
**SUMMARY OF THE 7TH ITF ANNUAL CONSULTATION ON GENDER AND TRANSPORT
MONDAY 23 JANUARY 2023, PARIS, OECD AND ZOOM**

Context

Since 2016, the Annual Consultation on Gender and Transport provides an opportunity for the International Transport Forum (ITF) and its partner international organisations to discuss how questions related to gender equality in transport can find a platform at the ITF Annual Summit. The meeting also serves as a platform for sharing best practices and insights concerning gender and transport more broadly.

This note highlights key points of the discussion at the 7th edition of the Gender Consultation that focused on the forthcoming 2023 ITF Summit on *Transport Enabling Sustainable Economies*.

Participants were invited to discuss the role of gender equality in transport for sustainable economic growth. The discussion was structured into three discussion blocks:

- Promoting inclusive access to economic opportunities and tackling poverty
- Enhancing women's participation in the transport workforce
- Making a shift towards net-zero transport systems.

Summary of the discussion**• Discussion block 1: Promoting inclusive access to economic opportunities and tackling poverty**

The discussion was kicked off by Ruth Lopian from the European Commission (EC), DG Mobility and Transport and Professor Lake Sagaris from the Pontificia Universidad Catolica in Chile.

Ruth Lopian highlighted key messages of the EC study on the social dimension of the future EU transport system regarding users and passengers¹. This study maps the challenges and opportunities posed by the modernisation of the system to different groups of transport users, notably women, in terms of affordability, reliability and accessibility. Women are affected by global trends, including demographic change, ageing societies, they also experience higher transport costs in urban areas and accessibility challenges in rural areas. The study highlights key aspects to make transport systems more inclusive, including awareness of diverse transport users' needs, stakeholder engagement, and data collection to underpin the knowledge base. The study also provides recommendations on how to address structural challenges to make transport inclusive, such as improving coordination; building knowledge and evidence; integrating the social dimension when reviewing existing practice; and providing resources.

Professor Lake Sagaris shared insights from her research on how transport and mobility can contribute to women's economic empowerment and social justice. In Latin America, if more women participate in the workforce of their countries, the regional GDP could rise by as much as 34%. Without the 70 million women who joined the workforce in the past 20 years, we would not be able to talk about an "economic miracle" in Latin America. Professor Sagaris highlighted the importance of sustainable modes of transport for transforming the road systems. Research show that the bicycle is 10 times more effective than electric

¹ "Study on the social dimension of the future EU transport system regarding users and passengers", Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport, European Commission, available at: https://transport.ec.europa.eu/transport-themes/social-issues-equality-and-attractiveness-transport-sector/studies/study-social-dimension-future-eu-transport-system-regarding-users-and-passengers_en

cars to reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions. In addition, changing short motorised trips to bicycles could save more than 200,000 lives per year. A more sustainable road system can be powerful in addressing inequality. There are a number of positive examples that confirm this, such as initiatives that aim to involve citizens in transport planning (e.g. Transport for London), investment in tourism for local communities, or reducing car speed and repurposing the streets for health and safety (e.g. Santiago de Chile).

In the discussion that followed, the following points were made:

- Gendered work arrangements that impact women’s mobility needs should be further studied. Women tend to be considered as vulnerable transport users, while they actually represent half of the world’s population, facing particularly stringent structural inequalities that, in turn, impact women’s mobility. These gender inequalities tend to be reproduced in the labour market. Women tend to be over-represented among part-time workers and in informal work (notably, in the Global South), and have demands for flexibility to accommodate care responsibilities that remain unequally shared. The role of childcare policies in shaping women’s demands to their employers was also highlighted.
- Women’s mobility patterns depend on the socio-geographical context. For example, the research conducted in India challenged commonly universalised opinions about women’s mobility: while it is often argued that women make more and shorter trips than men, the number of trips per capita is lower for women in India.
- There are a number of global trends, such as ageing societies, demographic change, which further reinforce challenges with regard to access for women, with low-income, living in rural areas. There is often a lack of coordination with regard to transport planning and investment, which results, for example, in higher transport costs for women. More funding for the improvement of transport infrastructure for disadvantaged communities in rural areas could address these challenges.
- Changing priorities for transport and bundling solutions can lead to more efficient planning. For example, re-purposing streets for health, safety, equity and anti-crime objectives. Awareness of intersecting challenges is a key element of inclusion in transport and decision-makers at all levels need to be aware of users’ needs.
- The transport sector is facing significant challenges in recruiting women in the workforce. Solutions to enhance women’s participation include promoting decent working conditions, ending violence against women transport workers, introducing innovation to advance equality in the workplace.
- Better coordination, knowledge building and data gathering, as well as putting equality and inclusion at the centre of transport planning is key. Gender and equality mainstreaming should be applied to designing policies, and then policies need to be put into action.
- **Discussion block 2: Enhancing women’s participation in the transport workforce**

This discussion block was introduced by Isobel Duxfield from POLIS and Heather Allen, Independent Consultant on Gender and Urban transport. They presented a preliminary results of the International Survey on Barriers to Women Working in the Transport Sector, supported by the FIA Foundation.

Results of the survey show that when asked if women can easily join and work in the transport sector, half of the respondents answered “yes, but there are many challenges”, and a quarter of respondents replied “yes, but only in some areas of work”. Respondents identified that there are good policy frameworks in place, however, they are not being transformed into operations, planning and assessments. In addition, 50% of the respondents have taken conscious decision to work in the transport sector.

