



Mobility and Transport Connectivity Series

She Drives Change: A Toolkit for Redefining Opportunities for Women in Transport

Chapter 2: Urban Transport



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Table of Contents

Preface	vi
Acknowledgements	vii
Urban Transport	1
Mobility.....	2
Employment.....	18
Entrepreneurship.....	33

Preface

She Drives Change: A Toolkit for Redefining Opportunities for Women in Transport is a comprehensive resource designed to empower transport sector professionals and policy makers to address disparities in mobility, employment, and entrepreneurship between women and men within the transport sector. The objective of this toolkit is to provide users with a structured approach to identifying and addressing gaps between men and women in various transport subsectors, including urban transport, rural and peri-urban roads, rail, aviation, maritime transport, and economic corridors and logistics. The toolkit presents specific interventions and indicators tailored to each subsector. The toolkit draws primarily from the World Bank's project experience and several other cases provided by other organizations.

The toolkit leverages practical insights from projects that tackle gender disparities in the transport sector, showcasing concrete examples and discussing common challenges and solutions. Projects were selected based on innovative approaches and a strong results chain, clearly articulating constraints, interventions, and indicators to measure progress. Examples span various subsectors and regions, ensuring diverse contexts and solutions, with preference for projects with several years of implementation to demonstrate tangible results. While some indicators may be challenging to adopt due to data limitations, the toolkit provides a comprehensive list of both tested and aspirational indicators for practitioners.

To enhance accessibility to the material, sector-specific interventions are detailed in separate chapters. This chapter addresses urban transport.

Online Interactive Toolkit:

A digital version of this toolkit is available at www.shedriveschange.org (as of July 2025). This online, interactive version serves as a dynamic and continuously evolving resource, ensuring that users have access to the most up-to-date and relevant examples. As a living document, the online toolkit will not be static; rather, it will be updated with new insights, best practices, and innovative approaches as they emerge, making it an indispensable resource for transport planners and gender specialists.

Downloadable (PDF) Toolkit:

The entire toolkit, including this chapter and the sector-related chapters, is available at [She Drives Change: A Toolkit for Redefining Opportunities for Women in Transport](http://www.shedriveschange.org).

Acknowledgments

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Our sincere appreciation goes to the World Bank clients, project staff, and colleagues from development organizations whose insights and contributions enriched the project case studies.

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2

Urban Transport



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Urban transport operations focus on enhancing urban mobility and accessibility in various cities around the globe. These operations aim to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and safety of urban public transport systems in an environmentally sustainable manner. Objectives include developing a diverse range of transit solutions, such as bus rapid transit (BRT) corridors, metro systems, suburban rail, multimodal urban transit systems, and urban logistics. Furthermore, the projects support the transition to cleaner technologies, including electric and hydrogen-powered vehicles, contributing to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Efforts also address climate resilience, road safety, and institutional capacity building in the transport sector. By targeting key corridors, feeder lines, and integrated transit networks, these operations strive to increase access to economic and social opportunities, enhance the quality of life for urban residents, and support sustainable urban development.

Mobility

In urban areas, disproportionate mobility barriers often faced by women are intrinsically linked to availability, affordability, physical accessibility, social and cultural acceptability, and safety of transport.

A global literature shows some clear patterns of public transport usage for women and men. Women tend to travel shorter distances in a limited geographical radius and are more likely to travel with dependents during off-peak hours for unpaid care work. This is often referred to as mobility of care.¹ Given the need to balance household and work responsibilities, women typically combine multiple tasks, necessitating several short trips, which is called trip chaining. Mobility of care involves complex trip chaining, which affects women's transport choices and limits their employment options. Consequently, women end up paying higher fares for frequently changing directions and modes of transport and breaking their journeys.

The paucity of sex-disaggregated data prevents urban transport planners and operations staff in public transport authorities from fully understanding different mobility barriers faced by women and men. Women also have off-peak needs that are often underserved. Thus, there is a need for a city-level analysis—built on sex-disaggregated mobility data—to understand different mobility patterns and provide services to cater to the needs of all.

¹ The term recognizes, quantifies, and makes visible travel associated with caretaking responsibilities and home-related tasks needed for the reproduction of life and sustainment of family.

Availability

Availability of transport remains a critical issue, particularly during off-peak hours when many women travel. While urban areas generally have better developed transport infrastructure, the quality and frequency of services often fail to meet women’s specific needs. For instance, irregular bus schedules during early mornings or late evenings can force women to wait for extended periods in potentially unsafe environments at transit stops. First- and last-mile connectivity presents additional challenges, with women encountering poorly lit streets when commuting between home and transit stops. This issue is particularly acute in informal settlements or peripheral urban areas where public transport coverage is sparse. The lack of dedicated cycling lanes and secure parking at rail or bus stations further limits mobility options, discouraging women from using bicycles as a viable transport alternative to cover their first- and last-mile needs. Table 2.1 highlights possible interventions and indicators to track progress. Case Study 1 shows interventions from Morocco.

Table 2.1. Addressing Availability Barriers for Women in Urban Transport

Interventions	Output Indicators	Outcome Indicators
<p>Data collection to construct baselines: Undertake a study to collect sex-disaggregated data on mobility needs, focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel patterns (travel mode, duration, frequency, purpose, and first- and last-mile connectivity). • Travel preferences and perceptions of affordability, availability, accessibility, safety, and personal security. • Overall satisfaction with the urban transport and suggestions for improvements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A survey to collect and analyze data about public transport usage and needs, travel patterns, frequency, modes of transportation, trip purposes, travel times, and distances, broken down by sex and other demographic and socioeconomic factors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number/percentage of women using formal public transport services. • Number/percentage of women switching from informal to formal and safe, more reliable public transport modes. • Number/percentage of women using improved cycle and walking paths. • Number/percentage of women reporting improved accessibility to jobs and essential services due to the introduction or improvement of transport services.
<p>Bus corridors: Develop bus corridors with real-time information and enhanced security measures for improved access and passenger safety.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of bus services introduced on routes. • Number of informal services integrated into a formal structure. 	

Interventions	Output Indicators	Outcome Indicators
Bus service availability and schedules: Enhance bus service availability and schedules to align with women's travel patterns, ensuring reliable and frequent service, based on the study findings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number/percentage of public transport services adjusted to meet women's mobility needs.	
Availability of information: Ensure wide availability of signs and instructions for directions, station names, route maps, and help desks to aid navigation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number/percentage of transit points (bus stops, metro stations, and so on) with real-time information boards established, as a share of all transit points.	
Demand-responsive transport services: Implement flexible transport options, such as ride-sharing or on-demand shuttles, especially in underserved areas to bridge the first- and last-mile connectivity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of demand-responsive transport services introduced.• Number of on-demand shuttles or ride-sharing services in underserved areas.	
Integrated multimodal transport hubs: Establish transport hubs that facilitate seamless transfers between different modes of transport, ensuring safe and convenient connections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of multimodal hubs established.	
Cycle networks and walking paths: Design and maintain well-lit, accessible, and safe walking and cycling paths leading to transit stops, also covering informal settlements and peripheral urban areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number/percentage of female (and male) cyclists using the cycle network per week.	

Case Study 01

Meeting the Transportation Needs of Women in Urban Morocco²

The Challenge

With up to 65 percent of Moroccans now living in cities—a number set to rise to 70 percent by 2050—urbanization is creating opportunities for economic growth and connectivity. Yet women and low-income communities face significant challenges in this changing landscape. Congested roads, unreliable public transport, and limited access to jobs and services highlight the need for a new approach to urban movement.

A 2017 World Bank–funded survey³ identified several barriers to women’s access to urban transport, with safety concerns being a significant issue. Many women expressed worries about their personal security and stated that they would use public transport more often if security was improved. Ninety percent of women indicated that better service, greater reliability, shorter wait times, and improved facilities would also increase their use of public transport. The presence of other women on public transport was another key factor, with women reporting feeling more comfortable when surrounded by other women, whether passengers or employees.

The Intervention

To support this effort, the World Bank has committed US\$350 million through the Morocco Urban Transport Program and its additional financing.⁴ The program aims to create accessible bus rapid transit (BRT) systems for all—women and men alike. Key initiatives include:

- **BRT services:** This involves offering more frequent service and schedules that fit women’s travel patterns.
- **Female-friendly infrastructure:** This includes ramps, handlebars, and lower grades that make it easier to walk. Storage space for packages, bags, and strollers, convenience stores, and clean, safe public restrooms are equally important. Easy-to-use transfer stations and fare integration systems specifically cater to women, who typically take more multileg trips than men do.
- **Training:** Operators, local stakeholders, and transit authorities trained to create a conducive travel environment for women.
- **Codes of conduct:** Clearly defined rules to promote safety during transit.

