

HANDBOOK OF BEST PRACTICES ON TRANSPORT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

2026

ESCAP
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

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Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AKCF	ASEAN-Korea Cooperation Fund
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BRT	Bus Rabid Transit
COVID-19	coronavirus disease
EIB	European Investment Bank
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
IDA	International Development Association
IFC	International Finance Corporation
ILO	International Labour Organizaiton
IMO	International Maritime Organization
ITDP	Institute for Transportation and Development Policy
ITF	International Transport Forum
ITS	Intelligent Transport Systems
JAL	Journey Access Tool
MIGA	Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
S-BRT	Super Bus Rapid Transit
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
VRUs	Vulnerable road users
WHO	World Health Organization
WIMA	Women in Maritime Association
WISTA	Women's International Shipping and Trading Association
WiT	Women in Transport Network

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. Transport and the Sustainable Development Goals

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, encompassing 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 associated targets, serves as a universal plan of action for people, planet and prosperity by seeking to address global challenges including poverty and hunger, inequality, climate change, peace and justice (United Nations, 2015). The 2024 progress assessment revealed that the world is severely off-track to realize the 2030 Agenda, with only 17 per cent of the SDG targets met or on track (United Nations, 2024a). Furthermore, regional disparities continue to persist. For example, while the Asia-Pacific region has made notable progress on Goal 3 (Good health and well-being) and Goal 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure), it remains off track and falls behind the rest of the world on the achievement of several Goals, including negative trends in material footprint and occupational injuries (Goal 8), and the concerning regression on Goal 13 (Climate action) (ESCAP, 2025a). As for Goal 5 (Gender equality), which concerns social inclusion and equality, there are insufficient indicators to understand and track progress of this goal in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP, 2025a), which will need to be addressed if countries are committed to leaving no one behind.

At the Summit of the Future in September 2024, world leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the 2030 Agenda. They further emphasized the need to accelerate progress according to the three pillars of sustainable development, which are economic, social and environmental (United Nations, 2024b). To ensure a balanced and integrated approach across these three dimensions, the transport sector must be recognized for its critical role in facilitating the mobility of people, as well as enabling the delivery of goods and services essential for daily life, while creating significant economic and social benefits. The lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, compounded with geopolitical conflicts and climate shocks, have further underscored a more urgent need to rethink passenger and freight transport flow. By adopting more sustainable, resilient and inclusive solutions while enhancing efficiency, transport systems and services can better serve the diverse needs of all users. This will then promote healthier lives and overall human well-being, providing greater safety particularly for all girls and women in both public and private spaces (Goal 3 and Goal 5). In addition, the transport sector contributes to economic growth by enabling employment opportunities, providing infrastructures with innovative solutions and supporting connectivity for supply-chain networks, ultimately strengthening competitiveness across industries (Goal 9). Table 1 highlights the linkages between the field of transport and various related SDGs, along with the specific targets it influences.

Table 1: Linkages between transport and the SDGs

SDGs	Targets	Linkages with transport
	Target 3.6 Halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents	Maintain and improve adequate transport infrastructure and implement better road safety regulations.
	Target 3.9 Substantially reduce the number of deaths and illness from air pollution	Nitrogen oxides (NO_X) and sulfur oxides (SO_X) are major pollutants that contribute to respiratory issues and are primarily emitted from combustion in transport.
	Target 5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres	A gender-responsive approach to planning and designing public transport systems ensures that the transport accessibility and safety needs of women and girls are effectively met.
	Target 5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life	Actively involve women in decision-making across all aspects of transport planning and development promotes gender equality, as users and workers within the transport sector.
	Target 9.1 Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all	Transport boosts regional economic development by enhancing cross-border connectivity, expanding opportunities, and improving access to essential services, thereby promoting human well-being and social inclusion.
	Target 9.a Facilitate sustainable and resilient infrastructure development in developing countries through enhanced financial, technological and technical support	Efficient knowledge transfer and innovative financing mechanisms enhance the development of sustainable and resilient infrastructure in developing countries.
	Target 11.1 Ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services	Transport systems play a crucial role in enabling the mobility of all residents to affordable housing and essential services.
	Target 11.2 Provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attentions to the needs of those in	Social inclusion and reduced inequalities can be achieved by the development of reliable and inclusive transport systems, particularly with the expansion of public transport.

SDGs	Targets	Linkages with transport
	vulnerable groups Target 11.3 Enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management Target 11.6 Reduce the adverse environmental impact of cities	Align transport planning and management with urban development to optimize resources. Strengthen vehicle inspection and maintenance routine while encouraging green and sustainable transport can help mitigate adverse environmental impacts.

Sources: ESCAP (2021) and ESCAP (2024a).

1.2. Linkages between transport and social inclusion

Social inclusion ensures that all individuals have equal opportunities to fully participate in society, irrespective of their socioeconomic status, gender, physical ability, geographical locations, or circumstances. Thereby in the process of fostering a sense of belonging and empowerment for all segments of society, the transport sector plays a vital role, providing mobility options for people to access resources and opportunities. The role of transport becomes even more critical for users who remain at risk of social exclusion, namely those from low-income households, women, persons with disabilities, older persons, or those living in isolated areas (ESCAP, 2025b). The interconnected relationship between transport and social inclusion is explicitly acknowledged in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, emphasizing that an inclusive and accessible transport system is not only a means of mobility but a foundation for achieving broader social inclusion and reducing inequalities, striving for a balanced and integrated approach across three pillars of sustainable development. This relationship is explicitly highlighted through the following goals.

Goal 3: Good health and well-being

Transport serves as a critical enabler of access to essential health services, including emergency medical care and routine health checkups. However, road safety remains a pressing issue in the transport sector. At the micro-level, infrastructure deficiencies such as the absence of footpaths and ramps create significant barriers to mobility. In Asia and the Pacific region where road traffic deaths account for approximately 59 per cent of global road fatalities (ESCAP, 2024a), footpaths are not in great condition and often obstructed by vehicles, rubbish, or vendors. The fear of falling, navigating crowded or high-traffic areas, and crossing roads in busy settings significantly affects the confidence and mobility of the elderly and disabled persons (ESCAP, 2025b). From 2000 to 2019, fatalities among those aged 65 and above have steadily increased, while there was a decline in traffic-related fatalities for individuals under 64 (ESCAP, 2024a).

As a result, Target 3.6 aims to halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents by 2030. This can be achieved by improving road infrastructure, enforcing traffic regulations, promoting inclusive design, and raising public awareness about road safety. Safe and

secure transport environments not only reduce the risk of crashes and injuries but also alleviate stress, fear and anxiety associated with travel. By fostering greater confidence and autonomy in mobility, well-designed transport systems can enhance social inclusion, mental well-being, and overall quality of life for all.

Goal 5: Gender equality

In addition to healthcare services, access to transport enables access to schools, educational institutions, and workplaces, allowing women to pursue education and to gain secure employment opportunities. However, women and girls are often exposed to violence, assault, and harassment while using public transport. Fear of sexual harassment and safety concerns not only limits women's mobility but also makes women face difficult decisions over the trade-off between personal security and economic opportunity (Gonzalez et al., 2016). In Mexico City, for example, women living on the periphery of the city can earn three times higher in the city centre, but over half of them experience sexual harassment on public transport (Gonzalez et al., 2016).

