



Remarkable Feminist Voices in Transport

Female Changemakers for Sustainable Mobility
5th Edition 2023



Dear readers,

Female mobility patterns and needs have historically been overlooked in the transport sector. Women and girls experience mobility and moving in public space differently from men and boys.

Commuting to work – mostly by car – has been the predominant focus of transport planners, thus failing to account for the diverse needs of women and other marginalized groups.

Women tend to travel more, while undertaking shorter distances, whereas a large part of men's mobility relates to the journey between work and home; women, too, travel significantly more for care work and household-related activities. There are also clear differences in the choice of means of transport: women cover distances significantly more often as pedestrians and are often dependent on public transport – especially if they belong to low-income households.

Women across the world regularly experience limitations to safe, efficient and accessible transport. In fact, a lack of safe and accessible transport is considered to be one of the greatest obstacles to women's participation in the labor market in developing countries. A survey conducted in Mumbai, India in 2019 revealed that 31% of surveyed women reported commuting as their greatest barrier to working (World Bank, 2021). Women are changemakers in the transport sector. We see more and more women driving

the transformation of mobility systems towards sustainability and decarbonization at the decision-making level, whether as transport planners in public administration, politicians or in managing positions in the private sector.

We, as Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, are committed to a path towards more just, diverse and gender-transformative international cooperation. Women Mobilize Women, as part of the Transformative Urban Mobility Initiative (TUMI) on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), is a lighthouse project for women in the transport sector. Since its launch in 2018, the initiative has fostered diverse and inspiring activities to promote more gender equity in the transport sector. Over the past five years, Women Mobilize Women, together with numerous experts on female transport, have managed to build a visionary community and to raise awareness on the topic of gender-transformative mobility. With the analysis on bridging the gender data gap in transport, Women Mobilize Women conducted a total of five quantitative and qualitative methods for gender-sensitive data collection in 5 African cities. Based on this innovative work, a greater understanding of women's travel patterns has been fostered.

With the "Remarkable Women in Transport" publication, the Women Mobilize Women initiative annually honors female changemakers who have made a special contribution to a gender-equitable change in transport. On this year's 5th anniversary, a special edition titled "Remarkable Feminist Voices in Transport 2023" has been assembled from inspiring interviews with the award winners.

We are especially grateful to the remarkable women in our network and the TUMI partners who have made extraordinary contributions to this work on more equitable transport. A diverse workforce including various perspectives is essential to develop and implement gender-transformative and just mobility systems. While this publication is by no means all-encompassing of the thousands of women in transport who make great contributions each and every day, we hope the few highlighted here inspire you in 2023.

Please enjoy reading about their visions, experiences and desires for a just mobility transition worldwide!



Ingrid-Gabriela Hoven

Managing Director, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH



Transport planning is not gender neutral

This edition of Remarkable Women in Transport is a special issue for us. Not only because it is the 5th anniversary, but mostly because we are convinced that there is not one perfect approach for feminist policy in transport. Feminism can be complex, highly subjective, and sometimes even messy. Quite the contrary to a sector that is associated with technological advancements, flow capacities, and quantifiable goals. Our daily work is a constant reminder that the approaches we take are a result of a distinct mix of local challenges, one's own professional position, and personal intersectional stories, with an understanding that we all carry our biases. It is time to broaden the focus. This includes: to keep looking for the perfect definition, to explore feminist approaches to achieve gender equity for women and marginalized groups in all their diversity and to primarily listen and learn from each other to better understand the diversity of feminist measures needed in transport.

Since its first edition in 2019 the Remarkable Women in Transport series the annual publication focuses on empowering women in transport to be seen, heard, and recognized for their value in ensuring more equitable, safe and sustainable transport systems. This edition marks the evolution of the series to not only recognize the women working to raise the status of and move towards gender-responsive transport but highlight the work of all and create a space to hear different perspectives.

This 2023 Remarkable Women edition aims to showcase the power of its approach. A public call for "Feminist Voices in Transport" that was open to all genders and marginalized groups in their diversity resulted in over 80 nominations from over 20 countries. We were excited to read about the inspirational work happening around the world and learn from each one of the nominees. Selecting the few portraits featured in this edition was the hardest part of bringing this edition to life.

In addition to the diverse and personal portraits, we highlighted selected organizations and initiatives for their outstanding work towards more equitable and gender-transformative mobility.

We as Women Mobilize Women are excited to keep exploring. We often reflect upon and consciously acknowledge the limitation of our own brand that carries the word "women" – even twice. It can be seen to take a binary approach to our target group – a big step in 2018 but seemingly outdated in 2023. At the core of our mission, this is not what we stand for. Going forward, we will aim to be more inclusive and provide a platform to highlight all the work that is creating more equitable access to urban transport systems, freedom from fear and violence, and providing an intersectional perspective on sustainable mobility and gender.

Enjoy the read.
The Women Mobilize Women Team



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Stand up and be heard: The power of the feminist voice

Growing up I can remember seeing the word feminist being met with myriad reactions. Some people would recoil, seeing it as a term for radical bra burners looking to smash the patriarchy. Others embraced the term, giving them a sense of empowerment and strength. Reflecting on my own journey, I can honestly say I've always been a feminist, consistently challenging male-oriented societal norms and unwilling to accept there was something I couldn't do simply because I was born a woman. For better or for worse, my belief that one's gender identity should never limit their ability to thrive, to feel safe, and to enjoy life on their terms without taking joy from someone else's life has influenced every decision I've made, self-imposing a pressure to succeed in changing the world. I think it's been for the better.

Like many feminists and advocates, there was a pivotal moment that has solidified my journey in the mobility and gender-equitable space. In my early thirties, I remember the first time I was told that women historically hadn't worked in urban planning and mobility, something I've heard repeatedly since then. While I readily acknowledge that women's representation in any sector has grown in the last 50 years as we joined the work force in greater numbers, I refuse to accept that there haven't been women fighting for the rights of women for much longer than people may know. In fact, in speaking with many of the women featured within these pages and those who I've met along

the way, I know that for as long as people have been fighting for equity, women have been there.

Although my life's path has never been straight and narrow, every turn has led to a new discovery of who I am and how I want to use my time on this planet. It has seen me as a mother sharing how liberating cycling with my children can be, as an author highlighting the work and stories of other women, and a vocal advocate focused on inspiring more equitable mobility systems. When I was invited to become a Women Mobilize Women Ambassador in early 2022, it seemed like the natural next step in my career, marrying my passion for sustainable transport systems and feminism.

Through Women Mobilize Women, I have been able to expand my knowledge of the intersectional experiences of women from around the world beyond my very Western experiences. I have been challenged to think critically about how my perceptions may not reflect the diversity of the lives of others and begun to redefine what being a feminist means to me. I have come to realize through working with and speaking to the vast network of Women Mobilize Women that this work is not just about mobility – it is about mobilizing change, and I need to be a part of that.

What I find most powerful is learning from the people who fall outside of more binary ways of

viewing the world. Disabled people who refuse to be limited by a society that fails to recognize their needs. Gender-fluid individuals and LGBTQIA+ people who are unafraid to show their colors despite fear of persecution. Women of all ages, abilities, and races who stand in the face of oppression and discrimination to demand more. To be included among these amazing people and using our voices to create change will always be an honor I cherish.

Just as each of us evolves over our lifetime, so has the definition of feminism and what it means to different people. Throughout my adult life I've come to understand how intersectional it is, how it is no longer a term just to label strong, outspoken women. There is room under the feminist umbrella for men who know a just future is one where women are seen as equals and fight alongside us and for LGBTQIA+ people standing up for the rights of everyone regardless of gender or sexual identity. Women are not a homogenous group, nor is feminism a homogenous word. This is reflected in each story shared by the inspirational people and organizations featured in this book.

What is universal is that the work and voices of the women in these pages, and those yet to be heard, are helping to ensure that the future of gender equity in transport – and in cities – is reflective of the diversity of people who make up our communities. Thank you for being remarkable!



MELISSA BRUNTLETT

WOMEN MOBILIZE WOMEN AMBASSADOR,
AUTHOR AND URBAN TRANSPORT EXPERT

A mother of three, chartered civil engineer, and Managing Director of Lagos Metropolitan Area Transport Authority (LAMATA), Enjr. Abimbola Akinajo has made it her mission to turn Lagos, the largest megacity in Africa, into an efficient and safe place to move around – a city where everyone can experience enjoyment in their daily lives.

In your view, what is a feminist transport system?

A feminist transport system is one that identifies women’s needs and ensures that deliberate efforts and focus are placed on gender neutrality – including the design, operation, security, and safety of women – while promoting transformational infrastructure that improves the experience of the city for everyone.

How does the experience for women and girls in Lagos influence your work?

I take an intersectional approach to my work, acknowledging that women and girls constitute a larger percentage of vulnerable groups in Lagos. As a result, I actively promote gender equity in all that I do. Under my leadership, LAMATA has developed strategies and policies on equality which were adopted into the LAMATA Quality System (LAMATA Gender Equality Plan 2022–2027). In that time, LAMATA has seen a growing number of women employed in positions from the boardroom to drivers to the shop floor. This includes 38% of indirect workers (drivers, ground staff, janitors, tickets sellers etc.), 40% of directly employed LAMATA staff, and 40% of LAMATA management staff. My goal is to make sure that the plans to increase that are realized.

A project I’m specifically very proud of is EMPOWER, a UKAID-funded program under the High-Volume Transport Applied Research. The program was commissioned to deliver a gender-equitable and inclusive transport system that improves the personal security of female passengers.

It specifically addressed the contributing factors that lead to sexual harassment towards women when they travel. The project developed a tool called Sexual Harassment Engagement – Changing Attitudes Meeting Needs (SHE CAN) to help cities respond to sexual harassment and makes suggestions to improve the safety and security of urban transport for the benefit of women and ultimately for all citizens.

How have you used your role to promote more inclusive transport systems?

In the pursuit of providing a world class, sustainable, integrated, and multimodal transport system in Lagos, I have used my role to raise awareness about the needs of women in public, private, and state council meetings. This has included the Women’s Day March, March Against Gender-Based Violence, quarterly radio, and press advocacies, and notably activating the #SPEAKUP campaign to raise awareness about sexual harassment on public transportation. I also advocate for universal accessibility when implementing public infrastructure and safe transport facilities, as well as ensuring the SHE CAN Tool is utilized on all forthcoming LAMATA projects. My working aim is to actively remove barriers and constraints to women becoming bus drivers and transport professionals, and significantly expand the participation of women in senior roles while encouraging workplace flexibility for women.

Abimbola Akinajo

MANAGING DIRECTOR, LAGOS
METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORT
AUTHORITY (LAMATA)

NIGERIA





Do you have any advice for other people who want to be part of a feminist reshaping of the transport system?

I would advise women and girls to follow their dreams and to never limit themselves or their capabilities because they are women. If you can think it, you can do it. Aim to achieve what you have set out to achieve.

The transport system may appear to be male dominated, however, I would like to advise that men ensure that equal opportunities are afforded to women in the transport system. In Lagos, we have women as drivers, engineers, mechanics, and in various other fields and they are doing phenomenally. I therefore urge women to embrace the opportunities given to them as we collectively improve the transport system.

Co-founder and director of Agile City Partners, Andrea San Gil León was named one of Latin America’s most important female figures working in the transport sector by the Inter-American Development Bank in celebration of International Day of Women and Girls in Science 2021. Andrea is passionate about reducing social vulnerability and increasing quality of life through city design and sustainable solutions, which makes her a great feminist leader.

In your view, what is a feminist transport system?

It is a transport system that leaves no one behind. It dignifies and satisfies travel needs for everyone, especially for those from historically excluded and marginalized populations (women, children, the elderly, people with disabilities, BIPOC, LGBTQI+ people). It involves them in planning, design, and decision-making. A feminist transport system is safe and accessible with a diversity of options depending on people’s mobility needs. It prioritizes active and public transport and connects all areas of the city that people need to access. It cares about people, is flexible, and is constantly improving and adapting based on the user experience.

How does the experience of women and girls in Costa Rica influence your work?

Feeling scared, unsafe, and vulnerable just by walking out the door that influences the gender perspective of my work. Walking, cycling, public transport: these are all unsafe for women. If the only safe option to navigate the city for women is to purchase a car (which not everyone can do), we are creating inequity and exclusion by design. A sustainable transport system or city will never be realized if 50% of the population doesn’t feel safe when moving around, if they are not part of planning and decision-making, and if the transport system doesn’t cater to their needs. I decided that if I was going to work in cities and transport, gender perspectives and a feminist approach were always

going to be elements I would incorporate in the way I plan, design, gather data, make decisions, and measure the success of projects.

How do you use your professional and personal channels to promote more inclusive transport systems?

From the very beginning, after founding the Center for Urban Sustainability in 2014, we have had a department on Gender and the City (now Gender and Inclusive Cities). The gender component is always included in lectures, conferences, events, and communications. Personally, I share a lot of content focused on social justice, gender inclusion, LGBTQI+ rights, etc., and do a lot of interviews and lectures with an inclusion component. As a professor of an Introduction to Urban Sustainability course for the University for Peace (UPEACE) I also include a module Inequality in Cities to raise awareness of all the inequities generated in cities today linked to age, race, ethnicity, gender, disabilities, etc.

Who is your feminist role model?

I have always admired women like Mónica Araya and Melania Guerra. They are strong women in male-dominated fields. They use their platforms to raise awareness about important issues, speak out, and take strong stands for what they believe in. Most importantly, they are always willing to support other women, like me. I feel very lucky to be able to learn from them and call them my friends.

Andrea San Gil León

FOUNDER OF THE CENTER FOR
URBAN SUSTAINABILITY IN COSTA
RICA, CO-FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR
OF AGILE CITY PARTNERS

COSTA RICA





Have you had a transformative experience that has guided your work?

From 2018 to 2019, I had the opportunity to work for Costa Rica's government in transport and city planning as a Presidential Advisor, alongside the formidable Claudia Dobles, Costa Rica's then First Lady. That experience gave me a broad perspective on the difficulties linked to politics, decision-making, multi-level governance, the importance of partnerships, and articulating ideas across different sectors. I learned about the importance of leading fearlessly, standing your ground, and defending your vision, but also being able to negotiate and listen to different stakeholders' needs with empathy and compassion.

I also learned how stressful and violent the political world can be, how being a young woman in transport means not being listened to or believed, being criticized, bypassed, bullied, ridiculed, etc. It motivated me to keep building technical and emotional skills with a community of like-minded people to help cope with these challenges and continue my work. Transforming systemic problems is a marathon and not a sprint. You need all the tools, energy, and help to make that long run without losing yourself.

How do you stay motivated?

Through the tiny victories. A prominent publication about inequities for women in Costa Rica's transport system in the newspaper. More projects including gender and inclusion components, small changes in legislation and policy. Seeing more institutions, companies, media, influencers, politicians, etc. talking about these topics. And of course, seeing other women – especially young activists – getting involved, being fearless and amazing. But also, by taking care of myself and finding comfort, enjoyment, inspiration in other things. If I'm ok, I'll be strong enough to keep on fighting.

