

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

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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.