



ITF/UITP Positive Employer Gender Policy

JOINT RECOMMENDATIONS

STRENGTHENING WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN URBAN PUBLIC TRANSPORT

This version constitutes the sole authentic text.

Introduction

Women are central to urban public transport – as the majority of passengers and as workers in public transport. However, public transport remains a male-dominated sector, both from an employment point of view and also from the values that are embedded in its structure and provision. This can be evident in various ways including, for example, pricing structure and route planning.

There is growing evidence that women's employment is key to improving working conditions for everyone; when we remove barriers for women entering the industry and address health and safety concerns for women, for example by ensuring decent access to sanitation facilities, the situation is improved for all workers.

Nevertheless, there is a real under-representation of women in the transport industry. Globally women represent less than 15% of the public transport workforce, making the sector highly male-dominated, while the majority of passengers are women. This does not include informal transport workers, which can represent a significant portion of employment in the transport sector in some cities. While women are under-represented in the transport workforce as a whole, they are hugely over-represented in precarious and informal work in the transport industry.

For women working in public transport, there are a number of issues. We know that these issues – in particular sexual harassment and violence – can limit the attraction of jobs in the transport sector for women and break the retention of those who are employed in the transport sector, as well as undermining a positive working environment for all. This link was acknowledged in the ILO transport policy brief in 2013.

For these reasons the international social partners ITF and UITP have decided to join forces to contribute to reverse the trend and accelerate progress toward women's equality, gender balance, dignity and respect at all levels. Within this objective, ITF and UITP have developed a set of recommendations to encourage and support employers and trade unions to strengthen women's employment and equal opportunities, and promote decent work in the urban public transport sector worldwide. These recommendations are set out below and form the joint ITF – UITP positive employer policy on women's employment.

In developing these recommendations, the international social partners also acknowledge the WISE project by the European social partners that identified recruitment, working culture, health and safety, qualifications and training, wage equality and work-life balance as highly important for women's employment in the urban public transport sector. The ILO has also developed a framework 'Women's career cycle in the transport sector' (ILO, 2013).



As stated in the ITF/UITP Memorandum of Understanding, ITF and UITP are committed internationally to promote trade union recognition and the collective bargaining process in each country. We recognise that for women workers to achieve the rights outlined in this policy, effective trade union representation and collective bargaining is required.

ITF and UITP agree that strengthening women's employment and equal opportunities, and promoting decent work benefits the whole sector – employers, workers and passengers, men and women and government.

- Gender diversity brings innovation and different skill sets to the industry and workplace;
- Improving working conditions for women, improves conditions for all workers;
- The demographic change in some regions of the world means there is an ageing workforce and subsequent labour shortages;
- It is a matter of equal opportunities: an inclusive workforce means public transport is seen as a positive choice of employer;
- Gender diversity improves the functioning and efficiency of the service for passengers by better representing the diversity of the different categories of passengers;
- Employing more women results in safer public transport for women workers and passengers; and
- Access to jobs in the transport sector allows women to move out of poverty into productive work – to provide for their families, and communities and to contribute to the economic viability of their countries;

While this is important, we cannot solely make a business case for gender equality in the labour market. This is fundamentally a social justice, labour and human rights issue. By strengthening women's employment in urban public transport and promoting decent work, the industry will also be contributing to delivering the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

In order to create a public transport system that is safe, accessible and equitable, we need to ensure that women's voices – workers and passengers – are present during the planning, policy-making, research, development and operation of our systems. This requires taking meaningful action to increase women's participation in this industry at all levels.