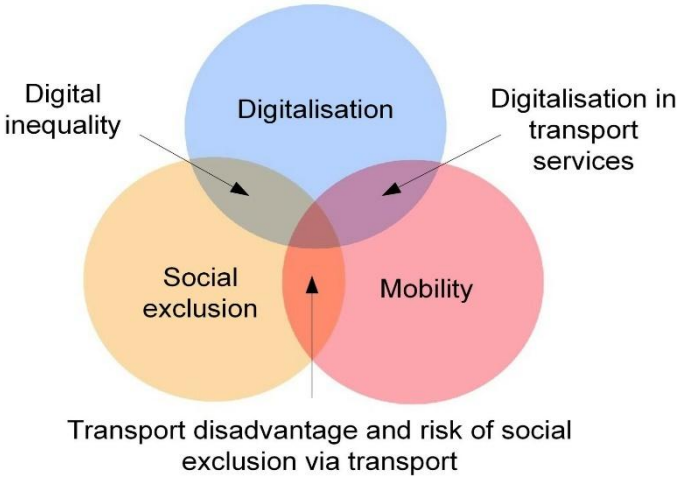
Safety and personal security concerns thereby greatly influence their choice of transport modes (Verma et al., 2017). Women and girls have trips that are often shorter, occur during off-peak hours, multi-purpose, involving multiple modes of transport, such as walking, cycling, and using public transit, putting them at higher risks of traffic injuries (Ng and Acker, 2018; ESCAP, 2025b). Not only does gender disparity exist in terms of safety and personal security in mobility but it is also prevalent across all levels of the workforce in the transport sector. Women remain underrepresented in transport-related employment and technical fields (Ng and Acker, 2020) with their participation rates varying widely by region. While women represent 21 percent of transport and storage workers in Europe and Central Asia, women participation rate is only 3 per cent in the Middle East and North Africa (Kurshitashvili, 2025). Meanwhile, the share of women in the transport workforce is notably declining in the Pacific (ESCAP, 2024a). Estimates also indicate that women hold only 23 per cent of senior leadership roles in transport and supply chain companies surveyed globally (World Economic Forum, 2023), implying a slow career progression for women within the sector.

Accessible transport systems with gender-inclusive designs, along with surveillance and monitoring features, can create safer travel conditions for women and girls, progressing toward achieving Target 5.2, which aims to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls in public and private spheres. Meanwhile, increasing women representation in the transport workforce can be achieved through education and training programs, hiring and retaining women, as well as through changes in existing social and cultural perceptions (Ng and Acker, 2018). Therefore, the active and effective participation of women in transport design, planning and implementation will constitute a more inclusive approach. By prioritizing safe and inclusive transport while actively fostering women's participation and leadership in the workforce of transport sector, women and girls are empowered to fully engage in social and economic activities, realize their full potential, ultimately leading to greater gender equality.

Goal 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure

New digital technologies have given rise to significant evolutions in the transport sector. Recent innovations, such as autonomous vehicles and intelligent transport systems are transforming the transport sector to be more connected and efficient. These developments present new opportunities to build transport infrastructures that are more inclusive, sustainable and resilient, supporting economic growth and human well-being, ensuring affordable and equitable access for all (Target 9.1). Smart mobility, for example, is part of this transformation. By employing advanced information and communication technology in transport systems and services, smart mobility enhances users' travel experience in their trips by allowing individuals to move more freely and easily (ESCAP, 2022a). It shifts traditional transport paradigms of private transport, public transport, and paratransit to customized, user-oriented services that adapt to individual traveller behaviours such as e-scooter sharing, demand-responsive transport, ride sharing or ride hailing services (ESCAP, 2023). People from low-income households, for instance, can benefit from ride-sharing services, which reduce the financial burden of vehicle ownership by enabling shared transport costs.

Figure 1: Intersection of transport services, digitalization, and social exclusion



Source: Durand et al. (2022).

In addition, figure 1 shows the association between digital inequality, refers to a gap between those who had access to technologies versus those who do not (Scheerder et al., 2019; Durand et al., 2022), transport disadvantage and risk of social exclusion. As digitalization is transforming the transport sector, it is critical to acknowledge that transport users lacking access to smartphones, the internet, or the necessary digital skills to navigate digital transport platforms, such as older persons, people with learning and communication issues, face a risk of exclusion from transport access (Durand et al., 2022).

To foster an inclusive transport system in the era of digitalization and to ensure that their benefits will expend to all users, a focus on an inclusive design from the start, the provision of digital literacy programs to showcase the added value of digital tools, and the offer of specialist

products and non-digital alternatives can be effective strategies in addition to a coordinated and multi-sectoral approach (Durand et al., 2023). A comprehensive approach to inclusive digital mobility must focus on clear communication, stakeholder collaboration, and the co-creation of services such as partnerships with civil society to effectively engage all user groups throughout the development and implementation phases, while also ensuring data protection for users (Delaere et al., 2024).

Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities

By 2050, an estimated 68.4 per cent of the world population will be living in urban areas, with the majority of this growth occurring in developing regions, particularly in Asia and Africa (UN-Habitat, 2022). The urban population in Asia is expected to grow from 54 per cent today to 66.2 per cent by 2050, while Africa's urban population is projected to rise from 45.9 per cent to 58.9 per cent over the same period (UN-Habitat, 2022). This rapid urban expansion is accompanied by a significant surge in the demand for urban passenger transport, a trend anticipated to affect all world regions. According to the International Transport Forum (2023), the global demand for passenger transport is expected to increase by 79 per cent by 2050, assuming current decarbonization policies remain in place. The combination of accelerated urbanization and growing transport demand is placing substantial pressure on existing urban transport systems, many of which are currently operating near or already at full capacity.

Target 11.2 aims to provide safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, with a notable expansion of public transport. It also highlights the need for transport to accommodate the diverse needs of all people. Meanwhile, Target 11.3 calls for the alignment of transport planning and management with urban development to optimize resources. In this context, inclusive urban transport is a fundamental pillar of sustainable cities, ensuring that all users regardless of their circumstances can access essential services, economic opportunities, and social activities. A barrier-free urban transport system allows people to move efficiently, contribute to economic growth and promotes equity.

Several challenges hinder the inclusivity of urban transport systems, many of which overlap with broader systemic issues in the transport sector. These include transport poverty, socioeconomic inequality and the digital divide (Velaga et al., 2012; Lucas et al., 2016; Durand et al., 2022). For instance, high transport costs disproportionately affect low-income populations, forcing them to forego desired travel and opportunities, use inferior travel options including inconvenient, uncomfortable, and sometimes dangerous modes of transport, or overspend on mobility (Litman, 2025). At the same time, in urban areas, low-income households are often located in peripheral locations at the outskirts of cities, where access to essential services and employment opportunities is limited (Lucas et al., 2016). This geographic isolation, combined with a lack of affordable and efficient transport options, creates a cycle of poverty trap, that is, limited mobility prevents individuals from improving their socioeconomic conditions and undermines their sense of belonging to the city (Harvey, 2003). On the other hand, as cities increasingly integrate digital solutions, such as contactless payments, real-time transit information, transport users who lack digital literacy may face severe mobility challenges.

In order to support social inclusion, the transport sector should strive to reflect the diverse needs of all segments of society, leaving no one behind by fulfilling the four A's, being available, accessible, affordable and acceptable (box 1).

Box 1: The 4A's for inclusive transport

- **Available:** transport options should be conveniently located and operated at times and frequencies that align with people's daily activities, including education, work, and social engagements.
- **Accessible:** transport systems must be designed for safety and ease of use, ensuring that all individuals, irrespective of their circumstances, can utilize and navigate without difficulty.
- **Affordable:** transport users should have access to a variety of transport options that meet their budget. Transport expenses should not constrain mobility.
- **Acceptable:** transport services, infrastructure, and facilities should be safe, reliable, and comfortable, enhancing user experience while meeting the diverse needs of all passengers.

Source: Urban Transport Group (2022).

An example of the application of these principles is the development of a set of regional guidelines (table 2) on social inclusion and innovations intended to strengthen the capacity of transport policy makers and urban planners across Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP, 2025b). These guidelines, developed by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) aim to support the design, implementation, and management of urban transport systems that are socially inclusive and responsive to the needs of diverse population groups. The guidelines were presented to the Committee on Transport at its Eight session in November 2024 and they were taken note by the Committee as a reference point (ESCAP, 2024b).