Invisible Commutes



COLOMBIA, PERU AND MEXICO
FOUNDED 2020
WWW.INVISIBLECOMMUTES.COM

Invisibles Commutes is a transmedia project portraying the commuting experiences of domestic workers in several Latin American cities. It shows multiple issues these women face during their commutes: long times spent in transit, high costs, a lack of road safety, health issues, and gender-based, racial, and everyday violence, among others. It uses a variety of media including audiovisual material, short and long podcast episodes, infographics, photography, blog posts, opinion pieces, and academic papers to showcase what these everyday experiences are like.

Domestic workers constitute 20% of Latin-American wage working women. Feminist cities should respond to their needs through:

1. promoting effective participation mechanisms to uncover their urban needs
2. building cities that address paid care work
3. connecting residential sites that host paid care work to urban opportunities, including good public transit and pedestrian infrastructure
4. providing subsidies targeting them
5. creating effective responses to the violence they experience
6. promoting clean mobility that enhances their health

A mother of two young children and climate advocate, Anuela Ristani is the Deputy Mayor of Tirana Albania, for Sustainable Development and International Relations. Prior to joining local government, she established the National Youth Service and opened the first youth centers in Albania’s major cities.

Anuela Ristani describes herself as unapologetic. She will not apologize for disrupting the status quo and building a Tirana that puts children and women first. She stands confidently beside Erion Veliaj, the Mayor of Tirana, in his assertion, “If Tirana was a gender, it would be a woman.”

Identifying the city as a woman inspires a vision of a place that caters to all citizens, not just the typical male commuter moving quickly from A to B. It caters to women who have more complex trip patterns that often involve multiple stops on the way to and from work. It caters to caregivers and children who do not fit neatly into a 9-to-5 schedule.

“A feminist transport system is not necessarily about women or gender – it’s about human rights. It’s about how fairly we treat people. By not designing in a feminist way, you are not just shutting women out, you’re excluding the whole of society who do not meet the profile of the average male commuter.”

Anuela has made it her personal goal to positively transform walking in the city. As a part of this goal, Tirana has widened sidewalks for strollers and mothers with children, narrowed main streets for cars, removed on-street parking for bike lanes, increased off-peak services, installed on-street lighting, and is building more playgrounds and green spaces so that everyone can experience enjoyment and feel secure on their walk or bike ride home. “I have yet to find one action we have taken that can be labelled as ‘feminist’

that hasn’t been good for the entire city,” she says. In her own words, Anuela’s biggest achievement has been the transformation of the city’s central square, a shift from a roundabout centered on cars to one open to people. “It was not a destination; it was a place to get around. The heart was aching. Within minutes of opening up the plaza, you saw how it was populated with kids, women and their babies, bikes. The city was thirsty for a long time and now there is an oasis. Life was given back to people.”

Anuela pinpoints social and feminist activist Gloria Steinem as her role model:

“Every day I try to approach life and work with empathy. As Gloria Steinem said, ‘It’s the most revolutionary form of human emotions.’ A feminist transport system should be grounded on empathy and the way we build public services should be founded on it. The bigger your vehicle, the more road space you take, the less empathetic you are. In that sense, empathy as a core human sentiment moves past genders, roles, stereotypes – it’s about how we level down to be empathetic with one another and how we can do that in a city which is so diverse and dynamic.”

Anuela is proud to work in a city with a women majority in office and is confident that their voices will continue to shape Tirana into a city of radical empathy where no matter an individual’s background, age, or ability, they will enjoy an equal right to the city.

Anuela Ristani

DEPUTY MAYOR
OF TIRANA

ALBANIA



As Director of Movin’On LAB Africa (African Mobilities Observatory OMA), Charlène leads the development of initiatives in sustainable mobility and the participation of the Observatory in projects of general interest in Africa. In Côte d’Ivoire, where she is based, this includes close engagement with the local ecosystem, and the Michelin Group.. She is also the Community Manager of the Observatory, contributing to initiatives related to sustainable and inclusive development of mobility and transport within African cities and by creating an active community of experts, companies, professionals, startups and citizens.

When she first began her work in the transport sector, Charlène Kouassi wasn’t focused solely on women’s perspectives, but rather the broader experience of people and finding ways to address their specific needs. This approach has carried through to today. For Charlène, a feminist transport system is one where women’s perspectives are perceived and understood equally – where the place of women is not above anyone else, but equal to any other, whether they be men, women, children, the elderly, etc.

“I don’t think through a specific gender lens when talking about mobility. I really focus on mobility groups and the multiplicity of persons that compose society.”

Charlène, who was born in France, adopted her Ivoirian nationality four and a half years ago, becoming a dual citizen of her birth country and that of her family’s heritage. One year after she moved to Abidjan she joined the Michelin Initiative ‘African Mobilities Observatory’ to work in the mobility field. She believes the duality of her culture and being a Black woman has helped her in her approach.

“I think it is not necessarily important to shout, ‘I am Black, I am woman.’ Doing the work in a way that I am proud of shows other women that it is possible to work in this so-called male environment. You must sometimes speak louder than others to be

heard and understood so we have a long way to go to achieve equality for women.”

Charlène recounts early in her career in Côte d’Ivoire when she realized the importance of having a strong voice. In a country where the respect and obedience towards the elders are key in and out the professional sphere, she allowed her manager to take credit for the work she and her colleagues were doing. But it didn’t feel right and she eventually stood up for herself, understanding that despite being the “new girl” with less experience, her insights were valuable.

“The experience helped me see that at the end of the day, even if you are young or less experienced, your voice matters and you should speak out. People may not see things like you do and think you are wrong, but there will always be those who see otherwise. You are not alone. Through your work, you will get what you deserve.”

Now as Director of Movin’On LAB Africa, Charlène uses her work and experience to challenge traditional thinking about mobility in Africa. She focuses on great examples of projects and initiatives that impact cities and people’s lives positively, believing that when you tell a good story or share an experience, people will identify with it.

Charlène Kouassi

DIRECTOR, MOVIN’ON LAB
AFRICA (AFRICAN MOBILITIES
OBSERVATORY OMA)

COTE D’IVOIRE



“You must sometimes speak louder than others to be heard and understood so we have a long way to go to achieve equality for women.”

She has been invited to contribute to many initiatives like the SLOCAT Partnership, and while she could only focus on what is trendy at the moment like electric mobility and decarbonization of transport, she chooses to focus on inclusive mobility solutions, which she believes African nations should include on top of their strategy, even if it's not something readily visible every day.

“Focusing on women's needs is good and essential, but we need to include men's opinions, too. We should continuously move toward that multi-dimensional direction. It is not only the poor and the rich, black, non-black, man, woman but the combination of everyone and communities. It is really important to have this inclusive approach to achieve sustainability.”

“I use Movin'On and my work to show how important inclusive mobility is, especially in low-income countries where unfortunately we tend to reproduce the errors of others and copy the Western models. We have the opportunity to shift towards a more inclusive and cleaner mobility sector. But the pace of African cities is different from the rest of the world yet the world is pushing us further and faster on a certain direction, but we have to achieve our goals step by step according to our own priorities and needs and be able to power projects and people inside out instead of parachuting in solutions.”

Although still early in her career, Charlène's advice for her younger self is simple: Do things with passion, be true to what you believe, and be patient.

“Patience is a strong quality. A lot of people say, ‘Why don't you start something yourself, build your own business, or work for an African company?’ I tell them that every sector has its ups and downs, but it is our role to shape it the way we want it to be.”

For others who want to enter this field, she emphasizes the value of being among other women and being open to the world and the diversity of people and backgrounds within it. She sees feminism as a strong word, sometimes too narrow, especially in Africa where it is not seen in the same way as in Europe. For Charlène, taking in all perspectives is the way to achieving a more inclusive mobility space.

Instituto Caminhabilidade



BRAZIL
FOUNDED 2012
WWW.SAMPAPE.ORG

Led by women, Walkability Institute (Instituto Caminhabilidade), previously SampaPé!, is a non-profit organization with the main goal of transforming cities into fairer, more welcoming, and more sustainable environments through walkability. The Walkability Institute promotes walking culture and humanizes cities by engaging citizens in the process of reclaiming cities using methodologies that put people at the forefront, especially women and girls; they are asked to dream, design, and build cities that do so. Their work promoting walkable cities through feminist development and feminist urbanism includes developing projects that make women protagonists of urban transformation and making their demands a priority, because a feminist city is a walkable city.

Cities are not neutral. When we have a city model which disregards the experiences and needs of women, and ignores the importance of walking, this leads to car-oriented cities, which are violent, unsafe, and unsustainable. Feminist and walkable cities reverse this model. Building more equitable cities is good for all people; such cities are fairer for children, the elderly, and people with disabilities, as well.

The Mayor of Bogotá and first female and openly lesbian mayor in the Colombian capital’s history, Claudia López Hernández has an emphatic focus on the environmental, social equity and anti-corruption agendas. Mayor López was a Senator of the Republic of Colombia between 2014 and 2018 and the vice-presidential candidate in the 2018 presidential election for the Green Alliance party.

How do you define feminism?

I believe it is the recognition that humanity has historically been around the primacy, if not hegemony, of men and a systemic inequality in relation to women. So, first and foremost, feminism makes this recognition, and secondly, what it proposes is to recognize and overcome all barriers that limit the freedom, autonomy, and equality of women, so that they can fully develop their potential with freedom and autonomy.

In your view, what is a feminist transport system?

In my opinion, it is one that guarantees freedom, autonomy, and equality for women, not just in public transportation, but in the overall urban development of the city. In Bogotá, public transportation is by definition quite feminized, with two out of every three users being women. That’s why it must be feminist, and that’s what we are trying to do in Bogotá.

Gender equity and specific care for women have been incorporated into both Bogotá’s Mater Plan and Sustainable Mobility Plan which are based on strengthening a multimodal public transportation network with a metro system. In the short term, we are working to make public transportation a safe space for women, as it is perhaps now the place where women are most harassed. We have strengthened awareness activities so that:

- Women have the knowledge to avoid situations leading to harassment
- They know what forms of sexual violence are
- They can confidently report it
- Reporting through the Purple Hotline prevention and protection services are effective
- Public transportation workers (drivers, managers, and collectors) are trained to receive complaints and know how to react, process, and attend promptly to any woman who is a victim of harassment, gender violence, or insecurity

Likewise, we are addressing the design of the system. From the measures, comfort, visibility, ergonomics, streets, stops, what is reported on public transportation advertisements, some of the most viewed in the city, must have a gender perspective.

But feminizing public transportation is not only done from the perspective of the users, but also from the perspective of services providers. Transportation is one of the sectors, like construction, that generates a lot of employment, but it is very masculinized. That’s why, to feminize transportation in Bogotá, we are incorporating women not only as users, but as system managers, as drivers, as people in the maintenance and mechanical service. In fact, Bogotá has a mixed system, with public and private operators. We have a public operator called ‘La Rolita’, in honor of the women of Bogotá, which is managed by a woman and where two out of three employees at all levels of service are women.

Claudia López Hernández

MAYOR OF BOGOTÁ

COLOMBIA



“They will bully you, they will tell you that you are not capable, but you will change the world, because feminism, change, and equality are unstoppable.”

How does the experience for women and girls in Bogotá influence your work?

Not only does it affect my work, but I am also the subject that influences it. I am the first female Mayor, and for me, the gender perspective is not just a focus to sound politically correct; it's a principle of life, public management, and budget allocation at all levels of public administration. Affirmative actions must be taken because large gaps for women cannot be overcome through passive actions. The creation of the Care Blocks, the feminization of public transportation, are all part of this perspective.

The pandemic created a new challenge, with many women forced to return to unpaid care roles. We are addressing that setback with specific programs and investments, providing women with opportunities to return to the labor market, and retrain to find better job options. It has all been worth it, because despite the pandemic, Bogotá today has the lowest labor gap between men and women in history. It has been a great effort that did not happen only due to market action, but thanks to social inclusion policies, feminization, Care Squares to free women from unpaid care, training and education for women, support for their businesses, and effort from public employment, whether in public works or with social services to give priority to women and young people.

Who is your feminist role model?

I have several references, women that I believe were very feminist, who may not have recognized themselves as such in their time. Esmeralda Arboleda, one of the suffragettes who led the movement for women to have the right to vote in Colombia from 1957, is an extraordinary reference for me. There is also Florence Thomas, the Dean of Feminism in Colombia, and Ana Falú, in Latin America, who has had an extraordinary job that is

always a great inspiration. Finally, my wife Angélica Lozano, and Ángela María Robledo in Colombia, are the people who have served me best as a reference of feminism and feminist political action.

Have you had any transformative experiences that have guided your motivation in the field?

I think that nothing is more transformative than feeling the weight of machismo and patriarchy firsthand, in my case, in addition to homophobia. Possibly the most transformative experience, because of how painful it was, was my experience as a senator of the republic. It is the most macho and homophobic environment that I have worked in in my entire life. For me, machismo and homophobia were something unfortunate that happened to others and that had never happened to me, until I was in that scenario as a senator, for four years.

Although it was tough, it was also a very transformative experience, precisely because of that. Because I worked on the women's commission of Congress, with women of radically different ideologies, with whom we could have many ideological and political confrontations, but with whom we could agree on a common feminist and gender-based work agenda. So, in both senses, it was a very transformative experience.

If you could go back in time, what would you tell your younger self as I entered this field?

At 52 years old today, if I could go back 25 to 35 years, I would tell myself the same thing: They will bully you, they will tell you that you are not capable, but you will change the world, because feminism, change, and equality are unstoppable!

Head of the Mobility Secretary of the State of Oaxaca, Mexico. Claudina de Gyves Mendoza is an architect focusing on urban planning and sustainable mobility. As co-founder and former general coordinator of Liga Peatonal, she advocated for pedestrians’ rights.

Claudina de Gyves Mendoza

SECRETARY OF MOBILITY OF THE
STATE OF OAXACA

MEXICO

In your view, what is a feminist transport system?

From my perspective, a feminist transport system is one that considers the needs and desires of women, teenagers, and young girls in order to provide them with solutions for their daily life while moving around the cities. A sustainable system that allows them to live and enjoy their cities in safe conditions when walking, cycling, using public transport, or by any other transport means. One that also provides them with different options depending on their daily activities.

A feminist transport system should consider gender as a category of analysis, along with others, such as age, ethnic origin, economic conditions, and so on. This allows an understanding of women’s everyday travel patterns and how they are connected to very specific life conditions and related to their role in the current hegemonic economic system that conditions their mobility. A feminist transport system should change the current approach of individual and linear mobility to analyze practices and patterns of everyday life activities, in the productive as well as the reproductive spheres.

Have you had a transformative experience that has guided your leadership in the field?

My transformative experience is linked to the personal decision I made around ten years ago when I decided to use a bicycle as a means of transport and discovered a whole new experience

of the city on two wheels. I realized that although we all must take certain precautions when going out into public space for our daily activities, for women, the issue of security goes a lot further, especially if you decide to cycle. Security becomes a personal subject involving choices made even before stepping outside. There is a mental checklist with questions like: What am I going to wear? How am I going to commute? Where do I go? What time will I come back? Will all my travels be alone? How will the weather be? This also goes without saying that on many occasions, our commutes are planned and conditioned by other people accompanying us to ensure a certain level of security.

