

“From Manufacturing to Mobility”

The gender dimension of future mobility concepts and trade union strategies

Gender dimensions of mobility

Mobility plays an important role in the lives of women; as passengers, women rely on public transport to fulfil their mobility needs – to visit family, fulfil care responsibilities, access public services and employment opportunities. But mobility is not gender neutral. For example, there are gender differences in the mobility needs and use of public transport, however, across the globe, urban planning and transport planning tends to be designed for and by men.

Inequality also exists in access to transport jobs – women working in public transport are few in number, and although women work within most public transport organisations, the types of jobs they have are often highly gendered – men traditionally hold the better paid jobs and positions of power, while women are over-represented in the lowest paid and most precarious forms of work. Key issues facing women in the mobility sector include:

- Inadequate working environments, conditions and arrangements
- A lack of facilities, including sanitation and security measures
- Poor work-life balance, including long working hours and inflexible shift patterns
- A lack of maternity rights
- Wage inequality
- Occupational health and safety concerns, including uniform and PPE (personal protective equipment)
- Violence and harassment from colleagues and passengers

With the new mobility concepts that are being introduced, there are likely to be significant impacts – positive and negative – for women. For example, new technologies have the potential to bring benefits for women workers for example in opening up new opportunities for work. However, some innovations such as the introduction of automatic ticket vending machines in passenger transport have led to job losses (in particular, in roles that are dominated by women); increased hiring of outsourced workers; and health and safety implications for workers (for example customer facing workers who are exposed to public anger when the technology is not reliable). There is also the question of digital inequality and access to technology.

Often gender is missing in discussions and decision-making around technology and future mobility concepts, and so the needs and concerns of women are often not properly considered.

A gender-responsive approach

Improving gender equality is critical to the sustainability and resilience of the sector, positively impacting on all who work in and use the sector. But without a gender lens, there is potential to further reinforce or worsen existing inequalities as new developments and trends do not consider the inequalities that already exist.

A gender-responsive approach means women are put at the centre of the mobility agenda – prioritising efforts to better engage and represent women in decision-making, implementation of gender-responsive planning, and proactive policy interventions that incorporate gender impact assessments and the inclusion of gender-disaggregated data.

And mobility can only be gender-responsive if there are women employed in the industry. Measures to address gender equality in the sector must improve access to employment for women, through

the creation of decent and secure work opportunities that identify and remove barriers, attract and retain women and challenge occupational segregation.

We also need to address existing inequalities and gender gaps to give women workers the right to decent work in a fast-changing world.

Gender equality and the regional pilots

One of the core principles of the project on the future of mobility is gender equality. We want to gain a better picture of gender equality in the entire mobility sector – to understand the impacts (positive and negative) of the new mobility trends on women's employment, raise awareness of the issues and opportunities, and develop a more systematic approach to address gender equality and the future of mobility – including through union bargaining and organising strategies.

Some key questions to consider:

- Where are women located in the different parts of the mobility sector?
- What are the impacts (positive and negative) of the new mobility trends, digitisation and automation on women's employment and access to decent and secure work in the different parts of the mobility sector and how have unions responded?
- How can the future of mobility be used to address the gendered nature of the industry and reduce the gender gaps? What are the challenges that need to be addressed?
- What is the role of women in decision-making about mobility?
- What data do we need to address gender and the future of mobility in union bargaining and organising?

Role of the gender advocate

The role of the 'gender advocate' is to help facilitate implementation of this core principle – for example, by making sure that a gender mainstreaming approach is consistently applied throughout the project and that all the strategies that are applied are gender responsive – by asking questions, providing guidance and insight.

This applies to the practical aspects of the development and implementation of the project and its activities, but also in terms of the content.