

Baseline Survey Report on The Status of Vulnerable Groups in Makueni County Public Transport

ABRIDGED VERSION



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Problem Statement

Public transport plays a crucial role in ensuring mobility for individuals, facilitating access to work, education, healthcare, trade, and social engagements. However, vulnerable groups, including women, children, older persons, and persons with disabilities (PWDs), face substantial barriers that hinder their access to safe, reliable, and inclusive public transport. These challenges not only restrict their freedom of movement but also constitute a form of discrimination, which is contrary to the principles of equality and non-discrimination enshrined in the **Constitution of Kenya, 2010** (Articles 27 and 54).

To achieve a public transport system in Makueni County that is safe, accessible, and inclusive for all, it is critical to assess the policies, systems, and structures governing the sector. Such an assessment will inform effective interventions by the government, private sector, and civil society organizations aimed at addressing the mobility needs of vulnerable groups. Despite the importance of this issue, there is a significant lack of data on the status of these groups within Makueni County's public transport ecosystem. This data gap has led to insufficient responses to their mobility needs, further exacerbating inequalities in access to essential services.

This baseline survey seeks to bridge this gap by examining the barriers faced by vulnerable groups in the context of their work and commuting needs and providing evidence-based recommendations that will support the development of a more inclusive, equitable, and constitutional public transport system in Makueni County.



Research Objectives

- To assess the status of vulnerable groups in Makueni County public transport system.
- To assess the existing social, technical, and policy structures supporting inclusivity in public transport in Makueni County.
- To assess the status of women public transport operators in Makueni County.
- To assess the role of key industry players in the promotion of inclusive public transport in Makueni County.



Key Findings



1. Barriers to Accessibility

The survey revealed that some of the hindrances to inclusive and accessible public transport in Makueni include; lack of accessible infrastructure, insufficient streetlights, inadequate Non Motorised Transport infrastructure provisions and important signages obstructions.



2. Safety and Security in Public Transport Systems

Safety and security in public transport in Makueni County is a huge concern, with women having to adjust travel patterns and behaviour, persons

with disabilities and older persons having to limit their journeys. Additionally, children having to put up with a public transport system that in many cases exposes them to safety and security risks.



3. Gender Inclusion in Public Transport Workforce

The findings show that only **4%** of the public transport operators are women, with the remaining **96%** being men. This underrepresentation results from a lack of fear and insecurity, job difficulty, societal norms, lack of skills and training, lack of confidence, and limited opportunities. These factors create significant barriers for women seeking to enter or advance in Makueni's public transport SACCOs, resulting in their continued underrepresentation.



4. Inclusivity Gaps in Policy and Practise

There exist gaps in the implementation and practise of policies in Makueni County including Makueni

County Transport Polict, 2022, Makueni County Sexual Harassment Policy,2022 and Makueni County Gender Policy, 2020. Some of these policies addresses inequalities across sectors of the county with an aim for progressive economic development.

Without proper implementation and monitoring, existing policies and guidelines have failed to meet the intended impact on the safety and accessibility of public transport for vulnerable groups.



5. Roles of Stakeholders

Key stakeholders have initiated various initiatives to support inclusivity in Makueni public transport. However, various challenges, such as budgetary constraints, infrastructure vandalism, poor interdepartmental collaboration, and road reserve encroachments, hamper the implementation of these initiatives and programs.



Recommendations



1. General Recommendations

- **Civic Education campaigns, and community workshops** on behavioral and attitude change towards vulnerable commuters. This can be done through information campaigns in various bus stations and other transport hubs, advocacy campaigns through advocacy messages in matatus, bus stops and bus stations, school and youth engagements on the importance of inclusivity in public transport systems, workshops and forums, chief *barazas* and partnerships with CSOs.

- ◉ **Motorist Sensitization;** Educate motorists about the importance of yielding to pedestrians, especially children, at pedestrian crossings.
- ◉ **Improving Stakeholder Collaboration;** Foster stronger collaboration between government departments, transport authorities, and community stakeholders to create a unified approach to addressing the challenges in public transport.
- ◉ **Implementation of existing policies** supporting accessibility and inclusivity in public transport.
- ◉ **Implementing policies that promote equality and non-discrimination through the implementation of the National Gender & Development Policy and the County Gender Policy** focusing on the $\frac{2}{3}$ gender rule, affirmative action and training for PTO on gender mainstreaming to enhance the contribution of women in the public transport workforce. There is also a need to fully implement the Disability Policy(2003),

Employment Act (2007), the Sexual Offences Act(2006) and the Children Act (2022), frameworks that safeguard the rights of vulnerable and marginalized groups.

- ◉ **Inclusion of vulnerable groups** in decision-making processes related to public transport by sending invitations to accessible public participation forums and other community engagements.



2. Government of Makueni County

- ◉ **Adoption of a public transport code of conduct and public transport policy** outlining the guiding principles and ethical standards of inclusive public transport within Makueni County.
- ◉ **In line with the Government of Makueni County Vision 2025**, develop a county urban transport master plan to guide the development and management of

urban transport systems within Makueni, highlighting the importance of integrated planning, social inclusion, efficiency and accessibility, and safety and security.