Over time, I realized that I had to also learn to deal with the daily mental exercise of perception of others about my safety. Questions about and emphasis on all the extra precautions I should take because of my decision to cycle became an endless headache. Questions about the use of a helmet and of special equipment to go out that resembled a Christmas tree just to be visible. I realized that what for me meant a certain level of autonomy while commuting was seen by others as an added risk that I needed to solve.



"I realized that I had to also learn to deal with the daily mental exercise of perception of others about my safety."

Being aware of this situation helped me realize that as a woman happy with my decision to travel by bike, I had to stand up and speak out about the risks but also about the benefits, especially the independence I gained in choosing a bike as transport. This also helped me prepare professionally for joining the transport field. I realized I needed the knowledge and tools to be assertive and make sure my voice is taken seriously as that of a specialist in the field, especially in this man's world.

If you could go back in time, what would you tell your younger self entering the field?

I would acknowledge that, yes, the city is not designed for all. As long as there continues to be no safe conditions for women's travels, we will survive by avoiding going out on some occasions, limiting our activities in others, or providing for ourselves what the city does not. Do not forget our ideal city and what we should be aspiring to – one where the only thing we have to do as women, regardless of the hour of the day or the clothes we wear, is to walk or cycle without worrying about anything. That the ideal city, the streets, the infrastructure, the transportation system, etc., would be able to mitigate the risks and possible eventualities and would offer us all the transport combinations to carry out our daily travels in a comfortable and safe way, according to our diverse needs.

I would say to myself that our ideal city does not exist yet, but that we are already on track, working hard with the help of women around the world to make sure each of us can have safe trips home.

Do you have any advice for other people who want to be part of a feminist reshaping of the transport system?

My advice is that they shouldn't take the city for granted as a place designed for all people. The reality is that the city doesn't know that a street without a cycle lane, without safe intersections, with dim lighting, without active facades, without intermodal and safe public transport, without sidewalks in good conditions, increases the risks in women's commutes. Nor do the ones who planned it.

The solution for women is not to solve every single risk with car travel or provide the company of someone to 'take care of us,' a situation only appreciated when it's our decision. What we need is a city that allows us to move safely and autonomously, to commute alone without depending on other people. What we need is for those planning cities to work collectively with us to create the conditions for autonomous travel, to provide a reality where we can move safely and independently.

Women on Bicycle Initiative

TÜRKİYE
FOUNDED 2015
WWW.BISIKLETLIKADIN.COM/EN

Bisikletli Kadın İnisiyatifi (BKİ) / Women on Bicycle Initiative (WoBi) began after a few women who commute by bicycle in İstanbul found themselves participating in events that were generally male dominated. They missed the visibility of women in cycling communities in İstanbul so WoBi created the space for women to meet, share their stories and feel safer while riding and learning to ride.

Though Türkiye has a deep feminist movement with hidden roots, optimism does not come easy. Teaching a woman how to ride a bicycle and seeing the glow in her eyes is what drives the members of the initiative. Or cycling with a woman in traffic so she can later cycle alone. Hearing stories of their success encourages members to make their next moves. As Rebecca Solnit says in her book, *Hope in the Dark*, “Hope just means another world might be possible, not promised, not guaranteed. Hope calls for action; action is impossible without hope.”



A mother, urban planner, and avid cyclist from Nairobi, Kenya, Cyprine Odada is working to transform African cities to cycling cities as the Organizer of Critical Mass Nairobi, the largest gathering of non-competitive cyclists in Africa.

Cyprine Odada

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
CRITICAL MASS NAIROBI

KENYA

In your view, what is a feminist transport system?

A feminist transport system is a human-centered transport system designed with the understanding that men and women have very different travel patterns, behaviors, and experiences. It empowers a pregnant woman, a mother, a single woman or group of young teenage girls to navigate the city without fear or favor. It accommodates multipurpose trips which include stops at the grocery store or daycare along the way. It does not trap, impoverish, or objectify them. It does not force them to craft creative modes of survival to keep themselves and their children safe, to avoid being harassed.

How does the experience for women and girls in Kenya influence your work?

Our transport systems reflect the societies that govern and construct them. In Kenya, women’s needs are perpetually disregarded because of the disproportionate distribution of seats at the decision-making table. Women are made to be voiceless and money is directed to roads, expressways and cars. There is little thought to pedestrians and cyclists on our roads – even though they are the dominant road users. My hope with Critical Mass is to dispel the myth that cycling is a poor person’s mode of transport or an elitist sport but rather an active mobility choice that is an inclusive, accessible mode of transport with a variety of socio-economic, environmental, and personal benefits.

Why Critical Mass?

We are a community of over 1000 cyclists that meet to take over the streets of Nairobi. A critical mass of people – a woman in the company of other women, kids in the company of other kids – changes how people view, experience, and interact with bicycles. There is safety and power in numbers and as we grow, it will be more and more difficult for policymakers to ignore us.

Have you had a transformative experience that has guided your work?

Weaving across Nairobi on a bike up until almost eight months pregnant with my first child. It was an exhilarating experience; I enjoyed it so much that I repeated it while pregnant with my second. I felt empowered while simultaneously being confronted with very stark barriers to access and safety as well as the unwarranted and intense disapproval and judgment from men. Women, on the other hand, felt inspired and challenged by my presence – if a pregnant woman can do it, so can I! And that is what I aim for: to break the glass ceiling and give other women the confidence to start cycling.

It’s my mission to make sure that when my little one is old enough, she can safely experience the joy of riding bicycles without fear of intimidation.





Who is your feminist role model?

I try to be unapologetically feminine in my leadership. I wear dresses on bikes. I ride when pregnant. I mock the idea that cycling is a man's sport. My feminist role models would be Cleopatra and Wangari Maathai. Both of these women used their femininity to stir change and break down barriers to create space for other women.

What advice would you give your younger self if you could?

Have thick skin. There are a lot of people who won't want you there because you're a woman. Your womanness will be used against you – you'll be told you're not strong enough, you're a mother, you shouldn't be out by yourself. Flip it and show them that being a woman is one of your greatest assets.

An expert for sustainable transport, Danawiryya Silaksanti graduated from Trisakti Institute of Transportation and Logistics in Jakarta in 2021. During her studies, she co-authored and published an academic paper on the costs and benefits of the use of shore connections. As an Impact Control Officer at the Indonesian Ministry of Transportation, she has supported both national initiatives and international projects on the topic of green transport.

In your view, what is a feminist transport system?

A feminist transport system is one that has considered the needs of women in its transport services, both in transportation facilities and infrastructure. In urban transportation, the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in my country provides special seats for all women, including pregnant women, there is a separation of space between women and men, and there are several buses dedicated as women’s buses. The operator also prioritizes women’s safety from acts of sexual harassment, by placing stickers highlighting the hotline number for sexual harassment complaints.

How does the experience of women and girls in Indonesia influence your work?

Women in Indonesia make up 49.42% of the total population. This made us at the Ministry of Transport (MOT) really think about the available services for women and disabled people in the transport system. With the knowledge of this large number of women, we have also opened job opportunities in transportation, both within ministries and as operators. As a working mother myself, I also use public transportation to get to work, and I convey my experience in using public transportation to the leadership as motivation and support for improving service.

Many feminist advocates say they get tired of saying the same things and having the same fights over and over. How do you stay motivated?

For women who feel frustrated, I would first reflect on whether they have found the right audience to present their ideas or frustrations. For myself, I persist in communicating my complaints and suggestions to various parties, with the aim of improving service. Because I work in a team that has the task of developing public services, we also coach operators to listen to customer complaints. We understand that if the goal is to improve services, listening and addressing women’s concerns will have a positive impact to the company and also the image of public transportation. To take the alternative approach would make customers feel abandoned by the system. I am motivated by the knowledge that continuous improvement and providing the best public transport to our community is important!

Do you have any advice for other people who want to be part of a feminist reshaping of the transport system?

As a passenger and user of public transportation, express your experience in improving transportation services. This can be communicated to officers in the field, through customer service hotlines, or via social media. Your input and suggestions will be very useful for improving transportation in your city/country. For those who want to work in the transportation sector, then don’t hesitate to apply for the job you want. Getting involved means you can contribute to creating a better feminist transportation system. Just be yourself!

Danawiryya Silaksanti

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT CONTROL
OFFICER FOR CENTER OF SUSTAINABLE
TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT,
SECRETARIATE GENERAL OF MINISTRY
OF TRANSPORTATION

INDONESIA



A gender-planning expert at the City of Vienna’s Competence Centre Overall Urban Planning, Smart City Strategy, Participation, Gender Planning, Eva Kail is the creator of several role-model initiatives and projects. These include the 1991 exhibition, “Who owns the public space? – Women’s Everyday Life in the City,” which led to the initiation of the Frauenbüro, Vienna’s first women’s office, as well as the proof-of-concept housing project Frauen-Werk-Stadt, the gender mainstreaming pilot program in the Mariahilf district (2002–2006).

Eva Kail may be cited online as one of the urban planners who “made feminist planning popular,” but when confronted with the description, she scoffs. “The non-sexist city or the city of short distances (now reinvented as the 15-Minute City) dates back to the seventies and was connected to the feminist movement of that time,” Eva says, emphasizing that learning about the works of these early thought leaders served as her own wake-up call, setting her off on her professional path. About 30 years later, Eva looks back at an impressive record of accomplishment of gender mainstreaming urban, residential, and transport planning and projects in Vienna, Austria.

“A feminist-informed city is not identifiable by purple trams. The feminist aspect goes unnoticed. It is one in which every citizen can go about their daily life, fulfilling their needs safely, with low effort and without barriers.”

Beyond the ability to access mobility without constraints, feminist transport planning touches upon the meta level. In her experience, feminism is a political and structural goal which critically reflects how urban resources are allocated. This cannot be done without active public engagement and participation.

“We collected voices, experiences, and inspiring practical examples from other cities in Europe or elsewhere as our starting point. A broader rollout followed the many pilot projects so we could refer to our own evolution and success as we continued our story.”

Essential to her and her colleagues’ success are the pilot projects that demonstrate the impacts that gender planning can have. As Eva highlights, “pilot projects need to include realistic goals and are to be set up to reduce public – or rather political – fears and worries.” Pilots that are designed for success are a powerful door-opener for subsequent discussions and complex transformational processes.

“Gender lyrics in visions, strategic planning documents, and publications do not change much. Strategies need to be broken down, commitments need to be agreed upon and made implementable.”

A dedicated strategic planning unit with continuous funding within the city authority is certainly a further part of Vienna’s success. Political stakeholders and public authorities in the city agreed upon goals, initiatives, and pilots to be implemented and evaluated. Ultimately, the city was able to derive its planning guidelines based on the observations and successes achieved at its doorstep. Eva reflects: “The city’s focus on pedestrian needs was initiated by women stressing their mobility needs. This is also needed for cycling.”

Eva Kail

GENDER-PLANNING EXPERT,
COMPETENCE CENTRE OVERALL URBAN
PLANNING, SMART CITY STRATEGY,
PARTICIPATION, GENDER PLANNING

AUSTRIA





Looking further ahead, she names climate change as the key challenge of our time. “We will need to seriously harvest the expertise, potential, and creativity of all experts and create a wide public acceptance for the much-needed urban and mobility transformation.”

“Our cities would be much better prepared today for the impacts of climate change if they had really listened to feminist planners thirty years ago.”

Expressing doubt that the interest in and application of gender planning-informed solutions for this transformation has been fully utilized, Eva brings the awareness full circle: What we do to better mobility today will have a lasting impact.



NINA

BRAZIL
FOUNDED 2018
WWW.PORTAL.NINAMOB.COM

NINA uses technology to combat and prevent harassment while traveling by providing a standard channel for complaints and collecting data that can be used to inform public policies aimed at creating safer, more inclusive cities. Working with partners such as the City of Fortaleza (CE), NINA's data can guide actions to combat violence. One such example can be found in the strategic installation of more lighting and surveillance cameras at bus stops that can serve as a hindrance to violence.

Such use of technology could readily expand to other cities and regions to gain location-specific insights that can better identify needs and influence public policies that improve the safety of women. Enhancing women's lives and safety in cities will lead to a city safe for everyone.

Architect and urbanist Dr. Eveline Prado Trevisan has worked on urban projects for Belo Horizonte City Council for three decades, coordinating their bicycle mobility program, Pedala BH since 2012. She created the GT Pedala BH in partnership with cyclists, an open, advisory, and leaderless working group that brings together representatives from civil society, local advocacy associations, and the public. Since 2018, she has been working to reduce road speed to improve safety and reframe the role of the street as an important meeting place.

In your view, what is a feminist transport system?

A feminist transportation system requires understanding that women have different mobility patterns than men, who have historically done the city planning. Although more women have entered the profession, male travel patterns continue to guide planning. While men’s commutes are often more direct, moving from home to work or education, women’s commutes are much more indirect, performing informal care tasks in addition to work or study. A mobility system that is feminist considers that difference. An important fact that reflects the exclusion of women in transport planning can be observed, for example, in Belo Horizonte, where only 11% of women commute by bicycle, this indicates that women don’t feel safe cycling. Therefore, in a feminist system, bike lanes and sidewalks should be considered an integral part of the transportation network, rather than just cars and public transport.

How does the experience for women and girls in Belo Horizonte influence your work?

Historically we have had very little information about how women and children move around in Belo Horizonte. However, we recently approved a large public transportation corridor project with the World Bank where one of the requirements was to propose a gender equity plan. Although a very recent project and just focused on one corridor, the city government looked at the surroundings to better understand how women and girls move.

I am also working on speed reduction projects, specifically focused on making zone 30 areas viable in peripheral regions. For one of them, Zone 30 Confisco, we started a dialogue with the local community to understand their perception of street safety. In partnership with UN SDSN, we performed a gender safety audit near the Anne Frank Municipal school. In every project, we try to mobilize the community to understand the current situation from a women’s safety perspective and show how it can be transformed by redesigning the streets.

What has been surprising for you as a feminist role model?

I have no doubt I am a feminist in my personal life, but I did not realize I could express this through my work and be seen as a role model. I work in a very masculine environment and live in a very macho country, so understanding I can represent a feminist perspective is something I had not even realized. I work so that we can have a more inclusive, welcoming city, especially for those who are most vulnerable. Feminism permeates all my work in a transversal way and I certainly emphasize the importance of that.

Who is your feminist role model?

I am inspired by Débora Diniz, who lives in exile after receiving many threats due to her work and research on abortion. I admire her because of her unwavering position.

Dr. Eveline Prado Trevisan

SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT
COORDINATOR, EMPRESA DE
TRANSPORTES E TRÂNSITO DE BELO
HORIZONTE (BHTRANS)

BRAZIL





Renata Novaes is another role model who has had an impact on me. She is a Black woman who has stood up and said she shouldn't have to educate anyone about feminism or racism, especially men. "The damage is yours. It's up to you to educate yourself."

Researcher Simony César has likewise done wonders for women and mobility by developing the Nina app, an important tool for use in feminist urban planning.

Have you had a transformative experience that has guided your work?

As I have matured in my career, I have gained a better understanding of feminist issues. My first shift began after I joined the participatory budget, where I directly experienced work in public management. I began to understand how perverse public service can be for women, especially those who work against the status quo. As a woman working on cycling, it has been a challenge, but I have learned through my leadership the value of bringing like-minded people together to make projects feasible. For me this meant finding allies, knowing who my partners are, and strengthening my resolve in the process.

