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# MOVING BARRIERS, INCREASING ACCESS

An Assessment of the Mobility of Women  
with Disabilities and the Elderly Women



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## AUTHORSHIP AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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### For more information



Flone Initiative is a Pan-African woman-led non-profit organization working towards the realization of safe, accessible, inclusive, and sustainable public transportation for all in Africa, with a particular focus on women professionals in public transport and vulnerable groups

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BRT	Bus Rapid Transport
CBD	Central Business District
CIDP	County Integrated Development Plan
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
OPDs	Organisations of Persons with Disabilities
FGD	Focused Group Discussion
KBS	Kenya Bus Service
KES	Kenya Shillings
KURA	Kenya Urban Roads Authority
NCCG	Nairobi City County Government
NCPWD	National Council for Persons with Disabilities
NEMA	National Environment Management Authority
NIUDP	Nairobi Integrated Urban Development Plan
NMS	Nairobi Metropolitan Service
NMT	Non-Motorized Transport
NTSA	National Transport and Safety Authority
PSV	Public Service Vehicle
PWD	Persons with Disabilities

## FOREWORD

Flone Initiative is a women-led organization working towards creating safe, sustainable and accessible public transportation spaces for women and vulnerable groups in Africa by influencing behavioural change, generating knowledge and movement-building. We envision a world where everyone can experience all freedoms of mobility.

Flone Initiative believes in implementing evidence-based programmes. In 2021, we carried out a study to document the accessibility of public transport by persons with disabilities and the elderly, which provided some rights insights, albeit generic. To ensure focused and targeted interventions, we commissioned a second related assessment focusing on women with disabilities and the elderly women limited to Nairobi County. The second assessment had a broader scope of four counties within the Nairobi Metropolitan Counties, including Nairobi, Kiambu, Machakos and Kajiado Counties. The findings from this assessment are expected to inform the policy makers on the areas of improvement to achieve accessibility in public transport services.

We wish to thank the parties involved in this assessment, including women with disability, elderly women, government agencies, matatu staff, owners and operators, and non-state stakeholders. We hope that the findings and recommendations will positively and have a long-term impact on our public transport services.

We express our gratitude to the technical research team from Wisena Consultancy led by Nathaniel Muthomi and supported by Collins Ombajo, Belinda Adhiambo and Agnes Njagi. Finally, we also acknowledge the staff of Flone Initiative, who supported this process.

**Naomi Mwaura**  
**Executive Director**



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The assessment aimed to identify technical, social, and policy gaps and implementation challenges concerning inclusive mobility focusing on women with disabilities and older women in Nairobi County. It was also aimed to document scalable interventions and case studies on inclusive mobility in public transport that can be replicated in other counties of Kenya to enhance public transport usage by people with disabilities and the elderly.

Findings from the assessment indicated that currently, women with disabilities and elderly women face challenges in accessing public transport services due to a wide array of structural, policy, and socio-economic barriers. The policy challenges identified include the lack of inclusive national and county transport policies and inadequate implementation of existing policies. The technical challenges identified include inaccessible public transport vehicles, unaffordable and hidden costs of transport, vulnerability to sexual harassment, limited road safety, risk of losing assistive devices and luggage, inaccessible bus terminuses, inaccessible facilities and inaccessible information on public transport. Other technical challenges include unresponsive reporting mechanisms, inaccessible non-motorized transport infrastructure, congestion, noise and pollution and a non-representative workforce. The social barriers identified include patriarchal dominance in the public transport sector, discriminative attitude by staff, unresponsiveness by matatu staff to the needs of women with disabilities and the elderly, and insensitive attitude by other passengers.

The challenges identified are interrelated, where one may have a causal relationship with the other. It is recognized that the government of Kenya, both at the national and county levels, is making an effort to provide generally accessible transport services. However,

marginalized groups such as women with disabilities and the elderly are still disadvantaged due to the existing barriers. There is an urgent need for more focused policies and goodwill from the state and non-state actors to take deliberate steps to improve the accessibility of public transport services. From the assessment, recommendations are made targeting different stakeholders that can help improve the situation. It should be noted that much as the recommendations are pointed towards particular stakeholders, their implementation requires multi-pronged and multi-stakeholder approaches.

### **Policy recommendations for government agencies**

- Enforce the requirement for constructing accessible vehicles. The Ministry of Transport should implement the ISO DKS 372 to ensure that all vehicles being built are accessible. The NCPWD should issue adjustment orders to non-complying PSV owners as per Section 24 of the Persons with Disabilities Act (2003). Additionally, the government can provide tax incentives to the PSV operators that comply.
- Formulate regulations on bus fares. The Ministry of Transport and the Ministry concerned with social services should develop policy regulations on fares that provide waivers or subsidized fares, especially for persons with disabilities and elderly persons.
- Enhance the social assistance programme. The Ministry of Labour and Social Services should enhance the enrolment of elderly women and persons with severe disabilities in their respective cash transfer programs, especially in the urban areas and improve the timeliness of disbursement for those already enrolled.
- Enforce the Noise Control Regulations of 2009 on loud music in public service vehicles. NEMA should enforce regulation 8 of the Noise and Excessive Vibration Pollution Control Regulations of 2009, targeting public service vehicles.
- To address the incidences of sexual and gender-based violence within the matatu sector, the Ministry of Transport and other stakeholders in the criminal justice system should strictly enforce



the provisions of Section 103 of the Traffic Act that outlaws touting. Those incriminated with sexual and gender-based violence should be according to the Sexual Offences Act (2006).

- Develop a mandatory and certifiable customer relations training course for matatu staff. The Ministry of Transport should develop a mandatory training course for all staff working in the public transport sector.
- Increased implementation and sensitization of the public on non-motorized transport. NMS and NCCG should continue building more NMT spaces that adhere to persons with disabilities' needs while ridding off the barriers and sensitizing the public on shared spaces for non-motorized transport.
- Establish a system for reporting abuse cases in the public transport service. NTSA, in partnership with other partners, should develop a complaint reporting system that is universally accessible, anonymous, free, technology-based and linked to the concerned government agencies such as the police.
- County Governments. Improve the accessibility of public amenities, including at least one for each gender in all bus terminuses and waive the costs.
- The National Police Service: Strengthen Policare to address abuse and underreporting cases of women with disabilities and elderly women.

### **Recommendations for matatu owners and operators**

- Practice inclusive staffing norms. The SACCOs should review their human resource policies that incorporate inclusion towards achieving the five percent constitutional requirement on employment of persons with disabilities.
- Invest in responsive and accessible reporting mechanisms to ensure that aggrieved passengers can freely report their issues. Further, SACCOs should report and support investigations on criminal cases such as sexual and gender-based violence cases as and when reported.

- Diversify public transport services that respond to the specific needs of persons with disabilities and the elderly. For example, dial-a-ride, introducing transport service routes that use small vehicles to pick up and discharge passengers close to the origin and destination of journeys.

### **Recommendations for civil society organisations**

- Sensitize, lobby, and monitor the implementation of policy provisions to include policy priorities in their long-term, medium-term, and short-term plans. Civil society organizations should monitor such plans to ensure the policy priorities are reported against the respective indicators.
- Enhance the capacity of matatu operators to become responsive to the needs of women with disabilities and elderly women through developing guidelines for engaging persons with disabilities, partner with matatu SACCOs to train their staff on disability inclusion and sensitize the matatu owners and operators on the specific needs of women with disabilities and elderly women.
- Support internal policy strengthening to support employment opportunities for women with disabilities.
- Partner with police stations to strengthen the Policare, by lobbying for the establishment of Policare within all the police stations and partnering with police stations to strengthen the reporting, investigations and acquisition of justice.
- Design and implement interventions for economic empowerment, including their enrolment into the national government's social protection programmes.
- Capacity building of women with disabilities and elderly women on self-advocacy.







## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

### 1.1 About Flone Initiative

Flone Initiative is a women-led Pan-African organization working towards creating safe, sustainable and accessible public transportation spaces for women and vulnerable groups in Africa by influencing behavioral change, generating knowledge and movement-building. In conjunction with Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Kenya, Flone Initiative in 2021 conducted another study on the accessibility of Kenya's public transport for persons with disabilities.

### 1.2 Objectives and Scope of the Assessment

Many people worldwide often cannot use public transportation because of the inaccessible design of vehicles and associated spaces which make it uncomfortable and unsafe. These passengers include persons with disabilities, older persons and others considered vulnerable. Such passengers include people who have mobility problems, vision or hearing impairments, difficulty in understanding road signs and directions, or hidden disabilities such as mental or intellectual impairments.

To address the challenges of access to public transport identified above, Flone Initiative has designed a programme targeting women with disabilities and the elderly. The project will enhance research and advocacy for improved public transport accessibility for the elderly and people with disabilities. To achieve the outcome of this project, one of the proposed interventions is to carry out an assessment entitled: *"Moving Barriers, Increasing access: An assessment of the mobility of the women with disabilities and the Elderly."* The assessment aims to understand the particular vulnerabilities women with disabilities and older women/elderly face in accessing public transport and documenting their subjective experiences and voices.

This study follows an almost similar one conducted in 2021 but generally on persons with disabilities and the elderly.

The current assessment is more specific to women with disabilities and older women. The findings will inform the advocacy agenda. More specifically, it will achieve three objectives including:

- a) To conduct qualitative and quantitative research and identify technical, social, and policy gaps and implementation challenges concerning inclusive mobility focusing on women with disabilities and older women;
- b) To conduct a peer review of the research study and guide;
- c) To document scalable interventions and case studies on inclusive mobility in public transport that can be replicated in other counties to enhance public transport usage by people with disabilities and the elderly.

### **1.3 Organization of the Report**

This report is presented in six main parts. The first part comprises the preliminary pages and includes the title page, the table of contents, a list of abbreviations, and the executive summary. The second part is chapter one which has the introduction; chapter two has a literature review. Chapter three covers the methodology, chapter four looks at findings, and chapter five covers conclusions and recommendations.







## CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF SECONDARY SOURCES

This section describes the status of women with disabilities and elderly women. This is followed by a justification of why it is important to provide accessible transport and the challenges that often face them while accessing public transport. Some of the efforts by the Government of Kenya towards promoting the accessibility of public transport are highlighted.

### 2.1 Status of Women with Disabilities and Elderly Women

Persons with disability and the elderly experience immense and unique challenges while using public transport and it becomes worse for women with disabilities to access public transport. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2011) estimates that 15% of the World's population has one form of disability. Kenya's 2019 census reported that 2.2% (0.9 million people) of Kenyan's population have a form of disability, with women being more women (2.5%) than men (1.9%). Estimation by Development Initiatives (2020) based on the Kenya Household and Population Census of 2019<sup>1</sup> revealed that in the four counties in the Nairobi Metropolitan Area, persons with disabilities account for about 0.4% of the population. Out of this, persons with physical challenges represented the highest proportion (0.7%), followed by those with visual impairments (0.65%).

Kenya has adopted the UN definition of older persons as 60 years or over. The 2019 national census reported about 6% (2.7 million) of Kenya's older adults, with females being more (55%) than men (45%). Nairobi, Kiambu and Machakos Counties are among the top counties with the highest population of elderly persons, each with over 100,000 older persons.

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1 <https://devinit.org/resources/status-disability-kenya-statistics-2019-census/>

There is a correlation between old age and disability and therefore, some challenges they face while accessing public transport are similar. Age-specific analyses study conducted by UN Women in 2021 showed that women older than 55 years were significantly more likely to experience problems related to transport accessibility. For example, 26% compared to 2.4% of the younger women of 18 -24 years. From these statistics, it is clear that a significant population of people is denied their rights to move freely as envisioned in international and domestic law due to insensitive and discriminatory transport services. Therefore, there is an urgent need for the government and other stakeholders to intervene.

## **2.2 Transport as an Enabler for Societal Participation**

Access to transportation is critical as it enhances individuals to engage productively in the community, including livelihoods, healthcare, education, goods and services and social interaction (Preston & Rajé, 2008). Persons with disabilities, the elderly and people of low economic status are systematically and socially disadvantaged when accessing transport (Yigitcanlar, 2005). Rodrique (2004) views accessibility as a critical transportation component regarding people, freight and information.

An efficient transport provides high levels of accessibility. Therefore, it is important to understand how the disadvantaged groups, including women with disabilities and elderly women, are affected by inaccessible public transport services to ensure full participation of individuals with disabilities in all aspects of society, as observed by Lucas and Currie (2012). Accessibility is considered through several dimensions but is not limited to the availability of transport services, awareness of such services, frequency of services, affordability and safety issues (Ajayi, 2020). The U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics (2003) views accessibility as the measure of the capacity of a location to be reached by or to reach different locations. Victoria Transport Policy Institute (2021) defines



accessibility as people's ability to reach desired services and activities (together called opportunities).

Transport is essential for creating a sustainable economy and community. When persons with disabilities and the elderly access transport, they can contribute significantly to economic and sustainable development. Yet, policy, technical and social challenges exist that limit persons with disabilities and the elderly from participating in earning their livelihoods and consequently contributing to a country's economic growth. Ajayi (2020) identified several key challenges to the accessibility of public transport, including; boarding and alighting vehicles, drivers not waiting until passengers are seated before moving and lack of assistance in getting on/off the vehicles. Others include inconvenient stops with no shelter, long waiting periods in heat or cold, and difficulties in reading signage. Bezyak, Sabella, and Gattis (2017) found other challenges to include, among others: scheduling problems, long waiting time, inadequate times of service, inappropriate driver attitude and missing pick-up appointments.

The situation described above resonates with what is happening in Kenya. If this situation is not addressed, women with disabilities and elderly women will continue being discriminated against and ostracised by society. At the individual level, stigma and social exclusion can be devastating, leading to low self-esteem, poor social relationships, isolation, depression and self-harm, causing profound effects on those with chronic health problems (Mason, 2011).

### **2.3 Challenges Limiting Access to Public Transport Services**

Research conducted by the University of Nairobi School of Computing and Informatics in collaboration with Columbia University's Center for Sustainable Urban Development (2022) revealed some of the challenges faced by persons with disabilities while accessing paratransit vehicles. The first challenge is harassment of women,

with 39% of persons with disabilities having experienced verbal harassment, 32% physical touch and 29% sexual advances and 94% did not report it due to the stigma associated with reporting. The second challenge is the denial of service and discrimination of persons with disabilities, with 89% of persons with disabilities being discriminated against in transport. Other challenges included route deviation, inaccessible infrastructure and vehicles, lack of training for matatu crew and lack of safety in matatus, especially in terms of theft and response to health issues.

Related research on the accessibility of public transport services in the Nairobi Metropolitan Area (Flone Initiative, 2021) indicated almost similar challenges. The report concluded that the accessibility of public transport services remains a mirage to users with disabilities and the elderly. The policy, technical and social challenges were found to be intertwined. For instance, the low implementation and monitoring of laws and policies cause persons with disabilities to continue being on the receiving end and the matatu operators remain indifferent. Other policy challenges identified were lack of adequate financing of plans to address accessibility, weak coordination of transport initiatives and weak linkage between the practitioners and policymakers and low engagement of persons with disabilities. The technical challenges identified included inaccessibility of the public service vehicles, poor accessibility of infrastructure and amenities, ineffective reporting mechanisms, lack of adherence to the designated terminus, inaccessible information and communication barriers, low safety from vehicular traffic, high and unregulated fare, insecurity in matatus, and health effects resulting from overcrowding and loud music in matatus. The social challenges included undignified handling, stigma from operators and passengers and discrimination of persons with disabilities while accessing the matatus.

## **2.4 Accessibility of Public Transport as a Human Right**

Accessibility is defined by Victoria Transport Policy Institute (2021)



as “people’s overall ability to reach desired services and activities (together called opportunities). The elements of accessibility include mobility, geographic proximity, transport system connectivity, affordability, convenience and social acceptability.

Accessibility is a human right enshrined in international and domestic legal instruments, most importantly the Constitution of Kenya 2010. Accessibility is a prerequisite for persons with disabilities to live independently, participate fully and equally in society and enjoy other human rights. Without access to transportation, information and communication, and other facilities and services provided to the public, persons with disabilities would not have equal opportunities for participation in their respective societies.

Several international legal instruments promote the right to access public transport. Firstly, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN, 2007) article 9 requires State Parties to provide accessible public transport. Secondly, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN, 1948) article 13 highlights that everyone has the right to freedom of movement. Thirdly, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (UN, 1966) and article 12 also provide the right to liberty of movement. Fourthly, the United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (UN, 1993) emphasizes the need for accessibility of transport.

Domestically, Kenya has developed legislations and policies that safeguard the right to accessibility. Firstly, the Constitution of Kenya 2010 requires accommodation and non-discrimination by public services to provide rights to Kenyan citizens. Further, Article 54 (1) (c) provides that a person with any disability is entitled to reasonable access to all places, public transport and information. Secondly, the Persons with Disabilities Act of 2003 recognizes that persons with disabilities are entitled to a barrier-free and disability-friendly environment to enable access to roads. Section 23 requires an operator

of a public service vehicle to adapt it to suit persons with disabilities in such a manner as may be specified by the National Council for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD) and all operators of public service vehicles are expected to comply. The Act also empowers NCPWD to issue adjustment orders to non-compliant public service vehicles.

## **2.5 Government of Kenya's Effort to Promote Accessibility in Nairobi Metropolitan**

With continued efforts by state and non-state actors, Kenya is making positive strides toward ensuring inclusive and accessible public transport. Some of the key programmes are discussed and how they promote accessible public transport services in Kenya.

### **2.5.1 The Nairobi Metro 2030 Strategy (2008)**

In addition to the wider planning, the Strategy also outlines the development of a transport master plan to effectively improve transportation infrastructure and land use planning to improve existing transportation options around the city. It focuses on improving the existing road network, an urban mass transit strategy that centers around investments in high occupancy buses and modernization of the existing commuter rail network. One of the key programme areas identified is the need for an efficient transportation system that minimizes travel times and reduces externalities to promote flexibility and freedom of movement. Key programmes identified are metropolitan road transport infrastructure measures, rapid mass transit, traffic management strategies, and the road safety programme.

The Strategy identifies Nairobi Metropolitan Region to extend 32,000 square kilometres that substantially depend on the city for employment and social facilities. This has also been spurred by the rapid population growth registered in the surrounding areas such as Kiambu, Thika, Muranga, Machakos and Kajiado. It has thus become difficult to separate Nairobi City from this wider



metro region. Planning for the Nairobi Metropolitan area covers the entire metropolitan region, with special measures to address the different needs of its diverse population and landscape. The Strategy identifies Core Nairobi as a national, regional and international strategic centre for education, commerce, transport, regional cooperation and economic development. This justifies why most of the issues discussed in this report are mostly in reference to Nairobi City County.

### **2.5.2 The Nairobi Integrated Urban Development Master Plan (2014)**

Kenya developed the Nairobi Integrated Urban Development Master Plan (NIUDP) in 2014, whose vision is to have secure, well-governed, competitive, and sustainable cities and urban areas that contribute to achieving the broader national development goals articulated in the Constitution and Vision 2030. The NIUDP's mission is to facilitate sustainable urbanisation through good governance and the delivery of accessible and efficient infrastructure and services. One of the challenges identified by NIUDP is that while pedestrian crossings and pedestrian signals are insufficient in Nairobi City, non-motorised transport (NMT), especially pedestrians, are exposed to danger as the traffic volume increases. Currently, vulnerable groups such as women, children, and persons with disability have difficulties traveling in Nairobi City and suburban areas. To improve this, the Plan recommends the improvement of the road markings for pedestrian crossings and pedestrian signals and pedestrian sensitization on road safety.