Casablanca launched its BRT Line 1 in March 2024. Agadir’s BRT is expected by mid-2025.

² The team thanks Nabil Samir, World Bank’s Task Team Leader for his input into this case study.

³ World Bank. 2017. Morocco Urban Transport Social Survey, Funded by the Umbrella Facility of Gender Equality (UFGE), Washington DC. Internal document.

⁴ Morocco Urban Transport Project (P4R) and its Additional Financing (P149653 and P173048) 2015–2025.

To date, 100,000 daily users, including approximately 45 percent of women benefit from the new, safe, reliable, clean, and modern public transport system. This number is projected to increase to 130,000 daily users with the introduction of the new BRT system in Agadir, set to launch in November 2025.

Lessons Learned

- **Sex-disaggregated data:** Sex-disaggregated mobility data permits transport authorities to develop design and track progress.
- **Infrastructure design that addresses women's needs:** Female-friendly BRT infrastructure, accessible facilities, and frequent service that fit with women's needs significantly boosts female ridership.
- **Private sector influence:** The hiring of female bus drivers was driven by private companies as part of an Environmental, Social, and Governance commitment, highlighting the role of the private sector in promoting changes.

Affordability

Affordability poses another significant barrier to women's mobility. To stay mobile, women are frequently forced to pay higher costs for alternative transportation options like taxis or private services, despite earning lower wages and having lower employment rates than men. Economic disparities make regular use of public transport a financial burden for many women. This is exacerbated by fare structures that do not account for women's typical travel patterns. For example, a woman who needs to drop children at school, go to work, and then shop for groceries might have to pay for multiple single-trip tickets, making the cumulative cost prohibitively expensive. Safety concerns often force women to opt for more expensive transport options, such as taxis or ride-sharing services, especially at night or in areas perceived as unsafe. This is effectively equivalent to levying a "pink tax"—which is the extra amount women pay for certain products or services, in this case, transportation—that can significantly limit women's mobility and access to opportunities, particularly for low-income women who may forgo a job or school due to high transport costs. Table 2.2 highlights possible interventions and the corresponding indicators. Case study 2 shows interventions from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Table 2.2. Addressing Affordability Barriers for Women in Urban Transport

Interventions	Output Indicators	Outcome Indicators
<p>Subsidized fares: Introduce discounted public transportation fares for low-income women to make transport more affordable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number/percentage of eligible women benefiting from subsidized transport fares. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number/percentage of women using public transportation as a result of the subsidized fares.
<p>Off-peak discounts accommodating women’s trip chaining patterns: Provide women and their dependents with multitrip and family passes during peak hours, like early morning school drop-off and late afternoon pick up, to accommodate the various needs associated with mobility of care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number/percentage of eligible women/their dependents using group/flexible transport fares. • Multiride or family passes that allow multiple people (for example, a woman and her dependents) to travel at a reduced collective fare during peak hours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number/percentage of women commuters who report savings on public transport by X percent. • Percentage of transport cost savings (percent of monthly income) reported by women commuters.
<p>Integrated ticketing systems: Implement seamless ticketing solutions that allow passengers to use a single ticket or payment method across multiple modes of public transport.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of public transport services that have implemented integrated ticketing systems. 	
<p>Real-time fare information: Develop mobile apps and kiosks that provide up-to-date fare details and ticket purchasing options, helping to minimize uncertainty and enhance convenience. Integrate fare information into apps and kiosks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of transport hubs with real-time fare information kiosks or app access. 	

Case Study 02

Increasing Affordability of Transport for Women in Rio de Janeiro through the Cartão Move Mulher Program⁵

The Challenge

Improving affordability for vulnerable women is essential for fostering independence and facilitating access to essential services. For women in situations of domestic violence and economic vulnerability, transportation costs can be a significant barrier to seeking help or escaping abusive environments. Affordable and accessible transport empowers women to access support networks, justice services, and social protection mechanisms, creating pathways to safety and self-reliance.

Rio de Janeiro faces a persistent challenge with gender-based violence (GBV), including high rates of domestic violence and feminicides. Many women, particularly those in remote or low-income areas, lack the means to escape abuse or access specialized support services. The city's Specialized Network for Combating Violence Against Women, comprising facilities like the Specialized Center to Assist Carioca Women, provides critical support but often struggles to reach women constrained by financial and logistical barriers.

The Intervention

Recognizing the intersection of economic vulnerability and mobility challenges, Rio de Janeiro City Hall, with the support of the World Bank's Rio de Janeiro Fiscal Management and Sustainable Development Policy Loan,⁶ launched an innovative transport subsidy program to address this gap.

The Cartão Move Mulher (Move Women Card) program was established by decree in 2021 (and sanctioned through the law in 2022) to provide free public transportation to women experiencing domestic violence. Administered by the Secretariat for Women's Policies and Promotion, the program distributes Move Mulher travel cards, which enable users to access critical services within the city's violence-fighting network, including women's shelters, public defenders, police stations, and specialized service centers. Each eligible woman receives a card charged for up to six bus tickets per month, with the possibility of adding another card within a month in case of need.

In addition to the Move Mulher card, Rio City Hall has introduced complementary measures like the Cartão Mulher Carioca, offering financial aid of R\$500 to the families of women who are victims of violence.

⁵ Case study was prepared based on desk review of project documents and recent articles such as Rio Prefeitura. 2022. Rio City Hall launches the Move-Mulher Card. <https://en.prefeitura.rio/cidade/prefeitura-do-rio-lanca-o-cartao-move-mulher/>, and *Rio, uma cidade referência na equidade de gênero*, 2023. Rio Prefeitura. https://mulher.prefeitura.rio/wp-content/uploads/sites/41/2024/02/240124_Relatorio-de-Gestao-2023_V10Web.pdf; The team thanks Ana Waksberg Guerrini (World Bank's Task Team Leader) for her input into this case.

⁶ Rio de Janeiro Fiscal Management and Sustainable Development Policy Loan (P179182) (2023–2024).

By the end of 2023, more than 4,000 Move Mulher cards have been distributed. The Move Mulher program represents a significant step in Rio's policies to combat GBV by ensuring affordable mobility for women in crisis. By enabling women to access essential services without a financial burden, the program empowers them to break the cycle of violence and seek justice. The provision of multiple cards per user ensures continued support and fosters a sense of security and autonomy.

Conclusion

The Move Mulher program exemplifies how targeted transport subsidies can foster resilience for women in vulnerable situations. As the program continues to expand, it serves as a model for integrating mobility, social protection, and GBV prevention into a cohesive urban policy framework.

Accessibility

Physical accessibility in urban transport systems often fails to consider the diverse needs of women users. Many public transport vehicles and infrastructure projects are designed with a “neutral” male user in mind, overlooking the requirements of parents (both women and men) traveling with children, carrying groceries, or managing other care-related tasks. High steps when boarding buses, large gaps between platforms and train coaches, and a lack of storage provisions create literal barriers to comfortable travel.

While universal accessibility measures—such as ramps, elevators, and step-free access—enhance mobility for all users, they do not fully address the specific mobility challenges women face. Infrastructure design that accommodates women's needs goes further by incorporating elements that improve safety, convenience, and usability. For example, poorly maintained sidewalks—often broken, discontinuous, or obstructed by street vendors or parked vehicles—force people to walk on the road, exposing them to traffic risks. Likewise, transit stops and stations often lack facilities that cater to the needs of women, such as separate toilets, breastfeeding rooms, and childcare areas. The absence of these amenities can make long commutes particularly difficult for parents with young children or women who are pregnant or menstruating. Table 2.3 highlights possible interventions to address accessibility constraints. Case study 3 shows interventions from Chennai, India.