What advice would you give others who want to be a part of a feminist transformation in transport?

You need to have perseverance, patience, firmness and flexibility at once. Be very firm in your position and convictions if you want to help transform the mobility system to be respectful and inclusive for women. At the same time, be ok recognizing that working towards the ideal means needing to go back, rethink, and readjust many times. We need to listen attentively and be open to any changes that may be necessary on the path forward to equitable cities.

Julie Anne Genter has been a Green Party Member of Parliament in Aotearoa (New Zealand) since 2011, as the Spokesperson for Finance, Transport, Infrastructure, Urban Development, Building & Construction, Energy & Resources, State Owned Enterprises. Former Minister for Women, Associate Minister of Transport & Health (2017–2020).

In your view, what is a feminist transport system?

A transport system that is empowering for women and girls to participate in their community and get around, as much as anyone else. It is not just women and girls, but children, the elderly, people with disabilities – it is a transport system accessible to all.

How does the experience for women and girls in New Zealand influence your work?

New Zealand has a very car-centric transport system that has excluded people and created many towns and cities that are not as sustainable and accessible as they could be. My work is focused on reversing that and creating more people-friendly streets.

How have you used your platform to promote more inclusive transport systems?

I got involved in politics when I realized it wasn’t technical solutions and research that we lacked, it was political leadership. I could finally see a political party providing that leadership with the Greens in Aotearoa New Zealand. In opposition politics, my work has been about campaigning for positive solutions. As Minister for Women and Associate Minister for Transport, I had this amazing opportunity to influence policy and funding more directly. It is here where we can make the biggest practical differences and have a role in showing that things can be done differently while inspiring people to believe that it is a choice they can make politically.

My work is not about shaming people or telling them they should be cycling or taking public transport over driving, rather that central and local government should be providing them with better choices and options to get around and better neighbourhoods that are more accessible. My choice to move around by bike, with my children, or in normal clothes has been inspiring for some people. I know that some people will see it as a challenge. I simply want to provide a positive example but in a way that is inspiring and empowering. Choosing to cycle to the hospital for the birth of both my children wasn’t planned, it was just the best choice at the time, and the overwhelmingly positive response has been surprising and heartwarming.

Have you had an ‘enough is enough’ moment?

It was more growing up in a place that was incredibly car-dependent. From a very young age I felt this was not right, and when I visited other cities I saw things could be different. The awareness of the need for a specific feminist awareness came later, because I was someone who grew up thinking feminism has already been achieved. It was in my twenties and thirties when I realized that it had not, that I had an opportunity to work to create more opportunities for equality for women, especially women of color and with disabilities, who face many more barriers.

Julie Anne Genter

GREEN PARTY MEMBER OF
PARLIAMENT IN AOTEAROA

NEW ZEALAND





How do you stay motivated?

I try to remember that it's the work we do that is important, not necessarily the outcome. As much as I want to see the outcome, the most important thing is speaking up. If you can find enjoyment and fulfillment in that, it is less frustrating. I like the Buddhist approach written about by Thích Nhất Hạnh: When you have compassion and care for yourself and your community you have compassion for others and the work you do. Even though we are not at the place we want to get to, we need to focus on the steps, enjoy it, be present.

What advice would you give your younger self if you could?

Pay more attention to your relationships and don't worry so much about what other people say. Like many women, I am my own harshest critic and when people are not happy with something, I take it on board a little too much. In this space it is easy to be derailed by criticism. It is important to be aware of other people's feelings, but not take it too much to heart. Have faith in your voice and stay true to yourself.

And for others who want to be part of a feminist reshaping of the transport system?

Keep going. It is important work. Sometimes because the work can be more technical or about infrastructure it is not seen as as important as a direct campaign for human rights, but equitable and inclusive access to transport is a human right.

Co-Founder of Safetipin, Board member at SLOCAT and member of the Advisory Group on Gender Issues at UN Habitat, Dr. Kalpana Viswanath is Chairperson of Jagori and Board member of the International Centre for the Prevention of Crime.

Thirty years of working to make the experiences of women and girls in the city a joyful one, Dr. Kalpana Viswanath has a hard time pinpointing one transformative moment that has shaped her work. As feminist role models, her parents enabled her to become who she is simply by allowing her to be herself, exposing her to feminist literature and thinking, and being active members of the community. But it was around 2004 when Kalpana experienced a shift in perspective. Until then, much of her work was focused on addressing violence against women. In starting to work on how to realize safe cities and safe public spaces in India, she realized that it was important to shift the responsibility from women themselves to all urban stakeholders to create safety.

“This is not the solution. The solution is to change the entire environment for gender equity.”

From this point on, the restrictions on the mobility and access to opportunities for women and girls has defined Kalpana’s work. Not just to address gender-based violence, but also how transport systems limit access. Access to education for girls, opportunities for (better) employment for women, but also access to leisure.

“Access to opportunities for leisure is a very important part of cities and urban well-being. We need to not just address the need for better transport to go to school and work, but also ask, ‘What about the right to enjoy the city?’”

Walking in the city Kalpana sees men freely enjoying public spaces, but for women that is never as comfortable and easy. Her work in her career and with the creation of Safetipin is to ask: “How do we make sure that fear is not the dominant factor that determines womens’ experience of the city and opportunities?”

This is where a feminist transport system comes in to play, which Kalpana believes must be based around the economics and ethics of care. Because the care economy has been invisibilized for decades, so too has the provision for it. To move forward, we need to make the care economy visible again, and begin to have transport systems that recognize every human being is and should be a caregiver.

“It is the work of care that makes us human. We should foreground that in any infrastructure, service, amenity, or public space that we design and plan in our cities.”

In her career, Kalpana has realized the importance of mainstreaming these ideas into all organizations. Whether transport, climate, housing, etc., a gender perspective is necessary to highlight the needs of women and girls. This can lead to uncomfortable conversations, but will eventually lead to learning or all.

Dr. Kalpana Viswanath

CO-FOUNDER OF SAFETIPIN

INDIA



“It is the work of care that makes us human. We should foreground that in any infrastructure, service, amenity, or public space that we design and plan in our cities.”

“Being able to talk to people for whom gender is not always their first go-to is a learning process for them and also for me to learn how to explain things in clear, simple terms. So that everyone understands why they need to do this.”

This has meant taking inspiration from the feminists that have come before her. Feminism and feminist work is not something you can ever retire from. She’s inspired by women like Kamla Bhasin, a founder of Jagori, and amazing communicator, who can take complex ideas on feminism and package them for a general audience in a compelling and powerful way. She is also encouraged by young women who are fearlessly embracing the term ‘feminist’ again. Kalpana believes it is this community of feminist activists that keeps her motivated and can help others as well.

“I know that if I am tired and slow down, someone will pick up the baton and continue. I am not that important, and the world will not end if I take time to rest. We are all part of something larger, and there are enough other men and women in the feminist community who will keep the fight going.”

Reflecting on her own journey, Kalpana notes that if she were to speak to her younger self, she would tell her to be kind to herself and patient with others. Young people expect things to move fast, but social change is hard, and will not happen overnight.

“It is not changing technologies or a policy. It is changing the way we behave. A little patience and kindness can make the process a lot easier for everyone.”

For Kalpana, the future of feminist transport depends not just on women continuing the fight, but to have men as allies, where they recognize that the work of care is not just women’s work. This is the feminist struggle.

“If you put the care economy center stage, you also allow men to be better caregivers. It is an amazing experience to give care, and the benefit to gender equity and empowerment is for everyone. I think when we visibilise that, more people will become part of this struggle.”

Women are doing the work because it affects them with an immediacy that is not experienced in the same way by men. Going beyond the gender binary and mainstreaming gender-responsive policies will be key to realizing a more equitable, feminist future.

Safetipin

INDIA
FOUNDED 2013
WWW.SAFETIPIN.COM

The social enterprise Safetipin aims to make communities and cities safer by collecting and providing safety-related data on a large scale. Designed to bring a gender lens to urban infrastructure, the organization aims to enable girls and women to access public spaces and services without fear. The data collected is used as evidence by city governments to inform decision-making and allows them to prioritize intervention areas for improvements in a city's physical and social infrastructure.

Over the last decade, Safetipin has recognized a need for a holistic approach to gender transformation of our cities. In 2022, they released the knowledge framework, SheRISES, to help urban stakeholders understand the different elements in building a responsive, safe, inclusive, and equitable city. They believe that putting the ethics and economy of care at the center of urban planning and design will foster feminist policies and outcomes.



Campaigns and Policy Manager for Wheels for Wellbeing, a disabled people’s cycling organization who campaign for and provide access to cycling through an ethos of mobility justice, Dr. Kay Inckle’s background is in social science, with research interests in intersectional and social justice approaches to mental health and disability. She has published widely in these fields including research conducted with disabled cyclists.

In your view, what is a feminist transport system?

A feminist transport system is one that is designed to meet the needs of a population made up of 52% women, 20% disabled people, and an increasing proportion of older people. It is thinking about that population and what their needs are for making multi-modal journeys, trip-chaining, traveling with mobility aids, with cycles, with children, with work equipment – having a transport system designed where that is the passenger norm. The current system is largely designed on the basis that all human beings are young, non-disabled, white men who make single purpose journeys in and out of the city center. A feminist transport system would be a complete re-imagining what the public actually looks like and how they travel.

How does the current situation for women and girls in the UK, particularly those with disabilities, influence your work?

We are really aware of the additional barriers that disabled women face while using all types of transport, including cost, accessibility, the general design of transport that doesn’t meet the needs of either women or disabled people. There are also forgotten factors about the lives of disabled women, for example, that a large percentage of disabled women are also carers for children or other disabled people. Yet we have a transport system that is often designed to only accommodate one person with a mobility aid at a time. That prevents families, friendship groups, and disabled carers from traveling with those they need to travel with. This forces people

back into the most expensive, least affordable and least sustainable forms of transport like the private car or taxi.

How is your work helping to address these challenges?

Our specific focus is on equitable access to cycling for disabled people, but there are interconnections with active travel and public transport more broadly: accessible pavements, walking and wheeling infrastructure, the need for accessible public transport that people can take their cycles or other mobility aids on board. It connects with wider issues that disability groups are campaigning around and we lend our voice to them.

We also campaign for policies to make cycling more accessible, like, for example, the cost of a non-standard cycle. Where a nice standard bicycle may cost about GBP 500, an e-assist hand cycle or recumbent tricycle may cost between GBP 4,000–8,000. In the context of a disability pay and employment gap where disabled people are less likely to be in employment and earn less than non-disabled people that creates a double barrier to cycling. For disabled women that figure is even more stark; they are on the worst end of the disability pay and employment gap. Cycling, for disabled people, exists within these wider inequalities that are all interrelated. We can never talk about disability and cycling without the wider structural context that causes so much discrimination and disadvantage for disabled people.

Dr. Kay Inckle

CAMPAIGNS AND POLICY MANAGER
FOR WHEELS FOR WELLBEING

UNITED KINGDOM



What guides your advocacy and keeps you motivated?

Like many disabled activists, it is the lived experience of the contrast between what is possible and what is actually happening that motivates me. I came to cycling not as an activist but as a disabled person – cycling was the easiest way for me to get around. It has always been a form of mobility, exercise, independence, access to nature, physical and mental health for me. As a young woman who could ride a two-wheeled bicycle it also offered freedom from the ableist gaze. It gave me anonymity I had not experienced before and freedom from unwanted attention.

To stay motivated, it is important to depersonalize the barriers we encounter. As a disabled person, when I go out, I can expect to be ignored, patronized, stared at, touched inappropriately by those “trying to help.” When you live with a disability all your life, you develop quite a low bar of what you have to tolerate, so for me, becoming active through feminism and then the disability rights movement that helped me realize none of this is about me as an individual. I am not the problem. It is other people and the broader structural inequalities and barriers that are the problem. People always try to individualize the issues you experience as a woman or a disabled person, or other minoritized group. You are expected not to “make a fuss” and to accept poor standards of access and behavior and we have to keep challenging this. At the same time, a lot of what is deemed acceptable for disabled people, would not be tolerated for other minority groups. For example, we wouldn’t accept only one woman or one person of the LGBTQIA+ community to be allowed on the bus at the same time, or expect them to use a different door or to have to book the train at least two days in advance, yet this is still the norm for disabled people in the UK.

I grew up before the Disability Discrimination Act, in an environment where disabilities were shamed and hidden. Part of my life learning is to undo this, to be loud about discrimination and inequality, and look to other people who are fighting the same and parallel battles. Mine has been a life journey of moving away from internalizing oppression to now being vocal and angry and not taking nonsense from others.

Do you have a feminist role model?

There are two disabled women activists who I admire in terms of active travel and public transport. Firstly, Rosa May Billinghurst, who is known as the “cripple suffragette.” She used a mobility device that was a wheelchair-tricycle hybrid (similar to something called the Mountain Trike today) and was very active in the suffragettes. She often, used her mobility aid as part of her direct action including, bashing into barriers and causing destruction and the police would try and confiscate her tyre valves to immobilise her. It is a shame that she is not more visible when we think about the suffragettes, a disabled women right at the front of the campaign. In recent history, there is Barbara Lisicki (still living), co-founder of the Disabled People’s Direct Action Network (DAN), who used a punk-inspired sensibility in direct actions demanding accessible public transport and protesting telethon fundraisers that depicted disabled people as objects of pity.

What would you tell your younger self?

I would have liked to have been bolder when I was younger about cycling as a mobility aid for me as a disabled person and understanding that I was not alone in that. I wish I had known that even though not much existed at the time there would be much greater understanding and support in the future and to just hang in there. I would remind myself that change is slow, but to keep looking, there are other people who share your experience, it just takes a bit of work to find them.

What advice would you give others with disabilities who want to be a part of this reshaping of the transport system?

Be confident, be loud, be unapologetic. Remember that you have the right to take up space in the world and to have your voice heard and keep going until that happens.

“Be confident, be loud, be unapologetic. Remember that you have the right to take up space in the world and to have your voice heard and keep going until that happens.”

An environmental planner from Manila, The Philippines, and outspoken advocate for getting women and girls on bikes, Keisha Mayuga is the founder of Life Cycles Philippines, a group dedicated to providing bikes to frontline workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. She is an integral member of Move As One Coalition and AltMobility Philippines, two groups which push for better public transport and safer bike infrastructure in Metro Manila.

In your view, what is a feminist transport system?

A feminist transport system liberates people, it does not confine them. It allows women to retain control over their autonomy. My mother would spend hours in traffic on her 50km daily commute from our home in Las Pinas to Quezon City. As a kid, I struggled to stay up late enough to say goodnight. My story is not unique in The Philippines, and it has impacted me to this day. It is not ok for children to miss out on their parents because of the way we travel. In The Philippines, because of the nature of women’s work, somewhere between three and six hours a day is wasted on travel – either waiting on public transport or in traffic; they should be using this time with family doing things they love and resting instead.

Why bikes?

My dream would be that every parent could get home to their kids in under 30 minutes. Fueled by this goal, I set my sights on bikes. Why sit in Manila’s never-ending gridlock when you could jump on a bike? Take control of your own time and your wallet. With that idea in mind, I started working for UP Bike Share, the first and longest-running bike sharing system in The Philippines. When I started, there were no women willing to brave Metro Manila’s roads so I was received by everyone with shock: Isn’t it unsafe? But you’re a woman. I wanted to be that one woman that people used to see and say hey, women are cycling.