### **2.5.3 Modern Bus Terminus**

The Nairobi Metropolitan Services (NMS) is implementing part of the NIUP as a multi-agency project to provide a city's reliable and efficient transport system. For example, the Green Park Terminal aims to decongest the CBD of vehicular traffic, reduce travel time,

improve commuter experiences, and encourage public transport as a preference to private transport. It will accommodate between 300 and 350 vehicles at any one time, processing about 1,000 cars per hour and up to 20,000 per day. NMS will partner with Kenya Railways Corporation to enable alighting passengers to access Nairobi CBD at a subsidized fee. Priority will be given to the elderly, persons with disabilities and expectant mothers. NMS expanded the terminus to accommodate bodaboda and taxis as part of plans to make them available to commuters to offer last-mile connectivity once they alight from matatus at the terminus. Other terminals under construction include Bunyala, Workshop Road terminal, Desai, Fig Tree terminus, Muthurwa terminus and Park Road termini in Ngara. The long-term plan is to introduce an intelligent transport system that will see over 107 roundabouts in Nairobi removed and reinstalled to fit the modern traffic circulation.

#### **2.5.4 Nairobi City County Non-Motorized Transport Policy (2015)**

Half of Nairobi's population walks daily, but the government only invests 2% of its transport budget into non-motorized transport. Most of the deadly road crashes in Nairobi involve pedestrians and others get incapacitated. This policy calls for road designs that adhere to complete street principles incorporating "dignified space" for NMT users, including continuous footpaths and dedicated cycle tracks. The goal is to make Nairobi a city where non-motorized transportation is the main mode of choice for short and medium trips which means a maximum of 5 km for pedestrians and 15 km for cyclists or trips of up to an hour. Among others, the areas of concentration are improving mobility and accessibility, increasing transport safety and improving amenities for NMT. NCCG, through this policy, has made the commitment to use at least 20% of its existing and future transport budget to invest in NMT and public transport infrastructure and services.

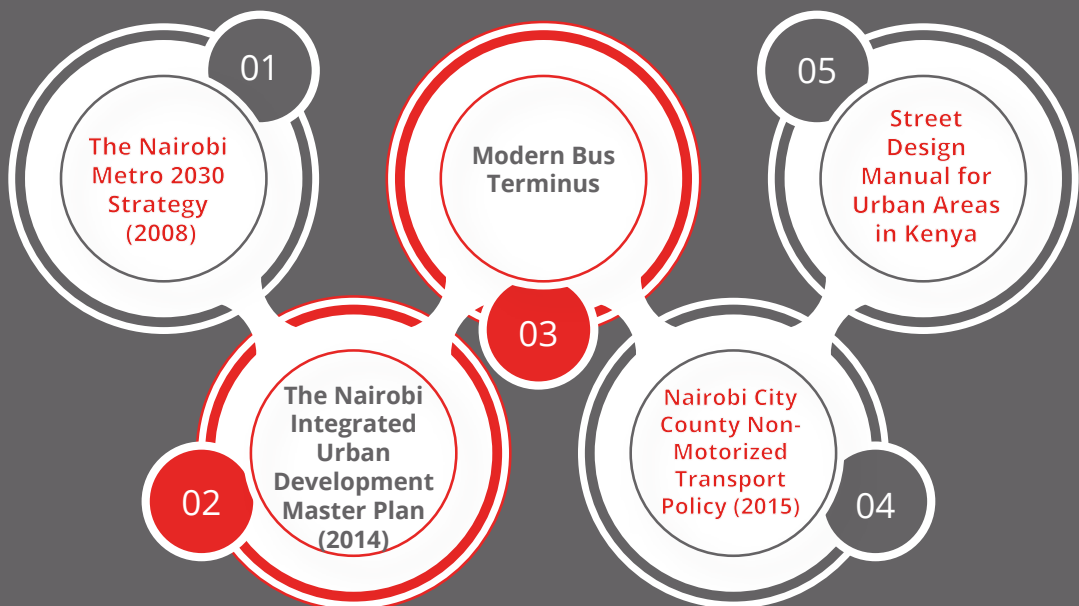


### 2.5.5 Street Design Manual for Urban Areas in Kenya

Kenya has developed the Street Design Manual for Urban Areas in Kenya. The manual outlines the principles of safety, efficient use of road space, universal access, gender-sensitive design, and modal hierarchy (pedestrian > bicycle > public transport > freight > personal vehicles > personal vehicle parking).



### GOVERNMENT OF KENYA'S EFFORT TO PROMOTE ACCESSIBILITY IN NAIROBI METROPOLITAN







## CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Approach

The assessment was designed using a model of public transport that responds to the Universal Design model intended to promote accessibility of public spaces and services by all, based on human rights principles. Victoria Transport Policy Institute (2021) defines accessibility as people's overall ability to reach desired services and activities (together called opportunities). The elements of accessibility considered include mobility, geographic proximity, transport system connectivity, affordability, convenience and social acceptability.

### 3.2 Design

The study design adopted was a descriptive survey that encompassed both quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

### 3.3 Limitations of the Assessment

There were three key limitations of this assessment. Firstly, it targeted women with disabilities and older women (above 60 years). Secondly, it was limited to public transport vehicles, including the fourteen-seaters and buses. Thirdly, the assessment was carried out in the Nairobi Metropolitan counties, including Nairobi, Kiambu, Machakos and Kajiado Counties, while impacting the national policies.

### 3.4 Data collection tools

The research utilised qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. Qualitative data were collected from focus group discussions (FGD) and key informant interviews (KIIs). Quantitative data was collected through a survey that targeted women with disabilities and elderly women.

### 3.5 Sampling procedure and sample size

The research participants were drawn from the Nairobi Metropolitan

Area, including Nairobi, Kiambu, Machakos and Kajiado Counties. The main categories of respondents were categorised as follows:

- a) The transport policymakers and policy implementers - government agencies in charge of transport
- b) Matatu staff owners and operators
- c) Users of public transport - women passengers with disabilities and the elderly from the four metropolitan counties

Due to its nature, the sampling was largely convenient/purposive. The policymakers and policy implementers were purposely sampled because of the offices they represent. Only women with disabilities and the elderly were targeted. For inclusion, persons with different disabilities were targeted. People under these categories were targeted and mobilised through organisations for persons with disabilities from the respective counties. The major groups included the following:

- a) Those with mobility challenges
- b) Those with vision challenges (low vision and blind and those with albinism)
- c) Those with hearing impairment (hard of hearing and deaf)
- d) Those with intellectual and psychosocial challenges
- e) Elderly women

A total of 183 respondents participated in the assessment, including 74 in Nairobi City, 43 in Kajiado, 42 in Kiambu and 24 in Machakos Counties, as illustrated in table 1 below.



Group of respondents	Description	Nairobi	Kiambu	Machakos	Kajiado	Total
KII (policymakers and key stakeholders)	Government agencies	2	1	1	1	5
	Officials of Matatu Owners and operators	1	2	2	1	6
FGD for stakeholders	Matatu staff	30		4	0	34
FGD (users of public transport)	Women with different disabilities	20	10	11	13	51
	Elderly women	13	12	10	8	43
Survey	Women with disabilities and elderly women	35	18	14	29	96
	Elderly women	6	21	3	12	42
<b>Total</b>		<b>107</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>280</b>
<b>Adjusted total</b>		<b>74</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>183</b>

Table 1: Category of targeted and reached respondents

### **3.6 Gender and Disability Inclusion Strategies**

Several inclusion strategies were employed.

- a) The research mainly utilised women as research assistants who have experience collecting data/engaging women with disabilities and the elderly.
- b) The research questions were tailored to respond to the issues and concerns of women while taking care not to stereotype them.
- c) Safe spaces were utilised during the data collection exercise
- d) A sign language interpreter was provided for the participants who were deaf.
- e) During the FGDs, accessible venues and those close to the participants were identified for the interviews.
- f) Proxy respondents, for example, aides or caregivers of persons with severe disabilities and the elderly, supported those who could not respond.
- g) The aides accompanying the respondents were also facilitated.
- h) The survey tool was shared electronically to collect data from those who could not be accessed physically. The aides and the research assistants helped those who could not fill out the survey tool electronically.







## CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

### 4.1 Demographics

A total of 130 women participated. From **Figure 1**, the majority of respondents (32%) were from Kajiado County, followed by Kiambu County (29%), Nairobi County (28%) and the least from Machakos County. This is because many reside outside Nairobi County but frequently travel to Nairobi. Further analysis indicated that 35% of the passengers travelled toward Nairobi County.

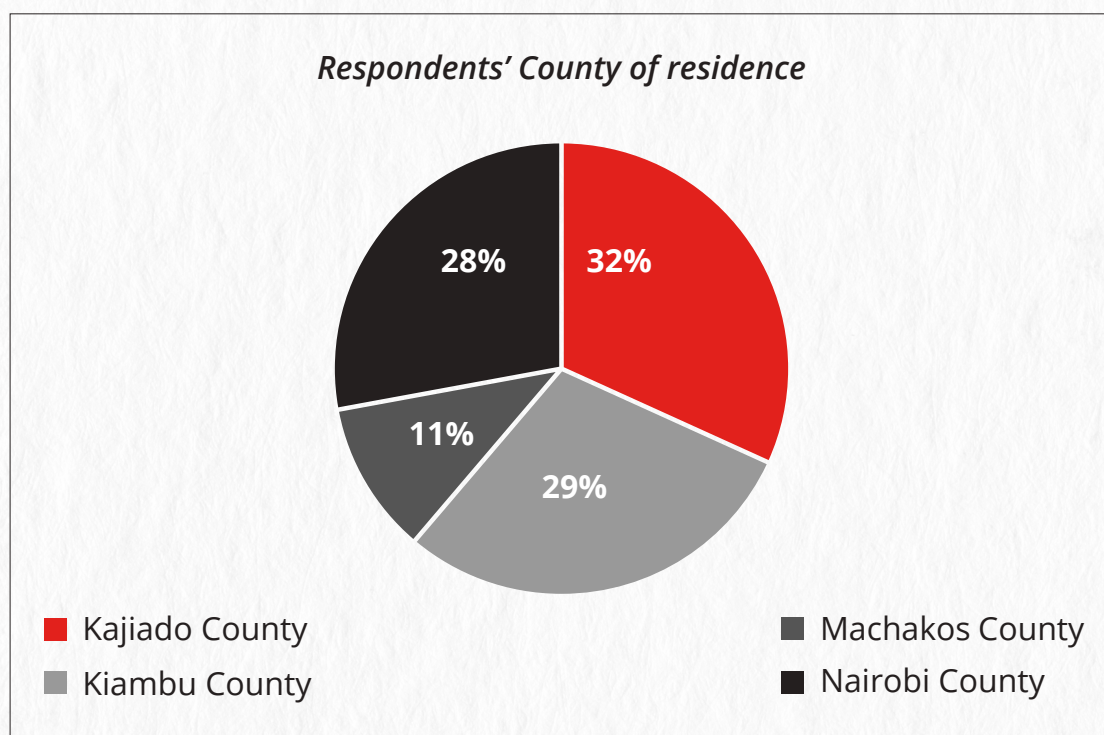


Figure 1: Respondents' County of residence

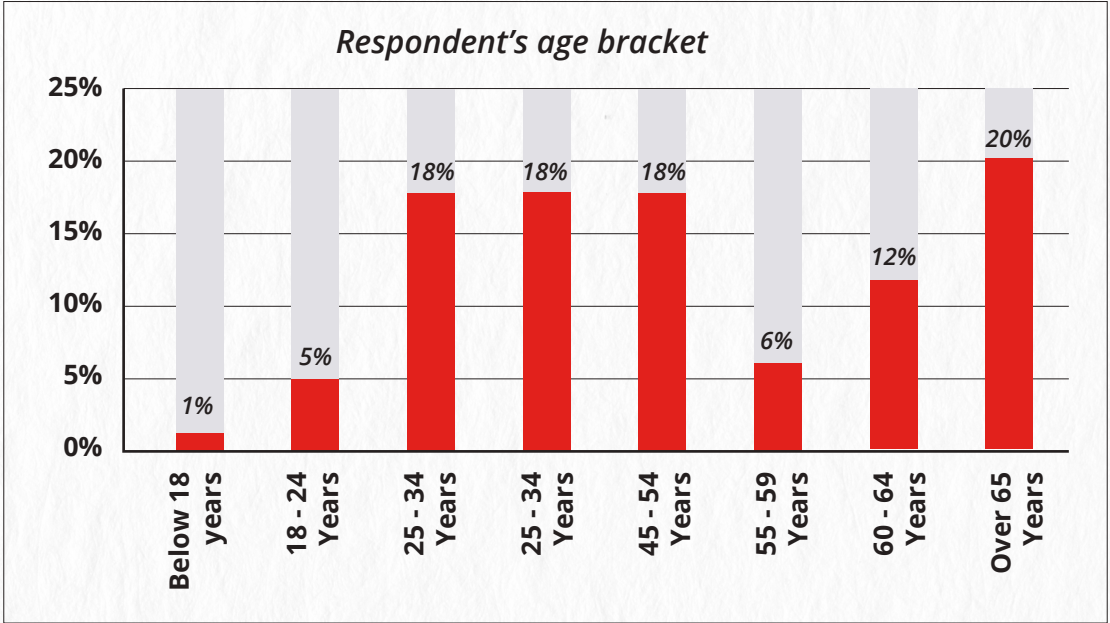


Figure 2: Respondent's age bracket

Among the respondents with disabilities, the majority had physical challenges (40%), followed by those with visual impairment (17%), hearing impairments (16%) and the least had psychosocial and intellectual challenges (11%) (table 2).

Category of disability	Kajiado County	Kiambu County	Machakos County	Nairobi County	Total	%
Autism	1	0	0	1	2	2%
Psychosocial and intellectual challenges	4	0	2	3	9	9%
Deaf/hard of hearing	3	1	3	8	15	16%
Blind/low vision	3	6	3	4	16	17%
Cerebral palsy	13	1	1	1	16	17%
Physical/ movement challenges	5	10	5	18	38	40%
Total	29	18	14	35	96	100%

Table 2: Category of disability by county



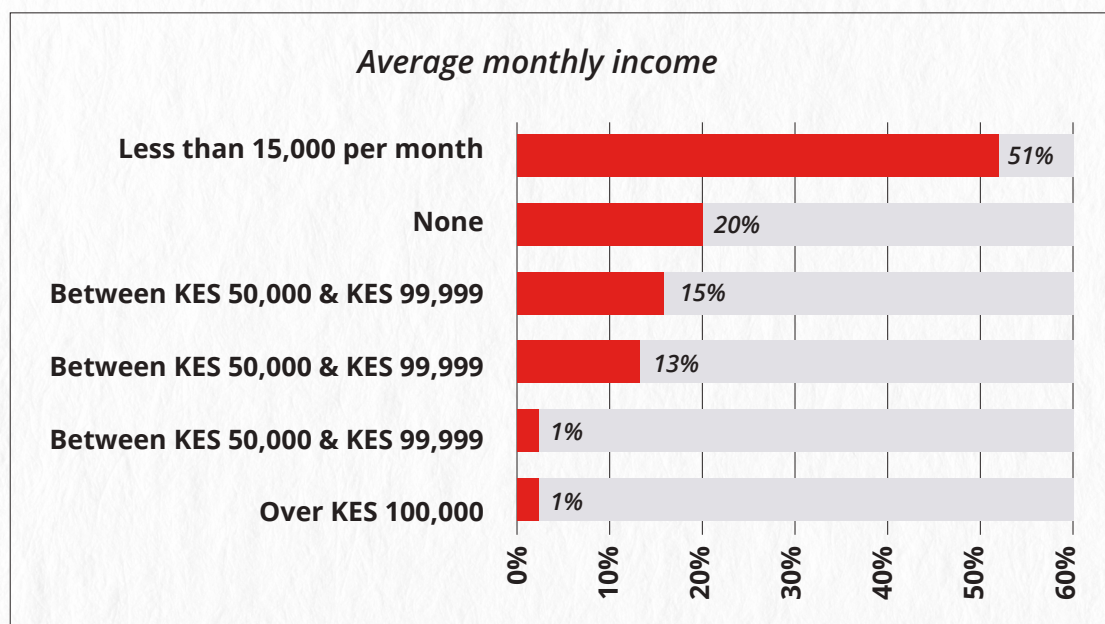


Figure 3: Level of income

According to **Figure 3**, slightly more than half (51%) had an income below KES. 15,000, while 20% have no reliable source of income. This low-income level suggests that they may not easily afford most basic needs and services such as public transport. This issue of affordability will be discussed under a different sub-section.

**Figure 4** shows the source of income for respondents. The majority (42%) reported running a business for their income, while 16% were in informal employment. Only 12% are formally employed, and 7% are students.

From **Figure 5**, the majority (32%) have completed college education, followed by those who completed primary education (24%) and 18% completed secondary education. A significant proportion, 18%, have had no education.



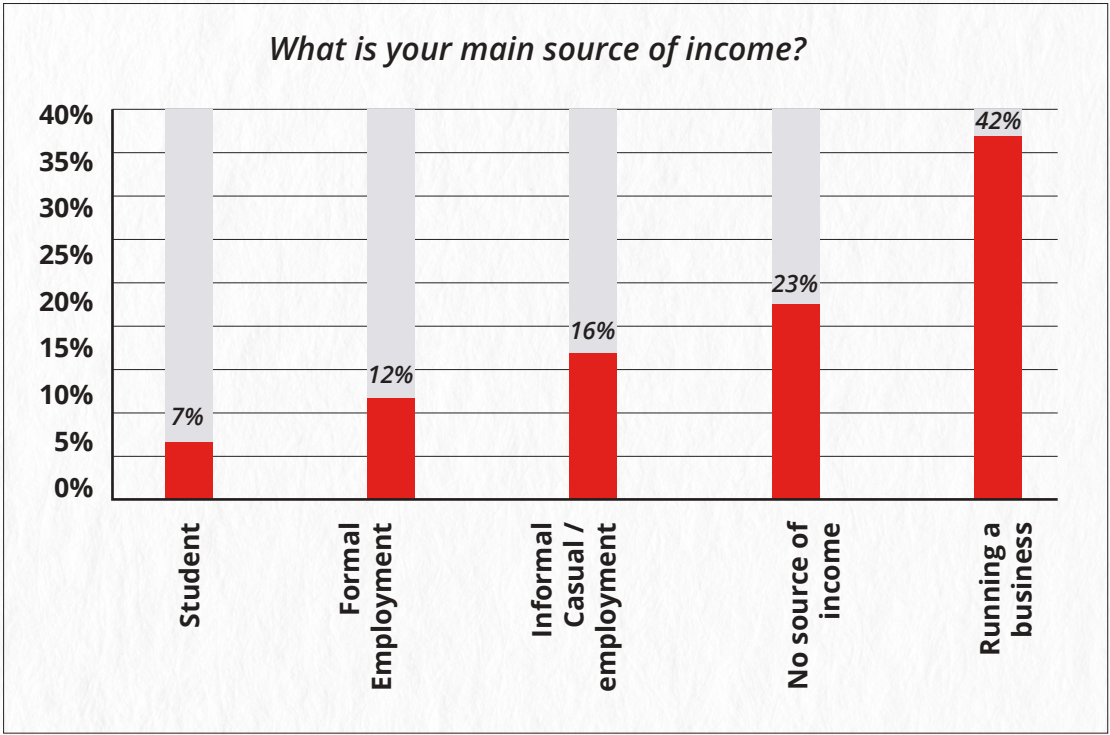


Figure 4: Main source of income

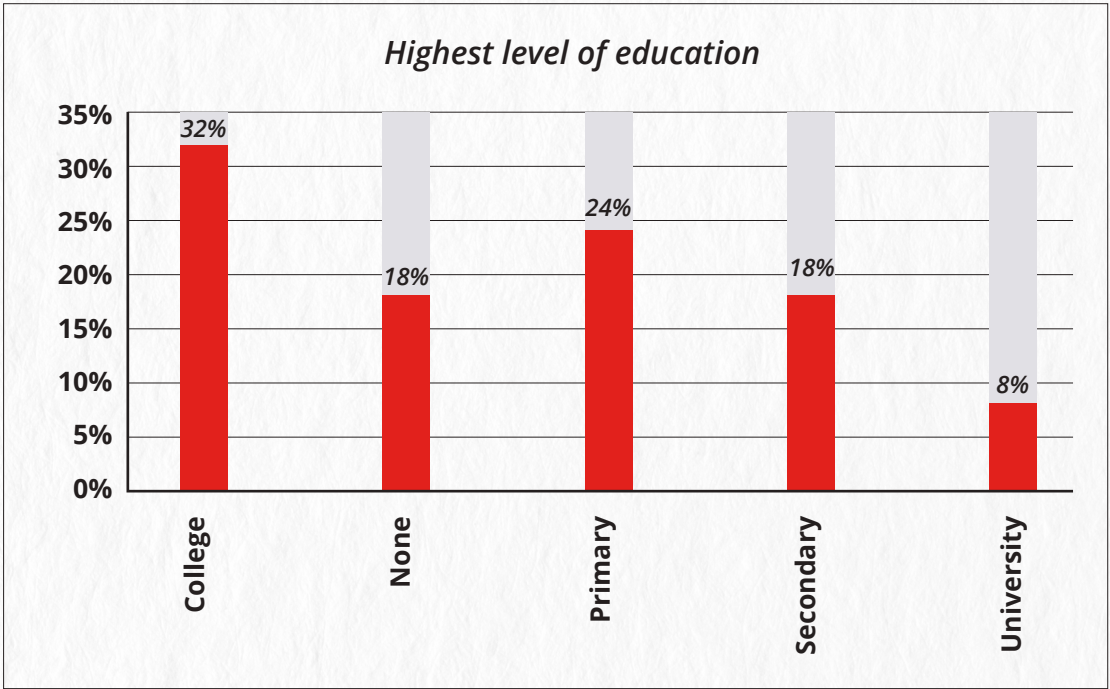


Figure 5: Respondent's highest level of education

**Figure 6** indicates that most (73%) respondents use public service vehicles when travelling. Another 11% mostly walk while 8% use motorbikes and 5% use taxis.