The main barriers for women's participation in the urban public transport sector can be grouped as follows, however it is important to note that these barriers are not separate issues and many have the same root cause:

1. Education, training and access to information: women may not be encouraged to access personal, educational or professional experiences that would give them the necessary access and/or skills for an apprenticeship or non-traditional occupation. Women may have limited access to information about the different industry jobs that are available or may not perceive that they have the necessary skills, and as such do not see a role for themselves in the industry. Options or access to re-training may also be limited, due, for example, to sex discrimination – whether direct or indirect.
2. Work organisation: (rolling) shift work, early morning / late night working hours, split shifts, weekend work – combined with a lack of safe transportation to and from work; isolation on the job; lack of consideration of work-life balance or reconciliation of work and private life requirements such as family/care work responsibilities.



3. Work environment: lack of workplace and policy adjustments; lack of facilities (including toilets); inappropriate uniforms.
4. Gender stereotyping and sex discrimination: gender-based occupational segregation is underpinned by the myth that women are unable or physically unfit to perform certain duties, tasks or roles, and women and men are better suited to certain jobs. It is entrenched in different aspects of recruitment practices, the work environment and structure.
5. Violence and harassment against women: Urban public transport workers are exposed to physical and non-physical violence because of the jobs they do. Both women and men can be vulnerable, nevertheless women are likely to be more vulnerable in additional ways.

Women can sometimes disproportionately experience a negative impact on their working conditions, employment status and career opportunities when outsourcing occurs, as gender responsive workplace measures and policies are not always extended to outsourced companies. These industry developments should also be taken into account so that terms that address decent work and labour rights, in particular gender equality measures, are considered in contracts between transport providers, operating companies and sub-contractors.

ITF and UITP agree that improving and sustaining representation and integration of women at all levels in the urban public transport sector and its employers, requires a package of activities and measures.

Governments, employers and trade unions must play a pro-active role in increasing women's overall access to traditionally male-dominated transport jobs, but also in ensuring women have access to leadership roles. There is also a role for international financial institutions to ensure that transport projects actively address gender inequalities, occupational segregation and access to work.

This needs to go beyond simply setting recruitment targets, but also examining corporate policies, culture and leverage opportunities to identify how everything from wages to working conditions and access to all jobs, training and promotion can be improved for women. Any policy measures should include a holistic approach in order to change perceptions and attitudes, as well as provisions for monitoring, enforcement and necessary amendments. Women should be involved in all aspects.

With this in mind, ITF and UITP believe that a strong policy on women's employment must address all elements of the ILO framework – 'Women's career cycle in the transport sector' (ILO, 2013). These include attraction, recruitment and selection, retention, career interruption, re-entry, and realisation of decent work.

And as part of our approach, and recognising that technology presents many opportunities, we must also consider the potential inequalities that may arise from the introduction of new technology in urban public transport, without significant policy intervention that ensures women's participation in the sector increases and does not further exacerbate gender-based occupational segregation.

Finally, ITF and UITP agree that these policy measures should be developed in cooperation with trade unions, including women union representatives and leaders. The fundamental principles of freedom



of association and social dialogue should also be recognised and promoted in order to ensure decent work.

ITF and UITP have identified nine key elements for a strong policy on women's employment and for each of those we have agreed some core recommendations:

1. Working culture and gender stereotypes

While in some countries, it is very normal and generally accepted for women to work in driving positions in public transport, in many countries this is not the case. Working culture and gender stereotypes can create a significant barrier preventing employment of women in the sector, as well as deterring women from wanting to apply to work in the sector, and may be deeply entrenched in multiple different aspects of employment.

This can include:

- attitudes within the workplace or sector
- lack of awareness of available job or career opportunities
- lack of opportunities to develop the appropriate skills to work in the sector, (in particular for driving, technical roles or other roles traditionally dominated by men); and
- the expectation or need to balance work life and family responsibilities, including the lack of appropriate workplace policies to enable integration of family and caring responsibilities for all workers.

To address this, steps should be implemented to challenge established perceptions of transport work, and in particular the narrative surrounding 'women's work' versus 'men's work' in the workplace, and in society more broadly and culturally. Positive promotion of the sector and the important role it plays in society – including branding and advertising that appeals to women, such as the inclusion of images of women workers in workplace literature and use of women role models in jobs traditionally held by men – are important tools as part of this.