There are still strong biases and stereotypes in the working environment, which are seen as major barriers for career progression, talent attraction and retention. There is also an invisible glass ceiling. It is challenging to change the workspace cultures and behaviors, as it is difficult for people to react against historically acceptable behavior.

Education is still biased against women and girls, especially progressing in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), although there have been some benefits from investments in this regard. To progress further, we need to go beyond mentoring programs and think about sponsorship at the early stages, as well as to understand better where are the leaky holes in the pipeline of talent.

Entrepreneurship is an area which transport must understand and collect more data about. Self-employment and entrepreneurship offers more flexibility as desired by many women, however, it also brings new challenges around unpredictability, financial stress, and exclusion from certain benefits.

In the discussion that followed, the following points were made:

- It is not about simply having more women in the sector, it is also how they participating in decision-making process. For this, it is important to analyse and collect data to better understand women's participation in the sector. Moreover, understanding the sector and differences within it is also helpful to identify areas where resources need to be allocated.
- Research show that women tend to look for jobs within a range of 20 to 28 kilometers and men for 49 kilometers. Further reflection in need on what does this mean for the location of job opportunities in the transport sector and how it can affect women's participation in the transport workforce.
- Role models are important to attract girls and women to the transport sector, especially as it is still perceived as a male-dominant sector. To address this challenge, for example, the European Commission launched the "Women and Rail Award", which highlights initiatives from the rail sector to attract women into the sector.
- Engaging with the private sector should be encouraged. Total Energies provided an example that in Pakistan the company is enabling projects for training women to ride two-wheeled motorised vehicles to allow women to have access to a range of opportunities. This is an example of how the private sector can be encouraged by goals and objectives set by governments.
- There may be other barriers to the women's participation in the transport workforce, such as regulations. In the Delhi Transport Corporation, for instance, drivers need to be a certain height, going beyond the qualification criteria. In India, the government's initiatives to subsidize electric vehicles and bikes do not necessarily cater women or encourage them to be owners. Finally, role models are important, for example, having more women in leadership positions and in transport operators fleet can inspire young women and students to choose professional career in transport.
- Personal safety is key to improve the use of public transport, improving safety and fighting harassments is therefore essential for women to become transport workers and users.
- It was also highlighted that it is important to understand that diversity in all its forms needs to be enhanced across the sector. And initiatives on gender should also take into account ethnicity, socio-economic background, sexual orientation, etc.

- **Discussion block 3: Making a shift towards net-zero transport systems**

This discussion block was opened by Bronwen Thornton from Walk21 Foundation and Wei-Shiuen Ng from the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

Bronwen Thornton focused her remarks on women’s travel patterns and how they impact their travel mode choices, notably most sustainable modes, such as walking. She highlighted that the concept of “net zero” can be simplistic and fails to take into account the complexity of systems and political realities. As a result, there is lack of understanding of the interlinkages between gender and walking. For example, in many cities, transport systems are designed in a manner that makes it not only challenging for women, but for the local community to travel in a safe and sustainable way. This impacts particularly women, notably in the Global South, where women have to travel by foot to access their daily needs. Investing in walking means addressing the needs of majority of women, and entire communities. In the North, women are often motorising at faster rate than men. Women then are using more cars, and they are not choosing public transport because the latter is not designed to address their mobility needs.

Wei-Shiuen Ng highlighted that transport and climate action cannot be fully advanced without support for women in leadership roles and in the transport workforce. She noted that more systematic and robust approaches are required for the transport sector to make a shift to net zero transport and to further include gender mainstreaming into transport sector on all levels. Gender mainstreaming has been shown to be a very effective approach to ensure that all policies consider their impact on gender. It is also important to provide capacity building and training sessions for women and men to better understand how gender equality can further contribute to the sector’s sustainability.

In the discussion that followed, the following points were made:

- Transport professionals, policymakers and researchers should go beyond the “vulnerable user paradigm” as it risks reinforcing gender inequalities. For example, rather than describing women transport users as “caregivers” with specific mobility needs, one should address the strategic inequalities that cause these caring responsibilities to be unequally shared. That particularly applies to sustainable transport modes that women rely on, sometimes under sub-optimal conditions (walking) or that they do not use as much of men - that is the case for cycling in many countries.
- It was argued that women should not be discussed as minority users, as they are not a minority. Adding together all groups usually discussed as “minorities” creates a majority that should be better served by transport systems and policies. Addressing this may be challenging and, therefore, greater exchanges between policymakers – but also with private stakeholders – are beneficial. The ITF serve as a platform to facilitate these exchanges.
- If we want women to use public transport, we need to understand why they are not using it. Women have different mobility needs, and policies should be designed to address women’s entire journey from “door to door”. Mobility needs of different age groups should be understood in order to make public transport more attractive. Notably, there are significant differences between women of different ages. Older women are more concerned with falls, younger women are afraid of being harassed, while women travelling with babies are concerned about accessibility.
- Safety should be considered as a gender inequality. For example, shared bikes are built for the male frame, and are not made for women. Transport should be designed for anybody and everybody. The expansion of investment in public transport is an opportunity to increase safety for women and, at the same time, to increase employment opportunities in the sector.

**ITF Annual Consultation on Gender and Transport
“Transport Enabling Sustainable Economies: A gender perspective”**

Monday, 23 January 2023, 14.30 – 17.30 CET

OECD CONFERENCE CENTRE CC10, 2 rue André Pascal, Paris, and virtually via Zoom

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