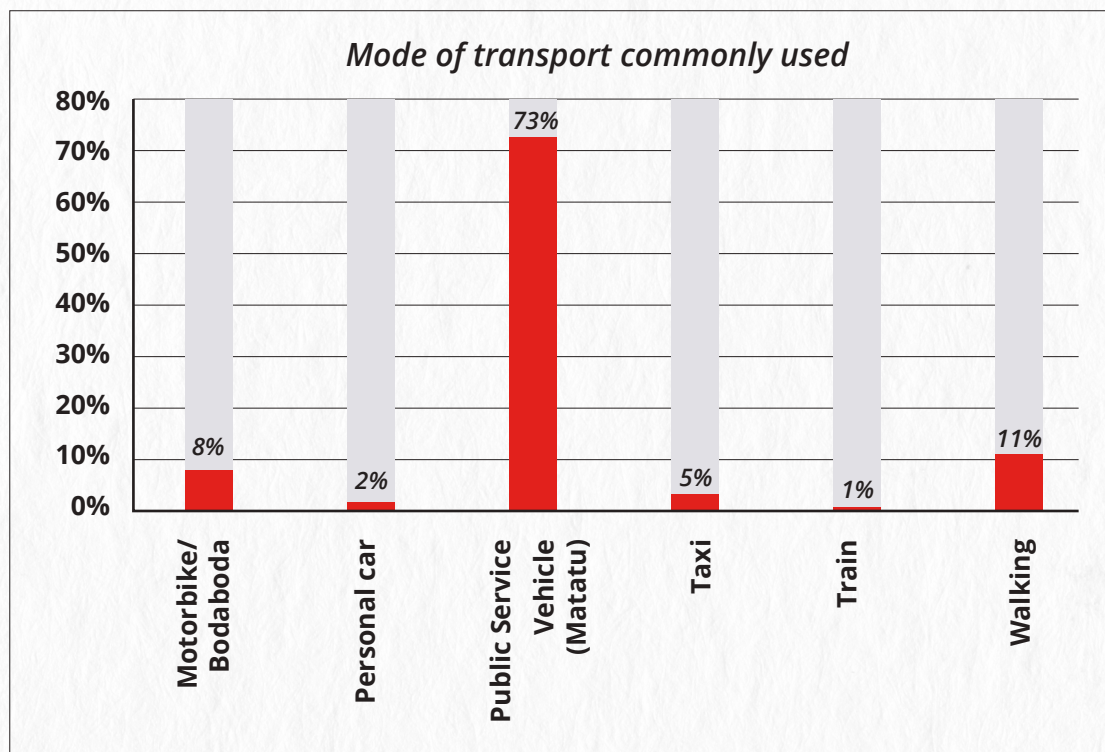


Figure 6: Common mode of transport

It was important to understand how the users travel from their homes to the bus terminus. According to **Figure 7**, most (45%) walk and 40% use motorbikes to the terminus. Of the rest, 5% are assisted, 4% use a tuk-tuk/taxi, 4% use their wheelchairs and the remaining 2% board a matatu. Tuk-tuks are preferred to taxis because they are cheaper than taxis and motorbikes and can access places with bad roads. They are also readily available. Persons with disabilities have unique needs and therefore, they choose their mode of transport depending on their disability. For instance, those with physical or mobility challenges may prefer a tuk-tuk over a motorbike due to safety considerations. Others prefer buses because they are cheaper than the 14-seaters and have bigger legroom and somewhere to place their luggage without being charged extra.



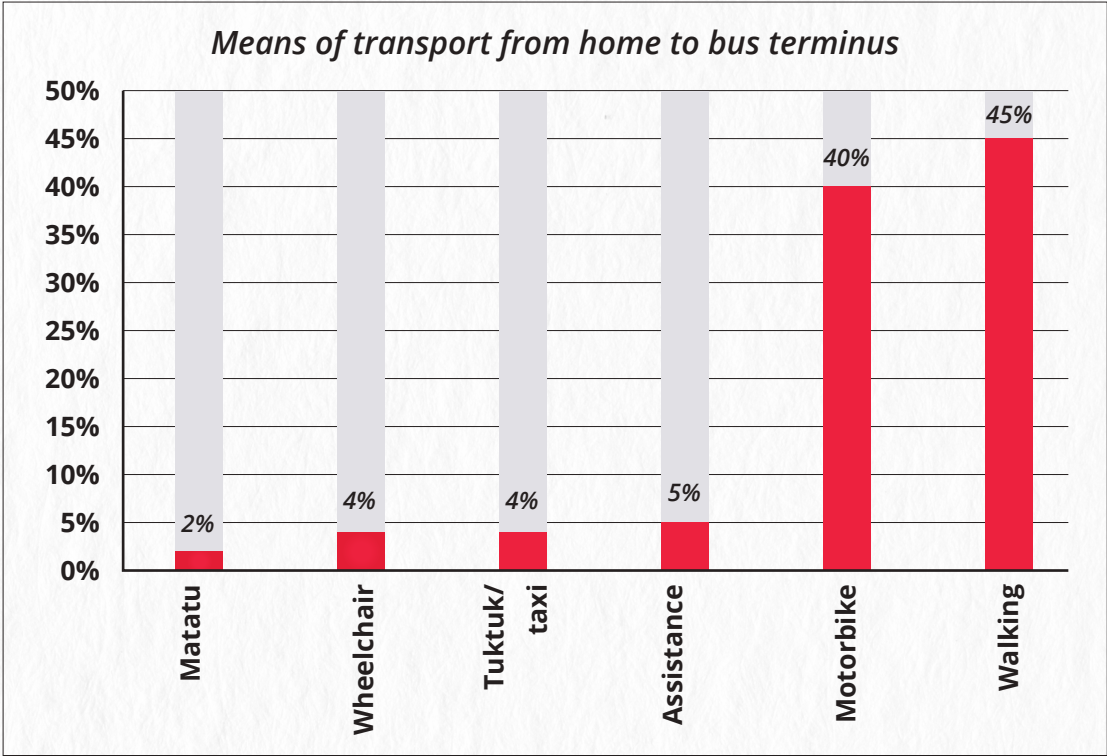


Figure 7: Mode of transport from home to the bus station

*“As a person with a disability, you have to be very careful on the mode you use. For example, a person with multiple disabilities lacks balance and unless you hold them, they cannot be stable; thus, bodaboda is not suitable. The riders rush to meet their daily needs. Therefore, they do not care if you have a disability or not. They will ride at the highest speed, which is very dangerous for a person with a disability.”*

*(A caregiver of two children with cerebral palsy, Kiambu County).*

#### 4.2 General issues of concern by women with disabilities and elderly women

To better understand accessibility challenges, respondents were asked about the main issues concerning using matatus. From **Figure 8**, the main concerns were getting to the bus terminus (20%), switching from one matatu to another one (17%), cost of transport (12%), boarding a matatu (9%), alighting a matatu (9%), customer

service (8%). Others include conditions of sidewalks (7%), getting to the destination (5%), safety in the matatu (3%), reliability of matatus (2%) and least was communication barriers (1%). About 37% of the respondents take between 16-30 minutes, 34% take between 31-60 minutes and 23% take less than 15 minutes to access a matatu from their homes. While connecting one terminus to the other, 36% take between 16-30 minutes, 34% take between 31-60 minutes and 18% take less than 15 minutes.

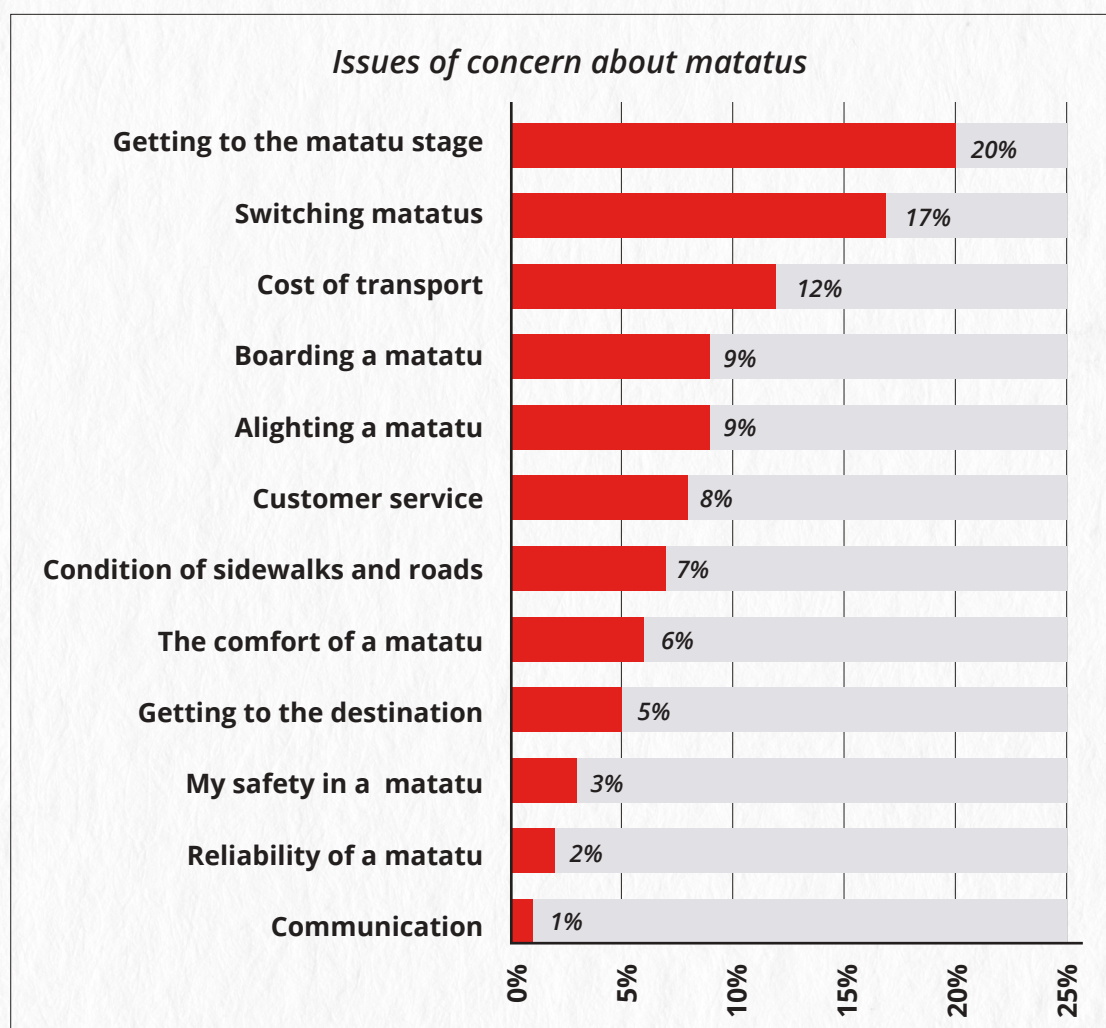


Figure 8: Issues of concern about matatus



*“Matatu industry is profit-driven, unlike quasi-government organisations concerned with the welfare.”*

*(A representative of matatu owners).*

*“There is no public transport, but individuals run the transport and are after making profits. Even in maltreatment cases, passengers have no voice.”*

*(A representative from a transport union).*

*“Sometimes the staff are forced to leave the persons with disabilities due to the imposed targets. You cannot tell the owner of the PSV that you did not meet your target because you were carrying a person with a disability.”*

*(A woman in transport, Nairobi).*

The specific challenges and issues are discussed in detail in the next section. They include those related to policy, technical and social challenges. It is difficult to separate them because they are interrelated.

### **4.3 Policy challenges**

#### **a) Non-inclusive national and county transport laws and policies**

The policies developed by the national and county governments are not adequately inclusive and do not comprehensively address challenges faced by persons with disabilities.

For example, in 2018, the Cabinet Secretary to the Ministry of Transport had indicated the intention for the government to amend Section 119 (1) and Section 4(2) of the Traffic Act to allow it the authority to prescribe certain fare tariffs on public transport operators, but this has not taken place.

The transport laws and regulations adopted by the counties are mainly drawn from the national government aimed to meet the

legal requirements. For example, Nairobi City County is developing 11 transport regulations<sup>2</sup> that have been drafted and forwarded to the county assembly. The regulations guide the implementation of the Nairobi City County Transport Act, 2020. Machakos County has developed two related policies, including County Public Transport and Safety Bill, 2021 and the Public Transport Sexual Harassment Policy. Kajiado County has the Transport Rules and Regulations of 2019. Kiambu County initiated the development of a transport policy, but the process has never been concluded.

Despite the commendable progress made on transport policies, there is a minimal and deliberate engagement of persons with disabilities in their development as required by the Constitution of Kenya 2010. There is often limited data to inform such policies, especially while addressing the needs of persons with disabilities. This is partly due to the low capacity of government agencies to engage persons with disabilities and inadequate targeting of persons with disabilities to provide feedback on such policies.

*“The policies are not inclusive. The policies developed are not responsive to the needs of persons with disabilities, partly due to a low level of public participation. Many users do not get full information in the most relevant format or channels. Public participation is done hurriedly and involves participants who are not necessarily active. When targeted, their needs are not well accommodated.”*

*(A DPO leader, Nairobi County).*

*“When doing public participation for public transport regulations, we do not purposely invite persons with disabilities. Unless you have a disability, you may not know their challenges.”*

*(A respondent from Nairobi County Government).*

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2 (1) Operation of public transport vehicles within the county; (2) designated public transport vehicle terminals; (3) public transport vehicle timetables; (4) public transport fares; (5) designated parking bays; (6) regulation of taxicabs; (7) regulation of tuk-tuks; (8) road reserves; (9) regulation of motorcycle taxis; (10) parking fees and excess charges chargeable under the Act; and (11) fines payable for contravening the provisions of the Act.



*“Working in a political environment, it is not easy to develop policies. When there is a policy, it should care for everybody on the roads. Sadly, we have had a draft transport policy since 2017 and was almost finalized, but with the change of government, it is like most of the work will be restarted because priorities change. Therefore, we use the national government transport policies.”*

*(A government officer, Kiambu County).*

## **b) Inadequate implementation of policies**

Several challenges limit the implementation of laws on the accessibility of public transport. Firstly, the existing county disability acts do not explicitly guide how the needs of persons with disabilities will be addressed. Even in the presence of laws, public service vehicles often break them. The lack of such laws in counties makes it difficult to charge traffic offenders. Secondly, the enforcement of such laws and policies is affected by the change of government and regular transfers of officers. Thirdly, corruption limits the enforcement of transport-related laws and policies, where the public service vehicles are accused of bribing the police for protection.

Fourthly, there is an inadequate implementation of policies due to weak inter-agency coordination. Lastly, the implementation of policies is often politicised and may fail in many cases. It is recognized that policies require a lot of resources to implement amid the many competing interests.

The counties allocate funds through the CIDPs and therefore, if the priorities are not captured in the CIDP, they are unlikely to be funded. While enforcing county by-laws, the enforcers are sometimes insensitive to the needs of persons with disabilities. In some cases, the matatu staff are willing to support persons with disabilities and the elderly access matatus but are harassed, arrested, or fined by the police officers or the County Government traffic marshals. This makes matatu staff leave such passengers to avoid confrontation with them.

*"There are many competing interests. The counties allocate funds through the CIDPs. So, if the priorities are not captured in CIDP, they are not likely to be funded."*

*(Respondent from Nairobi County).*

*"We have made newer road infrastructure accessible such as provisions for non-motorized transport connected to the bus park, allowing users with wheelchairs ease of access. However, enforcement is the biggest challenge and sometimes it takes a political angle. The transport directorate does not have an enforcement section and the enforcers are county askaris who do not understand laws and what to be acted on."*

*(Government officer, Kiambu County).*

*"Enforcement is the problem. Matatus are cash cows for the police and quite a number are owned by police who protect them, thus causing indiscipline. In the morning, they bribe the police and those who do not bribe are harassed. They do not take people to courts. They lock matatus for some days and release them later."*

*(Respondent from Nairobi County).*

*"Top officers prioritise some issues. The technical officers who have been passionate about some agenda-the vision carriers are transferred may impact the implementation of some policies."*

*(A respondent from Nairobi County).*

*"There are weaknesses among inter-agency operations, for example, the enforcement of NTSA policies by the police."*

*(Respondent from Nairobi County).*

*"Congestion in Nairobi town is a lot because all sorts of vehicles access towns, causing artificial congestion. Most of the policies and laws are politically motivated and when government agencies try to implement some of them, they are marred by political interests."*

*(A stakeholder of the elderly).*



*“One time, I boarded a person with visual impairment and she requested to be dropped at the OTC Stage. While dropping her off, the officers popped up and one asked me if my vehicle was meant to carry the disabled. He arrested me and I had to pay for the offence. (Woman in transport, Nairobi County).*

*“I boarded a matatu at Gatitu to Nairobi and I wanted to alight at Drive-In. I have a physical disability and had luggage. When I asked the conductor to stop the vehicle so that I could alight, I was told there were police and the matatu sped off. I was dropped very far almost at Pangani, yet I could not walk back fast to Drive-In and the luggage made things worse. Worse still, the conductor was not patient with me. They told me to alight here and they threw my luggage and then left hurriedly.”*

*(A woman with a physical disability, Kiambu County).*

*“We cannot alight passengers due to ‘Kanju’ (county askaris). We have to stop at designated stations. Such laws should accommodate women with disabilities.”*

*(A female stage clerk, Thika).*

## **4.4 Technical Challenges**

### **a) Inaccessible public transport vehicles**

From **Figure 9**, 70% disagree that matatus are easy to board and alight. The matatus are physically inaccessible as designed by the manufacturers, while most buses manufactured locally use bodies meant for lorries, presenting accessibility and safety issues. Transport service vehicles are made with narrow doors, high steps and narrow aisles. On a positive note, the Kenya Railways Corporation has introduced accessible buses and will partner with the NMS to transport passengers alighting at the Greenpark Terminus to access Nairobi CBD. Supporting heavy women with mobility challenges becomes a daunting task and can lead to injuries while boarding. As an adaptation, some women boarding chose to board earlier

crawling. Women with mobility challenges face difficulties when alighting because they alight facing backward due to the sharp steps/ stairs, which is a risk because matatus are always in a hurry.

