



SECTORAL BRIEF

GENDER AND INFRASTRUCTURE IN KENYA



Credit photo : REUTERS/Thomas Mukoya

Introduction

This policy brief is part of the Country Gender Equality Profile (CGEP), which assesses the status of gender equality and women's empowerment in Kenya based on recently produced reports and resources. The assessment aims to strengthen national understanding and data on advancing international, regional and national commitments to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE). As the primary source of evidence-driven advocacy and programming, the CGEP provides insights to county and national stakeholders, development partners, the European Union, and the UN System to advance gains and overcome challenges at the county and national levels.

Furthermore, the gender analysis is guided by the transformative and rights-based gender equality and women's empowerment approach embodied in the core European Union values on human rights and reinforced by the new EU Gender Action Plan 2021-2025 (GAP III). The framework recognises that gender equality is crucial in promoting democracy, good governance and sustainable development.

Background and context

Infrastructure development tends to focus more on the physical and visible aspects, while implications for social and gender inclusion are not considered. Poor quality infrastructure can exacerbate social exclusion and gender gaps. For instance, compared

As a result, all EU policies and actions in Kenya contribute to the dual goal of advancing gender equality and accelerating progress toward Kenya's SDG goals and targets. Gender analysis is a starting point for gender mainstreaming and integrating gender equality and inclusion perspectives into the EU programming processes, policies, actions and dialogues.

This policy brief serves as a strategic guide for programmes and policies aimed at advancing and strengthening Kenya's integration of gender equality and women's empowerment across key stakeholders: The Government of Kenya (Ministries, Departments, Agencies [MDAs] and structures of governance: national, county and communities); development partners including the private sector and the United Nations (UN) agencies. This ensures that actions aimed at closing gender gaps and ending discrimination are informed by context-specific analysis that reflects the different realities, needs and challenges of men, women, boys and girls in all their diversity.

to men, women tend to rely more on public transport, travel shorter distances and travel more during off-peak hours.¹ Inadequate access to reliable and safe transport disproportionately affects the poor, particularly women, girls, the elderly and people with

1 OECD (2019) Gender Equality and Sustainable Infrastructure

disabilities, thereby constraining their education, income-earning pursuits and upward mobility as well as access to essential services such as health care. Unsafe and low security, transport and road infrastructure also put women at a disadvantage as they are more vulnerable to violence, which can affect their well-being and participation in the labour force.

The UNW (2021)² study on urban transport shows that

45.7% OF WOMEN COMMUTERS FEEL MOST UNSAFE WHILE USING PUBLIC TRANSPORT BETWEEN 10.00 PM AND 7.00 AM



11.3% FEEL UNSAFE BETWEEN 7.00 PM AND 9.00 PM

Findings and current situation

Access to transport and mobility in Kenya is affected by inequalities in social and economic activities and gender differences, particularly in informal urban and rural areas.³ For instance, more men own vehicles as opposed to women who mainly rely on public transport which is often undependable and can be risky. There have been frequent instances where women using public transport have experienced gender-based violence, harassment and sexual abuse. The road transport sector in Kenya is male-dominated, with very few women working in public transport as touts and drivers. The men own all the public vehicles (matatus), with women

55.8%

FEEL VERY SAFE WHEN USING PUBLIC TRANSPORT DURING THE DAY (BETWEEN 8.00 AM AND 7.00 PM)

These are often overlooked, along with implications on intersectionality.

There is currently a lack of adequate data on the gendered experiences and needs of women, men and youth across socioeconomic, cultural, and geographic contexts of Kenya's green and sustainable infrastructure and urban development. The planning and design of infrastructure development have not systematically engaged women and youth and typically excluded groups, such as the larger population of urban and rural, cultural minorities/ethnic communities, elderly, as well as people with disabilities and living with HIV/AIDS. Furthermore, decision-making among public and private sector actors is yet to integrate gender and inclusive perspectives in planning and policy-making and to ensure gender parity at different management and technical positions and staff levels.

mainly left to perform ticketing duties, which are low-paying. Even so, women in the sector have had to fight harassment (physical and sexual) to continue working in the transport industry. Thus, women do not contribute to the decisions and planning in the transport sector and lack access to clean sanitation facilities.⁴

Access to reliable and safe transport allows women to participate in economic activities such as small businesses in the markets and other casual businesses. With the existence of taxi-hailing companies such as Little, bolt, and Uber, women

² UNW (2021). Women and Public Transport East Africa: Expanding available data and knowledge base about women and public transport in Nairobi and Kampala-Nairobi Report. <https://africa.unwomen.org>.

³ Kishiue Akiko, Dominguez G Karla and St. John Elise. 2020. Gender in Urban Transport in Nairobi, Kenya. Volume I: Mobility.