From crisis to opportunity, how did COVID-19 impact your work?

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, scores of women commuters who had previously relied on public transport turned to cycling. I decided to take advantage of this opportunity to make sure cyclists remained once public transport services resumed by founding Life Cycles PH, a bike donation drive that lent bikes to women and frontliners for their daily commute. At the same time, I took my advocacy with AltMobility PH and Move As One up a notch to ensure city and national governments were aware and proactive in providing solutions for the growing number of bike commuters. With the noise from urban cycling advocates and the help of multilateral institutions such as the World Bank, The Philippines’ national government allocated more than 22 million USD for active mobility infrastructure. This translated into the largest bike lane construction program in the country’s history: almost 500 km across Metro Manila, Metro Cebu and Metro Davao.

Keisha Mayuga

DIRECTOR OF ALTMOBILITY PH

THE PHILIPPINES





Has there been a transformative experience that has guided your work and motivation in the field?

Whenever I entered a boardroom or meeting, I'm one of a few or sometimes the only woman in a sea of men. Up until recently, all my co-workers and bosses have been older men. And here I am pushing for segregated bike lanes to be put up on dangerous roads or steering the conversation away from cars and the notion of the linear (male) commuter on bicycles to acknowledge the female/zig-zag commuter. After seeing the success of cycling among women during Covid-related closures, these men realize I was right and have a newfound respect for me. I would love for more women to be part of the Philippine mobility sector so that our voices can be heard. Because we matter.

What advice would you give your younger self if you could?

Don't be scared to dream big! I never imagined there would be bike lanes in one of the most dangerous roads in Metro Manila. With the right push and people, we were able to realize our vision faster than we could have imagined.

A public policy and regulation expert. As a local congresswoman in the Local Congress of Mexico City, Laura Ballesteros Mancilla led the enactment of the Mobility Law along with civil society organizations and the former Head of Government, Miguel Angel Mancera. As Sub-Minister of Planning in the Secretariat, Laura Ballesteros Mancilla introduced the road safety policy known as Visión Cero. She is also one of the founding members of the Mujeres en Movimiento (Women in Motion).

In your view, what is a feminist transport system?

It is a whole system. It is to imagine a city that is built for everybody, including women and children. It is the dream of a city that belongs to everyone, that involves women as decision-makers and users at the same time. At this moment in time, we don't have that. If we are not empowered on the streets, in the government, in the private sector, then we experience a lot of weakness in the public space and transportation system because they are not designed for us. Feminist transport systems address that.

How does the experience for women and girls in Mexico City influence your work?

In Mexico and Latin America, having women in leadership in the government is not common. When I began working in the public sector fifteen years ago, the first thing I did was introduce hiring women for these jobs and having them lead some of our most important projects. I knew having women's voices inside the government and making decisions would be a benefit to Mexico City. For me, I believe that if we are trying to create more inclusive cities, we have to act as the example.

Secondly, as a team we introduced this intersectional vision and planning for the mobility agenda, one that included the perspectives of women as users of the transport system. We built a technical approach to how we are moving inside our cities, using indicators to take into account

women's mobility patterns, like the mobility of care. With the support of CAF (Corporación Andina de Fomento – Banco de Desarrollo de América Latina, development bank of Latin America), we gathered the first data of its kind when it comes to gender perspectives in transport and mobility.

Third, and most important of all, we put the financial resources behind what we were saying. It is powerful to advocate for gender perspectives. It is better if you can put the money where your mouth is. We introduced a lot of funding for infrastructure, with consideration for public spaces and how important it is to invest in sustainable mobility. Women and girls are the first to use these spaces, and are often the main occupiers of them. Transport space is public space, making it a core reason to invest in sustainable mobility.

Finally, it was important to me to build a strategic alliance of all women involved in the feminist transport agenda. One of my most important legacies has been co-founding the Women in Motion initiative. To create a huge collective of people who want to be part of this change, and know that we are not alone and don't have to work alone in this very toxic patriarchal environment is something I'm very proud of.

Laura Ballesteros Mancilla

ALTERNATE SENATOR, FORMER
MOBILITY MINISTER OF MONTERREY
AND DEPUTY MOBILITY MINISTER
IN CDMX, FOUNDING MEMBER OF
MUJERES EN MOVIMIENTO

MEXICO





Have you had a transformational experience that has influenced your work?

In 2018, I was invited as a keynote speaker to the first Women Mobilize Women Conference in Germany. I was asked to write about my experiences as a woman in this field, and as I began writing, it was the first time I really understood how I was a victim of gender violence in politics. At the time I wasn't ready to understand what had happened, but in that moment of reflection, I knew I had to do something, and understood a key way to address it was to build a network of women, starting in Latin America. That is how Women in Motion began.

How do you stay motivated?

When you walk with the right people and understand that we are part of a larger collective of persons who want to make real change, that is one of the most important sources of inspiration. I have found that you reflect the people you work with and find strength in each other. The Women in Motion initiative is so important for me because through it we created our own tribe. Getting outside of the patriarchal system that makes people feel like they don't belong and are welcome and understanding we don't need them to create a better world, it is a powerful moment that keeps you moving forward. I find inspiration in working with the people who are improving the quality of life and creating safer, better transport.

What advice would you have for your younger self or for others who want to be part of a feminist reshaping of transport systems?

You are not alone. We are stronger together, and we have to break the patriarchal pact, taking this first steps of collectiveness. Yes, you can, we need you!



Lem Ketema

ETHIOPIA
FOUNDED 2018
WWW.LEMKETEMA.ORG

At Lem Ketema, we reclaim and transform public space for urban sustainability using principles of green design. We are a non-profit organization inspired by our namesake – Lem Ketema – which in Amharic means urban bloom or flourishing city. As geographers, architects, and designers, we collectively reshape urban space for ecological sustainability and socially connected communities.

We co-founded Menged Le Sew (Streets for People), Ethiopia's open streets or car-free movement; Ye Zembil Melse, a national campaign for a plastic-free Ethiopia whose guiding symbol is the zembil, a basket woven by Ethiopian women; and alongside Egre Menged, we have co-created Cycle Techyalesh – a bicycle school for the women of Addis Ababa.

At a time when Ethiopian cities are stratifying socially and economically, we are reclaiming the streets for all. And we demand that streets be truly for all; sexual violence, gender stereotypes and street harassment must be dismantled. With Cycle Techyalesh, we have co-created a free weekly bicycle school with Egre Menged; it is a collective space for Ethiopian women to learn to ride a bicycle, build their confidence, and take back the streets.

A feminist urban scholar from Toronto, Canada, Leslie Kern is the author of *Feminist City: Claiming Space in a Man-Made World* and *Gentrification is Inevitable and Other Lies*. She holds a PhD in women’s studies from York University. An Associate Professor at Mount Allison University, she also acts as an academic career coach, where she helps academics find meaning and joy in their work.

In your view, what is a feminist transport system?

A system that gives equal priority to the travel needs, patterns and experiences of women and girls in terms of the design of the system, physical infrastructure, timing of the services, cost, reliability, information provided to passengers, and accessibility. It pays attention to safety concerns for women and girls, ensuring a wide range of ways the system is proactive about womens’ safety, where the design of the system is equitable for women and takes into account their role as primary caregivers.

How does the experience for women and girls in Canada influence your work?

Canada has an international reputation as a very gender equal and progressive country but scratch below the surface and you’ll see that many of the challenges women all over the world face do exist here. Violence against women is a big part of what motivates me to do the work I do, including domestic violence and violence in the public sphere, particularly against marginalized women. At the city level, it is frustrating to look at visionary documents that give lip service to diversity yet give no explicit attention to gender and issues of caregiving, which is a major oversight. This pushes me to have more conversations about adopting feminist planning approaches and gender equity lenses for all aspects of urban life.

How do you stay motivated?

Staying motivated is reminding myself that the timeline of change is not the timeline of my life, as disheartening as that can be. The writings and ideas of my role model Dr. Gerda Wekerle and others from the 1960s–1980s are still solid; they’ve been expanded, developed, made more intersectional in the decades since but the foundational problems are the same. I cannot control the outcome of all this hard work that everybody is putting in, nor what the outcome will be or when it will happen. All I have control over is what I do with my life day to day, focussing on the spaces I do have influence over – the students I connect with, my writing, speaking to the media or doing public events. I have to believe that every chip in the iceberg of problems is part of the solution.

How do we encourage men to be a part of this timeline?

This is not only about women. Gender is something that affects us all in a multiplicity of ways across many different gender identities. Opening this conversation has been part of an attempt to show that whatever your gender identity, you will learn things that are important to your life. If we changed the title of “feminist” in feminist studies, we would ultimately water down our own political ideological project to make men more comfortable – and they are already pretty comfortable.

Leslie Kern

AUTHOR AND PROFESSOR, MOUNT ALLISON UNIVERSITY

CANADA





What advice would you give your younger self if you could?

I would tell her that she is on the right path. As much as I have enjoyed the theoretical aspects of women and gender studies, the combination of a geographical focus gave me the opportunity for practical real change that I can see in my lifetime, which is rewarding. I'd say don't be afraid to do the kind of writing that I did in *Feminist City*, to write for the public and combine my own story with the decades of research. I believe we do things when we are ready to do them. But don't be afraid. You will see positive results from this work. Keep on the path.

And for others who want to be part of a feminist reshaping of the transport system?

We need your voice to increase the diversity of people, experiences, places and voices, represented in this broad umbrella of feminist urban work and transport work. Your story matters and there are lots of ways to be involved. You don't need to be a planner, urban geographer, politician. Don't let what may seem like a formal, distant, male-dominated world dissuade you from having your voice heard and being active in your everyday life!

Professor of urban and regional planning, Dr. Ma Sheilah Gaabucayan-Napalang was the Director of the National Center for Transportation Studies of the University of the Philippines and Former Assistant Secretary for Planning and Project Development of the Department of Transportation (DOT). She is a core member of Women in Transport Leadership (WITL), a knowledge-sharing network aimed at empowering women and women leaders in transport in Australasia.

In your view, what is a feminist transport system?

Feminism is not about saying that women are superior or more important than men. It’s about recognizing the multiplicity of lived experiences and expectations of women, and how these impact the way that women navigate a city. It recognizes how visibility and safety perceptions affect mobility opportunities and choices, particularly amongst the LGBTQIA+ community. The fear of anti-LGBTQIA+ discrimination and violence has profound impacts on the travel options and activity spaces for the rainbow community. Feminism should include women and girls and those not defined by the gender binary. An intersectional feminist approach is about equity rather than equality.

How have you sought to make transport more inclusive in Manila?

As a professor, my head is wrapped around data and research. As a politician, the focus is on policy. As Assistant Secretary for the DOT, I advocated for the creation of an Inclusive Transport Unit aimed at harnessing the available data, mapping out data gaps, and informing policymakers. This was then used to ensure evidence-based actions could be created to realize better transport in our city. Disaggregated data ensures that we capture intersectional realities and distinguish between gender identity, disability, age, and more. It also illuminates how structures of inequality are crosscutting and mutually reinforcing.

A lot of our work has been undone or deprioritized due to changes in political administration. Having ‘male champions’ in The Philippines is essential as they are the dominant voices and steer policy in the country. We need them to champion the importance of policies that recognize intersectional perspectives and provide a platform for their female colleagues. Through my position at the university, I try to involve as many men in the conversation as possible.

Has there been a transformative experience that has shaped your work in the field?

Being a mother of a child who identifies as LGBTQIA+. Seeing how public transport in Manila disempowers (instead of empowering) the community. How poorly lit bus stops and poorly enforced alightment zones, amongst many other elements, affect the community’s comfort, experience, and safety. The LGBTQIA+ community has so many extra costs as they use taxis or take indirect routes due to heightened levels of fear while traveling; this is the result of having to overcome their experiences of unsafe and inaccessible public transport options. This is why I have dedicated my life’s work to ensuring that public transport becomes a great equalizer instead of a great disenfranchiser.

Dr. Ma. Sheilah Gaabucayan-Napalang

URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING PROFESSOR,
UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES / FORMER
ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR PLANNING AND
PROJECT DEVELOPMENT, DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION PH

THE PHILIPPINES



Maimunah Mohd Sharif is the Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat). Under her leadership, UN-Habitat is promoting gender-sensitive planning, policies and investment for sustainable, safe and accessible cities for all. Prior to this appointment, Maimunah Mohd Sharif was the Mayor of the City Council of Penang Island, Malaysia. She has two daughters and is an avid cyclist in her daily life.

Maimunah Mohd Sharif

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME
(UN-HABITAT)

MALAYSIA

Having lived in many cities around the world, I have realized that transport is often incorrectly considered to be “gender neutral” by the people who plan these systems. However, this approach does not consider the unique needs of systemically marginalized groups, especially diverse groups of women who navigate cities.

In our world, women undertake various roles, we often refer to them as “multi-taskers”. These range from productive to reproductive and community roles. Most transport systems around the world do not cater for such multi-purpose trips that arise from these roles, often done during off-peak hours, and at a higher cost.

In my role as the Executive Director of UN-Habitat, I am truly excited to have the opportunity to support cities to develop inclusive and affordable mobility and remove the “gender-blindness” of transportation planning, implementation and operations.

Under my leadership, we have worked, among other things, on planning a gender-sensitive Bus Rapid Transit system in Cairo, Egypt. In collaboration with the Government of Egypt, UN Women, USAID and the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP), a unique and highly participatory approach was taken to fully reveal the specific needs of women to improve the public transport system. I recall that the focus group discussions

brought out the inadequate perception of bus crews of the problems women face; exemplified by a remark of one bus driver: “Women don’t have any problem on buses, if they ever do, male passengers will intervene and protect the victim from any harassment.” This, however, differed greatly from the perception of women and girls in exercising their movement. Women are disproportionately exposed to violence and harassment during their movement and this real or perceived insecurity limits women’s access to opportunities.

With a large share of public transport passengers being women, women simply cannot be an afterthought in transport planning.

I want to urge decision-makers to intentionally ensure that women and girls meaningfully participate in planning processes to develop safe, inclusive, and accessible mobility systems that cater to their needs.

Despite many years of discussions on the challenges and interrelations between gender and transport, progress has been slow in implementing a ‘real’ gender perspective in transport planning and policy. But there is no time for further delays. We only have around 2500 days left to achieve the 169 targets of the SDGs and to make progress toward Gender Equality and Inclusive Mobility. I am ready to act now, and I hope you are too!





Kota Kita

INDONESIA
FOUNDED 2010
WWW.KOTAKITA.ORG

The Indonesian civil society organization Kota Kita envisions a model city shaped and shared by informed and empowered citizens, a city for all. Kota Kita uses participatory approaches that create safe spaces where all residents can voice their aspirations and citizens participate meaningfully in improving their cities. Among their accomplishments since their founding in 2010, Kota Kita has: worked with women with physical impairments to co-develop a prototype three-wheeled motorcycle that supports their social and economic mobility; engaged schoolgirls in designing a safe and inclusive school zone; and campaigned with the women workers, who use bicycles for daily transport, to promote safer and more comfortable bicycling infrastructure in the city.