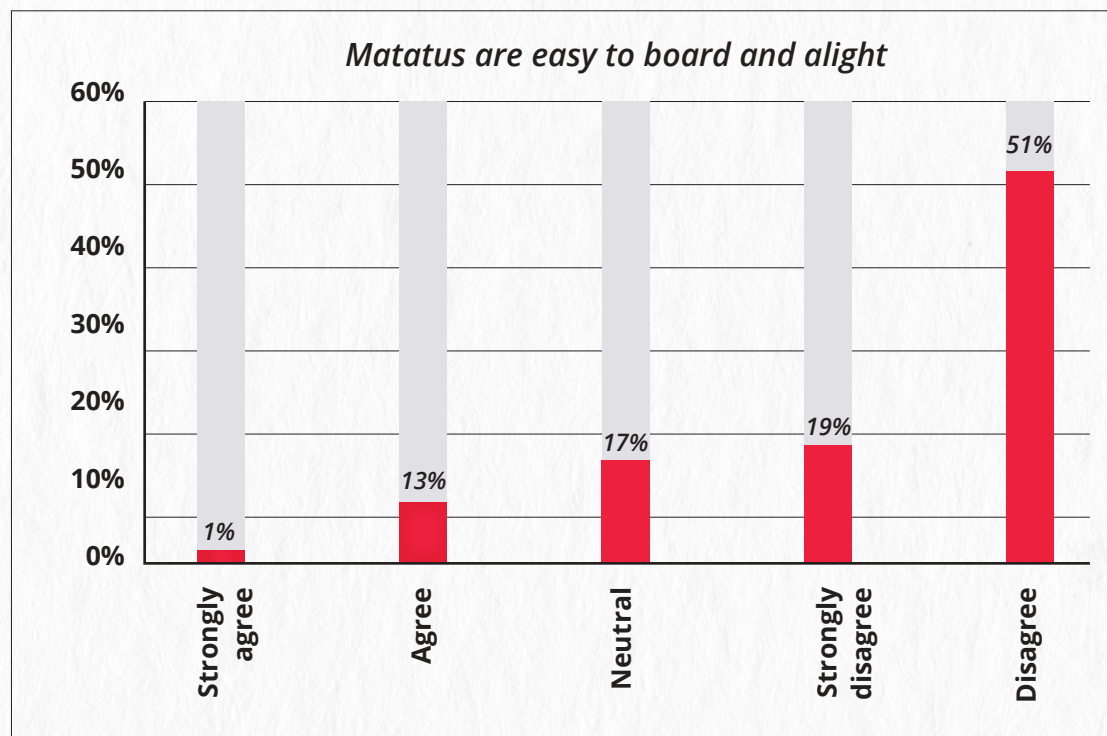


Figure 9: Ease of boarding and alighting

*“Buses are trucks converted to buses in Kenya. The stairs leading into the bus cause persons with disabilities to struggle to board.”*

*(A representative of matatu owners).*

*“None of the matatus have been done to cater for those with disabilities. The lowest is 30 cm from the ground and some stairs are 200 centimetres. The doors are not wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs. For persons with disabilities, it becomes difficult to get in. Once inside vehicles, there are no designated/reserved seats for PWDs. The aisles inside the vehicles are too narrow to be accessed by a person with a disability, especially on wheelchairs. Initially, the buses had two seats on either side, but after standing in matatus*



*was stopped, matatus increased the seats to five. It becomes worse for 14 and 18 seaters."*

*(A government officer from Nairobi County).*

*"I prefer only the front seat as it is more comfortable and usually taken."*

*(A female passenger with a physical disability from Machakos County).*

*"A child with cerebral palsy usually has an unstable neck and bad roads can worsen their situation. The safety belts cannot support their neck thus would need a special seat."*

*(DPO leader, Kajiado County).*

*"Persons with albinism suffer the sun's adverse effect, and most matatus do not have curtains to shield them from the sun. When they request passengers on the side without direct sun, they are ignored, or no one understands the sun's effect on them."*

*(A female passenger with albinism from Machakos County).*

*"Some women crawl when the vehicle is still clean to avoid getting dirty. It becomes difficult to keep alighting before the destination."*

*(A woman DPO leader with a physical disability, Nairobi County).*

*"A person without a disability can easily adapt to the matatu seats, but the seats are quite unfriendly for those with a disability, especially those with spina bifida."*

*(A female with spina bifida, Machakos County).*

*"Being blind, you cannot notice even when your belongings are stolen. The likelihood of your belongings being snatched is high. You cannot run after the thief, yet matatu staff insists that it is your responsibility to watch over your bag even when they put it on the carrier."*

*(A female with visual impairment, Nairobi County).*

*"The legroom in matatus is not friendly to people with muscular dystrophy because they require somewhere to stretch."*

*(Woman with muscular dystrophy, Kajiado County).*

*"Using a bus is not easy due to boarding and alighting because of my age and weight. It becomes quite difficult to access some vehicles. I prefer using a tuk-tuk that is patient with me."*

*(An elderly woman, Thika).*

*"When alighting, you face backward to hold the metal bars on the door. You alight slowly and if a matatu moves before you alight completely, it can cause an accident." (An elderly woman, Thogoto).*

## **b) The unaffordable and hidden costs of travel**

The cost of travel is already unaffordable since many women with disabilities and the elderly have limited sources of livelihood. From **Figure 10**, the majority (69%) felt that fares are unaffordable because they spend more travelling than a person with no disability. From **Figure 11**, the majority (24%) spend a daily fare between KES 201-300, followed by KES 151-200 (22%). Those who use wheelchairs and have an aid pay triple the fares: for themselves, their guide and the wheelchair. In addition, they often pay for motorbikes, tuk-tuks, or taxis to reach the bus terminuses or from bus terminuses to their destinations. "Squad" drivers charge more fares because their payment is not usually included in the normal fares charged.

The fare spent varies depending on the seasons (holidays, school opening, rains), the route used, the distance covered, and the day's hour (peak and off-peak), among other factors. During holidays, peak hours, during the crackdown of matatus by the police and when it rains, the fares are hiked arbitrarily. The matatu staff sometimes delay their change until they forget due to dementia and disappear with it. Dementia, for example, can be mistaken for confusion or alcohol use among the elderly. In other circumstances, the elderly



women are charged in excess because they are not frequent users of such routes. Due to high costs of travel and other factors, older women prefer not to travel and might spend more money accessing goods and services. They send other people to buy items or buy them from the nearby shops that could be more expensive than if it were in town.

Girls with disabilities attending school, due to their vulnerability to sexual abuse, are picked by their caregivers. When they use a matatu, it means the cost of transport more than doubles that of boys who have disabilities, therefore, increasing their cost of education. There is a cost associated with matatus not stopping at the right terminuses. People with mobility challenges pay extra to get back to their intended terminuses. Those with cerebral palsy and other conditions vomit in the vehicle and may be forced to pay the cost of cleaning it. The elderly who carry their luggage pay an extra fee to load it into the vehicle.

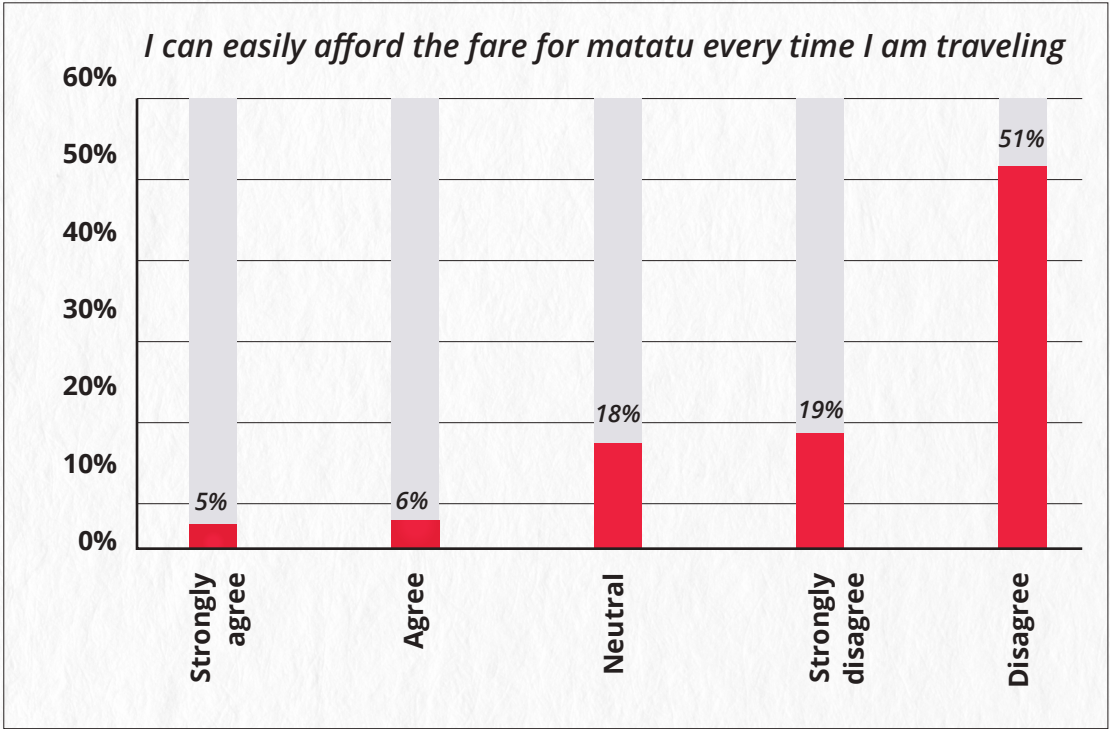


Figure 10: Affordability of matatu fares

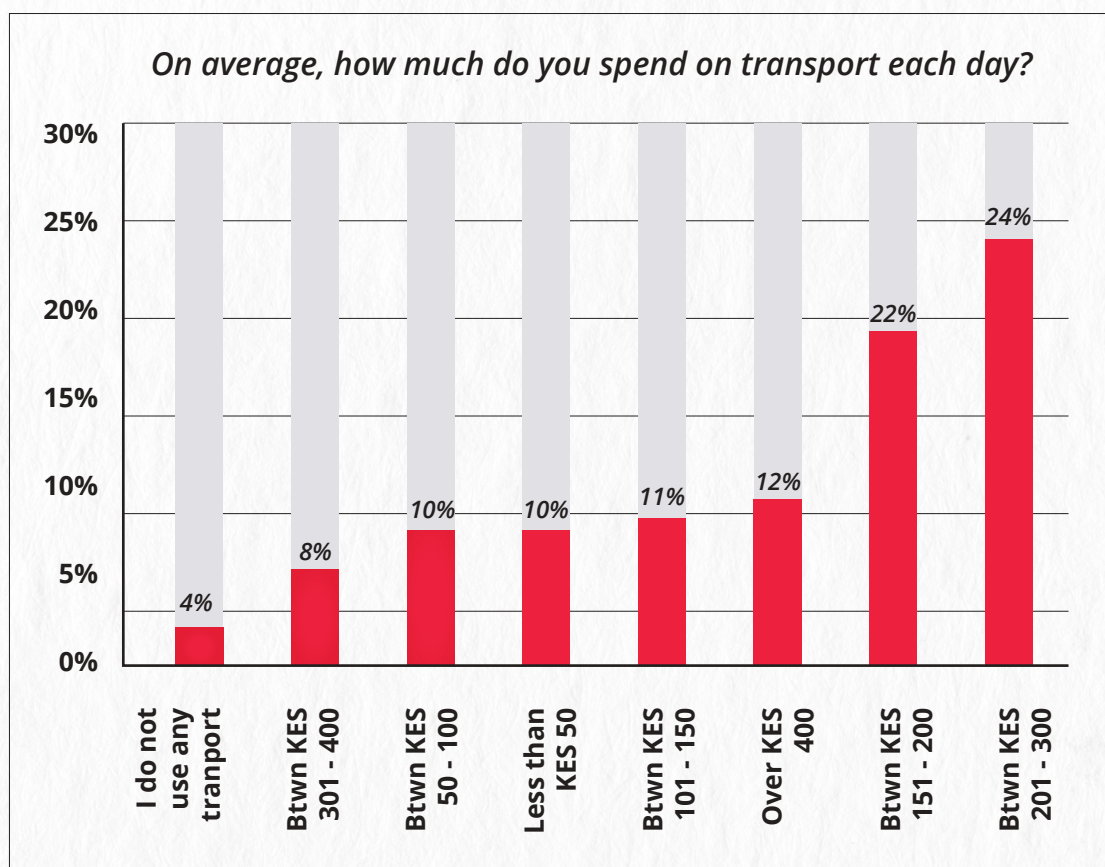


Figure 11: Average cost of transport using a matatu

*“Sometimes persons with disabilities or the elderly come without enough fare and are forced to contribute to assist them.”*  
(A woman in transport, Machakos County).

*“If you have a wheelchair, you are charged triple, for the wheelchair, the caregiver and you the person with a disability.”*  
(A woman with a physical disability, Kiambu County).

*“When you have a disability, you cannot alight easily, so they go past your intended stage. In some cases, they do not stop and you are forced to walk back to your intended stage, which is a waste of time and energy and adding to the fact that you have a disability, you might be forced again to pay for a motorbike to get back.”*  
(A woman with a disability, Nairobi County).



*"Sometimes the touts at the bus station attract you to their matatus with a lower rate, but when it starts leaving a different conductor, get in and ask for a higher amount. They do not listen to you when you try to explain, so you have to pay or get thrown out."*

*(An elderly woman, Thika).*

*"Last year in Rongai Route, I had to alight to help an elderly person who had been taken past their destination."*

*(A government officer, Nairobi County).*

*"Fares are not affordable. Many persons with disabilities and the elderly use much resources to take care of their needs. Many elderly persons do not have access to income like younger people."*

*(A stakeholder of elderly people).*

*"At the stage, I get charged by touts to help put my luggage into the vehicle because due to my age, I have no energy."*

*(An elderly woman, Kiambu County).*

*"There is insufficient space in the matatu to accommodate my kid, so I am always forced to pay extra cost."*

*(A caregiver of a child with cerebral palsy, Kajiado County).*

*"Persons who have physical disabilities are forced to pay three times as they will pay for the guide, the wheelchair and themselves; thus, it becomes quite expensive to commute."*

*(A female passenger with a physical disability from Machakos County).*

*"Poverty increases with age and disability. When you start negotiating for fares and leave them to be transported, you become a bother. Some matatus are compassionate enough to support them only during off-peak hours. You cannot get an older woman getting to town very regularly."*

*(A stakeholder of elderly people).*

*"The fares are not affordable and it becomes worse in December and when schools close or open. It is not cheap because we depend on our children for sustenance."*

*(An elderly woman, Thika).*

*"If a child is a girl with a disability, she will be more vulnerable to abuse than boys. Even when coming or going to school, and they must be picked."*

*(A respondent from Machakos County).*

*"A child with cerebral palsy may sometime vomit in the vehicle as they do not have control of themselves. You are asked to pay the extra money to clean the vehicle, which sometimes if you do not have and they end up being very rude."*

*(Caregiver of a child with cerebral palsy, Kajiado County).*

*"Without hands, it is hard for me to board a matatu, so I need a guide I can trust to help me travel and run my errands. I pay an extra amount for my guide and thus, it becomes quite expensive."*

*(A woman with a physical disability, Kajiado County).*

*"The touts misinform the passengers about the fares and later charged differently, and persons with disabilities feel harassed."*

*(A female stage clerk, Thika).*

*"Squad drivers are the biggest challenge because they charge more to benefit from the extra fare."*

*(A female stage clerk, Thika).*

### **c) Vulnerability to sexual harassment and abuse**

According to **Figure 12**, more than half (56%) felt that matatus are not safe to travel and 20% felt that the safety of matatus is improving and are comfortable travelling with them, while 23% are unsure. Many cases of indecent touch were reported by women with disabilities and elderly women. They feel uncomfortable being handled by men



due to indecent handling and sexual harassment. Travel time also presents a safety issue, especially during late hours. Late hours can be occasioned by traffic congestion or long waiting at a bus terminus. Several respondents felt that it is safer for men with disabilities to travel at late hours than men because late travels increase their vulnerability to sexual abuse. It worsens when the matatu drops them past their destination, especially at night, or uses a different route. It was also reported that a group of disorganized male touts that operate within the bus terminuses pose a safety challenge, mostly drunkards and some perpetrate violence against women.

Women with disabilities feel uncomfortable being handled by them for justified reasons. For example, in Machakos, two cases of abuse were reported involving a passenger with mental illness and a schoolgirl who was deaf and another case was reported in Kiambu County.