Table 2.3. Addressing Accessibility Barriers for Women in Urban Transport

Interventions	Output Indicators	Outcome Indicators
<p>Vehicles with universal accessibility features: Ensure that public transport vehicles have lower boarding steps, spacious interiors, and designated storage for luggage, groceries, and childcare items.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number/percentage of public transport vehicles with universal accessibility features. • Public transport authority using universal accessibility procurement guidelines for public transport vehicles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number/percentage of women using public transport facilities with accessible infrastructure. • Change in access to employment, education, and healthcare in areas served by upgraded transport infrastructure, disaggregated by sex and disability.
<p>Station infrastructure: Upgrade transport infrastructure by creating smooth, level transitions between platforms and vehicles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number/percentage of public transport stations equipped with accessible infrastructure. • Public transport authority using universal accessibility procurement guidelines for stations. 	
<p>Transit stops and waiting areas: Equip main transit stops and stations with essential facilities such as separate toilets for women and men, breastfeeding rooms for women, and childcare areas for parents and children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number/percentage of public transport transit stops equipped with accessible infrastructure. • Public transport authorities use universal accessibility procurement guidelines for transit stops. 	
<p>Infrastructure for non-motorized transport: Expand safe infrastructure for non-motorized transport, including sidewalks and bike lanes, to improve access for all.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kilometers of sidewalks and bike lanes constructed, rehabilitated, and maintained. 	

Case Study 03

Gender-Responsive Urban Development in Chennai⁷

The Challenge

In cities across India, 30–50 percent of women report using public transport, mostly buses, as their primary way to get around. However, perceived safety is a major concern, especially at night. A 2021 World Bank study in Chennai found that women generally avoid traveling after dark, in part because of safety concerns. The study found that women travel more frequently between 3 and 5 pm, when it is light outside. Men travel more between 5 and 7 pm.

Public transport is often not designed with women’s needs in mind, which limits their access to jobs, education, and economic independence.

The World Bank’s study in Chennai found that many women worry about their safety and security on public transport. Many reported sexual harassment at all times of day and rising in the evening and at night. Few female public transit riders knew about emergency helplines, and a shortage of restrooms, challenges getting on and off buses and trains, and dense crowds are all sources of concern.

The Intervention

The Chennai Gender and Policy Lab (GPL)⁸ is designed to create safer public areas, including public transport spaces, for women in the city.

To do that, the GPL did safety audits at 47 transit and other public places throughout the city. The audit dug deep into detail; it revealed that though people often felt unsafe crossing streets, they avoided foot bridges and subways. And the presence of street vendors, especially women, made people feel safer.

With that information, GPL designed training programs for city authorities and campaigns to raise awareness on women’s safety. It advocated for reclaiming public spaces, addressing topics like bystander intervention, asserting women’s rights to the city, and standing against gender-based violence (GBV). GPL helped direct the placement and design of new and renovated bus shelters. In the city’s parks, GPL recommended infrastructure upgrades like better lighting, seating, visibility, and maintenance. It also suggested displaying helpline numbers on signs and training security guards to handle harassment. GPL analyzed helpline data to identify “dark spots” and helped install 425 new light posts in 152 locations.

⁷ The team thanks Gerald Paul Ollivier, World Bank’s Task Team Leader, for the review and clearance of the case.

⁸ Chennai City Partnership: Sustainable Urban Services Program (P175221).

Safety and Personal Security

Security concerns are one of the most significant mobility barriers. Women potentially face harassment at multiple points of their journey, from the first and last mile to waiting at stops and inside vehicles. Harassment ranges from verbal harassment and intimidation to physical assault. Overcrowded public transport provides opportunities for harassment, while deserted stations and stops heighten anxieties about safety, especially during off-peak hours and at night. The lack of effective grievance redressal mechanisms and dysfunctional emergency helplines further compounds these issues, leaving women feeling vulnerable and unsupported. Women are less likely to report incidents of harassment for fear of retaliation by perpetrators, defamation by their own community, lack of awareness of reporting mechanisms, and distrust of grievance redressal mechanisms, thereby resulting in low levels of reporting. These safety concerns not only restrict women’s immediate mobility but also have a long-term impact on their educational and professional choices. Studies have shown that women may choose lower-ranking educational institutions or lower-paying jobs closer to home to avoid unsafe commutes, perpetuating economic disparities and limiting their career progression. Table 2.4 highlights key interventions to address these security concerns, followed by examples in boxes 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 highlighting the importance of tailoring these measures to the local context and users’ expected behaviors.

Table 2.4. Addressing Safety and Personal Security Barriers for Women in Urban Transport

Interventions	Output Indicators	Outcome Indicators
<p>Safety and personal security audits: Conduct audits to benchmark harassment levels, identify vulnerable areas, and understand how infrastructure and design choices affect mobility. These audits allow women, through their participation, to assess their safety and security in public spaces and transport facilities, while also evaluating the adequacy of infrastructure and spatial usage patterns.</p> <p>See Box 2.2 for more information on audits.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of safety audits conducted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number/percentage of women who report feeling safe using public transport. • Number/percentage of survivors reporting well-being and empowerment. • Number/percentage of women accessing jobs and essential services due to the safe transport services and infrastructure.
<p>Physical design: Incorporate safety features into urban transport systems, such as well-lit stations and Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras. Additionally, separate, well-lit waiting areas for women at transport hubs, equipped with seating and security personnel, should be created to enhance comfort and safety.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety features implemented (for example, CCTV cameras, well-lit stations). 	

Interventions	Output Indicators	Outcome Indicators
<p>GBV protocols: Establish protocols to tackle GBV in public transport/ space, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reporting mechanisms via hotlines, mobile apps, and/or in-person points.• Counseling, legal support, and referral services for survivors.• Training for transport staff and law enforcement on empathetic and nonjudgmental responses.• Ongoing monitoring and evaluation, incorporating survivor feedback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public transport authority/ service provider developing standard operating protocols (SOPs) for managing reports of harassment in public transport/ public space.• Number/percentage of train conductors, ticket collectors, and maintenance staff trained on new SOPs.• Reports filed through different means (hotline, mobile app, in person).• Number/percentage of survivors of sexual harassment receiving timely and adequate support, including counseling and legal aid, through survivor-centered SOPs.	
<p>Public awareness campaigns: launch an educational campaign to raise awareness about harassment and violence against women in public transport, incorporating a range of strategies to ensure broad outreach and engagement, featuring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Posters, social media, and community events.• Clear guidelines for reporting harassment.• Workshops on GBV and bystander interventions.• Partnerships with schools and media.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public transport authority/ municipal agency undertaking public awareness campaigns.• Number/percentage of public transport users reached through in-person and digital public awareness campaigns.	