Table 2: ESCAP Guidelines on enhancing social inclusion and innovations in urban transport systems

Guideline 1: Conduct timely data collection and analysis	
Strategy 1.1	Prioritize the regular collection and analyses of travel behaviour and accident data
Strategy 1.2	Integrate travel behaviour and accident data analysis into transport planning decisions
Strategy 1.3	Develop standardized indicators for inclusive transport and accessibility assessment
Strategy 1.4	Include the project impact on different social groups in cost-benefit analyses
Guideline 2: Mainstream social inclusion in urban transport	
Strategy 2.1	Provide affordable and accessible urban transport
Strategy 2.2	Improve the accessibility of services and opportunities for different social groups
Strategy 2.3	Promote active mobility in combination with public transport
Strategy 2.4	Modify and simplify regulatory frameworks
Strategy 2.5	Map and address safety and security concerns
Strategy 2.6	Improve gender equality in the transport workforce
Guideline 3: Integrate transport innovation for social inclusion	
Strategy 3.1	Design smart transport from a social inclusion perspective
Strategy 3.2	Steer national policies to foster innovative transport solutions
Strategy 3.3	Actively consider strategies and policy plans from the regional road map on smart transport for social inclusion
Guideline 4: Enhance capacity-building and awareness-raising	
Strategy 4.1	Develop organizational and capacity-building strategies
Strategy 4.2	Launch targeted campaigns
Strategy 4.3	Apply monitoring and feedback mechanisms
Strategy 4.4	Implement sustainable and inclusive procurement systems
Strategy 4.5	Develop tools to support the decision-making process
Strategy 4.6	Integrate social inclusion and innovations in transport training and education
Guideline 5: Promote inclusive consultation and collaboration	
Strategy 5.1	Consult and collaborate with different social and transport user groups
Strategy 5.2	Support cross-sectoral collaboration between transport and other sectors

Source: ESCAP (2025b).

In addition, the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific (2022–2026) includes a safe and inclusive transport goal, supported by a thematic area on "inclusive transport and mobility" (ESCAP, 2022b). A specific activity to develop a handbook on transport, social inclusion and related SDGs, which can help ESCAP member States identify transport policies that will reduce inequality, including through improved access to affordability of transport, was also included in the implementation activities of the Regional Action Programme.

This *Handbook of Best Practices on Transport and Social Inclusion* is developed with the objective of highlighting existing relevant transport policies and practices in Asia and the Pacific that can enhance the social inclusion of transport by focusing on the transport needs of low-income users, women, older persons and persons with disabilities. It presents a comprehensive compilation of best practices and effective policies for promoting social inclusion in the transport sector. By highlighting successful practices that have demonstrated positive impacts on the travel experience of different user groups, this handbook serves as a resource for policymakers, planners, and transport authorities, bolstering their capacity to develop transport services, infrastructure and systems that are accessible, affordable, available, and acceptable for all.

BEST PRACTICES ON TRANSPORT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION 2

This chapter highlights successful best practices collected mainly from cities and countries across the Asia-Pacific region that have effectively improved the social inclusion of transport through greater accessibility for all users.

The best practices presented in this chapter are primarily drawn from a literature review of existing examples in Asia and the Pacific, some of which are derived from the *Enhancing Social Inclusion and Innovations in Urban Transport Systems in Asia-Pacific Cities* report (ESCAP, 2025b). Additionally, these examples are compiled from a series of presentations from ESCAP member States and development partners, including presentations shared at an Expert Group Meeting in October 2023 and a Regional Meeting in June 2024. These practices of promoting social inclusion in transport are categorized in accordance with four specific SDGs, which are a) Goal 3 targeting at reducing the number of deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents; b) Goal 5 focusing at enhancing safety protection and personal security for women mobility; c) Goal 9 showcasing innovations from various countries to promote social inclusion in transport; and d) Goal 11 aiming at practices to enhance social inclusion in urban transport systems. It is important to note that the best practices presented do not solely align with one SDG but may possibly address multiple, interrelated SDGs in some cases.

2.1 Goal 3: Good health and well-being

Target 3.6 *Halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents*

2.1.1 Transport standards for persons with disabilities

❖ Australia

On 20 March 2024, Australian Government announced major reform to the *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002* (Transport Standards) developed under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Australian Government, 2024). These reforms aim to improve public transport accessibility, eliminate discrimination against persons with disabilities, and provide greater clarity for public transport operators and providers.

The reforms were developed in collaboration with persons with disabilities, the public transport industry, and state and territory governments. The process consists of two policy design stages

followed by a third legislative stage. Stage 1 identified 16 key areas for reform, while stage 2 considered 60 reform areas and various implementation approaches. For each reform area, three policy options were proposed:

- Regulatory reforms: Legislative changes made to the Transport Standards to include new requirements. For regulatory reforms, three implementation approaches were considered, including: a) new requirements would apply to new or substantially upgraded assets; b) new requirements would apply to existing assets with a compliance schedule; c) new requirements would apply from the date the amendments to the Transport Standards come into effect.
- Non-regulatory reforms: The provision of updates to guidance materials, including the *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport Guidelines* and the *Whole Journey Guide*.
- Status quo: No changes to the Transport Standards or guidance.

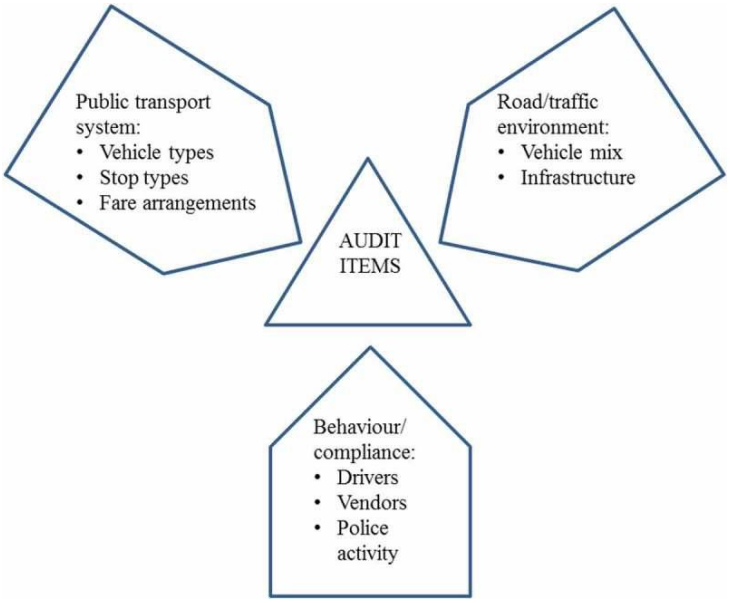
Each policy option has been chosen for each reform area based on available evidence including public submissions and impact evaluations drawn from cost-benefit analysis. Overall, 76 reforms were identified, comprising 53 regulatory reforms, 16 non-regulatory reforms, and 7 reforms requiring further work to determine the extent of the issue or explore alternative solutions. Several reforms focus on enhancing the travel experience for people with disability using public transport, including the following.

- Mandatory disability awareness training tailored to the specific roles and responsibilities of staff;
- Regulatory requirements for the quantity, location and identification of priority seats;
- Regulatory requirement that online information is not the sole means of providing information;
- Continuous handrails in subways and bridges to improve accessibility and safety;
- Booking accessibility for passengers with disabilities, ensuring they can reserve seats in appropriate areas of a public transport vehicle to meet their travelling needs.

❖ Journey Access Tool (JAL) in Cambodia

Journey Access Tool is a framework designed to evaluate and enhance accessibility within transport systems, particularly for persons with disabilities. The conceptual approach developed by Queensland University of Technology (QUT) combines access audits and road safety audits to identify transport barriers. A key feature of the tool is the incorporation of direct engagement and feedback on the travel experiences of people with a disability on their regular journey to utilize services such as education, employment, healthcare or general community services. As illustrated in figure 2, the tool considers factors in three key categories, namely public transport system; road and traffic environment; and behaviour of other road users.

