

## YES-DC congress report: sustainable transport in developing countries

### Equity: *“Thinking outside of the bus”*

With this phrase, Eric Britton, mobility expert and moderator of YES-DC’s congress on “Sustainable Mobility in Developing Countries” addressed his audience and the four other speakers of the day.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June 2012, more than 40 YES-DC members and non-members met at the Academic building in the centre of Utrecht to attend to the presentations of sustainable mobility experts, learn through their experiences, find out about national projects with large impact in a global context, be inspired by simple solutions that achieve great results, interact with each other in the workshops and socialise during the coffee breaks and the closing drinks of the evening.



Eric Britton kicks off the congress

Eric Britton set the background of the discussion by describing the constant efforts that the transition towards cleaner and fairer transport systems requires. With anecdotes and analogies he proposed that equity is a key element and that sustainable mobility is not only reached via technocratic pathways but via a structural change in the very foundations of what is called mobility. By giving examples varying from the American lifestyle to the Finnish educational system he brought the audience to a common mindset, that the best solutions are not necessarily the ones dictated by traditional thinking, ergo: “Thinking outside of the bus”.



Santosh Kondukula addressing the audience

This was a good moment for Santosh Kondukula to give his speech based on his international personal and professional background. He showed how complicated concepts can lose their functionality if implemented in the wrong way. *“Moving forward is moving backwards when travelling in the wrong direction”*, he said and then argued how simple and well implemented ideas can help the lives of millions. Santosh took Eric’s words and put pictures (and videos) to them, presented

the audience with examples and plenty food for thought with regard to congestion, access to transport, public transport, car ownership and safety. All success stories Santosh shared had one common element: Building new and more roads, bigger or faster buses does not give the answers but thinking with the society for the society does.

After a short break, Donovan Escalante with his presentation combined global climate targets and NAMAs related with sustainable mobility. After placing his subject in perspective, Donovan presented to the audience the technical and organisational complexity that the background work which supports the development of sustainable mobility projects requires. Donovan gave two concrete examples: the development of a BRT system in Mexico and electric mobility in Chile.



**Donovan Escalante explaining NAMAs**

Jaap Rijnsburger stepped up and shared with the audience his long experience in setting up bicycling as a transport option in developing cities. He expressed the challenges of integrating this option in various settings dominated by non-cycle friendly infrastructure, limited know-how, resisting cultures and budgets! Jaap Rijnsburger's presentation was complemented by Tom Godefrooij, who showed the requirements for the scaling up cycling as a major mobility option in developing cities. According to Tom, cycling has to be accepted as a mode of transport by all segments of society and it should be included into urban and transport planning of developing cities. The latter would require a re-allocation of both road space and budgets to maximise the contribution of transport to social and economic well-being.



**Jaap Rijnsburger (left) and Tom Godefrooij (right) on cycling as a sustainable mobility option**

After the presentations, Pam de Sterke took over the floor and hosted the workshop session in an interactive manner by inviting all the participants to convey their questions to the audience. Everyone selected the question that they would like to work with. The enthusiasm was great resulting in 5 to 6 groups in 2 rounds. The workshops were held in the terrace of the Academic building. With the sunny weather as an ally, the inspiration from the speeches, and the challenging questions of the workshops the participants interacted with creativity and enthusiasm. The workshop resulted in several flip-over sheets completely filled with creative and innovative ideas that even inspired some people to start a new company based on them!



**Selection of questions for the workshop**



**Discussion during the workshop**

Overall, the congress was a great success with interesting speakers and a very nice and open atmosphere. The many aspects of sustainable transport in developing countries have been highlighted by the speakers and solutions were generated during the active workshops. We would like to thank all of the speakers and participants for this interesting and enjoyable day!