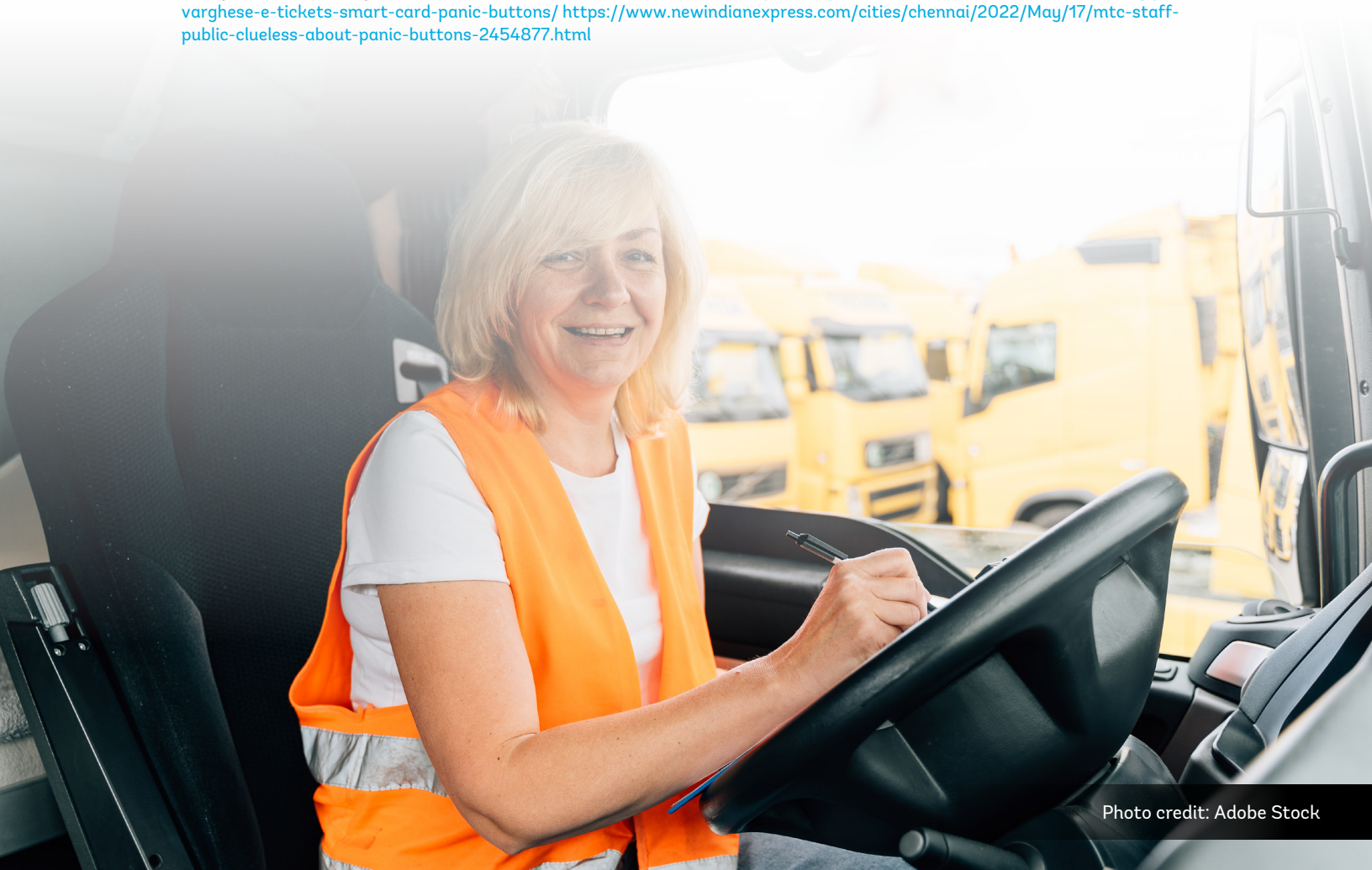
Interventions	Output Indicators	Outcome Indicators
<p>Bystander intervention training: Provide transport staff and users with training on bystander intervention techniques (for instance, the “5Ds:” distract, delegate, document, delay, and direct, among others) to ensure they are equipped with the knowledge and skills to intervene safely.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number/percentage of frontline staff trained (drivers, conductors, and security personnel) on bystander intervention.	
<p>Data collection on incidents to enhance response: Collect and analyze data on assaults occurring in public transport systems to identify patterns and trends. Use the insights gained from the data to design and implement targeted safety training for transport service providers. This intervention could:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish a robust data collection mechanism (for example, incident reporting platforms, anonymous surveys).• Analyze the data to identify high-risk routes, times, and victim profiles.• Use the findings to design safety training programs for transport providers, focusing on preventing assaults and improving responses.• Update the training based on evolving trends and patterns identified in the data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Report/s on assault patterns and trends in public transport generated.• Number/percentage of actionable insights provided on high-risk areas and times, improving transport authorities’ ability to address safety concerns.• Safety training sessions for transport service providers’ staff conducted.• Number/percentage of staff confidence in handling assault incidents, as measured by post-training evaluations.• Number/percentage of bystander intervention rates preventing harassment or assault incidents in public transport spaces.• Number/percentage of trained staff consistently applying safety protocols when handling assault or harassment incidents.	

Box 2.1. Learning Points and Tips (1): Shaping Interventions to Local Needs—Lessons from Chennai⁹

In April 2022, Chennai introduced AI-enabled panic buttons to improve women's safety in its public buses. Starting with 500 buses, the Metropolitan Transport Corporation (MTC) expanded the program to 2,330 buses by January 2023, approaching its target of 2,500. Each bus is equipped with four panic buttons, an AI-enabled recorder, and three cameras. Pressing a panic button triggers an alarm at the Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC), which also records the incident. The system is connected to both Chennai City Police and the Greater Chennai Corporation's distress response center for quick action.

The initiative has been widely supported by officials, who emphasize its potential to enhance women's safety. Awareness campaigns were conducted in December 2022 to educate passengers about the panic buttons. However, despite the technology, many women are reluctant to use the panic buttons, often due to cultural barriers and fear of drawing attention during harassment. Additionally, children misuse the system by pressing buttons for fun, leading to false alarms, potentially diverting resources from real emergencies. This highlights that while technology is essential, addressing social attitudes and user behavior is key to its success, and that what works in one context may not work in another.

⁹ Policy Lab teams in July 2023 and various local news sources such as: <https://citizenmatters.in/mtc-chennais-buses-alby-john-varghese-e-tickets-smart-card-panic-buttons/> <https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/chennai/2022/May/17/mtc-staff-public-clueless-about-panic-buttons-2454877.html>

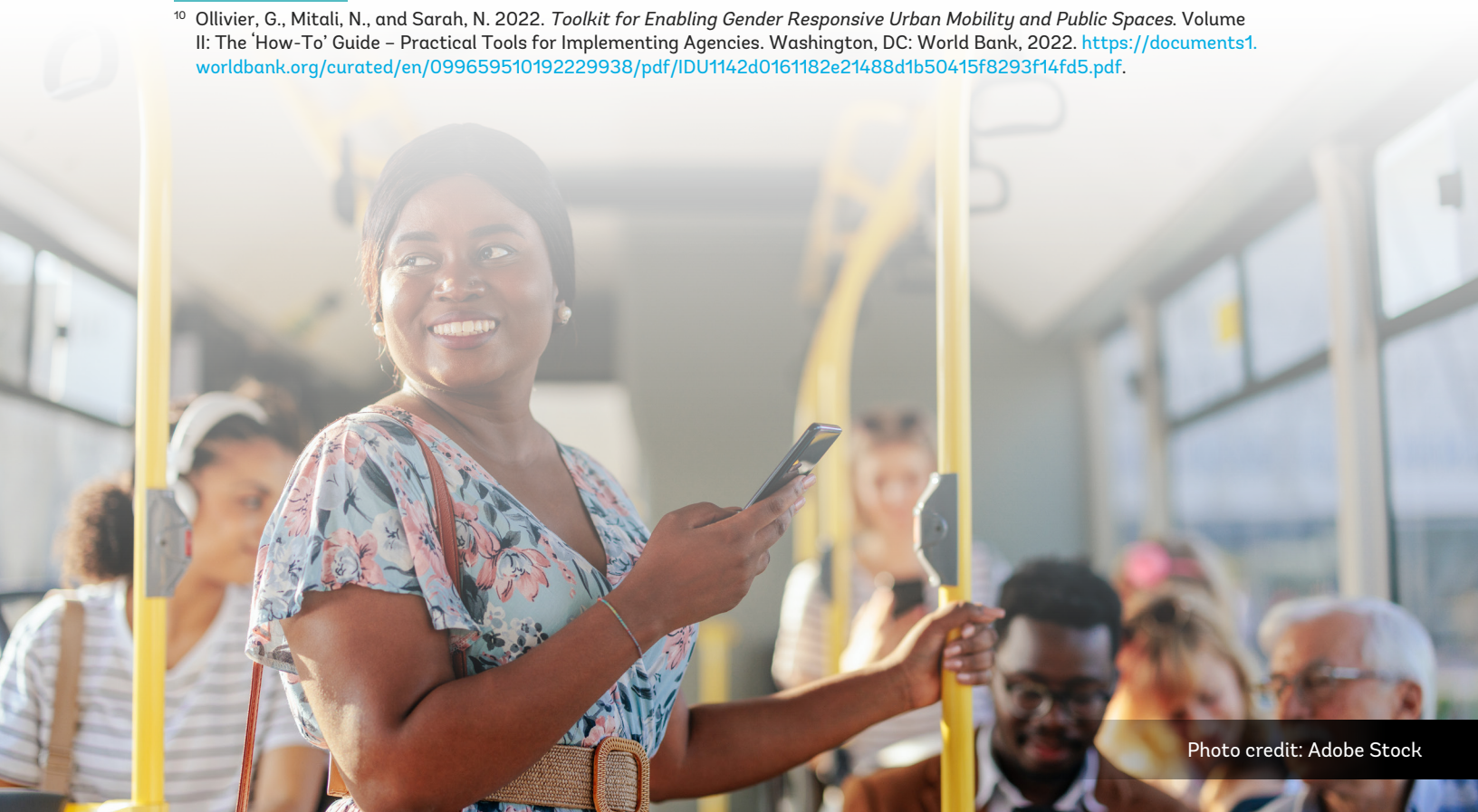


Box 2.2. Learning Points and Tips (2): Safety Audits in Urban Public Transport

Safety audits serve as critical tools for city authorities and public transport providers to evaluate and improve security. These comprehensive assessments offer benchmarks for harassment levels, identifying vulnerable areas, and understanding how infrastructure and design choices affect user safety. Through participatory mechanisms, safety audits empower women to assess their safety perceptions in public spaces and transport facilities, while evaluating infrastructure adequacy and spatial usage patterns. These assessments examine key components, including street lighting quality, pavement conditions, accessibility of transit stations, last-mile connectivity options, and availability of social amenities such as public toilets, parks, and markets.