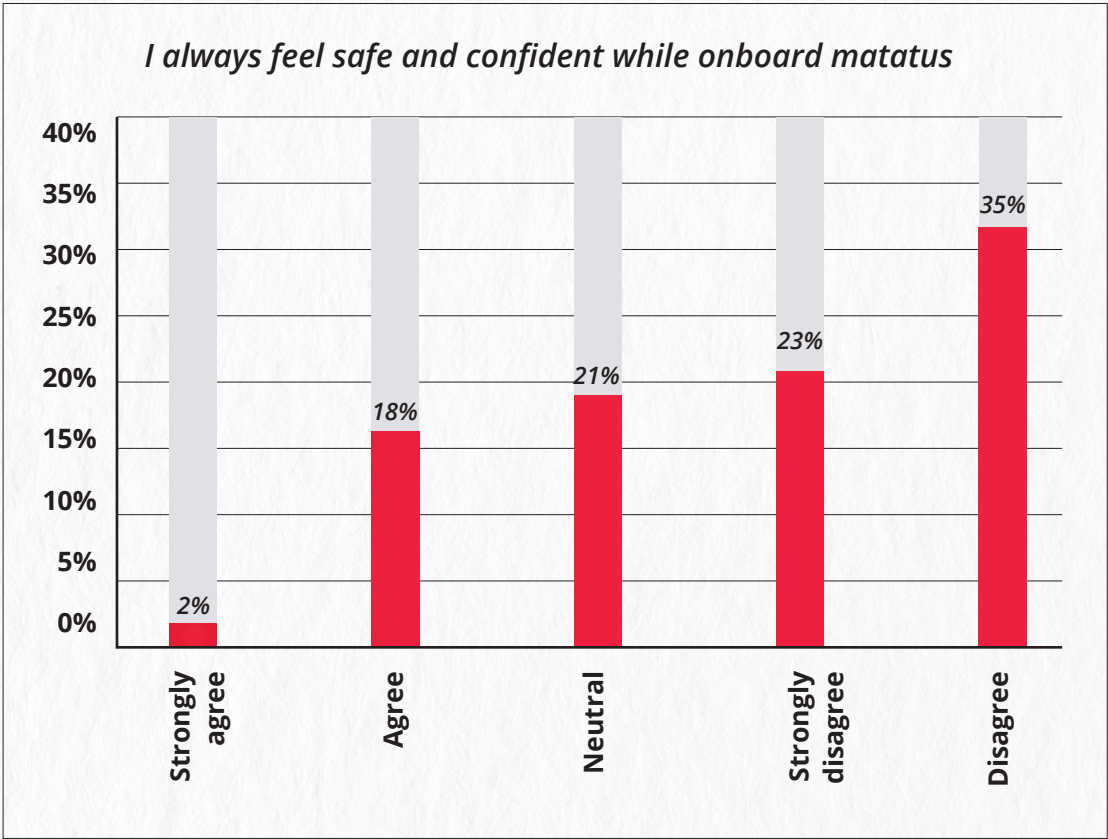


Figure 12: Safety in a matatu

*"It is easy to be sexually mishandled when you are a woman. Women are easily disrespected and the matatu staff lowers our dignity."  
(A woman with albinism from Machakos County).*

*"They touch our buttocks when helping us get into the matatu."  
(A woman who is short stature, Kawangware).*

*"A matatu driver and the tout raped a schoolgirl who was deaf in 2014 at the Machakos bus stage. They took her to the forest and raped her for three more days. The perpetrators fled upon noticing they were being pursued. The girl contracted HIV. After reporting, no action was taken."  
(FGD, Machakos County).*

*"In 2016, a 29-year-old female was raped by a tout. She was not conscious and she was raped for two days and climbed a tree when it became unbearable. I rescued her and kept her in a house for two days until she recovered. It looks like she had been bewitched after taking KES. 9,000 from her employer. We collected money from friends and after she refunded the money back to her employer, she became well."  
(A female stage clerk, Machakos County).*

*"Sometimes back, we had a case of defilement when the bodaboda owner refused to drop a person with a disability at the respective stage. He took advantage of the girl's disability and sexually abused her."  
(A caregiver of children with cerebral palsy, Kiambu County).*

*"When boarding motorbikes, the riders seem to be kind-hearted and welcoming but during the onset of the journey, they become cruel and turns out to be rapist instead. They are the greatest rapist in the transport sector."  
(A vendor who is deaf, Nairobi County)*



*"The tout keeps touching me and calling me names based on my disability, asking me to travel using their matatu."*

*(A woman with albinism, Nairobi County).*

*"At Kencom stage, I was travelling with someone in a wheelchair. The lady needed to be assisted to board the bus. The men assisting her mishandled her by touching her inappropriately, but she cautioned them. You end up feeling very disrespected as a woman. So being a woman, you can easily be taken advantage of in the name of assisting. Sometimes while assisting, they will lift your dress."*

*(An aide of a person with a physical disability, Kiambu County).*

*"Some conductors do not even ask for consent to lift you; they just assume you are sick and want to lift you right away. This makes one feel very bad. So, I explain that I am not sick, only that I cannot see. You have to keep explaining the situation, which makes you feel humiliated."*

*(A woman with visual impairment, Kiambu County).*

*"When the conductor wants to be paid and knows you are blind, they mishandle you and some touch your breasts."*

*(A person with visual impairment, Kiambu County).*

*"One day, I took a tuk-tuk from Thika Town in the evening and negotiated to be taken to Kiandutu. The driver wanted to charge me Ksh. 150 instead of the normal Ksh. 100, because I was blind. The journey started, and he stopped for another man to get in on reaching the junction. I was shocked and asked him why he had carried another passenger, yet they had agreed only her would be transported. The driver told me to keep quiet and that he would take me to my destination. The driver said the second passenger was a co-driver, but I told him that a tuk-tuk does not have a co-driver. On reaching Gatitu, he changed the normal route and used the mashambani route. I asked the driver why he had changed the*

*route and he asked me how I knew he had changed route, yet I could not see. Luckily, there were traffic police around that area, so I screamed and the policeman stopped the tuk-tuk. The policeman enquired about the commotion and I explained I did not know what they wanted to do to me. I wonder if I did not that get brave, what would those men could have done to me and it was late."*

*(A woman with visual impairment, Kiambu County).*

*"I feel very unsafe because I do not know what will happen during the journey, especially when the conductor and driver are all men. They can take advantage of you and sexually abuse you or steal from you."*

*(A woman with visual impairment, Kiambu County).*

*"Women with disabilities are more vulnerable than men. The deaf and blind can easily be harassed by the touts who are usually drunkards and drug addicts."*

*(A government officer, Kajiado County).*

*"I prefer spending where I go instead of coming back late hours because I do not feel safe at night in public transport. I fear being sexually harassed or being left in unknown destinations."*

*(A woman with visual impairment, Nairobi County).*

*"When somebody is alighted at a different station, especially at night, it becomes difficult for a woman with a disability and an elderly woman to identify their destinations. This can present safety issues."*

*(A matatu staff from Kiambu County).*

*Women are limited on hours of travel because they are more vulnerable to sexual abuse."*

*(A government representative from Machakos County).*



**d) Limited road safety**

From **Figure 13**, about half (48%) felt unsafe from other motorists and motorbikes. Some reported having been hit by moving vehicles. Switching vehicles is another problem and it can take those with mobility challenges up to one hour to connect from one terminus to the other, further exposing them to traffic accidents, especially when crossing busy roads. Some felt that matatus pose more safety issues than private cars due to careless driving.

Persons using wheelchairs and having visual impairments are more unsafe from vehicular traffic. Motorbikes that use the wrong side of the road can easily sweep away an alighting passenger. The pedestrian crossings are not clearly marked and even when marked, some motorists ignore them, posing a safety issue. It was realized that many passengers do not wear safety belts despite being provided, presenting a safety issue in case of an accident. Many said that safety belts are not clean and others are faulty.

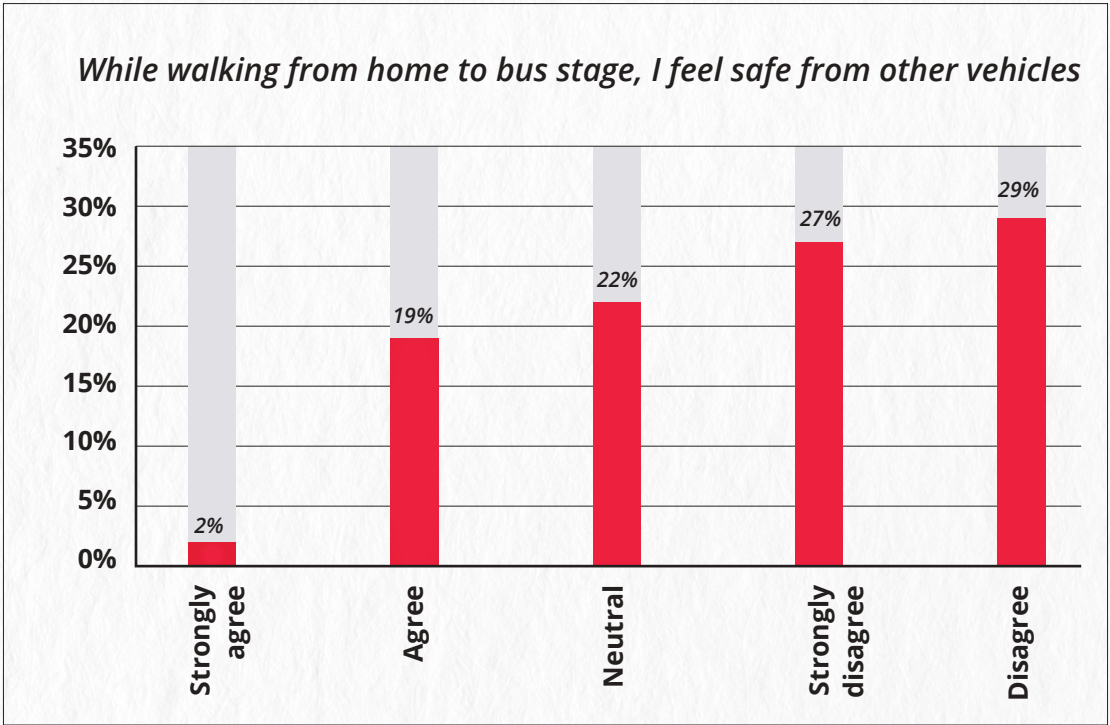


Figure 13: Safety from vehicular traffic

*"I was once hit on my wheelchair by a matatu when moving in town as I was going to park it. Fortunately, I was not injured."*

*(A female vendor, Nairobi County).*

*"Many drivers do not care about pedestrian crossings. Mostly the motorbikes are careless and do not care; they even cross the pedestrian crossings even when other vehicles have stopped."*

*(An elderly woman, Kiambu County).*

*"Most of us get into accidents when walking by the roadside just because we are deaf and cannot hear any hooting. Most of the matatu operators think we assume or ignore the signals."*

*(A vendor who is deaf, Nairobi County).*

*"Early in 2021, I was called being a leader of an organization for persons with disabilities that a man who was blind had been hit while crossing the road close to Thika Police Station. There were two pedestrian crossings near the Salvation Army Church and the other ten metres away from the police station. Being blind, he could not tell where the zebra crossing was, but he knew it was near it and used a white cane. A speeding driver hit him and the white cane fell. Luckily another pedestrian who knew the leader of the DPO and called her while calling the public's attention. The Traffic Police wanted a bribe to release the vehicle, but the DPO leader refused and asked the police to take the injured to the hospital. So, if there were no intervention, the police would have taken the bribe and the blind person would have suffered."*

*(A DPO leader who is blind, Kiambu County).*

*"Bodabodas go through the wrong side of the road and can easily sweep away the persons alighting from a vehicle."*

*(A stakeholder of the elderly).*



*"Many matatus have safety belts, but many users do not use them. The safety belts are dirty and dusty. Users have not appreciated that safety belts are for safety."*

*(A stakeholder of the elderly).*

*"One time, the vehicle moved when I had not alighted and I fell, hurting my legs. The matatu sped off, leaving me there and I was helped by a stranger who saw what transpired and took me to the hospital. From that time, I fear using public transport."*

*(A woman who is visually impaired, Kiambu County).*

*"Matatus do not always give time for road users to cross and will always harass elderly road users."*

*(An elderly woman, Thogoto).*

#### **e) Risk of losing assistive devices and luggage**

From **Figure 14**, most (61%) felt that the matatu staff do not carefully handle their mobility aids. Some end up spending the extra cost of acquiring new mobility aids, especially those using wheelchairs and white canes. Acknowledging that women with a disability and elderly women carry a lot of baggage with them, the safety of their luggage is a key concern for them whenever they use matatus, yet this is not a big concern by the matatu staff. For instance, those with visual impairment cannot easily trace their luggage.

*"Some conductors do not consider the white canes. When you alight and the white cane is trapped in the vehicle, the driver speeds off and as a result, the white cane breaks. I have lost many white canes because of this. When you tell the driver to stop because my white cane has dropped, they ask you will we stop the vehicle because of that thing. Others do not wait for you to sit down; they speed off, leaving you struggling to get to your seat."*

*(A woman with visual impairment, Kiambu County).*

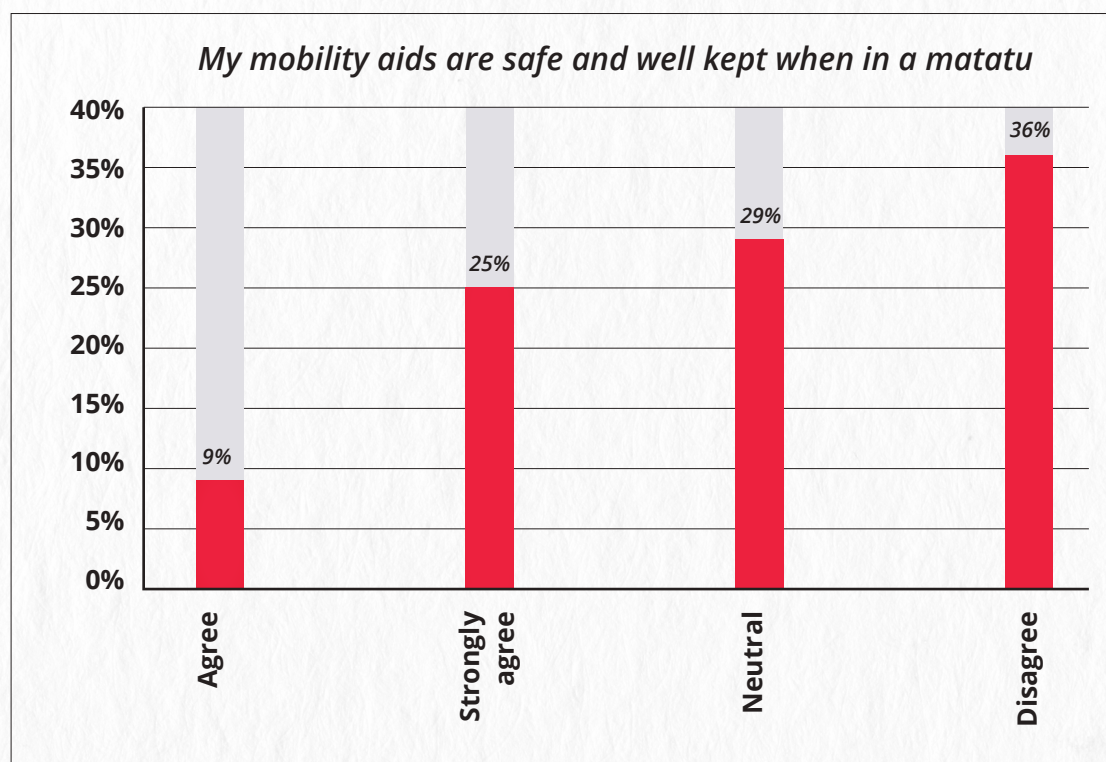


Figure 14: Safety and handling of assistive devices

*“When you have luggage, they throw your luggage in a place you cannot easily access. By the time you reach your destination, the conductor is not patient to give you your luggage. He signals the driver to drive off and you lose your luggage. I have lost my belongings many times. Sometimes they tell me to show them my luggage, yet I cannot see.”*

*(A woman with visual impairment, Kiambu County).*

*“Most public vehicles do not have somewhere for persons with disabilities to put their mobility aids like a wheelchair.”*

*(A female with physical impairment, Kajiado County).*

*“I feel that I cannot protect my items due to my disability. One time a conductor stole my phone and disappeared in the crowd. I called the SACCO to complain about the matter and my phone was returned.*

*(A woman with a physical disability, Kajiado County).*



*"Matatu operators mostly allow criminals to get in the matatus and steal from the passengers. They allow criminals spray sleeping drugs in the matatu."*

*(A vendor who is deaf, Nairobi County)*

*"At the country bus, it is worse because someone will take your luggage and pretend to help you but run with it and you will not see it again. Other matatu staff pull you into their buses. The commotion is a lot for an elderly person. I prefer not to carry any luggage as there is no point in carrying it to lose it at the bus station."*

*(An elderly woman, Thika).*

*"It is easy to lose luggage while onboard a matatu. Some rowdy touts can also ransack your bag for valuables while boarding or alighting."*

*(An elderly woman, Thogoto).*

#### **f) Inaccessible bus terminuses**

From **Figure 15**, most (72%) felt that the matatu terminuses are inaccessible. The terminuses are congested and vendors have encroached on the waiting bays. Despite the presence of by-laws regulating the terminus, it becomes difficult to evict them due to resistance from the beneficiaries. In some instances, the issues become politicised and the status quo remains. Elderly women were particularly concerned about the lack of benches for resting while waiting for matatus.

*"The bus stops are not designed with the level of the vehicle. We have tried some bus stops like Githurai Stage in Ronald Ngala. We have raised the boarding area such that you don't have to climb from the ground without climbing."*

*(A government respondent from Nairobi County).*

*"Hawkers have taken over the seating area, and therefore persons with disabilities have nowhere to sit as they wait for the vehicles."*

*(A woman with visual impairment, Machakos County).*

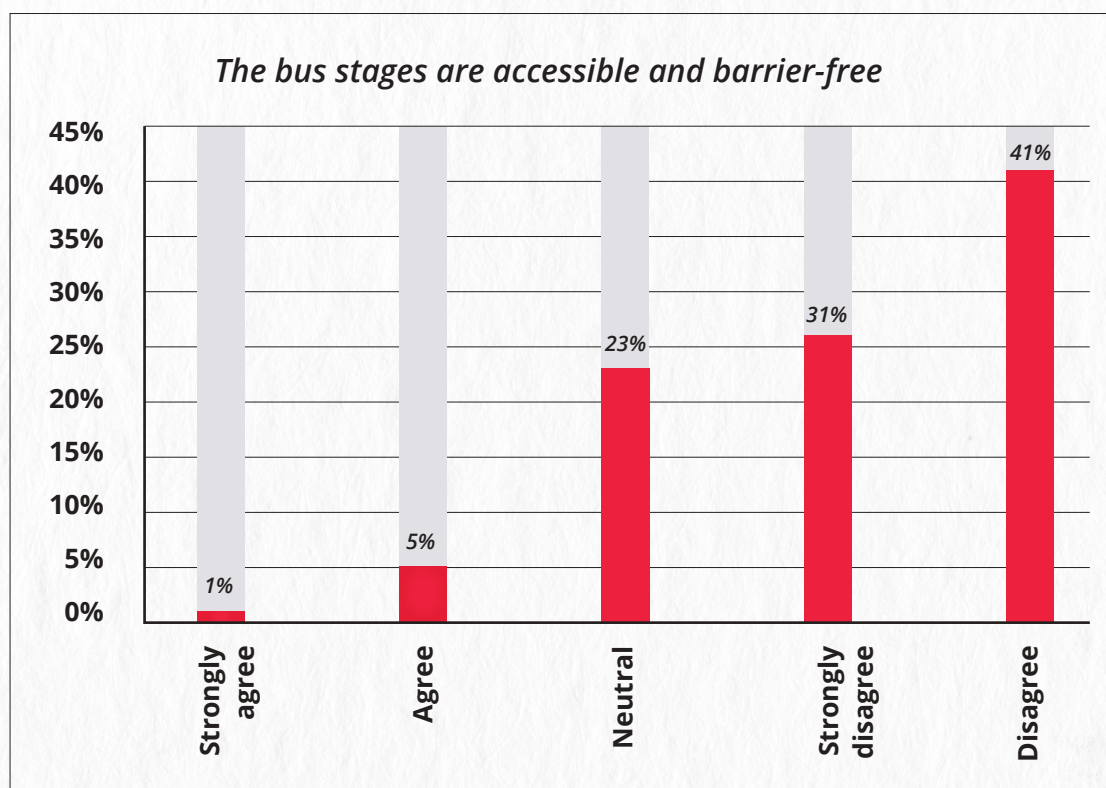


Figure 15: Accessibility of bus terminus

*"We get a lot of problems because of distractions from the hawkers. The hawkers are hawking along the road and in bus stations. They can easily make a slow person get hit."*  
*(An elderly woman, Kiambu County).*

*"Stages are crowded and you have to push your way through the crowd to get to the vehicle. It is harder for persons with disabilities."*  
*(A woman with a physical disability, Kiambu County).*

*"There is no walking path and if any buses have been parked on the spots, no ramps."*  
*(A woman with a physical disability, Nairobi County).*

*"Bus stages are not accessible. The staircases are very stiff. Therefore, the elderly and physically challenged struggle to enter. For example,*



*Kencom stage has no raised platform to allow persons with disabilities climb the bus."*

*(A representative of matatu owners, Nairobi County).*

**g) Inaccessible facilities**

From **Figure 16**, the majority (65%) felt that many bus terminuses do not have friendly amenities such as toilet facilities. Both women with disabilities and older women reported that they rarely take any food or fluids whenever travelling. This is because they are not sure if they will find friendly toilets. The county governments have been trying to provide adapted toilets, especially for newer terminuses but only a few adapted toilets in the older ones. The adapted toilets in the older facilities (for example, the one near the Archives) are one door that serves both men and women and women feel unsafe using them.