Figure 2: Conceptual basis of the JAT



Source: King et al. (2018)

The component of access audits systematically evaluates the accessibility of transport facilities, identifies areas needing improvement, and offers targeted recommendations for enhancement. Meanwhile, the road safety audits component provides an examination of road sections or intersections for deficiencies, safety concerns, and crashes potential. The tool was undertaken in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, through a collaboration between the QUT team and the Handicap International Cambodia (now renamed Humanity and Inclusion) (King et al., 2018). Participants included people with a disability who were accompanied by personal assistants, interpreters, or relatives while using public transport. The initial development of the tool was piloted in 2015 through an iterative formative evaluation process to examine inefficiencies in road usage. The JAT was then used to evaluate sidewalk accessibility to bus stops in 2021 and later expanded to provide a more comprehensive evaluation of public transit accessibility in 2022. This included analyzing not only bus stops but also the boarding and de-boarding experience, the design of buses, and specific obstacles faced by persons with disabilities. These assessments aimed to identify key infrastructural and operational shortcomings that could be addressed to create a more inclusive and accessible transport system in Phnom Penh.

In addition to the lack of enforcement of traffic laws and parking regulations contributing to the alternative use of sidewalks, the JAT assessments revealed several other barriers obstructing the public transport accessibility for persons with disabilities (Asia Foundation, 2023). One major issue identified was the improper parking of passenger cars and motorcycles at road corners, on the sidewalks, or even within intersections. This obstruction forces pedestrians, including those using wheelchairs or individuals with visual impairments, to navigate onto the roadway, significantly increasing their risk of injury. Moreover, vehicles were frequently found parked in front of bus stops or directly on the roads, preventing buses from pulling up close to designated stops. This not only disrupts the boarding process but also creates additional hazards for passengers, particularly those with mobility challenges, who may struggle to board safely when access to the bus is blocked.

The JAT has demonstrated its powerful advocacy tool by directly gathering feedback from persons with disabilities that can be used to address transport challenges from inaccessible sidewalks and bus stops to difficulties in boarding and navigating public transport. The findings have contributed to policy advancements, including the introduction of the *Technical Standards on Physical Accessibility Infrastructure for Persons with Disabilities*, officially proclaimed between the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction and the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (Disability Action Council General Secretariat, 2018).

These technical standards are established to guide the construction and modification of public physical infrastructure projects, ensuring barrier-free mobility for individuals with all types of disabilities. Some of the standards and recommendations for accessible routes that accommodate persons with disabilities, whether on foot or using wheelchairs, are:

- The route shall have a hard and level surface with slopes of no more than 1/50;
- Avoid leaving holes and tilt between bricks larger than 5 mm;
- Prevent danger at height changing places with appropriate ramps and guardrails;
- The route width shall be at least 2,000 mm wide for wheelchairs to pass one another easily;
- The minimum width for a pathway in an area that many people use, such as the paths to hospitals, train stations, schools, and flood safety hills is 2,500 mm.

These standards are indeed in line with the recommendations from the JAT assessments on the accessible pedestrian pathway, curb ramps along routes to bus stops, and accessible in formation for people with low vision. With the introduction of this initiative, Cambodian authorities have been taking a crucial step toward creating a more inclusive environment where persons with disabilities can travel safely.

2.1.2 Tools for safety enhancement

❖ Smart canes

The introduction of smart canes has significantly transformed the lives of seniors and persons with disabilities. For example, the latest generation of smart canes is designed with innovative safety, navigation, and AI features, greatly enhances mobility for visual impaired people.

The device incorporates custom-designed detection technology that can alert users overhead obstacles through audible feedback, while maintaining the ground-level awareness. Additionally, the intelligent voice assistant feature enables users to receive audio responses from built-in speakers for navigation queries. With turn-by-turn guidance and multimodal navigation, the cane provides the most efficient routes to a destination, informs users about transit options, schedules, and even recommends possible places of interest along the way (WeWALK, 2025).

With these six revolutionary features of enhanced obstacle detection, intelligent voice assistant, seamless connectivity, accessible navigation, live public transit, and boundless exploration, smart canes are not just a form of mobility aids but serve as tools to foster a sense of independence for persons with disabilities, allowing them to continue their daily activities and maintain social connections without relying much on others. By detecting potential hazards and providing immediate feedback, seniors and people with mobility challenges can avoid falls or injuries, alleviating stress and anxiety while navigating crowded and unfamiliar places. As such, smart canes empower users by boosting their confidence and improving overall mental health.

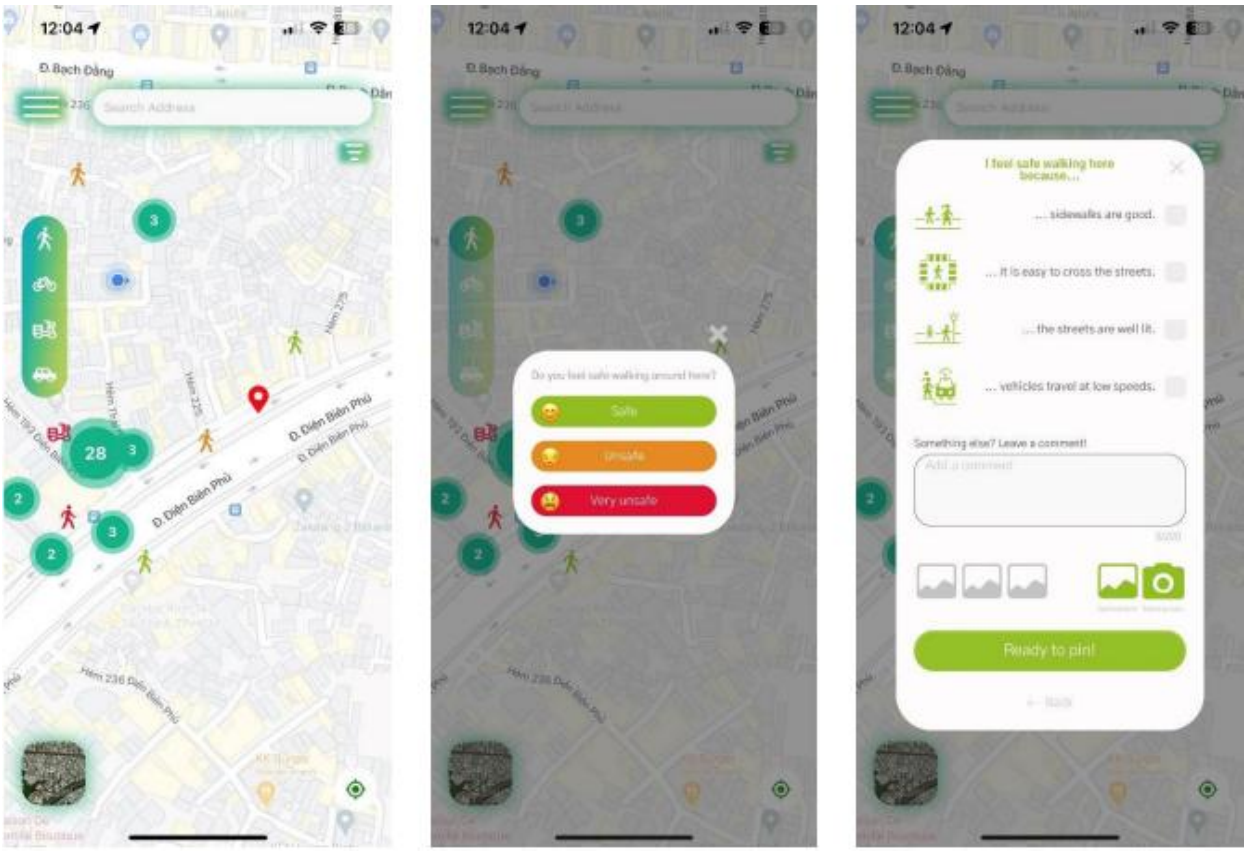
❖ Aubin application for autistic people

According to the National Autistic Society in the United Kingdom, 52 per cent of autistic people reported that a fear of experiencing unexpected changes, such as delays, diversions and cancellations, stopped them from going on a bus or train (Transport Committee, 2025). To tackle this challenge, the Aubin mobile application was developed as an innovative solution to assist autistic individuals with navigating public transport to reach their destination with greater ease (Aubin, 2026). The travel planner component in the application allows users to find the least stressful route based on personal preferences such as avoiding tunnels or crowded stations. The travel companion feature supports users' communication with transport staff, should assistance be needed during a journey. Additionally, Aubin provides detailed station information including step-free access, platform details, available facilities, as well as real-time updates on service disruptions. Rather than prioritizing the travel time or transport costs, Aubin is designed to minimize stress and anxiety for people with autism, providing accessible and supportive solutions when their journeys are disrupted. The application won the Mayor of London Covid Safe Travel Challenge in 2021, helping London recover more inclusively after the pandemic. It was later featured in the Futures of Rail Exhibition at the National Railway Museum in 2024.