The assessment process can leverage technology for data collection. Modern digital tools facilitate comprehensive coverage across urban areas while maintaining standardized evaluation criteria. The World Bank Toolkit for Enabling Gender Responsive Urban Mobility and Public Spaces in India provides a detailed methodology, guidance for conducting safety audits, and best practices from organizations implementing such assessments.¹⁰ The resulting data generates detailed safety maps that highlight priority areas needing intervention. These insights guide government decisions on infrastructure improvements, focusing on critical elements like lighting enhancement, footpath rehabilitation, and strategic placement of public facilities. Depending on available resources and local context, cities may conduct these audits through professional agencies or community-led initiatives.

¹⁰ Ollivier, G., Mitali, N., and Sarah, N. 2022. *Toolkit for Enabling Gender Responsive Urban Mobility and Public Spaces*. Volume II: The 'How-To' Guide – Practical Tools for Implementing Agencies. Washington, DC: World Bank, 2022. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099659510192229938/pdf/IDU1142d0161182e21488d1b50415f8293f14fd5.pdf>.



Box 2.3. Learning Points and Tips (3): Benefits and Drawbacks of Women-Only Transportation

Governments and transport companies worldwide have implemented various measures to address sexual harassment and violence in public transport and public spaces. One such measure is sex-segregated transportation, introduced in cities across countries like Bangladesh, Brazil, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Japan, Malaysia, and Mexico, to enhance safety for women. These initiatives offer immediate relief and a sense of security by providing designated train cars, buses, or transit sections, improving women's mobility and access to employment and essential services. While some women-only services have reported a decrease in safety incidents, concerns remain about their long-term impact and operational challenges, with limited evidence on their effectiveness in reducing harassment in door-to-door transit beyond the reserved cars.

Some Benefits of Women-Only Transport

- *Enhanced safety:* In environments where women face significant harassment in public spaces, providing women-only transport can offer them a safer space to travel in segregated transport. For example, evidence from the World Bank's Development Impact Evaluation (DIME) research in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, indicates that women riding in the reserved train cars reported experiencing physical harassment at one-half the rate compared to those women riding in mixed cars with men.¹¹
- *In certain contexts where social norms severely restrict the mobility of women and girls, women-only transport may be warranted.* In societies where it is socially discouraged for women and girls to travel without male chaperones, women-only transport can serve as a temporary solution until societal attitudes toward female independence in travel change and public space safety improves. For example, the World Bank's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa project, discussed in the Chapter 3, highlights how women-only transport is essential in enhancing rural girls' access to schools.

Some Drawbacks of Women-Only Transport

- *Risk of stigmatization and victim-blaming:* Some studies suggest that the presence of women-only transport may lead to the perception that women who do not use these services are responsible for any harassment they experience, further entrenching biases.¹²
- *Reinforcement of segregation:* While women-only spaces provide short-term relief, they may also reinforce social norms that restrict women's mobility. Some critics argue that such measures implicitly place the responsibility for avoiding harassment on women rather than addressing the behavior of perpetrators.

¹¹ Kondylis, F., Legovini, A., Vyborny, K., Zwager, A., and Andrade, L. 2020. Demand for "Safe Space": Avoiding Harassment and Complying with Norms. Policy Research Working Paper; 9269. World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/entities/publication/b61813eb-9124-5f10-b722-9bfad188c8b4>.

¹² Dunckel-Graglia, A. 2013. "Women-Only Transportation: How 'Pink' Public Transportation Changes Public Perception of Women's Mobility." *Journal of Public Transportation* 16(2): 85–105.

- *Operational and logistical challenges:* Women-only transport can lead to overcrowding in sections that carry both women and men, while leaving women-only spaces underutilized at certain times. In India, for instance, women-only buses have struggled with low ridership due to infrequent service and limitations on women traveling with male companions.¹³
- *Limited scope:* Women-only transport is not a universal solution, particularly in areas with inadequate public transport infrastructure. Relying solely on sex-segregated options can divert attention from broader systemic improvements that benefit all users, including better enforcement of antiharassment laws and safer transport design.

Women-only transport can provide immediate safety benefits, but it is not a comprehensive solution to harassment in public spaces. While women-only transport can be part of a multifaceted approach to safer public transportation, it should not replace policies that tackle harassment at its core.

Employment

Women in urban transport face several barriers across recruitment, retention, and career growth. Roles such as bus drivers, conductors, and station staff remain male-dominated due to limited awareness, gender stereotypes, and low female participation in transport-related education. High-skilled technical positions—such as vehicle maintenance specialists, traffic control operators, and electric vehicle technicians—also see low female representation, often due to gaps in access to specialized training. Work environments frequently lack women-friendly infrastructure, such as sanitation facilities at depots and terminals, and provide poorly fitting uniforms and protective gear. Long or irregular shifts, particularly in public bus and metro services, can conflict with caregiving duties and raise safety concerns. Additionally, the underrepresentation in leadership further restricts women's progression in the sector.

Outreach and recruitment

The urban transport sector faces significant challenges in attracting and recruiting female employees. Several barriers prevent women from accessing and staying in the transport sector. These include low female enrollment in technical education, gender stereotypes that discourage girls from pursuing transport-related education and careers, and the widespread lack of awareness among women about the diverse jobs available in the sector, particularly semi-skilled frontline positions such as bus drivers and conductors. This information deficit is compounded by women's systematic exclusion from professional networks where these job opportunities are typically discussed and disseminated, further limiting their access to potential career paths in urban

¹³ Shah, S. 2018. Women-only Transport: A 'Solution' To What End? Sustainable Transport. <https://itdp.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Women-only-Transport.pdf>.

transport. Table 2.5 highlights some of the interventions related to women’s recruitment that employers (transport ministries, municipal agencies, and transport service providers) can undertake. Case study 4 presents interventions from Senegal.

Table 2.5. Addressing Outreach and Recruitment Barriers for Women in Urban Transport

Interventions	Output Indicators	Outcome Indicators
<p>HR workforce database: Invest in HR database improvements to enable analysis of staff entitlements and conditions by sex and other demographic and socio-economic factors. Collecting sex-disaggregated workforce data is a crucial step in developing evidence-based responses and policies. Data can be collected across a broad spectrum of domains, such as women’s and men’s employment in total and across different positions, age, training, and development, leave uptake, duration of employment, and so on.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A database system upgrade to ensure collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data is funded and included in the annual budget cycle. • Clear specifications about how expected system enhancements for the analysis of sex-disaggregated data and functions are developed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number/percentage of women recruited, in total and by different job levels, including low-, mid-, and high-skilled technical roles, as compared to number and share of men for corresponding roles.
<p>Communication to challenge perceptions about the suitability of transport roles for women: Through public communications, job descriptions, and the building of an employer narrative around engaging with women.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of images and articles showing women in technical and leadership jobs in the employer organization. • Employer website and communications include references to the organization as an equal opportunity employer. • Job descriptions and employer documents showing unbiased language. 	

Interventions	Output Indicators	Outcome Indicators
<p>Nurturing female talent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Education talks:</i> Employers visit schools and universities to talk about the value of transport work and the importance of addressing the constraints women face when entering the sector.• <i>“Open days:”</i> Organizing open days where potential candidates (especially women and young people) are invited to visit the workplace and talk to staff; this could help challenge or demystify some aspects of transport careers, in addition to bringing potential reputational benefits. These will also help employers demystify false perceptions about the sector being suitably only for men, because of its culture and working conditions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of girls reached through education talks and “open days”.• Links deepened/ created between urban transport employers and education institutions through memoranda of understanding (MoU) or other cooperation agreements.	
<p>Internship program: Establish a paid internship program for women in male-dominated fields like transport engineering and urban planning, targeting X female final-year students and recent graduates for X-month internships in key urban transport agencies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of women who enrolled and completed the internship program out of the total number of enrollments and completions for interns.	

Interventions	Output Indicators	Outcome Indicators
<p>Targeted skills trainings: Develop targeted training programs for women in the urban transport sector, collaborating with Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions and universities to identify candidates.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of women and men who participate in, complete, and earn certification from the training programs.	
<p>Promote women's employment in urban transport through public procurement: Promote women in different roles through concessionaire bidding documents to increase women's employment within private sector operators.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bidding documents for procuring goods in transport specify targets for women's representation at different levels.	