Kota Kita believes that ensuring the informed, meaningful participation of women and girls in decision-making is a collective right, crucial to building a more inclusive and equitable city for all.

As Commissioner of Directorate of Urban Land Transport (DULT) and Ex-officio Additional Chief Secretary to Government, Government of Karnataka, Manjula Vinjamuri is one of the most prominent women in the transport sector. She has previously worked in numerous sectors including rural and urban development, energy, education, and training. She also held the position of Director General, Administrative Training Institute, Mysuru.

Manjula Vinjamuri

COMMISSIONER OF DIRECTORATE
OF URBAN LAND TRANSPORT (DULT),
GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA

INDIA

In your view what is a feminist transport system?

In my view, a feminist transport system is one which is designed to cater to the mobility requirements of women, with a focus on accessibility, safety, convenience, and comfort. Such a system will proactively gather comprehensive insights on travel challenges faced by women in the cities, across transport modes, and would use such insights for embedding gender-inclusive interventions in policies, plans, and projects.

How have you used your role to promote more inclusive transport systems?

As an organization, we strive to ensure that planning, designing, and funding of transport systems considers the needs and concerns of people of all ages and abilities. We engage with and obtain feedback of diverse groups through focus group discussions, community meetings, charettes, etc., to understand their perceptions and challenges with respect to usage of public transport and active mobility modes, aiming to target desirable outcomes.

Has there been a transformative experience that has guided your work in the field?

Formative years in my professional career, during which I worked in diverse sectors, equipped me with the skills and confidence needed to manage complex issues innovatively. It is difficult to pinpoint a single experience as transformative.

As a woman in a male dominated system, one had to constantly deliver high-quality output and demonstrate the ability to face challenging situations. Public acceptance and appreciation and the respect that I have received from peers as a result of my determination and work are motivating factors.

Did you have an ‘enough is enough’ moment?

At times, when you are trying to push a strong reform and you find yourself stonewalled from various sides, by your male colleagues and politicians, you do wonder whether you have reached your wit’s end. Nevertheless, I have realized over time that if you learn to disregard skepticism and criticism from others and continue to pursue what you believe in with single-minded focus, you will get there.

Many feminist advocates say they get tired of saying the same things and having the same fights over and over. How do you stay motivated?

I tend to believe that every reform, plan, or project has its “sweet spot.” The key is to keep working on it until that moment arrives. So, even when I momentarily feel demotivated, I push myself out of that zone, constantly telling myself that sooner or later I will be able to make progress towards my goal.





Do you have any advice for other people who want to be part of a feminist reshaping of the transport system?

Mobility is “the sector” to be involved in, considering the challenges and opportunities for innovation and the potential for personal and professional growth. Women and men alike should be sensitized to distinguish and incorporate women’s travel needs and concerns at all stages of planning, design, and implementation. They must equip themselves with skills to utilize data and technology for policymaking and the development of plans.

Founder of the Flone Initiative, an organization at the forefront of creating a safe and professional public transport industry in Kenya, Naomi Mwaura was also one of the lead organizers of the #MyDressMyChoice campaign that saw thousands of women protest against gender-based violence in Kenyan public transport. She has been featured in Forbes Women and was named one of the BBC’s 100 Inspirational and Influential Women.

Naomi Mwaura is calling for a revolution in public transportation – making routes information more accessible, protecting passengers from harassment, and paving a career path for women in the industry. She founded the Flone Initiative whose mission is to transform Kenya’s transport system into a feminist one.

“My family was in the matatu business,” says Naomi, who describes having been born into the transport business. The matatus in Kenya are unique minibuses, the most popular and affordable way for Kenyans to get around the city. Yet they are overcrowded, unregulated, and drive recklessly through Nairobi’s streets. “My family ran the flashiest matatu in our route, Gridlock’d. Like many, it was graffiti-filled, colorful, and loud.”

Naomi’s fire to transform the matatu business came after she was assaulted in a matatu and later saw a video being circulated of a woman getting stripped on a matatu. “It was then that I realized that I could not be a bystander anymore and I had to make a contribution, despite what others would say.”

Her motivation is rooted in her personal experiences and a strong belief that the public transport system can and must be transformed to a safer and more inclusive space for women.

“Women as users and operators of public transport in Kenya face sexual harassment on a daily basis. This leads to a massive financial loss for women, more time spent commuting as they try to avoid dangerous routes, and eventually, they drop out of a system that isn’t built for them and doesn’t cater to their travel needs. In Kenya, over 88% of women have experienced harassment while using public transport. My work at the Flone Initiative is anchored in reducing these statistics, ensuring that public transport becomes a safe space for women to use but also a place where they can access and retain employment for the betterment of their quality of life.”

Instead of rallying behind the common cries to get rid of matatus, she wants to reimagine them. “The system doesn’t work. Let’s get rid of it, some say. But I say no. We have a lot to work with, and we need to put in the work. Let’s provide training on how to improve commuter experience. Let’s change behavior. Let’s train on and adopt sexual harassment policies. Let’s hire a more diverse workforce. Just like myself and my family, I believe public transportation can be the preferred mode of transport and workplace for millions of Kenyans,” says Naomi.

She credits Wangari Maathai, the Kenyan environmental and socio-political activist as her feminist role model. “I admire her zeal, courage and belief in her cause despite it being largely misunderstood in society.”

Naomi Mwaura

CEO, FLONE INITIATIVE

KENYA



The Flone Initiative



KENYA
FOUNDED 2013
WWW.FLONEINITIATIVE.ORG

A women-led charitable organization, Flone Initiative is working to create safe, sustainable, and accessible public transportation spaces for women and vulnerable groups in Africa by influencing behavioral change, generating knowledge, and building a movement. Using research to identify and bridge the gender gap in sustainable mobility, they develop programs aimed at building capacity for women to access employment opportunities in the public transport sector and gain financial empowerment. One such program is the County Public Transport Sexual Harassment and Gender Based Violence Policy, implemented to combat sexual harassment and gender-based violence cases in Kenya's Machakos County.

Their work is anchored in feminist development policy, which is key to addressing discrimination within institutions and power structures. By promoting the inclusion and participation of women in planning and decision-making processes, they hope to enhance the equal participation and representation of women, youth and persons with disabilities in decision-making processes and enable greater access rights and resources. This will play a significant role in breaking structural barriers to women's economic participation in male-dominated sectors while addressing the burden of unpaid care work. Above all, Flone Initiative, as part of the movement building mandate, hopes to mobilise governments, non-profits and the private sector towards inclusive mobility.

Director of the Centre for Democracy and Rule of Law (CEDEM) in Ukraine, Olesia Kholopik is a lawyer with a mission to campaign for safe roads to save lives and to enhance the role of the civil society of Ukraine. She left corporate law to work on such advocacy campaigns in the voluntary sector and was voted one of Kyiv Post’s Top 30 under 30 in 2018.

“A feminist transport system is one formed on the principles of gender-oriented budgeting and with the involvement of women in making key decisions. This is also a system that fights stereotypes from an early age and creates tools to increase the share of female transport workers.”

Olesia Kholopik is a young woman who has wasted no time making a voice for herself as an advocate for human rights in mobility. As the director of the Centre for Democracy and Rule of Law, a Ukrainian NGO, she draws on many years of advocacy experience in road safety campaigns to promote the possibility of women influencing Ukraine’s policy-making process around road safety issues and transport systems.

For Olesia, innovation will play a vital role in creating more equitable transport systems but only if approached in an inclusive and accessible way:

“It is important to raise awareness about possible gender imbalances, innovate governance, and identify public policies that can help new technological solutions in reducing inequalities for disadvantaged groups while avoiding the creation of new ones. It is about guiding the deployment of innovative transportation services that leave no one behind.”

She has witnessed as Ukraine has been rapidly and effectively advancing in the areas of non-discrimination, protection of human rights, and a gender-balanced approach in all spheres of life. Olesia acknowledges this does not mean discrimination against women has been ‘solved’ nor has it significantly reduced the amount of domestic and gender-oriented violence, but these changes have had a significant impact on the formation of organizations’ policies and procedures while shaping general social trends.

This began in 2005 with the pivotal adoption of the Law on Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men, which notes such important concepts as discrimination, sexual harassment, and gender-based violence, specifies the punishment for them, and deals with the mechanism for ensuring equal rights and opportunities. In the years that followed, further legislation has reinforced laws against oppression, discrimination, violence, while improving human rights. This has even led to an Electoral Code for gender quotas to ensure the representation of women in power, prescribed at 40%. These ongoing developments reinforce Olesia’s work as a lawyer and advocacy manager.

Olesia Kholopik

DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRE FOR
DEMOCRACY AND RULE OF LAW (CEDEM)

UKRAINE





As a woman in a man's world, Olesia has the following practical tips:

- Learn to turn off doubt, fear, and hesitation
- Listen to your inner strength and believe in yourself
- Trust yourself and others, and delegate
- Learn to ask for and receive help
- Most importantly, remember the support, solidarity, and help of women

“There are numerous famous and prominent women all over the world and in history worthy of being role models. For me, one of the most important women who has helped me become the person I am now is my mother, Maria Kholopik. She inspires me, motivates me to grow without any limitations, and believe in myself. She is the best example for me of how to be a strong woman, supportive wife, attentive mother, reliable friend and a professional in your field.”

With the support of her mother and peers, Olesia remains motivated by remembering the victories, the results they achieved, and the path to success. She notes how important it is to praise ourselves and believe in our abilities to stay motivated and push for change.

“If I could, I would tell my younger self not to be afraid to fail and that it is ok not to get it right the first time. Keep calm, ask yourself what lessons you can learn from it, and try again. No one has a right to judge you except yourself.”

Paola Tapia Salas is the Director of the Metropolitan Public Transport Directorate (DTPM) of Santiago de Chile. As former Minister of Transport and Telecommunications of Chile, she was the first woman to lead this position. She is a university lecturer and member of the Council of Infrastructure Policies of Chile (CPI). Paola Tapia is also one of the founding members of the Mujeres en Movimiento (Women in Motion).

From your perspective, what is a feminist transportation system?

A feminist transportation system is an integrated system with a transversal gender perspective – one that considers all fields, such as safety, operations, and infrastructure for all modes of transportation. Foremost, it is one that recognizes the diversity of women, their different socioeconomic levels and ages. Thus, these perspectives must be considered in the vision of an integrated city and mobility.

How does the current situation for women and girls in Chile influence your work?

From my work in academia, I closely witness the mobility challenges that my students face every day. The long distances and travel times, the quality of public transport services, and the inequality they experience in terms of safety. That is why at the Metropolitan Public Transport Directory we work from an integrated vision, one that includes women, girls, and boys, and give them the educational tools to transfer the importance of focusing on mobility and public transportation as well as the importance of having safe, accessible, and inclusive public spaces.

How have you used your role to promote more inclusive transportation systems?

First, we work internally to incorporate gender mainstreaming into all our work teams. We also seek to carry out intersectoral work together with other ministries to advance gender and mobility. In 2018, when I was the first woman as Minister of Transport

and Telecommunications in Chile, we created the first mobility and gender policy for Latin America. This policy has shaped the basis for our current work. We are working on the development of indicators from a gender perspective, manuals with a gender perspective that are transversal, and action programs to bring more female drivers into public transport systems by providing them with scholarships for their training.

Have there been any transformative experiences that have guided your leadership in this sector?

Becoming the first woman Minister of Transport and Telecommunications in Chile, after being a public officer in the same institution for 17 years, strongly marked my career. It gave me the opportunity to offer a different vision from what had been done during the more than 40 years of the ministry’s existence: A vision focused on making mobility and gender visible, especially mobility of care.

Today’s mobility has concrete definitions. We know who the women working in the field are, their struggles and challenges, but also their investment in ensuring their daughters can also create a life with freedom and security. This factor is what moves me to contribute professionally, but also personally, to achieve a feminist mobility as a foundation in societies. Therefore, the importance of public transport in the lives of people and particularly women is what undoubtedly motivates me to continue working with that objective.

Paola Tapia Salas

DIRECTOR, METROPOLITAN PUBLIC
TRANSPORT DIRECTORATE (DTPM),
FOUNDING MEMBER OF MUJERES EN
MOVIMIENTO

CHILE





Do you have any advice for other people who want to be part of a feminist transformation of the transport system?

We must keep on working with everything we have, for integration, for territorial equity, for the generation of democratic and participatory spaces where women, girls, adolescents, young people can express themselves and feel that they have the security, quality, and equal conditions as other women. For people entering this space, no matter your area of focus be it academia, government, civil society, you must give it your all, dare, be brave, and above all break the paradigms. We have to break down the barriers; others before us did it for us and now it is our turn so that the future is more equitable and fairer for all children.

A fervent Congolese entrepreneur for women’s empowerment, Patricia Nzolantima founded Bizzoly Holdings which has a diverse portfolio with several businesses spanning from taxicabs to Nzolantima’s most recent and revolutionary project, M’Kento bank, Africa’s first digital-only women’s bank. Patricia Nzolantima is carving a path for women entrepreneurs, building them custom tools to ensure safety in transportation, security in payments, ability to get a loan, and investing opportunities. Through these initiatives, Nzolantima is taking steps to make the African economy inclusive for everyone who wants to contribute and earn with fair access to resources and opportunity.

The rainy season hit the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) especially hard last year (2022). Widespread floods and landslides swept through the capital, Kinshasha, submerging roads and stressing the already overcrowded public transport services. Thousands of people got cut off from their jobs and other essential services. This scene is all too familiar for Kinshasans (Les Kinois) and with climate change and continued rapid urban population growth, it will continue to get worse.

Patricia Nzolantima, a seasoned entrepreneur focusing on women’s empowerment, is putting women in the driver’s seat with Ubizcabs and Ubizdelivery, a female-only taxi and logistics services. The bright pink cabs which decorate Kinshasha’s streets challenge the stereotypical views held by many about women’s jobs and allows women to reap the economic benefits of on-demand ride hailing, a concept being steadily introduced in the absence of functional public transport. It also ensures that the devastating floods last year do not doubly burden women by impacting their access to opportunities while compounding their caretaking responsibilities.

Nzolantima notes that when Ubizcabs first started in 2017, people were stunned. “We struggled to attract funding. Pink cabs donned with female drivers was seen to be outrageous. Cabs were supposed to be driven by men and transport

was a man’s world. Every day, I would wake up to calls from driver’s husbands saying their wives should stop driving because they are married, that I was taking them away from their children and homemaking responsibilities and they should not be carrying around other men.

She recalls a desperate driver pleading with her because her husband demand she stop, even though he himself did not work and she was earning \$300 per month. “How can she stop?” Nzolantima asked. She asserts that putting women behind the wheel is an affirmation that Congolese women have agency outside of the familial, patriarchal expectations of them in Congolese society.

In 2020, Nzolantima launched the first female driver academy to empower women in transportation and logistics. The training also incorporates leadership, mentorship, and financial literacy programs with the end goal of helping the drivers create wealth and benefit from the upward social mobility the pay affords them.

Working with women drivers, Patricia identified an urgent need for a digital payment platform. Cashless payments lower rates of theft and crime, so to ensure the safety of her drivers, Patricia began building M’Kento digital bank, Africa’s first digital-only women’s bank.

