

THINGS WE DO, PEOPLE WE MEET – REFLECTIONS IN BRIEF

Sweden Study Tour (1) -- A Barrier-free City

If persons with disabilities are provided with facilities and access that meet their needs, they can enjoy the same independent lifestyle as everyone else.

This is one of the observations we gathered in our Sweden study tour.

Stockholm, capital of Sweden, announced in 1999 its plan to remove barriers for persons with disabilities, and its vision of being the most easily accessible capital in the world by 2010. The government set up a dedicated team to ensure accessibility in all government buildings, transportation services and private developments.

Examples of accessible facilities include:

- Sloped kerbs for wheelchair access
- Tactile paths throughout the city for people with impaired vision
- Colour markings on the edge of stairs
- Ramps outside buildings
- Elevators inside subway stations

To encourage the business community to be mindful of accessibility, awards are presented to businesses in Stockholm which demonstrate excellence in service attitude and effort in removing environmental obstacles for people with disabilities.

There is much that Hong Kong can learn from Sweden -- building an accessible city is not an impossible dream.