Case Study 04

Using Rapid Buses to Boost Women’s Employment in Senegal¹⁴

The Challenge

Dakar, Senegal, has long faced traffic congestion, unsafe roads, air pollution, and high greenhouse gas emissions, which affect both the quality of life and the economy. To address these issues, the Senegalese government is overhauling the city’s transport system, focusing on reducing carbon emissions. A key part of this strategy is the Dakar BRT¹⁵ project, which aims to serve as a model for other African cities.

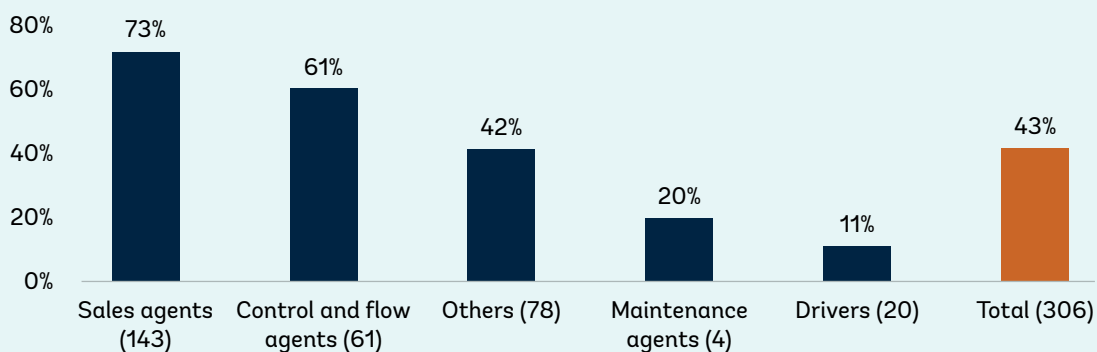
The Intervention

The Dakar BRT project serves an 18.3-kilometer corridor linking Dakar and Guédiawaye. It is Africa’s first fully electric BRT line, serving 300,000 passengers daily, and reducing travel time between the two cities from 95 to 45 minutes. The project focuses on women’s safety and aims to increase the percentage of female employees from 6% to 25% over the next 5 years. Features include well-lit stations, mirror systems, surveillance cameras, and broader sidewalks. Safety measures, including CCTV, dedicated police personnel, and community awareness campaigns, have led to a low crime rate of 3.51 crimes per 1 million passengers.

Challenges and Successes

The project faced several challenges, including difficulty finding qualified women bus drivers. This was addressed by training women so they could get licenses to operate heavy equipment and to qualify to drive buses.

Figure B.2.7.1. Female Staff Hired and Trained as of Sept. 2024



Source: Dakar Mobility 2024.

¹⁴ The team thanks the World Bank’s Task Team Lead Franck Taillandier and the team member Cassandra Augustus for their review of the case and the staff of Dakar Mobility for their input provided during a World Bank mission held in November 2024.

¹⁵ The Dakar Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Pilot Project (P172342).

Lessons Learned

- **Addressing barriers:** Collaborations with driving schools helped train women.
- **External examples:** Successful case studies from other countries provided insights and helped overcome resistance.
- **Leadership and advocacy:** Strong leadership was crucial in making gender equity an actionable priority.
- **Partnerships:** Collaborations with vocational schools, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and recruitment agencies were vital.
- **Recruitment and communication:** Campaigns and the creation of a women -friendly workplace environment attracted women to the sector.
- **Safety:** Infrastructure improvements and community liaison officers helped address safety concerns.

Conclusion

The Dakar BRT project exceeded its women's employment targets and demonstrated the importance of combining infrastructure, training, and stakeholder engagement to achieve gender equity in urban transit.

Human resources policies and practices

Biases persist in HR policies and practices in the urban mobility sector. Some in management harbor discriminatory attitudes, particularly toward women with family obligations or those expecting children. These biases manifest in unfair practices such as overlooking qualified women for advancement in bus operations or train services or assigning fewer demanding routes to female drivers. The unique challenges of urban mobility work, including security issues during late-night shifts, extended or unpredictable hours, and subpar workplace amenities, further deter recruiters from employing women in frontline roles.

Inequalities between women and men are evident in the design and provision of workplace infrastructure. Many transport hubs and vehicles are configured with male employees in mind, offering minimal or no accommodations for female staff. These include a few basic sanitation facilities such as women's toilets. Personal protective equipment (PPE) that is designed to fit most men is another example: gloves are often too big for women, safety goggles are too wide for their faces, or women have to wear uncomfortably high heels.¹⁶ A lack of PPE that fits women is not only a question of comfort but can be a serious health issue since improperly fitting PPE does not adequately protect against occupational hazards and could increase the risk of illnesses, injuries,

¹⁶ World Bank and EBRD. 2024. "Online e-learning training course 'Occupational Safety, Health, and Violence and Harassment: A Gender Perspective.'" <https://wbgeducast.com/channel/36106/home>.

and death. Beyond health hazards, ill-fitting PPE could lower employee productivity simply by making basic tasks harder. This lack of consideration for female employees is often justified by citing the historically male-dominated nature of the transport sector or perceived physical job requirements. Such practices not only restrict women's access to operational positions but also perpetuate misconceptions about women's suitability for certain roles.

Finally, regulatory barriers pose additional obstacles to women's participation in the sector. Certain requirements, such as legal restrictions on working in certain transport sector jobs in remote locations or during evening hours, disproportionately affect women and can bar them from many positions. Moreover, these positions frequently demand long working hours, which can be particularly problematic for women, who may face greater safety risks or have caregiving responsibilities that conflict with such schedules.

Table 2.6 highlights some interventions related to HR policies and practices that employers (transport ministries, municipal agencies, and transport service providers) can implement. Case study 5 presents an example from Mexico.

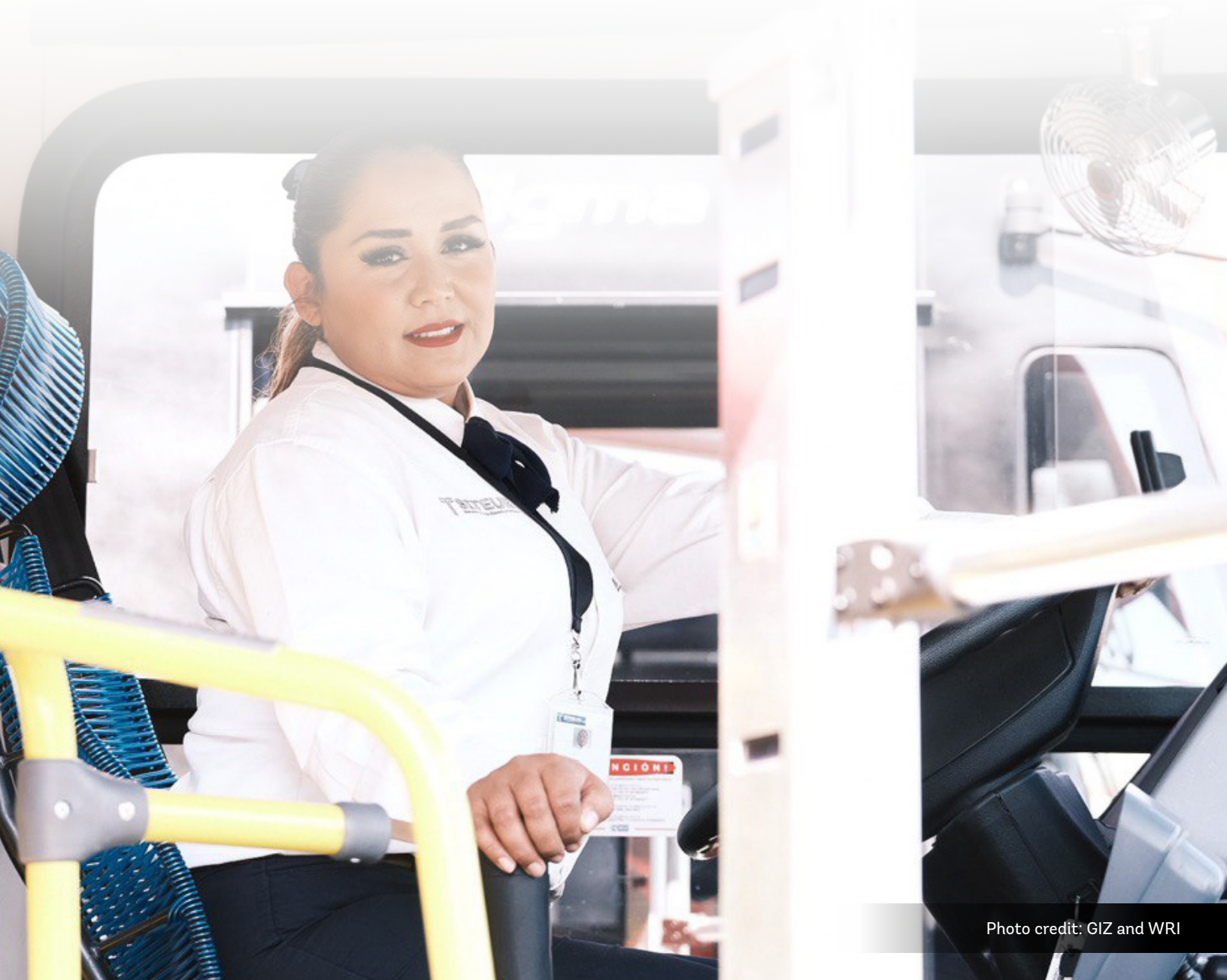


Table 2.6. Addressing HR Policies and Practices Barriers for Women in Urban Transport

