tools, on-site boards, and pocket guides can help inform travel choices and planning
- **Persuade** - Communication campaigns using mascots, messages, and storytelling can help shape user behaviour and choices, and encourage a shift towards sustainable modes.

- **Engage** - Citizen engagement can help cities understand citizen perspectives, improve awareness and collaborative decision making.
- **Effective tools for communication** - Media engagement, static interventions, social media, digital applications, and direct public engagement.
- **Long term strategies** - Create branding strategy, establish communication cell, allocate funding for outreach, build a robust monitoring and evaluation system.
- *“Everything is communication, especially in a crisis.”*

**London’s response - Mr. Shashi Verma, Director of Strategy and Chief Technology Officer at Transport for London**[\(Link to Video\)](#)

- **Data and evidence based planning** - Hourly charts are generated to drive the decision-making - this helps to identify localised problems and work towards on-ground solutions.
- **Tailored messages** - For travel demand management, people can change the mode of travel, the time, the route, or reduce their travel. Simplicity of the messaging is important to bring focus on the issues. But the complexity arises when the messages need to be linked to different sectors of the economy. The sector should be analysed according to the kind of customers to create tailored messages.
- **Effective communication channels** - Radio advertisements, posters, customer emails, one-to-one engagement with business groups
- The campaign has to be focused on sustainability, and not just towards the health crisis we are facing today.

**Lessons from Bhubaneswar - Mr. Arun Bothra, IPS, CMD-OSRTC and Managing Director, Capital Regional Urban Transport (CRUT)**[\(Link to Video\)](#)

- Communication can only yield results if good service and operations are established. Communications and operations supplement each other.
- CRUT is a new organisation - two years old and has seen steady growth in the last one year.
- **Communications team** - Work closely with the operations team. They handle customer grievances, social media, market research, and arrange events. The team regularly visits the depot and travels in the buses, to talk to the passengers and understand their perceptions.
- **Social media outreach** is strategized by looking at different trends - such as memes. This has helped to connect with common passengers and the youth.
- The outreach is done in the local Odia language and the organisation’s Guides and Bus Captains feature in the campaigns, instead of local celebrities.
- **Mascot** called Mobby - the name was chosen by the citizens through a social media competition. He has become popular and can be found all over Bhubaneswar.
- The Bus Queue Shelters have clear information panels in English and Odia. We also distribute pocket maps for free, which people can carry around everywhere.
- As many people are unable to use digital travel passes, the communications team suggested physical passes, which were developed in two months.
- **Customer-friendly initiatives** - Free newspapers in the bus, which are then sold to create a

welfare fund for the employees. CRUT also organised a bus to drop school children at an examination centre. We have also responded quickly to online requests from users.

- **During COVID** - Created games, asked people to share their experiences through the 'Mo Bus, Mo Story' campaign.

### **Key points discussed in the Panel Discussion and the Q&A session ([Link to Panel Discussion Video](#))**

#### ***Ms. Aswathy Dilip, Senior Programme Manager, ITDP India Programme (Moderator)***

- Engaging with the community needs its own nuance. Many cities do not engage the community, because they are scared of brickbats.
- A pop-up cycle lane does not mean cyclists will come automatically. It is important for cities to nudge behavioural change.

#### ***Mr. Gerald Ollivier, Lead Transport Specialist, The World Bank, (Co-Moderator)***

- Citizen engagement and communications should always be user-centric. Data based approaches will help to understand the user, and this must be embedded in the system.
- Our projects are rated based on if it was delivered to its beneficiaries, and we need to understand the project from the perspective.
- During COVID-19, we need to create agents of change - this will trigger long-term change. We need to empower our communities, by implementing pilots and make people believe the change can happen.

#### ***Mr. Kunal Kumar IAS, Joint Secretary, Smart Cities Mission, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs***

- Smart Cities Mission will use a mix of strategic and tactical initiatives to prepare for the new normal, post COVID-19.
- The India Cycles4Change Challenge is launching as a tactical initiative, which will turn into a strategic initiative that pushes for Non-Motorized Transport (NMT) infrastructure in our cities.
- Every country and city has to go through a learning curve, by understanding what's happening around the world, and to be innovative, but contextual in the future.
- Cities are beginning to feel the crunch on resources - funding for public transport has reduced, commuters have decreased, and it is difficult to support State Transport Undertakings (STUs).
- We have to think of innovative funding solutions - congestion pricing, parking charges, Transit Oriented Development, tax increment financing.
- Good urban planners are good observers, and ones who understand conflict points in a city and can resolve them. Smart transport does not mean good looking roads, but roads that have minimal conflict points and can be used by all users.
- We need not just one or two initiatives, but multiple initiatives on infrastructure, policy, and even piloting. In Pune, to engage with the citizens, we created a pilot overnight. This made the communication between the people effective and pushed the project through.