Dr. Patricia Nzolantima

ENTREPRENEUR, INVESTOR, BOARD
MEMBER, FOUNDER BIZZOLY
HOLDINGS

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
OF THE CONGO





Thanks to joint partnerships with Visa, Ecobank, and Vericash, M’Kento digital bank supports the women who are making revenue through UBIZCABS, but it also enables other women innovators to accelerate the growth of their businesses through access to basic and advanced financial services, including transfers, merchant payments, cross border transactions, low-cost credit lines, and capital instruments such as e-shares to support their financial independence and wealth creation.

Through these financial growth and digital safety tools, Patricia is positioning her UBIZCABS, towards greatness. Her goal is not for these women to be drivers for the rest of their lives; her goal is for them to become bankable and eventually, owners of their own cabs and businesses.

Patricia notes that: “We must stop throwing around the phrase, ‘women empowerment’ because it’ll just become a meaningless label. It’s about changing women’s perception. You can only change women’s lives by helping them build sustainable businesses or else they’ll run out of funds.”

Mujeres Rising for Africa



UGANDA
FOUNDED 2022
WWW.MUJERESRISINGFORAFRICA.ORG

The community-based organization, Mujeres Rising for Africa, is improving the lives of women in Africa, starting in Uganda. Working directly with the community and groups of women who have been traditionally excluded, Mujeres Rising for Africa supports women in confronting a variety of issues that they face through business management, selfcare, personal development and self-defense courses. Supporting these women through psychological and emotional coaching, the organization also assists in answering questions concerning the education and health of their.

The 'Women On Wheels' (WOW) training program they offer teaches women to safely ride a boda boda motorcycle around Kampala. It extends further with women receiving a driving license and a bike that affords them the knowledge, freedom, and opportunity to

work. Such avenues towards empowerment are inherent in every aspect of how Mujeres Rising for Africa operates. Women can gain independence through employment, which offers them greater opportunities along with the, confidence and ability to make female voices heard. After women qualify for the boda license and start operating, they become ambassadors for Mujeres Rising for Africa. They can be seen as advocates for female independence, development and progression. As the need for feminist development policy continues to grow, a new wave of activism is spreading through Uganda; in 2023, the organization will be responding to this by producing a detailed policy.

Founder of The Barefoot Facilitator, Rehana Moosajee is currently on the Board of ITDP. Her assignments include wellbeing economies, food systems, eco-mobility, place-making and staying connected to nature in rapidly urbanizing contexts. Prior to founding Barefoot, she served on the Mayoral Committee in the City of Johannesburg from 2006–2013.

Despite being the political Head of Transport for the City of Johannesburg between 2006 and 2013, Rehana Moosajee has never considered herself a feminist transport practitioner. But as a woman, having stepped into the space and becoming increasingly involved in shaping policies and implementation, she has helped to shape the beginnings of a more just transport system that caters to the needs of everyone.

“I would have never imagined myself wearing a feminist transport hat. But I think it is about a human approach, one that is very much people-centric. The people who have been invisible in the planning and conceptualization of transport systems, their lives, their needs, their requirements, have not really been front and center in the way transport systems have been planned.”

From her time living and working in Johannesburg, Rehana emphasizes that the biggest issue for women around transport is personal safety. When every trip begins with wondering if they will experience verbal or physical harassment or abuse, if they will actually return from their journey, is a very real lived experience for women in South Africa. Rehana has worked passionately to be part of shifting that experience, using the historical evolution of public transport in Johannesburg as a reference.

“It became apparent to me the extent to which transport was a site of struggle – the 1957 Alexandra Bus Boycotts, the violent clashes between the African National Congress (ANC) and Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) in 1990 which unfolded on the trains – the trauma that is inherent in the South African transport system is palpable and felt by everyone. Women in particular, because of the patriarchal nature of the industry, feel incredibly vulnerable in a transport system that doesn’t even see their humanity, let alone vulnerability.

To help address this, Rehana feels blessed to have been part of the committee for transport as a part of the legacy of the 2010 World Cup. The Rea Vaya project is the realization of this: A project unapologetically driven by the redistribution of space to benefit the vast majority, the possibility of having well-lit places where they could wait for public transport, and a public transport system that gave people a semblance of dignity.

“Rea Vaya was intended to showcase the possibility for what a human-centric, dignified, environmentally-friendly transport system could look like.”

Though these movements were a step in the right direction, Rehana was challenged after an encounter during which she, along with three colleagues (two international), were held at gunpoint in Johannesburg. This was upon return

Rehana Moosajee

FOUNDER OF THE
BAREFOOT FACILITATOR

SOUTH AFRICA





from Mobilise in Dar-Es-Salaam following an intense discussion about women's safety and mobility. The experience highlighted for Rehana that women's safety is not just about infrastructure. It is about acknowledging and improving the interlinkages between all aspects of a woman's daily life: placemaking, the economy, transport, sustainable food systems, even one's personal space – they are all interwoven.

"I think the work I do now is about connecting and creating quiet spaces for people to think through their work from much deeper perspectives."

Rehana is grateful for her naiveté when younger, regarding it as the means with which she was able to make it through to the other side of her work. Still, she wishes she could have built a better balance and been more present for her family, which paid the price for her role in the public sector. Community is so important in this regard: "You don't have to do everything alone. There are like-minded, like-hearted people that you can connect with to carry you through. There is no such thing as an individual superhero. We are very much part of collectives and those you surround yourself with, enable you to navigate some of the most difficult parts of life."

Looking ahead to the next generation of transport advocates, activists, and professionals, Rehana emphasizes how focus needs to shift away from only the transport components of the transport system and start threading together the economics, the space, the planet.

"Issues of gender-based violence, environment, economy, are as much transport issues as they are of those disciplines. Widen your lens, widen the horizon of the work you do and what it really means. It is not about moving a person from point A to point B. It is much deeper than that."

The co-founder and former CEO of Zipcar and co-founder and Executive Chairperson of Veniam, Robin Chase is the author of Peers Inc: How People and Platforms are Inventing the Collaborative Economy and Reinventing Capitalism. She has served on the board for countless NGO and government organizations and is also a prolific speaker in the field of transportation and innovation.

Robin Chase

“You have no idea that what you are about to do will change the direction of the rest of your life.” This is what Robin Chase would tell her 40-year-old self as she embarks on a career in transportation. Reflecting on the time now, she realizes she didn’t fully appreciate how the transportation sector would spark a professional love that would become her universe. But she has revelled in every moment since realizing through her work that the way we move and the tools that enable mobility are so central to everything in our daily lives.

“Transportation is the gateway to opportunity, education, fulfillment, health, recreation, income. Looking at climate change, it is the single largest growing sector we need to address. And when I think about equity, the difference between the people who have and have not is largely due to lack of mobility and the ability to get to places of health, education, jobs.”

Robin recognizes transportation is a complex issue. She believes, however, that in examining what a feminist transport system looks like, it is one that works effectively for both men and women, across all life stages and ages, and not just commuting men. Systemically, governments approach transportation as a means to move goods and people – all for the economy, and primarily for white men. It excludes other lifestyles, life phases, and ages, leaving out a lot of people. The impact this has on women in particular is continually overlooked by those planning transportation systems.

“Every woman from an early age is taught to be thoughtful about personal security when traveling early or late in the day or in less populated spaces. It is a constant background worry. Additionally, women do the bulk of childrearing and caregiving, traveling more often than men with another human who is less mobile, which complexifies all parts of the journey,” she says.

Robin feels a responsibility to use her profile and role to represent women. When attending a conference early in her career, she took note of the then-Governor of Texas who told the room that as leaders, women should never turn down a speaking opportunity because so few women get that platform. Taking it to heart, she got busier and busier, delivering upwards of 250 talks per year.

“I wanted to represent my gender by example, not just by word. Providing an example of an honest, empathetic, influential woman has been my way to inspire others.”

She notes that while at one time she would be the only woman in the room, she is positively moved by how much that is changing. Robin has been struck in the past few years by how so many young women are entering this space, and emphasizes how important this is to the future shifts towards more gender-equitable transportation.

CHAIRPERSON OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS,
TUCOWS
USA





“It is the power of our diversity that enables us to answer a whole suite of different problems. The dominant male culture is what got us here. The future needs to have new life experiences and approaches to correct those mistakes and provide solutions. When I look out at the world at this stage in my life, I am impressed by current young practitioners. They give me enormous hope and inspiration and their voices inspire me.”

As a final reflection, Robin challenges people to be aware of our comfort zones and be willing to look outside them. It was not something she thought about until she witnessed the ease with which male colleagues can bond so quickly. In the transition from her role at CEO of ZipCar to her male successor, she was shocked by how easily he fell into rapport with existing male investors and important connections to the company. Relationships she had spent years establishing were instantly created, and while at first it was frustrating, Robin realized she has the same experience with women, immediately having a tighter bond than with male colleagues.

“It was in this moment that I appreciated how we as humans create faster bonds to people who look like us. I can appreciate this in a positive way, but with a note of caution. We need to recognize and work harder to acknowledge the extra but important effort needed to connect with people who are not like us because our work can be more enriched for it.”

Capital Region Urban Transport (CRUT)

INDIA
FOUNDED 2018
WWW.CAPITALREGIONTRANSPORT.IN



Armed with the vision of creating an accessible, affordable, sustainable, smart, and inclusive public transport system for all, the local government in Odisha, India established the Capital Region Urban Transport (CRUT). Its pioneering approach to rethinking transport to be gender-sensitive and gender-inclusive while providing seamless commuting experiences to the general public has seen great success in the four years since its inception.

Among the changes implemented under CRUT, enhancing safety was a priority. Public transport facilities have been modernized and the city bus service's Mo Bus buses were outfitted with emergency panic buttons and Intelligent Transport Management System (ITMS), including live tracking in the app. The ITMS-enabled Automatic Fare Collection System (AFCS), India's first disaggregated ticketing system in public transport, further collects data on age, gender, and the physical ability of commuters availing the transit services to ensure gender sensitive transport planning.

Assembling a gender diverse staff was likewise important to CRUT; as the face of the brand, they send a message to the public about the organization's values. After renaming job titles to give them a feeling of ownership over their roles, bus drivers became Captains, conductors became Guides, and a Mo E-Ride

driver is called Sarathi. Aiming to have women comprise at least half of all Guides, they also implemented the unique staffing standard that Sarathis on the Mo E-Ride service only consist of women, transgender and those living with HIV. User feedback reveals that women feel safer commuting in Mo Bus and Mo E-Ride due to the presence of gender diverse crew.

CRUT also developed the Mo E-Ride initiative, which provides Light Motor Vehicle (LMV) driving training to women, transgender and people living with HIV. Within a year, more than 120 beneficiaries had been trained and successfully obtained their LMV driving license. After facilitating these members of a marginalized community with the means to earn their livelihood, CRUT now plans to establish a State-of-the-Art Institute of Driving Training & Research (IDTR) in the Indian state of Odisha focused on upskilling women and transgender people.

Going beyond the transit services, CRUT has established its depots equipped with CCTV surveillance and separate washrooms for different gender groups to provide its crew and staff with a comfortable working environment. The well-lit Bus Queue Shelters (BQS) serve as safe waiting areas for the public, especially women. Thus, an entire mobility ecosystem has been created where women and people belonging to other gender minorities feel safe, included, and empowered.

Dr. Sigrid Evelyn Nikutta graduated from Bielefeld University and holds a doctorate in Psychology. She began her career in the management of a medium-sized company in Bielefeld, and joined Deutsche Bahn in 1996. In 2010 she left Deutsche Bahn to become Chairperson and Chief Operating Officer at Germany’s largest public transport company, Berliner Verkehrsbetriebe (BVG). As the first female Chairperson, she made the company operate profitably for the first time. In 2019 she returned to Deutsch Bahn and now acts as a Member of the Management Board for Freight Transport at Deutsche Bahn AG and Chair of the Management Board and CEO of DB Cargo AG.

In your view, what is a feminist transport system?

Feminist mobility should, in fact, be a given. As I see it, mobility is open to all – and it considers the needs of society as a whole. We know that historically urban planning and transport are geared toward men, so simply saying, “Keep up the good work,” or “Do more of the same,” won’t get us anywhere. Instead, the needs of all people requiring mobility must be actively integrated for all purposes: getting to school, traveling during leisure time, commuting to work, going on vacation. The important factors here are complete accessibility, the precise intermeshing of different means of transport, the resilience of service and safety of use.

Integrating all of this requires a long-term perspective. The feminist view thus has as its logical consequence sustainable mobility with environmentally-friendly zero-emission mobility services, such as bike sharing and alternative vehicles, or, for instance, the consistent use of electric mobility with green power.

An often-overlooked aspect of feminist mobility is its focus on the employees and co-workers who ensure good mobility.

Who is your feminist role model?

Rosa Parks, the American civil rights activist. She refused to give up her seat to white passengers on a city bus in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1955. Her resistance ignited the already ongoing civil rights movement in the United States, led by Martin Luther King Jr., among others and these acts of protest successfully led to the passing of the law abolishing racial segregation in 1964. Rosa Parks set an example through a single act of civil disobedience, and, in doing so, brought the problem of racism – a problem that has not been overcome to this day – to the public’s attention. It is always the courage of individuals that moves the world. We are currently seeing this in the brave people of Iran who are courageously taking to the streets and fighting for their freedom to live the lives they want.

Have you had a transformative experience that has guided your work?

When I started working after finishing university nearly 30 years ago, I naturally assumed that women and men could and did achieve the same things equally, that gender has no influence on one’s career. The higher I climbed the career ladder, however, the clearer it became to me that women’s career ladders have more rungs or the distance between those rungs is greater.

Dr. Sigrid Evelyn Nikutta

MEMBER OF THE MANAGEMENT BOARD OF DEUTSCHE BAHN AG AND CEO DB CARGO AG, BERLIN

GERMANY





I consider it a great success that our society is changing. Mandated quotas are certainly helping. Being a woman is becoming ever more of an advantage, with women actively sought after for many roles, and that's a good thing. But the inevitable result, of course, is some people are starting to question whether women are only there because of the quotas. I counter that with another question: Have men not also been chosen for centuries because of their gender? In my experience, it is the best person for the job who is hired, regardless of their gender.

Do you have any advice for other people who want to be part of a feminist reshaping of the transport system?

Absolutely! Don't talk about each other – talk to each other. Then all users of mobility systems in a city will be involved from the very beginning. Mobility should always be thought of together with urban planning. Feminist urban planning and feminist mobility go hand in hand.

Founder of The Urban Catalysts and Executive Director of C-SEC (Centre for Sustainable and Equitable Cities), Sonal Shah is a multi-sectoral professional with 18 years of experience in catalyzing urban change through action-oriented research, knowledge tools, technical advisory, capacity development, and implementation support. She is passionate about people-oriented cities with a focus on sustainable transport, gender, informality, and universal access.

In your view, what is a feminist transport system?

A feminist transport system is rooted in a feminist development policy which transforms our mobility systems and public spaces so that all womxn and girls can enjoy public spaces. Having a broad group of people – including children, girls, poor womxn, womxn with disabilities, older womxn loitering in public spaces is a marker that our public spaces and transport are safe, accessible, and affordable. A broader perspective would consider gender balance in the public sphere, especially technical, managerial and decision-making positions.

How do you use your role to promote more inclusive transport systems?