❖ Youth Engagement Application

With road traffic injuries being the leading cause of death among children and young people aged 5-29 years globally (WHO, 2023), addressing road safety for youths is also a priority. In Vietnam, 3,389 individuals aged 10-24 lost their lives in road crashes, accounting for 15 per cent of all road fatalities (Bui et al., 2024). With the aim to improve road safety for young people while harnessing the benefits of technology, the AIP Foundation, in collaboration with the International Road Assessment Programme (iRAP), launched a three-year pilot project, namely "AI&Me: Empowering Youth for Safer Roads", in Ho Chi Minh City, Yen Bai City, and Pleiku City. A key component of the initiative is the development of the *Youth Engagement App,* a mobile digital risk-perception tool designed to involve students in road safety assessments (figure 3). The application enables young users to map locations they perceive as "safe" or "unsafe" on their daily school routes. A cohort of 1,700 students, aged 13-22, from 17 target schools were invited to participate in the pilot program.

Figure 3: Interface of Youth Engagement Application



Source: Bui et al. (2024).

Multiple surveys were conducted targeting three key groups: youth, teachers and local government authorities to assess the effectiveness of the application and evaluate the level of support. Training workshops with teachers and local authorities, focus groups discussion with students, and in-depth interviews with teachers were held to gather valuable insights into how the application influenced students' perceptions of road safety and their engagement in identifying hazards. With 18,617 pins mapped via the application, the project successfully identified high-risk locations, leading to a thorough evaluation of road safety conditions at 30 schools. The results were subsequently shared with government authorities, resulting in successful advocacy efforts for road infrastructure improvements at high-risk schools. By actively involving young people in road hazards identification and reporting, the project demonstrated that the Youth Engagement Application is an effective platform for empowering youth to raise road safety awareness. It also reinforced that youth participation in decision-making process can drive meaningful change.

2.2 Goal 5: Gender equality

Target 5.2 *Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres*

Target 5.5 *Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life*

2.2.1 Safety and personal security for women

Best practices focusing on the improvement of safety and security of women include technologies that can enable real time tracking and navigation in transport for safety and emergency response, allowing women to seek immediate assistance and report unsafe situations. By optimizing the capabilities of mobile technology, women can make informed mobility decisions and travel with greater confidence.

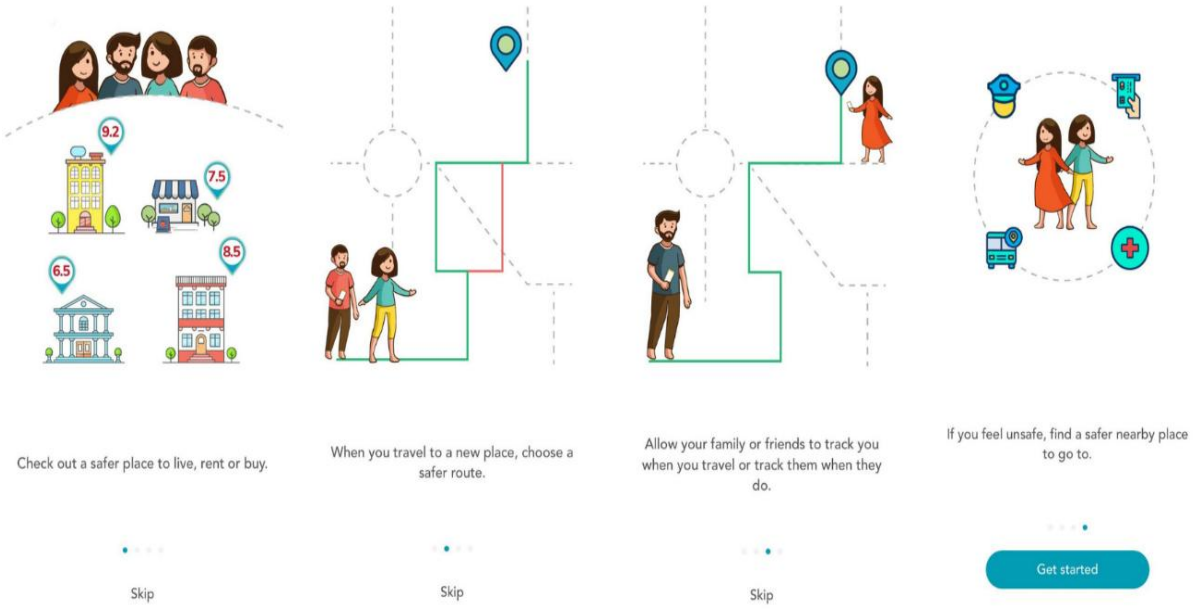
❖ My Safetipin Application

My Safetipin Application, developed by Safetipin, is a location-based mobile application that collects safety related information and conducts safety and security audits at different scales, including at street scale, ward scale, or a specific location such as a bus stop. Figure 4 shows the interface of My Safetipin Application.

Nine measuring parameters are considered including lighting, openness, visibility, security, crowd density, connectivity, gender, feelings of safety, and presence of footpaths or walkways. For one location, each parameter is scored separately. The overall safety score is determined by using a weighted mean function for a scale of 1 to 4, ranging from poor to good condition respectively. This safety assessment enables app-users to make informed decisions about secure routes in unfamiliar areas, optimize their travel plans, and allow friends and family to track their movements in real-time.

With over 400,000 safety audits completed and a community of more than 100,000 users, Safetipin's geo-tagged data has provided crucial evidence to support decision-making of local authorities and community organizations with identifying areas in need of safety improvements (Sharma, 2023). Targeted interventions such as better lighting and improved pavements therefore can be provided to enhance overall safety in these areas.