*Ms. Rushda Majeed, Country Representative, Bernard van Leer Foundation*

- Urban95 Initiative - 95cm is the average height of a healthy three-year-old child. Looking at a city from the height of 95cm changes our perspective, in terms of urban public services. This is important right now, when we are looking at the youngest and most vulnerable during COVID-19.
- Communications cannot be looked at in isolation.
- **User experience** should be thought of first and in integration with community engagement and building public support. Gathering observational data by talking to the users will not only help to engage with the community, but will also gather the right information to refine the user experience.
- **Resources** - We are looking at Urban95 and other similar initiatives as an add-on and not an additional resource. This will help interested partners to take the lead on these innovations, that can then feed into costs that the city is already undertaking.
- **Communications to induce behavioural change** - We look at behavioural economics and participatory planning. While we have to start young to influence behaviours, we should also look at caregivers and other users.
- **Behavioural change** is often thought of as a long-term process, but our work has shown that it is possible to build culture through tactical interventions and day-to-day citizen engagement.
- In Udaipur, we tried to create a community space through reclamation. The community was involved in the design process and the city reached out to all Urban95 constituents - children, teachers, and parents. This led to behavioural change such as continued usage of designated parking spaces.
- In Pune, the traffic plaza project aims to teach children how to cycle. The city has undertaken data collection, spoken to schools in the area, and brought in architecture students. This helps in ownership of the project and supports behavioural change.
- In Tirana, there is an ongoing cycling campaign. It is being approached from 3 sides -
  - a. Technical - Pop-up cycle lanes, design, and implementation
  - b. Market - Supply of bikes, supporting market
  - c. Cultural - How to destigmatize cycling, connect it with the local culture
- Pre-COVID, Tirana was creating pop-up cycle lanes for toddlers. The city is using strong visuals of children cycling to create a cultural change.

*Mr. Arun Bothra IPS, CMD-OSRTC and Managing Director, Capital Regional Urban Transport (CRUT)*

- Revenue is important. But we are not worried because public transport is essential and the government is ready to fund it.
- To bring customers back, it is important to have good service. MOBUS service has been very good and has become part of life in the city.
- Our job is to assure people that we are doing our best in terms of health standards and cleanliness. We are not allowing people without masks, standing passengers or high numbers of people.
- Our communications team has documented the nightly cleaning process and circulated the videos to media channels and social media. It has started to rebuild public trust and we have seen ridership increasing again.

- Good service is necessary for open communication to people's questions, suggestions, and criticism. We are sure of our service. We take all feedback seriously.
- We have dedicated customers, who respond to online criticism to defend us.
- We have two handles - the official CRUT handle and the Mobby handle. The latter is used for humorous and light exchanges with people.
- In our 1st annual function in 2019, we invited the Chief Minister to travel the bus. We invited our supporters and critics on social media to accompany the CM. The critics were so pleased and soon turned into our followers.

*Mr. Shashi Verma, Director of Strategy and Chief Technology Officer at Transport for London*

- The underlying themes of sustainable mobility have not changed despite this crisis: climate change, carbon emissions, air quality, road safety, personal health. This shapes our long term strategy.
- London's transport strategy is based on the idea that sustainable mode share (walking, cycling, and public transport) should reach 80 percent from about 63 percent today. That might not seem like a major change but the share of cars going from 37 percent to 20 percent is a major change.
- In India, there is a high sustainable mode share, but that is because people are making local journeys, travel short distances and depend on walking and cycling. These are people who are invisible to policy makers, because policymakers do not engage in these behaviours.
- Our job is to maintain these core themes. The fundamental tools to do this are the same around the world. We should remember that cities exist to allow economic activity to be organised more effectively than spreading them across a place. The job of cities is to make life productive and that can only be done with an efficient transport system.
- The London experience shows the absolute centrality of the bus system. In India, this is still a missing piece. We see a lot of investment in metros, which in itself is not wrong. But the reality is that even in cities with efficient, extensive, and dense metros, more journeys are carried on buses than on metros. The bus system is not seen as a glamorous shining investment.
- The fragmentation of the transport network is a major issue. Thinking of transport as an integrated door-to-door trip by including all modes is important. Every public transport trip starts and ends with walking. Addressing this requires not just physical integration but also institutional integration.
- If different departments are responsible for different aspects of the problems, we will never have a bus lane.
- **Cycling** - London has been dedicating more and more space towards cycling. We have learnt a lot about which interventions work and which do not.
- Painted cycle lanes that are separated from vehicular traffic do not make people feel safe. We should create segregated cycle lanes that make it impossible for vehicles to come in. There is never a perfect mechanism to create cycling space. We need to work with what each city offers.
- Road space is limited, and must be used as efficiently as possible. Not by the people with the loudest voice, but in a way that is most effective.