At The Urban Catalysts, a large part of our local and global work is focused on gender inclusive mobility and how we can incorporate a gender lens in existing transport projects, combining mixed-methods and action-oriented approaches. On the one hand, we believe that research is required and can be powerful in shaping the narrative around gendered mobility. On the other hand, we work with public transport authorities to incorporate a gender perspective into their infrastructure and services. We try to bridge the gap between the data we have created and action on the ground. This has included supporting multilateral development banks in creating gender equality and social inclusion action plans to incorporate a gender lens in public transport infrastructure, road safety, and institutions. This takes extensive outreach and consultation with

civil society organizations that represent different groups of womxn, girls, gender minorities, and people with disabilities. We use their voices to inform gender priorities in transport investments.

Looking more locally, we have also supported the Delhi government in creating a committee for women’s safety in public transport. Realizing that women are often portrayed as a homogenous group, we wanted to highlight the differential impacts of the pandemic on different groups, with a focus on self-employed, resource poor women workers. We have also conducted technical capacity development workshops on gender inclusive mobility with decision-makers, professionals, and students. Our work is focused and centered on how gender can be used as a lens to inform transport investments.

Have you had a transformative experience that has guided your work?

I was fortunate to be exposed to a feminist way of thinking when I was in architecture school, in a faculty that exposed me to Western feminist authors and to art. This had a profound impact on me at a young age in my life. That transformed me from being an obedient adolescent to a questioning adult. At school, I was not exposed to transport planning but to gender, politics, development, labor, and globalization, which helped me develop a broader perspective on feminism and feminist thought.

Sonal Shah

FOUNDER AND CEO,
THE URBAN CATALYSTS

INDIA





A pivotal moment for me, however, was a very gruesome rape and death of a young woman in India in 2012. Prior to this, transport organizations had not really engaged with or even acknowledged the gendered experience of mobility systems. I then had the opportunity to specifically focus on how transport systems were gendered, which kickstarted my journey. My passion found a purpose. I have followed this path with continuous reflection and a desire to catalyse gender-just cities and organisations.

How do you stay motivated?

I have 'enough is enough' moments all the time, because I work with decision makers, transport and urban development professionals in India where we still don't have an understanding of why we need gender-inclusive mobility. It is often confused and conflated with social safeguards. What keeps me moving and motivated is working with leaders and organizations who are doing important work on the ground.

The Urban Catalysts



INDIA
FOUNDED 2018
WWW.THEURBANCATALYSTS.ORG

The mission of the The Urban Catalysts is to reconceptualize and transform transport to mitigate and adapt to climate change while enabling universal access and creating vibrant public spaces for all genders through user-centered and participatory processes. They bridge the gap between communities and decision-makers, and between concepts and ideas to action. Their work includes mixed methods, action-oriented research, technical advisory, capacity development and implementation support.

The Urban Catalysts have created women-focused urban mobility plans and guidelines, supported governments and multilateral development banks in incorporating a gender lens in road safety, public transport projects, infrastructure, services and institutional strengthening. While based in India, they have worked across South and Central Asia, Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa.

The Urban Catalysts' work has revealed how city design, policies, institutional, and regulatory frameworks can shape our built environments to reinforce traditional gender roles and stereotypes. From their perspective, feminist development approaches have the power to transform our mobility systems and public spaces so that all womxn and girls can enjoy and loiter in public spaces. This is a marker that a city is safe, accessible, and affordable for ALL womxn.

As Undersecretary for Economic Affairs and Finance in the office of the Governor of Jakarta, Dr. Sri Haryati assists the city secretary in coordinating economic affairs and finance policies. The former Head of Economic Affairs Bureau (2016–2019), Dr. Haryati has held various managerial positions and played a key role in pushing ahead the zero-emission bus transition in TransJakarta, the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system in Jakarta, Indonesia.

In your view, what is the feminist transport system?

Feminist transportation systems generally prioritize the needs and safety of marginalized groups, particularly women, in the design and implementation of transportation infrastructure and policies. As women usually act as caretakers for other vulnerable groups, they may show different mobility patterns compared to men. Redefining the feminist transport system should be seen as a pivotal part of women’s empowerment measures, enabling women to access wider job opportunities in cities through safe, efficient, and affordable transportation day and night, 24/7.

How does the current situation for women and girls in your city influence your work?

In Jakarta, women tend to have different transportation needs and face different safety concerns than men, particularly in terms of public transportation. In Jakarta, women also dominate the informal economy sector and not only travel to participate in the day or night economy but also to attend to domestic needs. To address these issues, it is important that cities consider the specific needs and perspectives of women and girls when planning, implementing, controlling, and monitoring transportation infrastructure and policies.

Do you have any advice for other people who want to be part of the feminist reshaping of the transport system?

- Start by listening and being sensitive in observation: Seek out the perspectives and experiences of marginalized groups, particularly women and girls, who are most affected by current transportation systems. This includes hearing from women of different ages, incomes, and abilities, as their experiences may be different.
- Join or support advocacy groups and participate in decision-making processes that affect marginalized communities.
- Keep track of the progress made and the impact of transportation initiatives on marginalized communities.

Dr. Sri Haryati

UNDERSECRETARY OF JAKARTA
CAPITAL CITY GOVERNMENT FOR
ECONOMIC AFFAIRS AND FINANCE

INDONESIA



Lebanese-born Yasmine Al Moghrabi is a Regional Youth Leader, PhD Student in Transportation Engineering (Integrated Intelligent Transportation Systems/Traffic Engineering), and global road safety and climate action activist named one of the top 10% of Changemakers from around the world who have acted in favor of Global Goals.

Yasmine Al Moghrabi spent the first 25 years of her life in Lebanon before moving to the USA for her studies. While she acknowledges there are some differences in rights and accessibility between her two homes, the situation for women is similar in both countries – particularly the need for women to prove they are just as capable decision-makers in the transport sector as men. Learning from her own experiences of successfully proving her worth, she believes all women have the power to create their own destinies.

“Women can accomplish anything. When I started my path in engineering, I didn’t get any support and I saw how women in engineering, especially transportation, are not taken as seriously as men. I think an important skill is having confidence and knowing that you really can add value to projects by bringing your perspective and knowledge to the discussion.”

As a road safety engineer and activist, Yasmine feels a feminist transport system does not limit the focus of its efforts to women and girls. Rather, the most effective way to build a feminist transport system is to fight the root causes of transportation issues that can affect everyone: Why do people make the mobility choices they do? What are their daily challenges and aspirations?

“As the regional youth leader of road safety in North America selected by the Global Youth Coalition for Road Safety, I always empower women and young people to insist on improving road safety. At the same time, I feel so happy when I see the achievements of women. I tell them, ‘Good luck, I am so proud of you!’ We need more of that, women supporting women.”

Yasmine is inspired by the stories of women, especially young people, who are change agents, finding opportunities to gain practical advice on how to partner with other women from different backgrounds, cultures, and lifestyles. She values the chance to connect with other women who are passionate about making the world a better place by addressing important global issues. For her part, she has contributed through the attendance and participation in many activities, competitions, TV interviews, research, projects, and conferences related to the Sustainable Development Goals, and transportation. Yasmine is also a social media content creator, with the Instagram page Road Safety by Yasmine (@roadsafety.yasmine) which provides interactive and creative road safety content.

“My passion for development and my quest to be part of a group of women who will make roads safer for everyone globally has pushed my work to save lives. I believe that local and global efforts are not just a vision but an achievable initiative. I understand how beneficial it is for all generations.”

Yasmine Al Moghrabi

REGIONAL YOUTH LEADER OF
ROAD SAFETY IN NORTH AMERICA,
PHD STUDENT IN TRANSPORTATION
ENGINEERING

USA



“Women can accomplish anything. When I started my path in engineering, I didn’t get any support and I saw how women in engineering, especially transportation, are not taken as seriously as men.”

In addition to be one of the four youth delegates representing the voice of youth around the world at the United Nations High-Level Meeting (HLM) on Road Safety, as well as countless other prominent events, in September 2022, Yasmine was selected to participate in UNITE 2030’s Camp 2030. The event brings together top Youth Leaders from across the globe for six days of innovation and co-creation for working towards the achievement of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals. For her, it was an opportunity to represent women in transportation.

“I was the only young woman from the transportation field. Everyone was curious about the relationship between my field and the Sustainable Development Goals, and surprised that I am involved in transportation and passionate about road safety. I explained I am happiest when the things I do can make a difference in the lives of others.”

As a young feminist voice in transport, Yasmine is driven by the knowledge that despite the risks, she can succeed through confidence, by not being afraid, and by following her passion. “It’s not just about being a transportation engineer; it’s all about the passion I have and feeling the responsibility to take action to save the lives of vulnerable road users, especially women and young people, who are the greatest victims of road crashes. We all need to address the issues by using one voice, and women’s voices are a driving force.”

Yasmine highlights how often the greatest successes start out as fantastic goals. In some cases, those goals have seemed so out of reach as to be impossible. Without a sense of optimism and a belief in themselves, those who have achieved the most might have achieved nothing.

“Around the world, women are driving change and claiming fundamental freedoms and rights. They are improving conditions for themselves and their communities, finding opportunities to learn, work and participate in decisions that affect them. Every woman can do something if they have the resources, the opportunity, the skill, the confidence.”

The South African writer and granddaughter of Nelson Mandela, Zoleka Mandela became a road safety activist following the death of her 13-year-old daughter Zenani in a car crash hours after her birthday in 2010. At the forefront of worldwide campaigns for road safety, she believes it is wholly unacceptable that road traffic injuries are the leading killer of young people globally. She is a United Nations Global Ambassador on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) and the FIA Foundation’s Ambassador for its Child Health Initiative. The Zoleka Mandela Foundation also supports accelerated cancer research and breast cancer awareness.

In your view what is a feminist transport system?

First, I have to say that I am not an expert on feminism – certainly not from an academic point of view. Nor can I claim to be a transportation policy specialist. I am a woman and a mother living in one of Africa’s largest cities. I grew up in Johannesburg during Apartheid when we were fighting for our freedom. I’ve seen my city and country develop so fast. For us, it’s been a revolution for society – of democracy and human rights. At the same time there has been massive technological and economic change.

Transportation is a big part of this, and one of the most visible aspects. During Apartheid, we were restricted in how we could move around. Now, in the South Africa of the 21st century, I see how human rights and equality are still impacted through transport. Research published by the FIA Foundation covering my country as well as others has shown alarming levels of harassment and abuse experienced by women in public spaces on a daily basis.

In my view, the biggest and most immediate priority is to ensure that women are safe and secure when we use transport. Our voices must first be heard, then women must be given the opportunity to design transport systems and lead transport policy making; finally, there must be concerted action and investment to put the measures in place that we need in order to move with true freedom. This, after all, is a fundamental human right.

How does the current situation for women and girls in South Africa influence your work?

I have personally experienced the very worst that can happen to women: As a child and young girl, I suffered sexual violence. In my book When Hope Whispers, I describe being sexually abused by some of the adults in my life who should have been protecting me. It was an abuse of power and a violation of trust. It was a deep, traumatic humiliation, and it left me scarred emotionally and mentally. It led me to self-harm and to try to take my own life several times.

In my country, the rate of gender-based violence is incredibly high. I must say that honestly, I often feel quite powerless in the face of all the abuse that continues. But I have been fortunate to have the platform to call for action, by campaigning with the FIA Foundation and with the UN on fundamental issues of human rights. The trauma will always be with me, but it also spurs me on to make my voice heard. Currently I am campaigning in the lead-up to the Global Forum for Adolescents linked to the UN’s SDG Summit later this year. Issues such as violence against girls, road safety, and safe equitable transportation are major priorities. I would urge everyone to get involved in the #1point8BillionforChange campaign, with which we call on policymakers to make commitments and accelerate action on these priorities.

ROAD SAFETY ADVOCATE AND FOUNDER OF
ZOLEKA MANDELA FOUNDATION

SOUTH AFRICA





Who is your feminist role model?

When you have a grandfather like mine, who really changed the world, people often overlook the role played by the women who were around him. In particular, I would point to my grandmother, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela. I was incredibly close to my grandmother; she was my rock during some of the most difficult times in my life. To say my grandmother was strong is an understatement. She was a leader and a fighter but the love she had for her children and grandchildren was limitless. She was at the forefront of the struggle for freedom, but really, she was not recognized as a mother of the nation until she died. She was so dear to my heart and her strength continues to be an inspiration to me.

Do you have any advice for other people who want to be part of a feminist reshaping of their communities and transport system?

My advice is simple: Be true to yourself and tell your story. I have never held back in speaking the truth, however uncomfortable for some people that may be. I won't pretend that it has been easy for me to speak out and to confront the dark moments in my life. It takes courage to stand up, to speak, and to campaign. But I know that for any change to happen, the world must first hear and understand our stories, our experience.

Local South

SOUTH AFRICA AND COLOMBIA
FOUNDED 2022
WWW.THELOCALSOUTH.COM

Promoting neighborhood-level approaches for improving life in cities across the Global South, Local South addresses some of the most pressing issues impacting women’s lives in the region: mobility, public space, informality, and food systems. Local South collaborates with a range of organizations, to test, initiate, and implement experiments, programs, and policies at the neighborhood level. They use the resulting information to strategically document and tell exciting urban stories, connect cities and people from across Latin America and Africa.

Local South helps to demystify contexts across cities in the Global South and sheds light on local initiatives through which innovative policies, including feminist development policies, can be tested. Neighborhoods across Latin America, for example, have made strides in highlighting the plight of women, in terms of transport and mobility. Other cities can learn from their experiences, but in order to do so, a fuller understanding of women’s mobility experiences is necessary, as is the need to find ways for policy to respond to this. Doing so can both transform women’s mobility and provide the space for mobility itself to serve as a better tool of equality.



Cover Illustration by Valeriya Simantovskaya



Valeriya Simantovskaya currently lives and works in Yerevan, Armenia. She has been creating digital illustrations for over seven years. In her works, she explores human nature and the human body in particular, relationships between people and social phenomena such as alienation and loneliness.

Her work focuses on social inequalities, the place and role of women in society, outdated stereotypes and the blurring of generally accepted social values. She likes to experiment with textures and composition. The limited color palette and simple geometric shapes give the work a minimalist character, leaving room for interpretation.

Women Mobilize Women



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On behalf of the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Women Mobilize Women (WMW) initiative works along the nexus of increasing knowledge about equity in transport as well as the empowerment of women and marginalized groups in the transport sector. Women Mobilize Women also strives to raise awareness on the application of a Feminist Development Cooperation in the transport sector. To do this, Women Mobilize Women works to build local and global capacities on gender-equitable transport through leadership and mentoring programs, study tours, and digital knowledge products.

Women Mobilize Women is committed to being at the forefront of advocating for intersectional feminist perspectives on sustainable mobility and gender, recognizing the multiplicity of women's lived realities as transport workers and users.

2023 marks the fifth anniversary of the initiative's founding as part of the Transformative Urban Mobility Initiative (TUMI). This year Women Mobilize Women is focusing on Feminist Voices in Transport in a variety of formats: A special edition of the annual Remarkable Women publication to increase visibility of trailblazers in the field, a high-level study tour bringing together leading feminists in sustainable transport in Berlin, Germany, as well as the annual TUMI Conference focusing on feminist thought leadership and action.

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