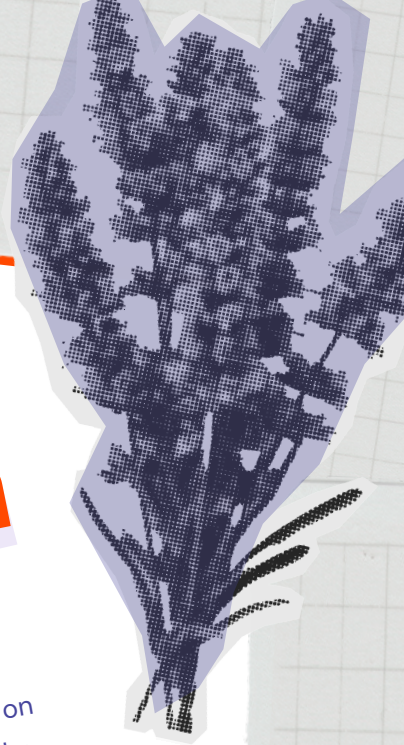


Sana'a Khasawneh

Sana'a is a passionate young advocate for road safety and inclusive, sustainable mobility, with a strong focus on empowering women and young people. She works as the Advocacy and Campaigns Manager at YOURS—Youth for Road Safety—and is a member of the WHO EMRO Youth Council. With experience across transport, health, and climate, Sana' brings unique insight and dedication to policy advocacy and meaningful youth engagement. She believes in the power of storytelling to inspire change and sees young people not just as future leaders, but as key drivers of global development today.



Irbid, Jordan



Transport systems can be considered inclusive only if...

... it truly leaves no one behind. For us young people in the Middle Eastern–North African region, that means mobility for all – especially women and youth. It's not enough to pour concrete for new roads; what matters is how we design and run transport for people.

Does a young woman feel safe catching the last bus home? Can a recent graduate afford the transport to their new job? True equity comes from bold policy choices: fare subsidies that make every ride affordable; well-lit stations and a zero-tolerance stance on harassment so every journey is secure; and inclusive planning where women and youth have a real say in what their buses and streets look like. When transport opens up access to jobs, schools, and community life for everyone, it becomes more than a way to get around – it becomes a path to economic empowerment and freedom. This is what an inclusive, feminist, and equitable transport system looks like: one that empowers us all to move forward together!

If I was in power of our transport systems, the first thing I would do is...

... listen and act on what people need! If I were in charge of our transport systems, my first

initiative would be to set up a framework that ensures meaningful youth participation in all decision-making processes. Young people are bursting with fresh perspectives and innovative ideas, essential for crafting progressive, sustainable transport policies. I'd establish youth advisory councils that actively involve young individuals in evaluating and shaping our transport policies. These councils would focus on assessing both infrastructure needs and the social aspects of transport safety that particularly impact young commuters.

My aim would be to harness technology to create platforms where young voices are central in guiding policy adjustments and service improvements. These platforms would use real-time data and feedback from young commuters to make our transport systems more adaptable, inclusive, and ready to meet future generations' needs. This strategic inclusion enhances our transport system and empowers young people by giving them a stake in their communities' futures. Prioritizing youth input from the start ensures our transport policy equips young people with the tools to shape their own communities and futures, making transportation a powerful tool for empowerment and inclusion.

How does the current transport situation for in your city influence your work?

The transport scene in my city really shapes my work, especially seeing how tough it is for women, young people, and those with disabilities to get around. Safe and easy access to transport is a game-changer; it opens doors to jobs and schools. But right now, those doors are pretty hard to unlock for too many people, and it's setting us back. This pushes me to fight for better safety and more routes so everyone can hop on a bus or a train without worry. Plus, our city is full of young people who are just brimming with potential. Giving them a lift in the literal sense means we're boosting their chances to succeed big time. On top of that, fighting climate change is huge for me. More buses and less traffic can seriously cut down on pollution. So, improving public transport isn't just good for getting us where we need to go; it's crucial for keeping our air clean, our bodies healthy and our cities sustainable. Every step we take towards a transport system that's safer, more inclusive, and greener gets us closer to a city that works better for everyone. I'm all about turning our young city's energy into a powerful force for positive change, making

sure our moves today shape a brighter, cleaner tomorrow.

What's the main challenge that you face in your daily work?

Honestly, the biggest challenge I grapple with is the status quo mindset – the fact that youth voices like mine often aren't taken seriously by those in power. In my advocacy work, I frequently encounter older officials who pat me on the back but then ignore our ideas when real decisions are being made. This isn't just my feeling; across MENA, young people make up a huge portion of the population yet are rarely involved in decision-making and often feel marginalized by leaders. Pushing against that entrenched attitude every day can be exhausting. Sometimes it feels like shouting into the wind about road safety or equitable access, when traditional policymakers only see us as "ambitious kids" with idealism, not as stakeholders with real solutions. Funding can be tight and that's another hurdle – youth-led organizations and start ups often run on passion and pocket change. One of my key proposals involves integrating young people into road safety policymaking. The

My work aligns with the Hamburg Charter Principles!



Principle #2 Inclusivity in Transport

Drives my mission to ensure that often overlooked groups such as women, youth, and people with disabilities are included in the planning process. This principle guides my push for equitable transport policies that cater to diverse needs, ensuring all voices are considered in decision-making. Together, these principles inspire my daily work, reinforcing my commitment to fostering a transport system that not only meets today's needs but also anticipates and shapes a more just and sustainable future.

Principle #1 Equitable and Climate-Friendly Access to Opportunities

This principle advocates for a transport system that enables everyone to access education, jobs, and healthcare safely, affordably, and sustainably, emphasizing that mobility is a fundamental human right. Central to my advocacy, this principle aims to bridge gaps and ensure no one's potential is hindered by their access to transport, while also promoting environmental sustainability.





real challenge is convincing authorities of the urgency of these issues for women and youth—often tougher than devising the solutions themselves. Breaking silo thinking is a challenge too: transport is treated as an engineering issue, when it's really a social justice issue, and I'm constantly trying to get others to see that bigger picture. Yet, this challenge also fires me up. Every dismissal I face is a reminder that we need more youth at the table. So while it's challenging to fight for a seat and for open ears, it's also exactly why I do what I do. The resistance tells me I'm pushing the right boundaries – and I won't stop until youth voices are not the exception but the norm in transport planning.

What would you tell other young people working in the transport field?

To all my fellow young changemakers in transport: keep pushing the boundaries! Across the MENA region and beyond, we're united in our mission to improve transportation for everyone. Remember, our work is about enhancing people's lives, not just optimizing routes and vehicles. So stay driven by the

human impact, and let that passion fuel your efforts. Think big and bold. If it hasn't been done before, maybe it's waiting for us to tackle it. From launching youth-led transit groups to developing apps for safer carpooling or advocating for bike lanes, your innovative ideas are crucial. We need more tech-savvy minds pushing for smarter, sustainable transport solutions that also fight climate change. Connect, share challenges, and celebrate even the small victories—like getting a new crosswalk installed or influencing local policy.

Keep the energy high and the fun alive. Why not organize a bike parade or a flash mob to spread our message joyfully? The field is tough, filled with bureaucracy and tight budgets, but our youthful enthusiasm and fresh perspectives are our superpowers. You're essential in this dialogue, actively shaping the future of mobility. Let's continue to drive change and create a sustainable, enjoyable transport system for tomorrow. Keep innovating, stay engaged, and cherish the journey—we're not just part of the conversation; we're leading it!