The gender diversity of transport workplaces should be increased by proactively addressing gender occupational segregation through, for example affirmative action policies and ratios/targets for particular occupations like driving.

Workplace training and awareness activities on equality and diversity for workers, managers and supervisors at all levels, will help to identify potential measures to address the attitudes and gender stereotypes that may be deeply entrenched in the sector as a whole, and within specific urban public transport workplaces.

2. Recruitment

Companies need a recruitment policy with strategies that directly target recruitment of women, and which enable those involved in the recruitment process to ensure that processes are non-discriminatory and do not include conditions for employment linked, for example, to pregnancy, maternity, age, marital status or appearance. Proactive steps relating to recruitment may include the following initiatives:

- Non-discriminatory recruitment and selection processes that are fair to women (e.g. neutral job descriptions that do not reinforce stereotypes and recognise transferable skills);



- Public campaigns, education and awareness activities targeting women's employment;
- Women-only recruitment days (e.g. to address misconceptions around work in the sector);
- Partnerships with employment agencies and programmes that target women (including women who are returning to the sector);
- Broadening of outreach (e.g. with NGOs, industry councils, schools) – to include positive promotion of the transport industry and the important role of urban transport in society;
- Consideration of quotas and targets to ensure women's employment, including in contracts for sub-contracted work;
- Interview panels that include women, gender-neutral interview questions and selection, and training on unconscious bias; and
- Exit interviews when women workers leave the company so that patterns of gender inequality can be identified and improvements can be made.

3. Work environment and design

Positive strategies to actively recruit women can make some impact, but it will also be important to address other issues and challenges preventing women from wanting to work in the sector (either applying for jobs or staying in the industry).

One aspect of this is making sure that the work environment and design reflect women's needs. Often, since the transport industry is male-dominated, little attention has been paid to the needs of women workers in terms of uniforms and the ergonomics of the vehicle they are expected to drive or work in. Women still have to deal with uniforms that are designed only with men's bodies in mind, which impacts on safety and dignity, and perpetuates a preference for men workers.

Examples of initiatives linked to work environment and design include:

- Provision of appropriate and proper fitting uniforms for women transport workers in different roles and for pregnant women;
- Establishment of joint union and company uniform committees with women's representation in order to test uniforms and make input to their design;
- Provision of proper fitting PPE – personal protective equipment (e.g. safety jackets, safety head gear);
- Provision of suitable tools and equipment that accommodate women's needs;
- Provision of adjustable work stations;
- Utilisation of body mapping to assess work environments and propose suitable changes;
- Visible displays that outline an employer's commitment to zero tolerance to violence from workers, managers, authorities and customers.

4. Facilities

Lack of safe access to decent toilets and other sanitation facilities can have a substantial impact on the health and safety of men and women transport workers.

Inadequate or a complete lack of facilities takes away a workers' dignity at work. Not having access to toilet facilities can cause a range of health problems, including serious life-long issues. And if there is no provision of separate facilities for women, this sends a clear message about how women are seen in the industry. Furthermore, a lack of toilet breaks and in particular regular scheduled breaks, which can be particularly important for women workers, compounds the problem.



It is therefore important that suitable and sufficient toilet facilities are provided for men and women at fixed workplaces but also on route (working with municipalities as appropriate), as well as provision of sanitary facilities, appropriate separate changing rooms, toilets and, where necessary, separate sleeping areas, break rooms and canteens.

Facilities should be clean, affordable, safe, accessible (e.g. during a shift change) and not open to the public. Separate facilities should be incorporated for women workers and workers should be involved in the design of these spaces to ensure they accommodate their needs. Regular scheduled toilet breaks should also be incorporated.

5. Health and safety at work

Decent work also means safe employment. There are gender-specific health and safety issues for women public transport workers including gender-based violence at work. Taking action to address these issues will mean better protection for women and men transport workers, as well as for the safety of the traveling public.