Figure 4: Interface of My Safetipin Application



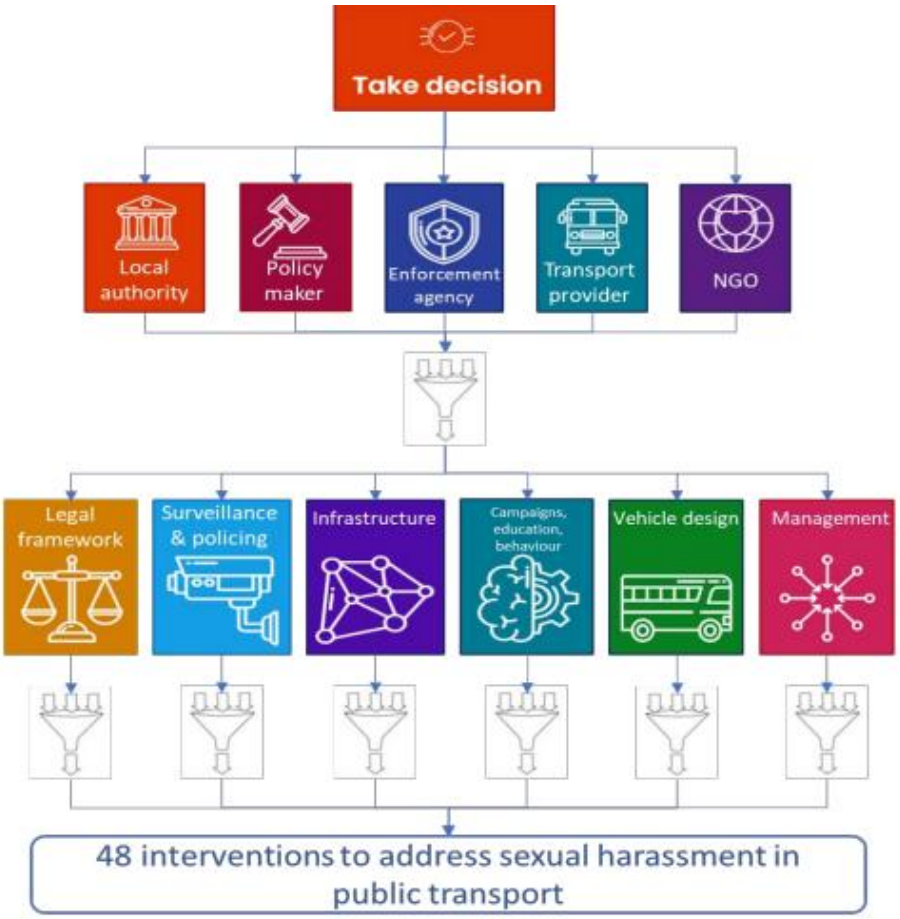
Source: Safetipin.

❖ SHE CAN tool

The SHE CAN tool is a user-friendly, web-based resource, assisting policymakers and transport providers to develop an evidence-based approach to tackle sexual harassment and personal security in public transport (Curtis et al., 2024). The tool offers resources in the form of collection methods, interventions and case studies. It is the final output of the EMPOWER project that is a two-year research programme engaging multiple stakeholders across Africa to understand the prevalence of harassment in formal and informal public transport networks. Stakeholder inputs gathered from interviews, workshops, and beta testing throughout the project were integrated in the software development.

The SHE CAN tool features a dual-purpose design. It guides stakeholders through a tailored pathway to access relevant information while also serving as a repository with categorized direct links. As illustrated by Lane-Visser et al. (2023) in figure 5, the tool offers five tailored pathways for stakeholders: local authorities, policymakers, enforcement agencies, transport providers, and non-governmental organizations. Based on the selection of the stakeholder type, the tool then extracts the relevant subset of sexual harassment intervention strategies applicable for the selected stakeholder type. These interventions are effectively filtered from 48 proposed interventions compiled from literature review, expert analysis and stakeholder inputs.

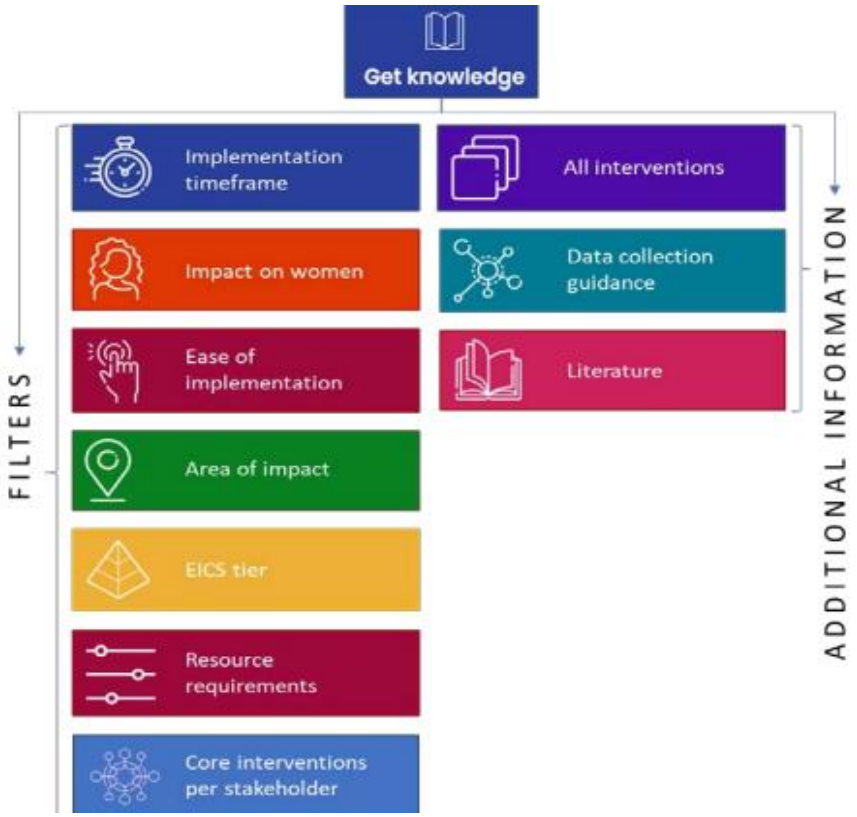
Figure 5: Structure of the SHE CAN tailored portion



Source: Lane-Visser et al. (2023).

The information repository offers an alternative way for users to access the tool's content, extending beyond intervention strategies for sexual harassment (figure 6). For example, it provides guidance on data collection to assess the prevalence and extent of sexual harassment in public transport, including step-by-step instructions, sample documents, and best practices for surveys, focus groups, and stakeholder engagement. Additionally, it features findings from data collection exercises conducted during the EMPOWER project. Users can also explore multiple other filters of interventions based on implementation timeframe, ease of execution, impact on women, or the areas of the public transport system they affect, based on an internal ranking system.

Figure 6: Structure of the SHE CAN repository portion



Source: Lane-Visser et al. (2023).

The application of the SHE CAN tool has proven to be a success in Lagos, Nigeria. The Lagos Metropolitan Area Transport Authority integrated the tool into its operational procedures, resulting in a significant change within the Lagos transport sector and the organization (Ogbara and Sonoiki, n.d.). This includes the integration of the SHE CAN tool resources into ISO Management Systems to support the delivery of the SHE CAN Champions, advocating for gender awareness and safer transport environment. It ensures that gender integration remains prioritized across all levels of the organization, from policy development to the gender-inclusive design of new bus terminals and the ongoing construction of the 49km Quality Bus Corridor, Marina and Mile 2 Interchanges.

2.2.2 Women participation in the transport workforce

Recognizing the difficult challenges that women encounter in joining and thriving within the transport workforce, multiple initiatives have been established at the global, regional, and national levels to promote gender inclusivity as well as to tackle skills and labour shortages in the sector. This section highlights existing policies developed and implemented to address gender imbalance in the transport workforce. This could be through gender mainstreaming in the legislative and policy frameworks, directly targeting at increasing women employment rate in the sector, or strengthening human resources policies to create a supportive working environment for women that could be through prioritizing women employment or improving their working conditions including the provision of more stable wages. These efforts are designed to create a

more equitable and diverse workforce by offering targeted development programs, support women's professional growth and provide greater access to employment opportunities.

❖ Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan's legislative and policy frameworks support equal opportunities for women and men (World Bank, 2023). The 2022-2026 Socio-Economic Development Strategy envisages "a dynamic, inclusive and socially just society" as one of the five national priorities, aiming to enhance women's access to employment opportunities and reduce the gender wage gap. Recent policies, including the National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2024-2027), the Employment Strategy (2019-2030), and the accompanying draft Action Plan on Women's Employment in Azerbaijan, aim to eliminate barriers on women's participation in the workforce (Kurshitashvili et al., 2024). In 2022, Azerbaijan's Government lifted employment restrictions on women in 674 occupations across various sectors, including roles such as large bus drivers, train engineers, and asphalt layers. Moreover, several organizations have taken proactive steps to support gender inclusivity by implementing training programs for women in traditionally male-dominated fields and revising human resources policies. One such example is Azerbaijan Railways has recently launched its first training programme for female train operators, while the Port of Baku has been actively recruiting and retaining female interns and offering generous childcare support to female employees (Kurshitashvili and Solotaroff, 2024).