Interventions	Output Indicators	Outcome Indicators
<p>Flexible work-life policies: Introduce policies that provide flexible working hours, job-sharing arrangements, and part-time options for employees.</p> <p>Sexual harassment policy: Develop and implement a sexual harassment policy, including procedures for reporting and redress, and ensure it is accessible to all staff and published on the company website.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies rolled out with staff-wide communication. • Number/percentage of staff trained on the sexual harassment policy. • Number of sexual harassment reports received through the formal redress mechanism and addressed. • Number/percentage of women utilizing flexible work options. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number/percentage of women retained with the organization, in total and by different job levels, including low-, mid-, and high-skilled technical roles. • Number/percentage of staff reporting improved job satisfaction, after introducing or improving the company’s HR policies and practices; disaggregated by sex and other key organizational metrics.
<p>Workplace infrastructure, uniform and PPE: Implement safety measures, including separate toilets for men and women, changing rooms, and lighting. Provide PPE that is appropriately designed to fit both women and men.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number/percentage of workplace facilities equipped with separate toilets, changing rooms, and appropriate lighting. • Gender-sensitive PPE provided to all workers who require it. 	
<p>A staff satisfaction survey: Conduct periodic surveys to assess satisfaction with employment terms, working conditions, hours, leave, professional development, and equal opportunity outcomes. Analyze results by sex and demographics to inform activities, evaluate implementation, and identify areas for improvement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys are completed periodically. • Results disseminated among staff. • Percentage of recommendations acted upon. 	



Case Study 05

Transforming Jalisco's Public Transportation Workforce¹⁷

The Challenge

Women make up just 11 percent of the workforce in transportation in Mexico.¹⁸ Women in transport generally work in administrative and service jobs, while men typically occupy leadership, managerial, technical, driving, and operational positions.

The Intervention

The Mujeres Conductoras Program in Jalisco¹⁹ addresses gender inequality in transport, an issue with implications far beyond employment. The program goes beyond job skills to address the challenges facing women workers and riders; in addition to driving training, it offers course modules on safety regulations and protocols for preventing violence.

Another part of the program makes it easier for women to get a public transport license. The law used to require four years of professional driving experience as a prerequisite for a public transport license, called a C2. This was a significant hurdle for women with limited experience. Because of the program, a driver's license of any type permits someone to apply for a C2. This has opened doors for women while addressing the public transport's shortage of drivers.

The Mujeres Conductoras Program prioritized collaboration with transportation companies. Government agencies worked closely with public and private companies to create a hiring pipeline.

Challenges and Successes

The Mujeres program confronted deeply ingrained beliefs that driving is a male profession. The first female driving students faced an array of obstacles ranging from disapproval from their families, hostile male drivers, and the general view that women should not work as drivers. Many women, especially the 58% who were heads of households, struggled to balance the demands of working with their caregiving responsibilities. Some companies have tried to accommodate women with more flexible schedules, but the pressure to work during rush hours remains a challenge. Drivers also must cope with a lack of restrooms at terminals and along bus routes.

¹⁷ The team is grateful to Gabriela de la Torre Ríos (WRI) and Hannah Behr and Jens Giersdorf (GIZ) for the material.

¹⁸ ILO Laborstat. 15 years and above. 2023. Transportation and storage. <https://ilostat.ilo.org/data/#>.

¹⁹ The program was implemented by the "TUMI E-Bus Mission: Accelerating mass adoption of electric buses worldwide" for the State of Jalisco, and the World Resources Institute (WRI) in Mexico, with funding from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The data, which informed the design of the interventions, were collected in 2022.

Despite these obstacles, the program had an immediate impact on the number of women entering the public transportation workforce. The female graduation rate rose from 60 percent for the first cohort of students to 75 percent for the second design. The program's design changes, such as online training modules and flexible scheduling, addressed participants' needs. The program also shifted to a more formal employment model, which brought substantial benefits to both male and female drivers. All drivers got standardized wages, social security benefits, vacations, and fixed schedules. The new working conditions greatly benefited male drivers, who had previously endured grueling 24-hour shifts and the task of maintaining their vehicles.

The program also sent a message by challenging conventional roles about women and men, and inspiring other women. Women began to see themselves as capable employees who might pursue a nontraditional career. Female drivers placed behind the wheel helped create a sense of security for female riders. In the Mexican state of Jalisco, 8 in 10 women reported feeling unsafe on public transportation.

Lessons Learned

- **Financial support:** Using a stipend to support program participants was instrumental. The stipend helped women overcome economic barriers to participation.
- **Flexibility and adaptability:** The program adapted to participants' needs. Online training and flexible scheduling allowed women to better manage work and family.
- **Inter-institutional collaboration:** The program's partnership with government agencies, educational institutions, and public and private transportation companies guaranteed steady funding, informed curriculum design, helped with legal compliance, and offered jobs to graduates.
- **Addressing gender stereotypes:** The program tackled stereotypes about driving with training by highlighting women drivers' accomplishments.

Conclusion

The Mujeres Conductoras Program has benefited newly employed women drivers by offering them economic autonomy and boosting their self-esteem, and it has sent a strong message to their families and communities. The program has also reduced absenteeism and increased safety. While challenges remain, the Mujeres Conductoras Program serves as a model for both promoting women's employment and improving public transportation.

Career progression

Women in the urban transport sector face significant barriers to career progression. A notable challenge is inadequate training and skill development programs, particularly for operating new electronic vehicles, which are increasingly common in urban transport systems. This skills gap limits women’s opportunities for career advancement and adaptation to technological changes. Additionally, women’s disproportionate burden of unpaid care work necessitates employers in the public transport sector consider their care and domestic work responsibilities Table 2.7 highlights some interventions related to women’s career progression and retention. Case study 6 presents an example from Tanzania.

Table 2.7. Addressing Career Progression Barriers for Women in Urban Transport

Interventions	Output Indicators	Outcome Indicators
<p>A performance review system: Develop a performance review system for staff with a standardized framework linking performance reviews to workforce competencies, skills development, and promotions.</p> <p>A range of actions can achieve this objective, such as: establishing a promotion committee comprised of both women and men, adopting a blind selection process where candidates’ resumes do not include personal details, and testing participants without revealing their personal information to eliminate potential conscious or unconscious gender bias in promotion decisions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number/percentage of promotion committee members completing training on unconscious bias and gender equality. • Gender balance in decision-making processes, ensuring a fairer and more diverse representation in promotion decisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number/percentage of women promoted within X months/years after the introduction of the formal performance review system. • Number/percentage of women promoted within X months/years after the introduction of the women’s mentorship program. • Change in employee perceptions of organizational culture related to equal employment opportunities (measured through regular staff satisfaction surveys).

Interventions	Output Indicators	Outcome Indicators
Women’s mentorship program: Implement a mentorship program pairing women with senior female and male professionals, focusing on various issues such as improving technical and soft skills, and addressing specific workplace challenges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of women participating in the mentorship program.	
Women’s networking: Create a platform for women in urban transport to connect, share experiences, and seek mentorship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of women participating in networking events.	



Case Study 06

Empowering Women in Urban Mobility: Inclusive Infrastructure and Workforce Development in Dar Es Salaam’s BRT System²⁰

The Challenge

Tanzania is rapidly urbanizing, with one-half of its population expected to live in cities by 2050. Dar es Salaam, home to 40 percent of the urban population, is one of Africa’s fastest-growing cities and is projected to become a megacity by 2030. However, urban inefficiencies hinder productivity, job creation, and accessibility, highlighting the need for improved infrastructure and public transport.