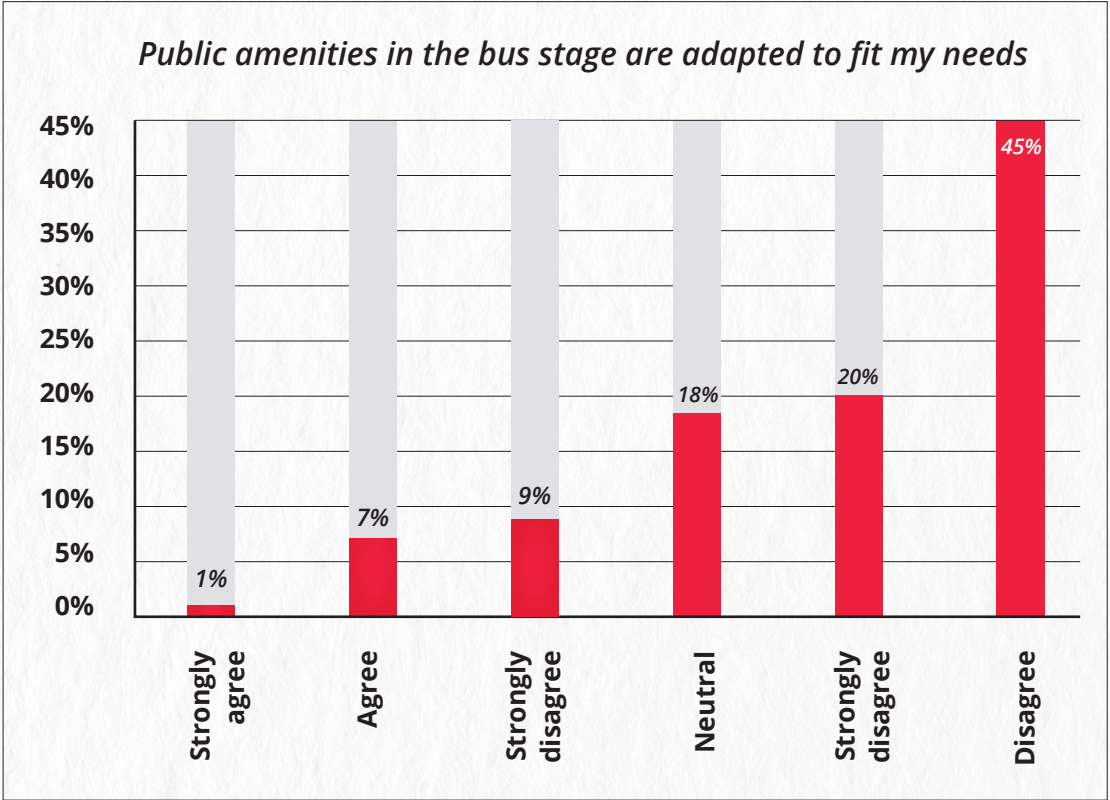


Figure 16: Adaptation of public amenities

*"There are few ramps but does not have pedestrian crossing and the hawkers have occupied the pathways."*

*(A woman with visual impairment, Kajiado County).*

*"At the bus station, there are no sitting spaces and being an elderly person and you cannot stand for long."*

*(An elderly woman, Kajiado County).*

*"Our bus stage has no much adapted facilities"*

*(A government officer, Kajiado County).*

*"Most terminuses do not have a place to sit as you wait for the bus. During rush hour, it is even worse as everybody is rushing to get to their destination."*

*(An elderly woman, Thika).*

*"Women with disabilities are used not to eat or drink anything while travelling. They are afraid of whether there are friendly toilets wherever the vehicle stops"*

*(A woman DPO leader with a physical disability, Nairobi County).*

*"Women with disabilities cannot easily access toilets compared to men. They have to sit on the toilets, yet they are unclean."*

*(Government officer, Kajiado County).*

*"Those with challenges with controlling bowels and put on diapers and others using catheters feel embarrassed to empty them, especially in public spaces."*

*(A woman DPO leader with a physical disability, Nairobi County).*

*"I do not take anything while travelling as I cannot control my bowel movement. It is worse when you have luggage because you cannot get somewhere to put it should you need to go to the toilet. I once lost my money when I trusted someone to hold my bag."*

*(An elderly woman, Thika).*



*"Some cannot control their bowel movement so could pass urine on themselves and sometimes the staff do not know how to assist further."*

*(A woman in transport, Machakos County).*

*"A few toilets in the CBD have been reconfigured. The new toilets being constructed should be disability-friendly. Newer stations like Green Park and Desai Road have male and female toilets for persons with disabilities. We have reserved seating for persons with disabilities in Green Park terminus, but the old stages have no reserved areas."*  
*(Government officer, Nairobi County).*

*"Often, I have heard that persons with disabilities do not like taking fluids because they are unsure where to relieve themselves."*  
*(A government officer, Nairobi County).*

*"Even when pressed, I have to wait until I am home. The available toilets might be accessible but not friendly and no water to flush."*  
*(A woman with physical impairment, Nairobi County).*

*"There are toilets but are not friendly depending on the type of disability and one must pay to use them."*  
*(A woman with a physical disability, Kajiado County).*

*"As an elderly person, you use the normal toilet and are forced to bend, causing additional problems to your back, so you chose not to use them."*  
*(An elderly woman, Thogoto).*

#### **h) Inaccessible information on public transport**

Generally, in Kenya, matatus do not provide information to the passengers in the most accessible formats. From **Figure 17**, 54% reported that they could not easily locate different matatu routes.

Often passengers have to keep reminding the conductors of their destination. Accessibility of information is also observed in the complaint's mechanism. Despite some buses having complaints mechanisms, they reveal that they are not accessible to all people and present a challenge of reporting if they encounter any challenge.

*"We have a 24-hour radio room to register a complaint. You look at the fleet number and not the vehicle registration number. But a blind person cannot access that information. Need for audio or braille to announce stages and fleet number."*

*(A representative of matatu owners).*

*"A person with no disability can alight anywhere compared to one with a disability. They will be able to communicate their destination and can quickly board or alight without taking extra time. For a person with a disability, matatu staff feels they will waste their time and are always in a hurry."*

*(A female with spina bifida, Machakos County).*

*"With old age, you develop a low vision and therefore you cannot see the placards that show various destinations. The matatu staff can lie to you and you find yourself boarding the wrong bus."*

*(An elderly woman, Thika).*

*"Persons who are deaf experience communication barriers since some do not know how to write; therefore, they cannot express their wishes to the matatu staff. Most of the time, the staff ignore them, and those willing to help cannot communicate with them."*

*(A female passenger who is deaf from Machakos County).*

*"Persons with low vision cannot see far, especially the notifications on matatu destinations compared to persons without visual impairment. Therefore, it is easy for them to manoeuvre around the terminus."*

*(A female with low vision, Machakos County).*



*"There is an office that handles complaints, but the building where the office is located is not accessible."*

*(A woman stage clerk, Machakos County).*

*"If you ask someone what number that matatu is in town, they ask if you can't see, not realizing you have a visual impairment. Sometimes it is very complicated for a person with visual impairment to know which vehicle is going whereas they are all in one place and most people are not willing to assist. Some people make fun of you, making them feel very bad."*

*(A woman with visual impairment, Kiambu County).*

### **i) Inaccessible and unresponsive reporting channels**

In an ideal situation, a case of abuse or mishandling in a public service vehicle should be reported and acted on by the relevant parties. The primary responders should be the matatu SACCOs. An aggrieved passenger can also report to the police station, especially if the issue is criminal. The respondents felt that the reporting channels are unresponsive and inaccessible. Therefore, many have given up reporting to the SACCOs or the police. Some SACCOs, however, are making efforts to be responsive to passenger complaints, but there remains a huge gap.

*"As a person with visual impairment, if you are sexually harassed and report to the police, you are told to describe the person who defiled you, yet you cannot see. For a person who is deaf, there are no sign language interpreters in most government entities. Mostly you do not know the number plate or hotline of the vehicle as a person with visual impairment, and it is not easy to report the situation."*

*(A woman with visual impairment, Kiambu County).*

*"We usually report to the SACCOs, but they only say we will correct and nothing happens."*

*(A woman with physical impairment, Machakos County).*

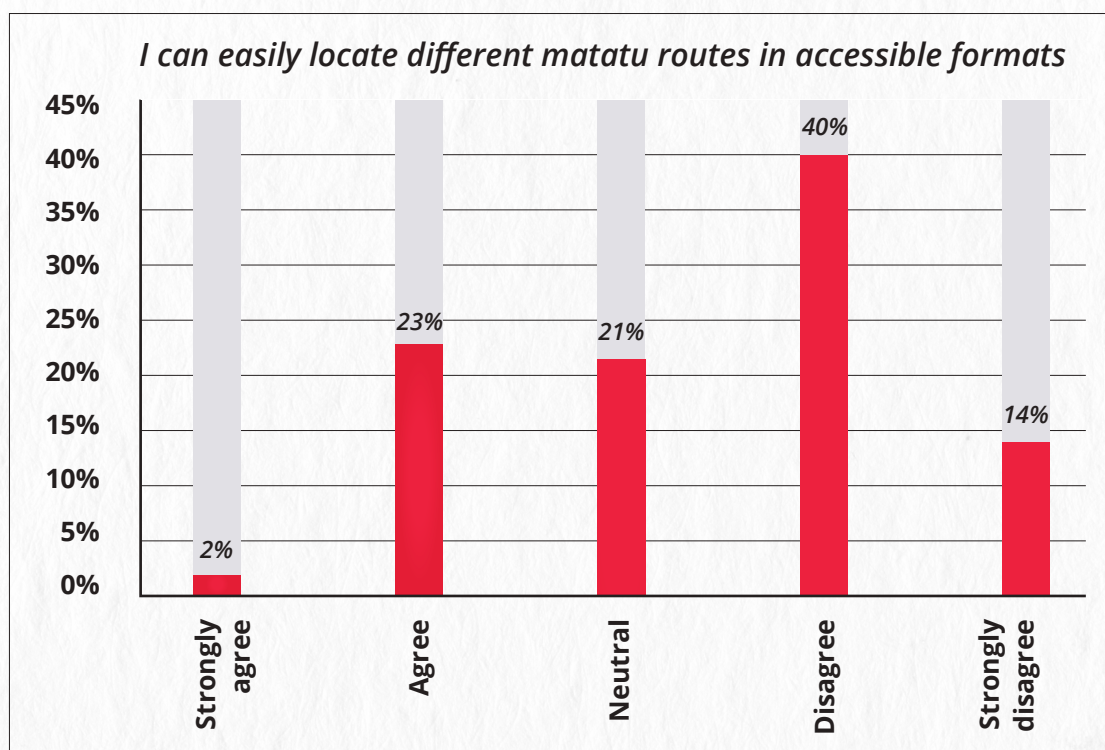


Figure 17: Matatu routes in accessible formats

*“Even when you are left and you report, no action is taken. When summoned, the conductor and the driver may defend themselves by saying that the vehicle was full. You decide to wait for conductors who will empathize to onboard you.”*

*(A woman with physical impairment, Kiambu County).*

*“The SACCO offices are like kiosks, so most persons with disabilities cannot access them to report.”*

*(A woman with visual impairment, Machakos County).*

*“I feel that I cannot protect my items due to my disability. One time a conductor stole my phone and disappeared in the crowd. I called the SACCO to complain about the matter and my phone was returned.*

*(A woman with a physical disability, Kajiado County).*

*“In most cases, we do not report because we do not know the channels to report the incidences.”*

*(A woman with a physical disability, Kajiado County).*



j) Inaccessible non-motorized transport infrastructure

From **Figure 18**, the majority (66%) felt that the few walkways that have been upgraded are comfortable to walk on. However, others still felt that despite the NMS's effort to construct new walkways, the existing ones still have barriers.

The barriers include lack of footpaths, poorly maintained footpaths, blocked walkways, lack of pedestrian crossings, poorly lit streets, and the encroachment of footpaths by hawkers and other road users. Also, many road barriers during road construction make it difficult for people with mobility challenges to manoeuvre. These obstructive barriers can cause severe injuries to people with mobility and visual impairments and make them disinterested in visiting towns.

*“Motorbikes use footbridges designed for accessibility. The motorbike operators assume they were done for them because the public*

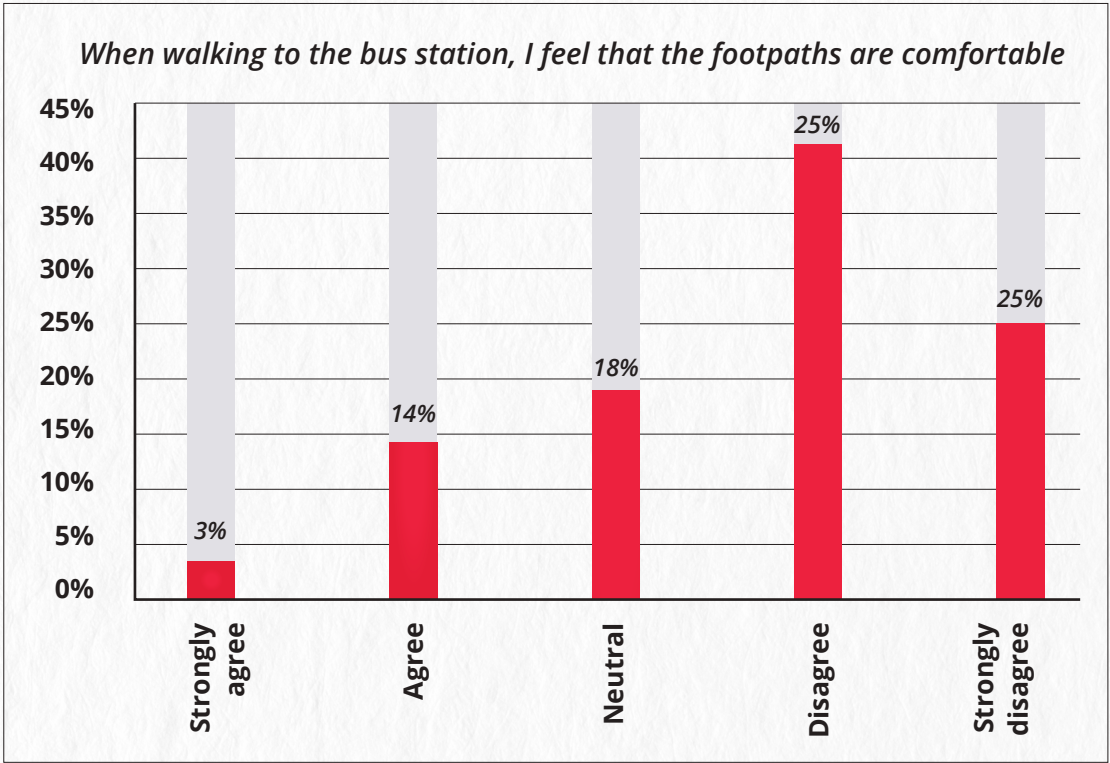


Figure 18: Friendliness of walkways

*has not been sensitized to the importance of such facilities. Even officers in different sectors within the county government may not understand their importance."*

*(A respondent from Kiambu County).*

*"I usually go with other ladies to me assist in the market. One day, they rushed to the matatu to hold a seat for her leaving her behind. While I was trying to get to the matatu, I fell into a ditch full of water because it had rained the previous night heavily. Strangers helped me out of the deep ditch."*

*(A woman with visual impairment, Kiambu County).*

*"There are no benches for elderly women. Even when they are made, vandals vandalise them. Elderly women have to stand. Where there were benches, now are kiosks and hawkers. So, there is nowhere to sit and rest."*

*(A stakeholder of the elderly).*

*"For pavements with holes, a person with visual impairment can easily fall in them."*

*(A female with low vision, Machakos County).*

*"The passage and walkways are majorly used by bodaboda or are small and occupied by cows making it very inaccessible for persons with disabilities."*

*(A woman DPO leader, Kitengela).*

*"Like now there is construction everywhere. An elderly person or a person with a disability cannot jump the ditches and the manholes on the roads."*

*(An elderly woman, Thogoto).*

*"Most bus stops do not have pedestrian pathways; therefore, when a deaf person walks along the roads, they can be easily knocked."*

*(A vendor who is deaf, Nairobi County).*



### **k) Congestion, noise and air pollution in the public service vehicles**

Some matatus are reported to operate despite being unroadworthy. Some are poorly serviced to the extent that they pollute the environment and make the passengers uncomfortable. Elderly women with chronic breathing and other health problems are easily affected by such fumes and other pollution. Those with autism may be affected by loud music. Passengers with disabilities such as cerebral palsy and other health conditions may vomit in the vehicles and be treated rudely. The loud music also affects older women's hearing ability, and sometimes the content is inappropriate for viewing. They also said it is not easy to request them to reduce the volume because they can easily become rude.

*"I had a very bad allergy and every time I got into a matatu, it would become irritable to other passengers and me. I imagined that pollution would affect elderly persons whose health is compromised."  
(A government officer from Nairobi County).*

*"The bus stations are highly polluted because the engines are always running. The same fumes are getting into the food that travellers are consuming."  
(A stakeholder of the elderly).*

*"Several matatus play music, especially those plying Nairobi routes. If you tell them to lower the music, they tell you that it is not loud, only that you are old. The response is not usually very good."  
(Stakeholder of older people).*

*"Last week (first week of March 2022) I travelled with an old man. The matatu we were in had loud music. He requested the driver to reduce the volume. The driver refused. We intervened, but later, he kept increasing the volume. The old man decided to alight and pay the extra fare to board another matatu."  
(A government officer from Nairobi County).*

## I) Non-representative workforce

Progress has been made in employing women in the transport sector. However, our study findings revealed that no staff with disabilities are employed in the matatu sector. The lack of such representation could be a cause of discrimination. One of the causes is that women with disabilities may imagine that the transport sector only involves driving, is a male job and requires aggression, thus making them shy away from such jobs.

Another cause could be that the matatu owners and SACCOs have not realised the potential of women with disabilities to work in the sector. They imagine women with disabilities have inadequacies and that they will not fit in the sector. There are no regulations developed to guide the employment of persons with disabilities in the matatu industry.

*“Many PWDs are discriminated against in employment because they are wrongly perceived as people who cannot perform like others. There is no one employed in the matatu industry with a disability. Many imagine that the transport sector only entails driving. There is a lot of other work involved.”*

*(Transport Workers Union).*

*“The matatu sector setup causes discrimination. Many owners leave the matatus to the drivers. They have daily targets. The driver hires his conductor. In this case, any person with a disability cannot get that chance (to operate as a conductor). We are pushing for BRT to provide a level-playing ground for everyone.”*

*(Transport Workers Union).*

## 4.5 Social challenges

### a) Patriarchal dominance of the transport industry

Kenya is largely a patriarchal society dominated by men, with national data indicating that only 10% of women in the labour force



in transport services, and in a county like Machakos, only 0.001%. This is also reflected in the running of the public service vehicle industry. This being the case, the cultural orientation presents men as superior to women and thus contributes to more maltreatment cases among women passengers than men. The challenge more than doubles for a woman with a disability and becomes worse for a woman with a disability and is elderly. Sexual and gender orientation also perpetuates dominance.