- ◉ **Implement increased security measures, such as lighting, surveillance cameras, and dedicated support services,** at transport hubs to protect vulnerable passengers from harassment and violence.
- ◉ **Develop and implement a sectoral plan for public transport in Makueni County,** focusing on inclusive infrastructure, including designated lanes for non-motorized transport (NMT) and pedestrian walkways.
- ◉ **Reintroduce SACCO awards competitions** to incentivize safety and good service delivery in public transport.
- ◉ **Broader responsibilities for enforcement officers** beyond revenue collection, such as ensuring road safety, reporting overloading, and addressing misconduct by public transport operators.

- Through the department of education, **introduce practical lessons on road safety in schools** implemented under the supervision of a teacher(s).
- Work jointly with public transport SACCOs to set up **consistent and affordable fare** rates for persons with disabilities who use public transport services.



3. National Council for Persons With Disabilities

- In collaboration with public transport SACCOs, offer **disability mainstreaming** in public transport operations and management.
- **Fasttrack** provision of assistive devices to applicants to better address their mobility needs
- **Advocate** for disability-friendly public transport systems in Makueni County.



4. Schools

- **Introduction of ‘walking school bus’** who is typically one or two adults helping children cross busy urban roads in the morning and when they leave school.
- Implement [Safety Standards Manual-Schools as Safe Zones](#) requirements under transport strategies for safe school zone.
- Implement practical lessons on road safety; including road safety animations.
- **Acquisition and implementation** of safe school buses in partnership with Government of Makueni County and other stakeholders.
- The school buses to display on the outside the name, address, and telephone number of the school.
- **Advocate** for safe school zones as provided for in the [safety standards manual for schools in Kenya](#)



5. National Transport and Safety Authority

- **Reviving Usalama Barabarani Program-** Reflecting bag covers for school-going children for schools located along major highways.
- **Enforcing traffic guidelines** e.g installing speed detectors on all highways and urban roads to ensure compliance with traffic guidelines, scale up Intelligent Transport System to monitor traffic in all built up/ urban areas areas in Makueni County, strengthening law enforcement capacity through trainings on inclusivity, targeted enforcement programs to boda boda riders to ensure compliance such as helmet wear, licensing and adherence to traffic rules.



6. National Police Service-Traffic Department

- **Promotion of anonymous reporting** at designated points in bus stations and NPS offices as well as a functioning hotline dedicated for sexual harassment incidents.
- **Enforcing traffic guidelines, e.g., Targeted enforcement programs for boda boda riders to ensure compliance, such as helmet wear, licensing,** and adherence to traffic rules.
- Establishing and operationalizing **gender desks** in police stations.
- Strengthening law enforcement capacity through training on inclusivity in public transport.
- Implementation of Policare Policy 2021, which provides for the establishment of one-stop centers offering medical, legal, psychosocial, and forensic support to survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence.



7. Civil Society Organizations

- **Agroforestry initiatives** to help mitigate the impacts of floods and river erosion.
- **Collaborate** with public transport stakeholders on projects to improve accessibility and inclusivity in public transport, such as joint training programs or community outreach initiatives.
- Involve other public transport stakeholders in your **calendar of activities** to offer technical support to vulnerable and marginalized rural areas on inclusive public transport.



8. Kenya Urban Roads Authority & Kenya Rural Roads Authority

- **Install traffic calming elements** around school zones (tabletop crossings, speed limit signs, school zone signs).
- **Include accessibility signs** where pedestrian crossings are located.
- **Pedestrian Crossing Maintenance**, especially next to schools and in urban areas
- **Inclusive Design:** Adopt universal design principles for public transport vehicles and infrastructure. Refer to [the Street Design Manual for Urban Areas in Kenya](#), which aims to mainstream best-practice street designs that support sustainable modes of transport and improve safety for vulnerable road users through the promotion of universal access designs, gender-sensitive designs, and children's safety streets.



9. Public Transport SACCOs

- **Training for Public Transport Operators (PTOs):** In collaboration with other key stakeholders, provide mandatory sensitivity training for drivers, conductors, SACCO clerks, stage attendants on how to treat vulnerable groups with respect. Topics on identifying kidnappers and child traffickers in public transport, gender sensitivity, disability awareness, and empathy can be addressed through interactive workshops led by experts in these fields.
- Ensure that Public Transport **SACCO guidelines** are in place and implement them effectively.

- ◉ Display of **fare charts** with destinations in matatus and bus stations.
- ◉ Gradual transition to **accessible vehicles** with low-floor, environmentally friendly and priority seating for vulnerable groups.
- ◉ Liaise with other stakeholders on programs to **attract, retain and advance** women in public transport operations.
- ◉ Labeling **priority seats** for passengers with disabilities and other vulnerable groups like older persons, expectant women, and those who are ailing.



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