When we act to prevent and respond to violence against women at work, we give women's access to decent work a huge boost. Ensuring that all workers are properly protected through collective agreements, prevention measures, legislation and policy with measures for education and training, and mechanisms for investigation and responding to complaints, is critical if we are to broaden women's recruitment, retention and participation in this industry.

Examples of initiatives include:

- Clear process and guidelines for reporting violence against women;
- Training on violence against women for workers and management;
- Implementation of practical measures to address violence at work (e.g. good lighting, radios, safe staffing levels);
- Implementation of women's advocacy programmes in workplaces;
- Consideration of safety when travelling to/from work and appropriate measures in place;
- Implementation of risk assessments for pregnant women and suitable alternative duties during pregnancy.

6. Work-life balance

Long working hours and shift work can have an effect on workers' health and safety. But working patterns can also be problematic as awkward shift patterns raise challenges in relation to caring responsibilities.

Implementation of policies and facilities that allow integration of family and caring responsibilities for all workers – men and women – are therefore important. These can include negotiation of maternity-related provisions and other family-related rights such as paternity, parental leave, carers' leave, as well as provision of affordable childcare facilities.

Options for flexible working arrangements – for example, shift work, job share, part-time work, or reduced hours, should also be in place to have choices regarding how work is organised. And equal rights status should be afforded for all. In terms of re-entry to the workforce, career break policies should be in place.



7. Qualifications, training and career opportunities

Training and re-training is important as part of improving women's equal access to the industry, to provide them with the appropriate vocational skills to undertake different roles in the industry, but also to progress within the sector. Opportunities for training to support women of all ages when transport infrastructure is introduced or upgraded, or jobs are changed as a result of new technology, are essential to ensure that women stay in the sector. When developing and implementing training initiatives, employers should ensure women workers are represented so that training is gender balanced.

Education and training for workers at all levels (e.g. workers, managers and supervisors) and for both men and women, on equality, diversity, fundamental rights, women's health and safety, violence and sexual harassment at the workplace, is also important for women to stay in the industry.

Examples of initiatives linked to qualifications, training and career opportunities include:

- Skills development and technical training to facilitate industry entry and progression – for example, paid apprenticeships, on the job training, 'positive action training';
- Support for women's leadership and women's access to higher-paid roles in transport;
- Consideration of 'just transition' to support women transport workers and potential women transport workers of all ages – for example, in response to changes linked to automation and digitalisation, and support for transition from informal to formal work for women workers;
- Introduction of coaching and mentoring or 'buddy' systems to complement formal training and re-training and ensure better access for women to leadership roles; and
- Retention of seniority or status (for example, following a career break);
- Unconscious bias awareness training for senior management

There should be equal access to training and validation of skills. Training content, training methods and the timing and location of training courses should also take into consideration the needs of women workers.

8. Wage equality and terms and conditions of employment

Our core recommendations on wage equality and terms and conditions of employment include:

- Equal pay for work of equal value;
- Fair assessment of work and equal pay audits; and
- Access to social security, maternity benefits, pensions;

9. Corporate policy

On their own, implementation of different measures and targets is not enough. Monitoring and enforcement is also needed to ensure that policies are effectively implemented. For example:

- Written employment policies made widely available;
- Regular data reporting and planning;
- Equality audits and analysis of pay and conditions, and development of policies to address any gaps;
- Inclusion of effective and accessible grievance mechanisms; and
- Inclusion of a whistle blower policy.

As part of this it is vital that women are directly involved in the decision-making and monitoring.



Follow-up

The international urban public transport social partners will promote these joint recommendations and identify employers and unions willing to implement the initiative as an example of good practice. As part of this process, the ITF and UITP will establish mechanisms to monitor and evaluate implementation of the policy and address any issues.

Signed in 2 copies, the 7th March 2019, one going to the ITF and the other to the UITP.

For ITF

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