Naturally, women play multiple roles in a family. A woman with a disability is already disadvantaged in terms of barriers while accessing public transport vehicles. It becomes an additional challenge when travelling with her children, who require much attention from her and extra baggage. Compared to men with disabilities, women with disabilities are 'stressed up' by such journeys. Additionally, when women face challenges, they are not as aggressive as men and therefore give up easily and maybe become emotional, affecting their self-esteem.

*"The situation is harder for women than men since a man is more respected in society. Men can raise their voice when oppressed, are stronger and so they can manoeuvre easily, other men can assist them in boarding and alighting with no sexual harassment."*

*(A woman with a physical disability, Kajiado County).*

*"Men dominate the transport industry. Women feel shy to be assisted by men who hold their backs, thighs and next to breasts causing them to be uneasy. This can make a lady not use public transport, yet very few can afford it."*

*(Matatu Owners SACCO representative).*

*"Men dominate the public transport industry. They find it easier handling men than women. Men easily accept other men."*

*(A respondent from Kiambu County).*

*"Men are stronger and can push themselves to the vehicle, but you have to lift them for women"*

*(Women in transport, Nairobi).*

*"Culturally, men are more respected. Men with disabilities are given preference over women with disabilities when travelling. Women with disabilities are more disadvantaged because they travel with children and others are pregnant."*

*(Government officer, Machakos County).*

*"Men do have their challenges, but it is not as bad as those of women with disabilities. Physically, men are stronger than women, so most men struggle with boarding and alighting the matatus on their own."*

*(Caregiver of children with cerebral palsy, Kiambu County).*

*"Women are not good fighters. Sometimes men are more aggressive and can compete for matatu spaces more than women. Women withdraw easily and lose self-esteem if they face challenges."*

*(A respondent from Nairobi County).*

*"In early March 2022, I travelled with a woman who was visually impaired from Ngong Town. She was alighting at Dagoretti Corner, but they stopped at the Junction. If it were a man, he could have raised his voice."*

*(A government officer from Nairobi County).*

*"Women are more underrated than men. They see women with albinism as wazungu but not a person with a disability."*

*(A woman with albinism from Machakos County).*

*"Women with disabilities most of the time have a luggage or a child. Already, as a person with a disability, society views you as a burden. They are more of a burden than a man with a disability."*

*(A respondent from Nairobi County).*



*"I do not feel safe because all my attention is on the child with a disability and one could lose her bags. One time a matatu left my bag as I was trying to help my child to alight. The bag had clothes and documents she needed for the hospital. I was forced to pay extra cash to buy their clothes."*

*(Woman caregiver of children with cerebral palsy, Kajiado County).*

#### **b) The discriminative attitude among the matatu staff**

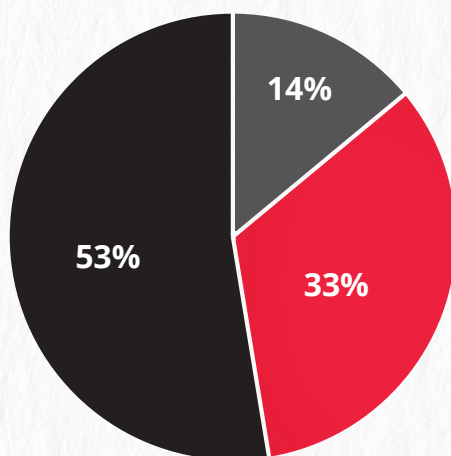
From **Figure 19**, the majority (53%) have been left by a matatu and 14% sometimes. More women than men are left because women are not aggressive. From figure 20, 62% of women with disabilities and the elderly take 20-30 minutes waiting for a matatu, and others may take longer; 14% take 30-60 minutes, and 3% take over one hour. Those who take longer waiting are those with wheelchairs and the elderly. Public transport operators imagine they cannot afford to pay the fares.

Some staff perceive women with disabilities as a burden and wasting their time. This also has a bearing on the patriarchal societal orientation regarding belittling women. Unchecked discrimination by the staff can cause low self-esteem among women with disabilities and older women. Many wheelchair users are left because the matatus do not have a space to put their wheelchairs. Those who are deaf are thought to be pretenders. Most times, the elderly women are left at the bus stop as they cannot match the pace of other passengers whenever it is peak time.

The time taken to wait for the matatus is also reasonably long as the matatus do not frequent the areas they reside. This affects elderly women as they experience joint pains when they stand at the terminuses for long. The longer time taken to travel drains the energy needed to run errands and many times, the day ends with swollen feet from the long day's errands and longer seating in the squeezed matatus.

Many get late to reach their destinations due to being left at the terminus and have developed resilience by befriending motorbike operators to transport them as an alternative mode of transport. Elderly women prefer travelling later during the day and coming back early. Many women with disabilities who are actively working prefer travelling very early morning and returning home later to avoid the push and pull involved when boarding.

*Have you been left at the bus stage by a matatu because of your disability?*



■ Sometimes

■ No

■ Yes

Figure 19: Being left by a matatu because of disability

*"It is very common to be left at the station. The matatu stops far from a person with mobility challenges and this also happens upcountry. People with disability have established a relationship with certain motorbike riders who provide transport services"*  
(A woman DPO leader, Nairobi County).

*"They assume since you have a disability you are a beggar and so you will not pay for the fare."*  
(A female with visual impairment, Kajiado County).



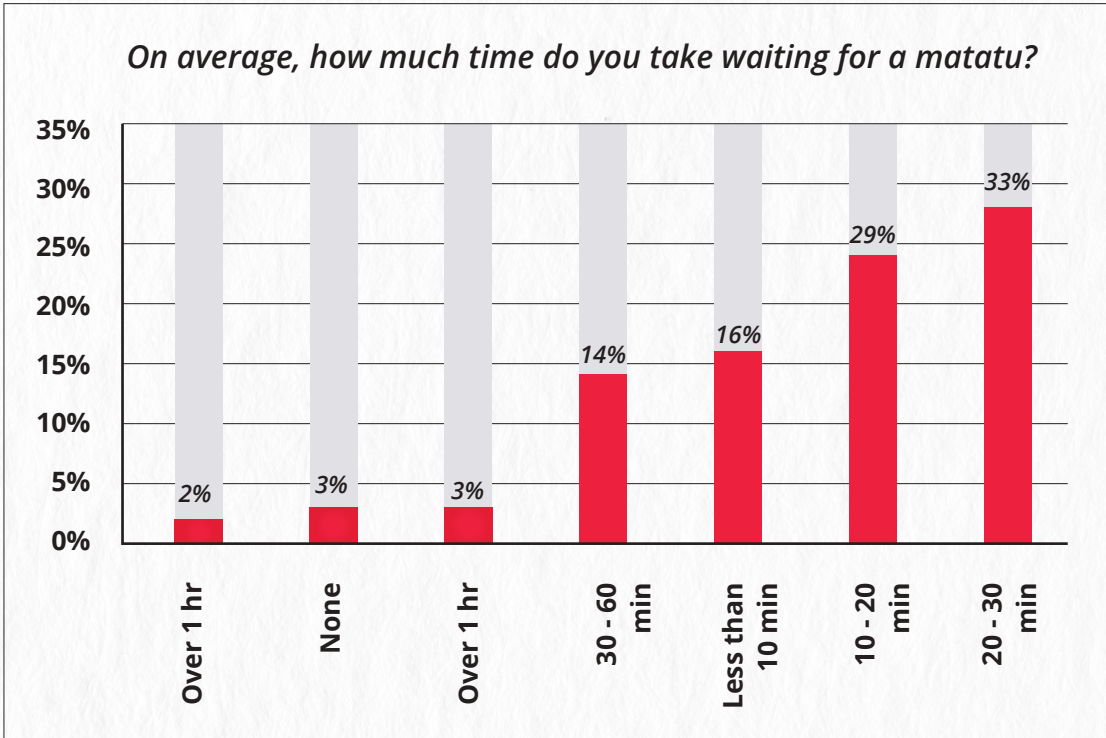


Figure 20: Average time taken to wait for a matatu

*“Some matatu conductors think that I will not be able to pay for the transport cost.”*

*(A female with a physical disability, Kiambu County).*

*“Since I can neither speak nor hear and I could not write in Swahili, I was thrown out. They assumed I was a beggar who might not pay the fare.”*

*(A female with hearing impairment, Machakos County).*

*“If you stop a vehicle and they see you are visually impaired, they say if it is that person, she does not pay the fare and they speed off.”*

*(A woman with visual impairment, Kiambu County).*

*“Matatus prefer leaving persons with disabilities or the elderly so that they do not lose on business.”*

*(A female stage clerk, Thika).*

*"Today (interview date), I stood at the stage from 10 am to 2 pm waiting for a matatu. I had to board a matatu to the City Stadium and then take a tuk-tuk (next to Nairobi Archives).*

*(A female vendor with a physical disability, Nairobi County).*

*"I prefer travelling off-peak hours where the commotion is less, but travelling is determined by need and where you are going."*

*(An elderly woman, Thika).*

*"Many drivers and conductors are in a hurry. They think that a lot of time is wasted."*

*(A representative of matatu owners, Nairobi County).*

*"Some staff use abusive language. They told me not to stress them and that women like me have problems and I should not take them my curse. This made me feel so bad and questioned God."*

*(A female with a physical disability, Kajiado County).*

*"When I was travelling to Kiserian in February 2022, I witnessed a lady who was being left by many matatus. I approached and asked her why she was being left. She said that the conductor would dismiss her by telling her to move since she was a burden and wasting time. If she were a man, the treatment would be different."*

*(A government officer from Nairobi County).*

*"The elderly women are left. The matatu staff leave them and start talking ill about them. They imagine such a person cannot afford to pay the fare. The only advantage is that they can speak."*

*(A woman with a disability, Nairobi County).*

*"In Nairobi, you are dropped far from my stage and your legs cannot walk long distances. Other times you are left by buses because you did not make it to the stage on time."*

*(An elderly woman, Thika).*



*"During the peak hours, there is a lot of pushing. You either start coming out very early around 5.30 am or late hours. When it rains, it becomes worse."*

*(A woman with a physical disability from Thika).*

*"I never want to go to town early because there is still competition. I live in Kikuyu, and I leave Kikuyu for the town at 10 am and I get back from town by 2 pm to avoid traffic jams."*

*(An elderly woman, Kikuyu).*

*"Matatus see persons with disabilities and the elderly women as obstacles. They often tell them to wait for another one (matatu)."*

*(A stakeholder of the elderly).*

*"One time, we travelled to Nairobi from upper Hill as a group. We stopped the Citi Hoppa bus and when the conductor looked at us, he asked them, now, who will pay for all of you? We felt offended because we knew he assumed we were beggars."*

*(A person with is blind, Machakos County).*

*"The matatu staff call me a person who cannot see, which makes me feel very bad. I ask God why I had to be that way. It makes me feel undeserving."*

*(A woman with visual impairment) Kajiado County).*

*"Being deaf, you cannot communicate and so the staff cannot understand your destination and most assume you are pretending."*

*(A woman with hearing impairment, Kajiado County).*

### **c) Unresponsiveness by matatu staff to the individual needs of passengers**

From **Figure 21**, most respondents (57%) felt that matatu staff are rude and do not understand and support their needs. Women with disabilities and older women present unique needs depending on

the type of disability. Someone may have a similar impairment but may also present unique needs. For example, those with intellectual challenges may face difficulties recognising bus terminus and currency. Those with physical challenges may be required to pay more for their wheelchairs and aides. It becomes more challenging if one is a woman with a disability and is pregnant. When matatu staff are requested for extra support, they may get rude or ignore such requests, making passengers uncomfortable in the matatu. Older women cannot queue for long due to their weak muscles. They also felt that it is dishonourable for young men who qualify to be their great-grandchildren to mishandle them. Some older women are also concerned that due to many of them suffering memory loss, some conductors take advantage of them and do not return their balance or issue old, torn, or fake notes. It is claimed that male matatu staff are more insensitive than women staff to the needs of persons with disabilities and the elderly.

Currently, there is no formalised institution to train the public transport staff in Kenya. Drivers and conductors are only required to have statutory documents to operate. Despite the critical role of interacting with about 600 people daily, the matatu owners recruit drivers and conductors based on years of experience and statutory documents but not on customer relations skills, which is very important. However, some efforts are being made by some matatu operators. For example, KBS has mandatory training for their drivers (two weeks) and conductors (one month) on customer relations. Their module has a component for handling persons with disabilities. Two matatu operators in Machakos named 'Sauti' and "Penny Kilovo" and Forward Travellers in Nairobi were hailed for ferrying the elderly and persons with disabilities for free. Others like TKN Sacco in Thika do not charge wheelchairs.

*"The timing for boarding is not friendly. Matatus are always in a hurry and therefore, boarding is quite fast, so an older woman*



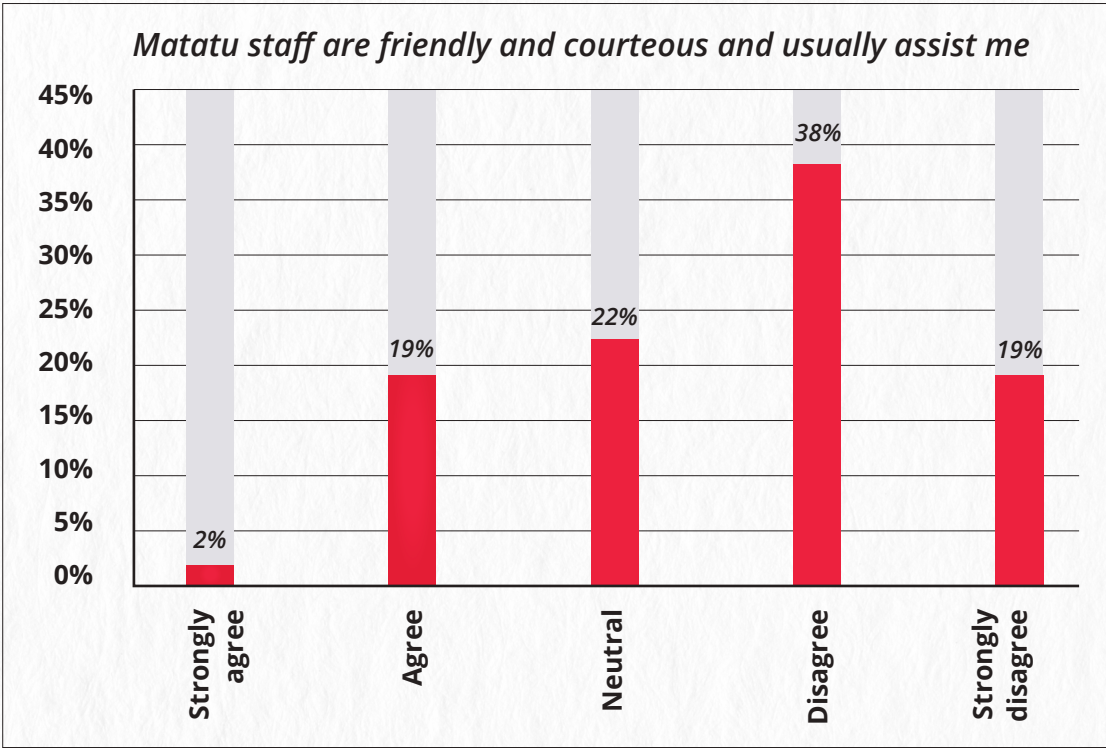


Figure 21: Friendliness and courtesy of matatu staff

*cannot board fast. Older women do not want to travel early morning because of boarding and alighting. "*  
*(Stakeholder of elderly people).*

*"We have not reserved or marked seats for persons with disabilities and therefore making it difficult to vacate someone (who has already boarded)."*  
*(A representative of matatu owners, Nairobi County).*

*"I do not prefer to be helped up into the bus or tuk-tuk because the handling is sometimes embarrassing or can hurt me more where I have injuries due to old age."*  
*(An elderly woman, Thika).*

*"The elderly women are referred to as 'warembo wa zamani' (old beauties) and so only the old buses 'mawe' (stones) carry them since*

*'nganya' (the new and pimped buses) do not have time for them as the buses are always in a hurry and charge higher fares. You have to be physically fit to use the 'manyanga' buses.*

*(Woman in transport, Nairobi County).*

*"Matatus leave me because they sometimes stop past me and ask me to rush towards them and since I cannot rush, they leave me. Others say it is full to avoid me."*

*(An elderly woman, Kiambu County).*

*"I was left because the matatu crew said that he would not be able to understand what I said."*

*(A woman with hearing impairment, Kiambu County).*

*"It was almost raining and I was in town with the child with a disability. We could not struggle to board, so we were left." (Caregiver of a child with intellectual challenge, Kajiado County).*

*"When left, one will feel disappointed, not loved and even you tend to believe that you do not fit in the society and can lead to low self-esteem."*

*(A woman with a physical disability, Machakos County).*

*"They complain that it takes time to put a wheelchair into the vehicle and then carry the passenger into the matatu."*

*(A woman with a physical disability, Machakos County).*

*"They left me because I was given a back seat and could not fit in with my child with cerebral palsy. I felt bad because I was late and felt rejected by the passengers."*

*(Caregiver of a child with autism, Kajiado County).*

*"We even wait for about one hour, especially when you are waiting for passengers to fill the vehicle. Sometimes I feel a lot of back pain*



*due to tiredness experienced in matatus. When I get back home, I go straight to bed to rest. Kenya Mpya has one express bus and another one that stops all stages, so I prefer the express one."*

*(An elderly woman, Kiambu County).*

*"Young women can sit on a 'sambaza'(wooden piece), but elderly women cannot, so they are left at the stage."*

*(A female stage clerk, Thika).*

*"The matatus do not allow adequate time for boarding and even alighting."*

*(An elderly woman, Kajiado County).*

*"The matatu staff are not friendly. They are not patient and not responsive to the needs of persons with disabilities. Every category of disability has its issues. Those with intellectual disabilities, especially autism, are disturbed by very loud music. Those without disabilities can enter easily, communicate easily and sit anywhere. People who are blind cannot easily differentiate the currency, especially with the new currency and can easily be cheated. When you have a wheelchair, you pay double and if you have an assistant, you pay for them. Those with communication challenges, nobody understands them. When the conductor asks for money, the user with communication challenges cannot communicate with the conductor. Those with psychosocial disabilities are often mishandled."*

*(A woman DPO leader, Nairobi County).*

*"The matatu staff are not trained to handle persons with disabilities. Lack of etiquette. Women are also delicate in terms of the language used and are easily affected compared to men."*

*(Government officer, Nairobi County).*

*"When you were a young woman, you could run towards the bus, but now, even walking fast is a challenge due to age. You stay still and*



*wait for the vehicle to come where you are. They usually leave you because you cannot rush. A young woman pushes her way into the matatu, but an older woman cannot due to age.*

*(An elderly woman, Thika).*

*“Out of ten staff, only two will treat a person with a disability with respect and the two none of them knows how best to handle us as much as they would like to help.”*

*(A female with a physical disability (hands amputated), Kajiado County).*

*“One time, the conductor assumed that my child with cerebral palsy could hold on to the seat. The child was left unattended and before the mother could get into the vehicle, the child had fallen and hurt herself badly.”*

*(A woman with a physical disability, Kajiado County).*

*“They ignore persons with visual impairment because you cannot see. They do not drop you at the agreed stage but a stage you are unfamiliar with, which is a problem because I have to ask people around for assistance, especially if I do not have a guide.”*

*(A woman who is blind, Kiambu County).*

*“One day, I gave Ksh. 1000 note to the conductor. I kept asking for her change until we arrived at our destination. The conductor did not know I was with my son, who intervened and the conductor was coerced to give back the change. If no one was with me, I could not have gotten my change back.”*

*(A woman with visual impairment, Kiambu County).*

*“Once they realize you cannot see, they give you the oldest or torn notes since they know you cannot recognize them. Most vendors will refuse to take when you go with the notes to buy something and you realize the conductor took advantage of you. Sometimes they even give you fake currency and will not realize until someone helps when you get home.”*

*(A woman with visual impairment, Kiambu County).*



**d) Indifferent and insensitive attitudes by other passengers**

Often persons with disabilities not only get discriminated against by matatu but also by other regular passengers. Some passengers have a negative attitude towards such passengers and are unwilling to give them friendly spaces within the matatu.