❖ India

The Dantewada Advanced Network of Transport Empowered Self-Help Groups of Women to Assess Remote and Interiors is a project designed by Dantewada district administration to introduce public transport facility in the remote areas of Chhattisgarh, India (ESCAP, 2025b). This innovative initiative aims to enhance mobility and connectivity while creating employment opportunities for tribal women from remote villages.

Another notable example is Azad Foundation's advocacy for women's employment as bus drivers in Delhi. The Foundation played a key role in pushing for policy changes in the recruitment criteria of Delhi Transport Corporation. In 2022, hiring requirements were relaxed, reducing the minimum height for women applicants from 159 cm to 153 cm and lowering the experience criteria after the issuance of the Heavy Motor Vehicle license to one month from three years (Azad Foundation, n.d.).

❖ Nepal

Nepal is making progress in mainstreaming gender and social inclusion in rural transport (ESCAP, 2024a). With 83 per cent of its population living in rural areas, the Government of Nepal has been prioritizing the provision of accessible infrastructure and barrier-free connectivity for rural communities (World Bank, 2018). One such effort is the programme implementation to strengthen national rural transport (SNRTP), aiming at enhancing the availability and reliability of transport connectivity in 37 districts across the country. The project targeted at recruiting

women, especially single women living along the road, through an employment-intensive rural roads maintenance approach. In total, 2679 road maintenance worker groups were recruited, of which 70 per cent were women, while 80 per cent of the road maintenance worker groups were from disadvantaged and vulnerable group (ILO, 2021). Each worker was provided with a monthly wage, an employed identity card, accident insurance, and linkages to the nearest health posts, free bus services to and from work, and local financial institutions.

2.2.3 Regional initiatives for women participation in the transport workforce

❖ Women in Maritime Associations (WIMAs)

Through the gender and capacity-building programme of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), eight Women in Maritime Associations have been established in Africa, Arab States, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America and the Pacific (IMO, 2026). They aim to improve gender balance in the shipping industry, provide members with a platform to discuss technical issues, and offer a variety of training, mentorship, and knowledge-sharing opportunities through established professional networks.

❖ Women's International Shipping and Trading Association (WISTA International)

The Women's International Shipping and Trading Association is a global organization connecting female executives from around the world, building a strong network of more than 5,100 female professionals in the maritime, trading and logistics sectors (WISTA International, 2025). The National WISTA Association (NWS) is supported by 62 countries and is guided by WISTA International. The NWAs facilitates national and regional networking, offers business development opportunities and skill-building programs, and strengthens corporate visibility. Through WISTA's extensive global network, members gain access to a diverse community of shipping and trading professionals, providing valuable opportunities for referrals, mentorship, industry connections, and commercial collaborations.

❖ Women in Transport Network (WiT)

The Women in Transport Network is being established by the World Bank Group (IBRD/IDA, IFC, MIGA) and several development institutions, including the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the European Investment Bank (EIB), the International Transport Forum (ITF), and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) (Kurshitashvili, 2025). The WiT aims to empower women across all areas of the transport sector, with a particular focus on enhancing women's participation in mid- and high-skilled technical and leadership roles. It will initially cover Europe and Central Asia and the Middle East and North Africa regions with the expectation that the Network will gradually expand into a global initiative.

2.3 Goal 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure

Target 9.1 *Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all*

Target 9.a *Facilitate sustainable and resilient infrastructure development in developing countries through enhanced financial, technological and technical support*

Innovation and technology play a crucial role in developing sustainable and inclusive transport systems. New technologies can help bridge mobility gaps and ensure safe, efficient and equally accessible transport for everyone as shown in the following best practices, which highlight various smart solutions aiming to enhance inclusivity in transport by addressing all travel needs and improving accessibility and optimizing transport efficiency.

2.3.1 Pedestrian safety enhancements

❖ Republic of Korea – Smart Crosswalk Safety Service

This system enhances pedestrian safety at crosswalks by utilizing video and radar detection to provide real-time audio-visual alerts (Ralston, 2020). Pedestrians are warned of approaching vehicles, while drivers receive alerts about jaywalking pedestrians. An advanced feature under assessment allows adaptive traffic signals, granting vulnerable road users (VRUs) extra time to cross safely.

❖ Republic of Korea – Smart Intersection Service

This AI-powered system detects vehicles and pedestrians using cameras and object recognition algorithms (MOLIT, 2021). It provides alerts to road users and communicates hazardous events to approaching vehicles, improving both road safety and traffic flow efficiency.

❖ Singapore – Green Man+ Service

Designed for seniors and persons with disabilities, this system extends the green light duration at crosswalks when a discount card is tapped on a reader. Deployed at over 1,000 pedestrian crossings, it ensures s have sufficient time to cross safely (Land Transport Authority, 2025).

2.3.2 Adaptive and on-demand transport services

❖ Singapore – Autonomous Bus Service

Following a year of successful trials that enabled the safe movement of tens of thousands of passengers through thousands of autonomous trips within Resorts World Sentosa (RWS), Singapore's Land Transport Authority has launched a fully driverless bus service connecting key

locations within the RWS precinct on a fixed 12-minute loop (Tan, 2025). The vehicle is equipped with advanced sensing technologies capable of detecting obstacles at distances over 200 metres and is designed without a steering wheel or pedals. This development reflects Singapore's broader efforts to integrate autonomous vehicles into its public transport network, thereby enhancing accessibility, safety, and system efficiency.

❖ Singapore – SimplyGo Contactless Fare Payment

The Land Transport Authority has implemented a seamless fare system using Near Field Communication (NFC) technology, allowing passengers to pay without physical contact. A new initiative is testing radio frequency identification (RFID) to automatically detect fare cards, further reducing barriers for VRUs (SimplyGo, 2026).

2.3.3 Intelligent Traffic Management Systems

❖ Australia – Sydney Cooperative Adaptive Transport Systems (SCATS)

SCATS is an advanced real-time traffic management platform that optimizes the movement of people and goods in Sydney (SCATS, 2022). It integrates intelligent traffic monitoring and road user priority services to improve transport efficiency and sustainability.

❖ Australia – Cooperative Intelligent Transport Systems (C-ITS)

This framework enables direct communication between vehicles, roadside infrastructure and nearby road users, including pedestrians (Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts, 2026). Advanced Connected Vehicles Victoria (ACV2) utilizes 4G networks to deliver safety warnings and enhance road safety for all users, particularly VRUs.

Recognizing the digital divide in the transport sector across countries, knowledge sharing and capacity building are crucial in bridging the gap. Investing in education and technical training can support professionals develop the necessary skills to integrate digital solutions into infrastructure planning and design. One such initiative is the ASEAN Smart City Professional Program (2023-2027), funded by the ASEAN-Korea Cooperation Fund (AKCF). This program provides advanced educational opportunities to experienced officials and professionals engaging in smart city planning. Selected candidates gain specialized knowledge through a Master's degree program at Seoul National University, which offers cutting-edge, transdisciplinary courses under the Smart City Global Convergence Program. The curriculum focuses on innovative urban development strategies, digital transformation in transport, and sustainable mobility solutions, equipping graduates to implement smart transport systems in their home countries. In early 2024, the program welcomed its first cohort, with nine students commencing their two years Master's degree program (AKCF, 2024). These professionals will receive academic training, engage in research, develop case studies and collaborate with industry experts, establishing a network of skilled professionals ready to apply and drive smart city innovations across ASEAN.

2.4 Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities

Target 11.2 *Provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attentions to the needs of those in vulnerable groups*

Target 11.3 *Enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management*

Best practices that can address the urgent need for increased investments to expand the capacity of urban transport networks and enhance their quality, inclusivity and sustainability (ESCAP, 2024a) include upgrading outdated systems, building new infrastructure, integrating digital technologies, and ensuring transport services are accessible.