⁴ International Labour Organization (ILO). Guidelines on the promotion of decent and road safety in the transport sector. Accessed https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_dialogue/@sector/documents/normativeinstrument/wcms_742633.pdf

have increased access to more private transport options. However, the taxis are unaffordable for women earning low incomes. Women have also, in recent times, faced harassment and gender-based violence when using the taxis hailed through the transport apps. Besides traveling for home-care activities, women also use transport to access health services. The Integrated National Transport Policy of 2009 acknowledged the existence of gender inequalities in the transport industry, recognising that due to household work, women spend most of their time walking in search of basic needs and, as such, cannot engage in economic activities. In some rural parts of Kenya, where transport infrastructure is still a problem, women often have to trek long distances to access the nearest health facilities. This is especially challenging for women with children,

pregnant women and elderly women. Additionally, in urban areas, access to ambulances is challenging due to high costs and accessibility issues.

A study by Kishiue et al. revealed that over 31 per cent of government employees are women in the transport sector, mainly in non-management positions. To close this gap, more gender inclusion in leadership and decision-making is crucial to address women's needs. Through the National Transport and Safety Authority (NTSA), the government has started gender mainstreaming in transport policies and regulations. The State Department of Transport (Ministry of Transport, Infrastructure, Housing, Urban Development and Public Works) is also in the process of reviewing the Integrated National Transport Policy 2009.

Conclusions

The government should address the issues facing women working in the transport sector and those using public transportation. Both the government and private sector should collaborate to find solutions aimed at making transportation

accessible, affordable, and secure for all Kenyans. The government should review its policies in the transport sector to include more gender-specific needs, create more opportunities for employment, improve security, and persecute offenders.⁵

Recommendations for the Government of Kenya

- a. Conduct a comprehensive gender analysis of the sector using the frameworks of the Government of Kenya [Sessional Paper No.2/2019] on gender-inclusive legislations, regulations, budgets, policies, service delivery, and procurement to ensure gender responsiveness and inclusive policy and investment outcomes for the sector.
- b. Enhance gender mainstreaming by reviewing policies to ensure gender-responsive guidelines, especially in the provision of accessible and free sanitation facilities in convenient locations and prohibition of any form of gender-based violence and discrimination in the sector.
- c. Promote and increase women's participation and leadership in the decision-making process and throughout the value chain of sustainable infrastructure projects. Increase the equitable and diverse number of men and women among planners, policymakers, and technical professionals in the infrastructure sector.
- d. The State Department of Transport to collaborate with the State Department of Gender (Ministry of Public Service and Gender) and the National Transport and Safety Authority (NTSA) to establish a framework for safety and gender equality in the public transport sector.⁶
- e. Develop integrated multi-disciplinary guidelines promoting green and sustainable infrastructure with a gender and inclusive lens, including mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating gender outcomes and impacts.

⁵ Kishiue Akiko, Dominguez G Karla and St. John Elise. 2020. Gender in Urban Transport in Nairobi, Kenya. Volume I: Mobility

⁶ Ibid.

Recommendations for Other Stakeholders and Partners

- a. Support the development and implementation of international standard guidelines, such as the UN Accessibility and Development Agenda 2015⁷ and ILO Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy.⁸ These standards must be incorporated into the project design and implementation, and barriers that prevent equal and safe access to infrastructure services for women, men, and other marginalized groups must be removed.
- b. Support innovative actions that ensure both women's and men's participation in opportunities and benefits provided by the infrastructure projects, including measures to empower women by working with civil society and local/community organizations focusing on gender equality and inclusion.

Acknowledgements

The brief was developed under the overall guidance and leadership of Anna Mutavati-UN Women Country Representative to Kenya and Dan Bazira-UN Women Deputy Country Representative to Kenya.

It was developed by Diana Karua-International Consultant; Sebastian Gatimu-UN Women

Kenya Planning and Coordination Specialist; Jackline Kiambi-UN Women Kenya Planning and Coordination Programme Associate; Jack Onyisi Abebe-UN Women East and Southern Africa Regional Knowledge Management and Research Specialist and Wendy Akinyi-UN Women Consultant for Knowledge Management.



Credit photo : Julius Mwele/UN-Habitat

7 United Nations (UN). 2015. Accessibility and Development; Mainstreaming disability in the post-2015 development agenda. Accessed. https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/accessibility_and_development.pdf

8 ILO Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy: <https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups>



UN Women Kenya
UN Gigiri Complex, UN Avenue;
Block M, Ground Floor
P.O. Box 30218- 00100 Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: +254 20 762 4778

africa.unwomen.org

-  [unwomenafrica](https://www.facebook.com/unwomenafrica)
-  [unwomenafrica](https://twitter.com/unwomenafrica)
-  [unwomen](https://www.youtube.com/unwomen)
-  [unwomenafrica](https://www.instagram.com/unwomenafrica)