Only a few are compassionate in helping people with disabilities and elderly persons. This contributes to them being left at the terminus, thus advancing stigma in society.

*“Very few passengers are in a position to help or are willing to help. Others assume persons with disabilities cannot speak or understand Kamba language, so they gossip about the condition of the person with a disability, making you feel bad.”*

*(A female with short stature, Machakos County).*

*“Other passengers, if requested, are usually not willing to give a person with a disability a seat.”*

*(A person with physical impairment, Machakos County).*

*“Others do not want to sit next to you. Children with cerebral palsy cannot control saliva dropping. Some passengers show disgust outrightly, which makes the caregiver feel so bad.”*

*(A caregiver of children with cerebral palsy, Kiambu County).*

*“The society stigmatizes persons with disabilities, thus making one not to use public transport. Most of the staff make fun of their disability, and others assume they are pretending. Other passengers do not want to sit next to them as they cannot control most of their movements, especially children with cerebral palsy and autism.”*

*(A woman DPO leader, Kajiado County).*

*“Other passengers rarely help or tell the conductor to assist a person with a disability. Most of them are concerned with getting to their*

*destinations on time, but sometimes some empathize about two out ten who force the conductor to assist persons with disabilities.”*

*(A woman who is blind, Kiambu County).*

*“The rest of the passengers do not help you access a seat, yet they can see you cannot see. They say you are pretending and that you are a burden and should be placed somewhere. At one time, I got agitated by their comments and told the passenger to get me where to go.*

*(A woman who is physically challenged, Kiambu County).*

*“I paid Ksh. 40 and the conductor refused to give back the change of Ksh 20 and he insisted he had paid back the balance. The passenger sitting next to me had taken back the change and claimed it was hers.”*

*(A woman who is physically challenged, Kiambu County).*

*“Out of ten people, only one or two will assist you and intervene on your behalf. The rest are in a hurry to get to their destination, so they will not speak.”*

*(A woman with visual impairment, Kiambu County).*

*“There are nice passengers; they will help you to your seat, make sure you get to your destination and remind the driver to drop you off at the right stage. Some will assist with removing your luggage or the wheelchair.”*

*(A woman with a physical disability, Kiambu County).*

*“Everyone is in a hurry to get to their destinations so rarely will they empathize. Those that show concern and try to assist are more men than women.”*

*(A female with a physical disability, Kajiado County).*



*"Mostly women will not assist, but men will do. If a conductor tries to swindle you your change, the men will speak out to get your right change."*

*(A woman with visual impairment, Kiambu County).*

*"Before, the younger generation would give seats to older persons but nowadays they claim they have also paid for it."*

*(An elderly woman, Thika).*

## Social Challenges



Patriarchal dominance of the transport industry

Unresponsiveness by matatu staff to the individual needs of passengers



The discriminative attitude among the matatu staff

Indifferent and insensitive attitudes by other passengers









## CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Conclusions

This assessment was aimed to determine the accessibility of public transport services for women with disabilities and elderly women. The findings are expected to inform policy advocacy. The assessment aimed to identify technical, social, and policy gaps and implementation challenges concerning inclusive mobility focusing on women with disabilities and older women. It was also aimed to document scalable interventions and case studies on inclusive mobility in public transport that can be replicated in other counties of Kenya to enhance public transport usage by people with disabilities and the elderly.

Findings from the assessment indicated that as it is now, women with disabilities and elderly women are being discriminated against from accessing public transport services due to a wide array of challenges. The key challenges identified are grouped into policy, technical and social challenges. The policy challenges identified include the lack of inclusive national and county transport policies and inadequate implementation of existing policies.

The technical challenges identified include inaccessible public transport vehicles, unaffordable and hidden costs of transport, vulnerability to sexual harassment, low safety from vehicular traffic, unassured safety of mobility aids, inaccessible bus terminuses, inaccessible facilities and inaccessible information on public transport and inaccessible. Other technical challenges include unresponsive reporting mechanisms, inaccessible non-motorized transport infrastructure, congestion, noise and pollution and a non-representative workforce. The social barriers identified include patriarchal dominance, discriminative attitude by operators, unresponsiveness by matatu staff to the needs of women with disabilities and the elderly, and insensitive attitude by other passengers.

The challenges are inter-related, where one may have a causal relationship with the other. It is recognized that the government of Kenya, both at the national and county level, is making an effort to provide generally accessible transport services. However, marginalized groups such as women with disabilities and the elderly are still disadvantaged due to the existing barriers. There is an urgent need for more focused policies and goodwill from the state and non-state actors to take deliberate steps to achieve accessible public transport services.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

From the assessment, there is goodwill by the government to promote transport that is universal and accommodates the needs of persons with disabilities. However, the implementation of such plans is far from being achieved due to the policy, technical and social challenges. This report proposes recommendations for different stakeholders that can help improve the situation. It should be noted that much as the recommendations are pointed towards particular stakeholders, their implementation requires multi-pronged and multi-stakeholder approaches.

### **A. Policy Recommendations for Government Agencies**

- i. **Enforce the requirement for constructing accessible vehicles.**  
The Ministry of Transport should implement the ISO DKS 372 to ensure that the vehicles being built consider the needs of persons with disabilities. The NCPWD should issue adjustment orders to non-complying PSV owners as per Section 24 of the Persons with Disabilities Act (2003). Additionally, the government can provide tax incentives to the PSV operators that comply. Part of accessibility should be the provision of accessible information in the public service vehicles. Accessible information will ensure people with different sensory needs access accurate information. Below are some examples of making information accessible in public transport vehicles.



- ii. **Formulate regulations on bus fares.** The Ministry of Transport and the Ministry concerned with social services should develop policy regulations on fares that provide waivers or subsidized fares, especially for persons with disabilities and elderly persons. Through stakeholder consultations, such regulation should consider the economic needs of persons with disabilities. Counties can, in turn, customize these regulations to fit their respective context. Nairobi City County is currently developing a policy regulation on fares charged by public transport vehicles. Machakos and Kiambu County, having a transport policy, should develop a Transport Act. Kajiado County should draft the transport policy and act to inform the accessibility components. The development of such policies should embrace consultation and evidence.
- iii. **Enhanced social assistance programme.** Currently, elderly persons and persons with severe disabilities benefit from the cash transfer program. However, this programme does not cover a substantial number of these two marginalized groups of already economically disadvantaged people. The cash transfer is also faced with delays in disbursement. In this situation, these groups of people cannot afford the cost of transport, which is already overwhelming. The Ministry of Labour and Social Services should enhance the enrolment of elderly women and persons with severe disabilities in their respective cash transfer programs, especially in the urban areas and improve the timeliness of disbursement for those already enrolled.
- iv. **Enforce the Noise Control Regulations of 2009 on loud music in public service vehicles.** As observed, elderly persons and people with hearing impairments and other related disorders are affected by loud music, which has become a culture for the urban public service vehicles. To address the menace, NEMA should enforce regulation 8 of the Noise and Excessive Vibration Pollution Control Regulations of 2009, targeting public service

vehicles. The regulation outlaws the use of radio, TV, other sound-amplifying devices in a loud, annoying, or offensive manner such that the noise from the device interferes with the comfort, repose, health, or safety of members of the public and interferes with the conversation of members of the public who are 30 meters or more from the source of such sound.

- v. **To address the incidences of sexual and gender-based violence within the matatu sector**, the Ministry of Transport and other stakeholders in the criminal justice system should strictly enforce the provisions of Section 103 of the Traffic Act that outlaws touting. Those incriminated with sexual and gender-based violence should be further charged as per Sections 3 (rape), 4 (attempted rape), 5 (sexual assault) and 8 (defilement) of the Sexual Offences Act (2006).
- vi. **Develop a mandatory and certifiable customer relations training course for matatu staff.** The Ministry of Transport should develop a mandatory training course for all staff working in the public transport sector. Priority should be accorded to the conductors who are always at the forefront of handling passengers with different needs. The course can be developed in partnership with training institutions such as the National Youth Service.
- vii. **Increased implementation and sensitization of the public on non-motorized transport.** The establishment of NMT infrastructure is ongoing in Nairobi City County. NMS and NCCG should continue building more NMT spaces that adhere to persons with disabilities' needs while ridding off the barriers. It is equally important to sensitize the public on shared spaces for non-motorized transport, especially targeting the motorbikes riders, street vendors, and drivers who mainly block the NMT spaces.



- viii. **Establish a system for reporting abuse cases in the public transport service.** NTSA, in partnership with other partners, should develop a complaint reporting system that is universally accessible, anonymous, free, technology-based and linked to the concerned government agencies such as the police.
- ix. **Improve the accessibility of public amenities.** More toilets that accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities and the elderly should be constructed, including at least one for each gender in all bus terminuses. The county governments should waive the costs of accessing the public toilets for persons with disabilities and the elderly.
- x. **Strengthen Policare.** To address abuse and underreporting, there is a need to strengthen Policare in all police stations learning from Kilimani Police Station. Many cases reported through Policare are not related to those of persons with disabilities.

## **B. Recommendations for Matatu Owners and Operators**

- i. **Practice inclusive staffing norms.** The SACCOs should review their human resource policies that incorporate inclusion towards achieving the five percent constitutional requirement on employment of persons with disabilities. Such staff with disabilities can benefit from office-related roles.

The employers should include a component for conducting a thorough background check on the staff before employment. During employment, staff should be thoroughly prepared by inducting and training them on customer relations, their experience notwithstanding. The SACCOs should also formalize the engagement with the 'squad' drivers and touts affiliated with them to ensure they are well trained and committed to their respective policies. SACCOs and owners should reward disability champions.

- ii. **Invest in developing comprehensive, responsive and accessible reporting mechanisms.** Due to limitations of unresponsiveness and inaccessibility, many aggrieved passengers may not feel the need to report issues to the SACCOs, yet they are being victimized. There is a need to invest in responsive and accessible reporting mechanisms to ensure that aggrieved passengers can freely report their issues. Further, SACCOs should report and support investigations on criminal cases such as sexual and gender-based violence cases as and when reported.
- iii. **Diversify public transport service.** The matatu owners and SACCOs can invest in alternative transport services that respond to the specific needs of persons with disabilities and the elderly. For example, dial-a-ride service for passengers who need door-to-door travel and require assistance at the start and end of their journey. It may also be used by those who need help during a journey or use a wheelchair that cannot be accommodated by an accessible bus. Alternatively, owners can provide transport service routes that use small vehicles to pick up and discharge passengers close to the origin and destination of journeys to reduce walking distances to and from stops at a longer travel time. These alternatives should be easily accessible vehicles with specially trained staff and flexible schedules so that passengers can board and alight without feeling rushed. Investors can also utilize technology in promoting access by developing mobile applications to enable persons with mobility challenges to access transport services.

### **C. Recommendations for Civil Society Organisations**

The civil society organizations that promote accessibility of public spaces, such as non-government organizations, lobby groups, and organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), have a role in complementing the government's role in providing accessible transport. Some recommendations for them are provided below.



- i. **Sensitize and lobby and monitor the implementation of policy provisions.** Organizations can Sensitize the policymakers on inclusive transport and lobby the government agencies to include policy priorities in their long term (e.g., Vision 2030 and master plans), medium-term (e.g., County Integrated Development Plans) and short term plans (Annual Development Plans). Civil society organizations should monitor such plans to ensure the policy priorities are reported against the respective indicators.
- ii. **Enhance the capacity of matatu operators to become responsive to the needs of women with disabilities and elderly women.** This can be done in three ways. First, develop guidelines for engaging persons with disabilities and the elderly by the public service vehicle operators touching on invisible and visible disabilities, reasonable accommodation and etiquette and handling mobility aids. Second, partner with matatu SACCOs to train their staff on disability inclusion of women with disabilities, pregnant women and the elderly. Third, sensitize the matatu owners and operators on the specific needs of women with disabilities and elderly women. It is acknowledged that subgroups within the marginalized groups present unique challenges and must be addressed. For example, elderly women have dementia and thus, matatu operators should be sensitized to responsiveness to such needs. Staff should be patient with women with bowel incontinence.
- iii. **Support internal policy strengthening to support employment opportunities for women with disabilities.** The CSOs can partner with the matatu SACCOs to develop or review their policies responsive to the needs of women employees with disabilities. Flone Initiative has developed a database that captures the data for women in transport. Such a database should also capture the details of disabilities. Such a resource can be very important if and when embraced by the owners and operators. It can also be a good practice rolled out in the country and beyond.

- iv. **Partner with police stations to strengthen the Policare,** CSO can lobby for the establishment of Policare within all the police stations and partner with police stations to strengthen the reporting, investigations and acquisition of justice for women with disabilities who have been abused in public transport services. The police also need to be sensitized to handle sexual and gender-based violence involving women with disabilities and learn basic sign language skills.
- v. **Design and implement interventions for economic empowerment.** Organizations like Flone Initiative can design economic empowerment programmes targeting women with disabilities and elderly women. Further, it can lobby for their enrolment into the social protection programmes such as cash transfers for persons with severe disabilities and cash transfers for elderly persons aimed to uplift their economic status.
- vi. **Capacity building of women with disabilities and elderly women on agency/self-advocacy.** Flone can build the capacity of organizations for women with disabilities and elderly women to lobby for inclusive transport. Such groups, when empowered, can be vocal against mistreatment and systemic discrimination within the public transport sector. The opportunities for inclusive participation should be strengthened to ensure their needs are taken care of during the policy development.



### **5.3 Best practices in providing accessible public transport**

Several case studies that have provided successful accessible transport are provided. The case studies provide some insights to the government policymakers and planners on how they can promote accessible transport in Kenya.

**Australia** - Australia has several transport accessibility initiatives. Firstly, the Australian Government-funded mobility allowance helps people with a disability pay for transport costs when they cannot use public transport to join in approved activities without substantial assistance.

Secondly, wheelchair-accessible vehicles (WAVs) allow people who use wheelchairs to travel in their wheelchair if they and the wheelchair can be safely restrained in the vehicle. WAVs are vehicles designed or modified to carry one or more people seated in wheelchairs (depending upon the vehicle type) and between 4 and 11 passengers when not configured to carry wheelchairs. WAVs are required to prioritize bookings by people who use wheelchairs but may be used to carry other passengers when not engaged with wheelchair bookings. When not carrying wheelchair passengers, WAVs have the same operating rights and conditions as standard commercial passenger vehicles but charge a higher high occupancy fee in the metropolitan and higher occupancy fare when carrying five or more passengers to other parts of the country.

Thirdly, Community transport options are provided to help a person with a disability get from their home to common community areas, including community areas like the shopping centre or medical centre. Low-fare transport services are often provided by community centres or state and local governments.

Fourthly, the South Australian Transport Subsidy Scheme allows people with permanent and severe disabilities that limit their ability to

use public transport may apply for subsidised taxi fares. The subsidy includes a 75 percent subsidy for people confined to a wheelchair and a 50 percent subsidy for people who are not confined to a wheelchair. Lastly, a Mobility Pass is provided to people who cannot validate a metrocard using onboard equipment due to physical or cognitive impairment. This Special Pass enables free unlimited travel on Adelaide Metro buses, trains and trams. A cognitive impairment can involve intellectual disability, dementia, acquired brain injury, or other disabilities. The vision impaired travel pass entitles the holder to unlimited free travel on Adelaide Metro buses, trains and trams. A medical certificate from an ophthalmologist, optometrist, or medical practitioner is required.

**France and Germany** - Light-rail coaches and urban transit buses were designed to provide ground-level access to passengers with disabilities and older passengers. Technology now allows these vehicles to be built with a low floor over either part or all of their length. The low floor height ranges from 320 to 350 mm above ground. Major accessibility features desirable for light-rail coaches and buses include minimum doorway and gangway specifications, handrails and handholds to assist movement down the aisle, provision of access ramps for wheelchair users and safe, designated wheelchair spaces inside the vehicle.

**Spain** - The introduction of low-floor buses led to increased ridership by 10%. This indicates that more passengers are appealing to transport systems that are responsive to the needs of those with mobility challenges.

**Sweden** - The service route was first developed in Sweden to meet the travel needs of persons with disabilities and older passengers. Its main objective is to minimise the walking distance to and from bus stops; to offer a readily accessible vehicle (no interior steps, comfortable seats, provision of handrails and handholds, etc.); to remove the



pressure of time on passengers boarding and alighting and to avoid crowding; to ensure a friendly, welcome ride with specially trained drivers. Typically, mid-sized buses with low floors and wheelchair ramps and spaces are used. They operate along scheduled routes between residential areas and sites with social and leisure facilities. Upon request, passengers can board or disembark at intervening locations. If asked, the driver helps passengers board and waits for them to be safely seated before starting. Other countries, including Australia, Canada, Norway and the United States, have adopted this concept. In Sweden, service routes have proved so popular that some passengers eligible for Dial-a-Ride paratransit choose to use service routes for some or all of their journeys. This reduces the cost to the community. Service routes have replaced some lightly used conventional bus services.

**Community transit** - Community organisations often provide transport services for older people. They link neighbourhoods and shopping areas, senior citizens' centres, medical services, etc. Services may be subcontracted to transit operators or to private companies. Better coordination between community organisations and transit systems could expand community services. In particular, transit vehicles that are under-utilised during off-peak times (for example, school buses from late morning until early afternoon) could be made available to community organisations at reduced rates or even as a community service.

**The Oregon 20-minute city** - The 20-minute city gives people the ability to meet most of their everyday needs within a 20-minute walk, cycle, or local public transport trip from their home. The rationale is that a combination of modes would offer a reasonable catchment area where people, jobs, and services, including recreational opportunities and nature, are accessible. Cities designed in this way bring wide-ranging benefits, including less time in traffic, fewer road accidents, lower greenhouse gas emissions, reduction in noise pollution, better

health from a more active lifestyle, more choices about how to travel, and more connectivity within a locality. The model originated in Oregon and is gaining prominence as cities like Melbourne and Singapore implement it.

## Best practices in providing accessible public transport



### France and Germany:

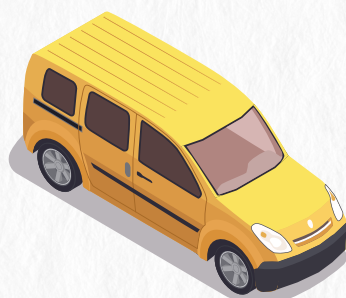
Light-rail coaches were designed to provide ground-level access to passengers with disabilities and older passengers.

### Community transit:

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**Spain:** The introduction of low-floor buses led to increased ridership by 10%.



**Sweden:** Mid-sized buses with low floors and wheelchair ramps and spaces are used.



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For more  
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Flone Initiative, 2022. Moving Barriers, Increasing access: An Assessment of the Mobility of Women with Disabilities and the Elderly Women. **Flone Initiative**