The National Transport Policy (NTP) aims to enhance urban mobility, focusing on high-capacity public transport, with the BRT system as a key initiative. The World Bank’s Dar es Salaam Urban Transport Improvement Project (2017–2026) supports this, with the first phase already cutting travel times significantly. Six planned phases aim to build a 140.1 km network by 2030, improving accessibility, reducing congestion, and supporting sustainable mobility.

²⁰ Dar es Salaam Urban Transport Improvement Project (P150937). This case study was prepared based on a desk review and an interview with the project Task Team Leader, Yonas Eliesikia Mchomvu, World Bank’s Task Team Leader.

The Interventions

The project includes initiatives to enhance women's mobility and employment in the transport sector:

- **Improved pedestrian infrastructure:** Developing safer walking spaces like sidewalks, lighting, and pedestrian crossings.
- **Expanded public transport:** Scaling up the BRT system to reduce waiting times and overcrowding, improving safety for female passengers.
- **Mobile reporting system for GBV:** A system for women to report GBV incidents, map occurrences, and facilitate actions from authorities.
- **Employment initiatives:** Internship programs for transport graduates, vocational training for affected Daladala drivers and conductors, and the Structured Engineering Apprenticeship Program (SEAP), aiming for 50% female enrollment in engineering.

Challenges and Successes

There were several challenges, including leadership continuity issues and delays in system functionalities. Despite this, the project saw successes:

- **Graduate engineering initiative:** SEAP achieved equal representation of women and men, with 433 graduates (211 men and 210 women) participating, increasing female representation in engineering.
- **Women drivers training:** 102 women were trained as drivers, with 77 completing the course, some already securing BRT driver positions.

Lessons Learned

Key lessons include the importance of consistent leadership, expert support from transport and gender specialists, practical tools like surveys and suggestion boxes, targeted initiatives that empower women in male-dominated fields, and strengthening local capacity for more effective implementation.

Conclusion

The Dar es Salaam Urban Transport Improvement Project demonstrates the positive impact of integrating strategies addressing women's mobility and employment in urban transport planning. By improving infrastructure, safety, and professional development opportunities, the project enhances women's mobility and empowers them economically and socially, despite challenges.

Leadership

A significant barrier in the urban mobility sector is the severe underrepresentation of women in leadership positions. The sector suffers from a lack of mentorship programs designed to address women’s specific needs, leaving them without crucial guidance to navigate industry-specific challenges. This gap in support systems often results in women feeling isolated and struggling to advance their careers. The absence of relatable role models and mentors who understand the unique obstacles women face in this male-dominated field further exacerbates the problem. Additionally, informal decision-making processes in promotion and career advancement often perpetuate biases, reinforcing existing workplace power imbalances and creating further barriers to women’s professional growth.

Consequently, many talented women exit the sector prematurely, unable to realize their full potential or achieve their professional aspirations, thereby perpetuating the imbalance in urban transport leadership and operations. This lack of female leadership also perpetuates a cycle of decision-making in urban transport planning and policy making that overlooks women’s perspectives as users of transport. Table 2.8 highlights some of the interventions related to women’s leadership. Case study 7 presents interventions from Ecuador.

Table 2.8. Addressing Leadership Barriers for Women in Urban Transport

Interventions	Output Indicators	Outcome Indicators
<p>Women’s Leadership program: Establish a targeted leadership training program for women in the urban transport sector, focusing on strategic planning, financial management, and team leadership.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number/percentage of enrolled participants who successfully complete the training program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number/percentage of women promoted to leadership roles within X months/years after the introduction of the women’s leadership training program.
<p>Annual review process: Implement an annual review to track progress in women’s representation in managerial and senior roles, using specific metrics to measure effectiveness and adjust initiatives as needed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employer introducing annual review process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change in employee perceptions of organizational culture related to equal employment opportunities (measured through regular staff satisfaction surveys).

Case Study 07

Addressing Mobility and Employment Barriers for Women in Quito's Transport Sector²¹

The Challenge

The 2018 Quito Metro Line One Project aimed to improve urban mobility in Quito, Ecuador, responding to increasing demand for public transport. Over 91 percent of women reported experiencing harassment in public spaces, leading many to modify their mobility patterns for safety.

The Intervention

The project implemented several measures to address sexual harassment, including a prevention and response protocol and staff training.

Conclusion

During the first five months of project implementation, results were significant: 96 percent of women reported feeling safe on the metro, with only six harassment cases over 20 million trips. The metro also achieved 40 percent female participation in its workforce, surpassing the 20 percent target, with 50 percent of management roles held by women. These achievements marked a key milestone in fostering women's employment in public transport in Ecuador, where women make up only 9 percent of the transport sector's workforce.

²¹ Quito Metro Line One (P144489). The team thanks the World Bank's Task Team Leader Alejandro Hoyos Guerrero and the project team member Karla Dominguez Gonzalez for their input.



Entrepreneurship

Despite emerging opportunities, such as operating electric three-wheelers for last-mile connectivity and e-commerce delivery, women entrepreneurs face numerous challenges in urban transport systems, including limited access to capital, training, and networks.

Business skills training and advisory services

Women face limited access to business skills training and business advisory services in the transport sector, which is often seen as a male-dominated industry. This gender stereotype discourages women from seeking relevant training and opportunities. Additionally, transport-related subjects are frequently underrepresented in educational curricula, particularly for young women. Without access to specialized courses or training programs, women have fewer opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skills needed for business roles in transport. Table 2.9 highlights some key interventions to address these constraints.

Table 2.9. Addressing Business Skills Training and Advisory Services Barriers for Women in Urban Transport

Interventions	Output Indicators	Outcome Initiatives
<p>Business skills training and advisory services program: Launch a structured business skills training and advisory services program to empower women in the urban transport sector, especially in the e-mobility space, through the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct regular business training covering essential business skills, such as planning, financial management, marketing, and e-mobility trends. • Create an online platform with templates, guides, and toolkits for managing businesses in urban transport, along with regulatory information and funding opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of women receiving training and business advisory support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number/percentage of women beneficiaries of training and business advisory support launching or growing their businesses in urban transport. • Number/percentage of women beneficiaries of training and business advisory support reporting change in their economic outcomes (in projects, revenue, or profits). • Change in the number of projects, revenue, or profits among women entrepreneurs who benefited from training and business advisory support.

Access to Finance

Financial barriers persist, with financial institutions often imposing biases that hinder women’s ability to secure loans for vehicle purchases or transport businesses. Discriminatory practices, like requiring male co-signers or higher interest rates for female applicants, confine women to lower-paying, less secure jobs and perpetuate economic vulnerability. Table 2.10 highlights some key interventions to address these constraints.

Table 2.10. Addressing Access to Finance Barriers for Women in Urban Transport

Interventions	Output Indicators	Outcome Initiatives
<p>Access to finance: Launch a dedicated initiative providing <i>loans</i> tailored to women entrepreneurs (for example, collateral free, low interest, and so on) in urban transport with a streamlined application process.</p> <p>Establish a competitive <i>grant</i> program to provide seed funding for women-led startups in the e-mobility sector.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number/percentage of women entrepreneurs securing loans through the access to finance initiative. • Number of female entrepreneurs receiving e-mobility grants and other financial incentives for sustainable transport solutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number/percentage of women beneficiaries of access to finance programs launching or growing their businesses in urban transport. • Number/percentage of women beneficiaries of access to finance programs reporting change in their economic outcomes (in projects, revenue, or profits). • Change in the number of projects, revenue, or profits among women entrepreneurs who benefited from access to finance programs.

Market Access and Linkages

Additionally, market access challenges prevent women from tapping into business opportunities and digital platforms, restricting their participation in ridesharing or delivery services and hindering their ability to generate sustainable livelihoods within the urban mobility ecosystem. Table 2.11 highlights some key interventions to address these constraints.

Table 2.11. Addressing Market Access and Linkages Barriers for Women in Urban Transport

Interventions	Output Indicators	Outcome Initiatives
<p>Market access and linkages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create partnerships between women entrepreneurs and government procurement systems for urban transport and e-mobility projects, including capacity building workshops to navigate procurement processes and develop competitive proposals. • Develop forums for women entrepreneurs in urban transport and e-mobility to connect, share experiences, and collaborate through regular events and conferences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number/percentage of women-owned businesses being awarded contracts in urban transport from government. • Number of women entrepreneurs participating in networking platforms focused on urban transport. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number/percentage of women beneficiaries of market access support programs launching or growing their businesses in urban transport. • Number/percentage of women beneficiaries of market access support programs reporting change in their economic outcomes (in projects, revenue, or profits).