❖ Cambodia

Since 2019, Phnom Penh City Bus Authority has expanded the provision of free public bus services to children under one meter height, students, persons with disabilities, senior citizens, monks, and manufacturing workers (Prak, 2024). The fare for bus service is fixed at KHR 1,500 (USD 0.36) for each trip and bus users can conveniently choose to pay by cash, QR-code or cashless transactions using the City Bus Card. To utilize the bus system efficiently, a City Bus mobile application has recently been developed to provide information on Phnom Penh City Bus. This new application, together with the recent integration of bus service with Google Maps through the General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS), has enabled bus users to track bus movement in real-time, view available bus routes and timetables and thereby can plan their travel more efficiently. Furthermore, to alleviate traffic congestion and increase bus ridership, in June 2024, Prime Minister Hun Manet called for forward-thinking transit solutions, specifically instructed the Phnom Penh Administration to incorporate designated bus lanes into infrastructure development (Nimol, 2024).

❖ Pakistan

The Peshawar Bus Rabid Transit System, known as Zu Peshawar, is a model of success in reshaping and revitalizing the city's public transport system (ITDP, 2024). Previously, the public transport in the city was unsafe and inaccessible with high-floored vehicles, limiting mobility of individuals with disabilities. Harassment deterred female riders, reducing their participation to just 2 per cent, while high fares exclude low-income individuals. Zu Peshawar introduced reforms with effective strategies to restructure and rejuvenate the public transport system, including the following.

- The Bus Industry Restructuring Program: 504 outdated vehicles were replaced with modern diesel-hybrid buses, thereby mitigating carbon emissions and increasing the efficiency of the transport system.
- The Peshawar Safe Travel Program was implemented with inclusivity and safety measures

catering for women, children, transgender and persons with disabilities. Key components of this program are the provision of dedicated separate spaces for women on buses and waiting areas at the stations; the installation of priority ticketing counters; well-lit stations and CCTV surveillance to ensure passenger safety. All stations are also equipped with accessibility features to assist persons with disabilities such as ramps and elevators for wheelchair accessibility, tactile paving and audio announcements for visually impaired individuals, and visual signs for those with hearing impairments. A team of well-trained security personnel and staff can assist passengers when needed.

These collective efforts have led to a significant increase in female ridership to 30 per cent, reflecting greater security and confidence among women in using public transport. Beyond efficiency and modernization, Zu Peshawa has enhanced mobility for marginalized groups, establishing itself as a sustainable, accessible, and inclusive transit system. This success earned it Honorable Mentions in the Sustainable Transport Award programs in both 2022 and 2024 for its inclusive and people-centered approach.

❖ Philippines

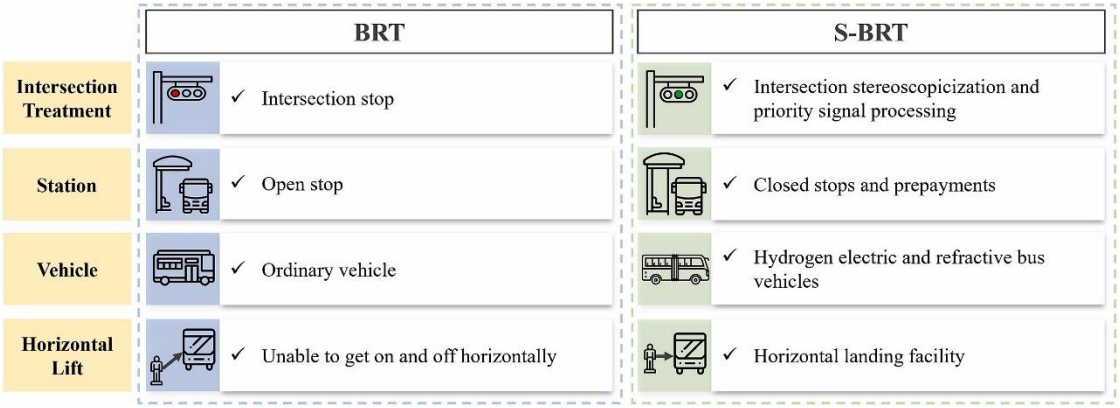
The Government of the Philippines has unwaveringly committed to strengthen the transport infrastructure towards a more comfortable, accessible, safe, sustainable and affordable transport system for all users. Through Executive Order No. 14, s. 2023, the Philippine Development Plan 2023 – 2028 was approved and adopted (Presidential Communications Office, 2023). Notably, the Outcome 2 "Seamless and Inclusive Connectivity via Local and International Linkages Achieved" in Chapter 12 "Expand and Upgrade Infrastructure" mandates the implementation of design standards for transit stations and interchanges. These standards emphasize convenient transfers, high quality service, universal accessibility, gender inclusivity, and sustainability. To effectively achieve this outcome, the Department of Transportation (2024) subsequently issued Order No. 2024-002, establishing the Transit Facility Design Standard (TFDS). It serves as a framework for the adoption, implementation, and enforcement of transit facility design standards across the transport network. Key components of the TFDS include the provision of inclusive facilities, such as dedicated lactation rooms, at least one gender-based violence help desk per transit facility, and clear and intuitive navigation like standardized signage and information displays within transit facilities, ensuring seamless and independent movement for all passengers (Garcia, 2024).

❖ Republic of Korea

The Super Bus Rabid Transit System (S-BRT) has recently been introduced in Korea following the establishment of the standard guidelines for S-BRT by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport in 2019. The S-BRT system is defined as a BRT structured with systematic facilities, offering significantly higher level of efficiency while serving as an environmentally friendly transit model (Kang et al., 2023). As shown in figure 7, there are four differences between BRT and S-BRT. In the S-BRT system, public transport vehicles can move faster by receiving priority signals.

Passengers can prepay at enclosed stations installed with screen doors, providing a safer and more comfortable waiting environment. Additionally, wheelchair users can conveniently board through horizontal landing facilities. The system also enhances operational efficiency by utilizing hydrogen-electric and refractive buses, promoting sustainable public transport.

Figure 7: Difference between BRT and S-BRT



Source: Kang et al. (2023).

3 CONCLUSIONS

Current transport services, infrastructure and systems in Asia and the Pacific often do not address the travel needs and accessibility of all user groups including women, persons with disabilities, older persons, and low-income populations, who are subject to mobility barriers that hinder their access to essential services. These barriers, encompassing unaffordable fares, inaccessible infrastructure, unsafe environment and digital divide can widen existing disparities when social inclusion is not effectively integrated into transport policies and planning. This handbook underscores the strong linkages among social inclusion, the transport sector, and multiple SDGs, especially SDG 3 (Good health and well-being), SDG 5 (Gender equality), SDG 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure), and SDG 11 (Sustainable cities and communities). The achievement of social inclusion in transport is not a stand-alone goal but rather a critical component of broader sustainable, resilient and inclusive development strategies within the sector.

Despite the progress made thus far, as illustrated in Chapter 2, the path towards inclusive transport still has its challenges. Key issues that have been identified and persist include inadequate policy frameworks, insufficient awareness, limited funding, lack of disaggregated data, gender biases, weak enforcement of accessibility and safety standards, and the low level of mainstreaming social inclusion in transport planning and policy development in general. It is imperative that women, persons with disabilities, older persons and low-income households are meaningfully engaged in decision-making processes and represented in the transport workforce, thereby enabling transformative changes by reflecting their diverse needs.

As the region continues to grow and technologies evolve to shape the future of transport, it is increasingly urgent to ensure that transport systems are affordable, accessible, available, and acceptable to all. Transport systems must be designed to serve the diverse needs of all segments of society, especially since it is more than a means of moving people from one place to another but also a critical enabler for poverty reduction, economic and social participation, overall well-being and empowerment. With only five years remaining to achieve the SDGs, urgent and coordinated actions are needed to ensure that no one is left behind.

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