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Women Transport Workers:
Social Protection and Labour Issues

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The Kenyan Transport Sector

- Transport sector employment in Kenya is largely informal
- 4th largest employer of informal economy workers in Kenya
- Largely male dominated
- Women increasingly entering the sector - owners, drivers, touts, stage clerks, fleet managers etc

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Study Methodology 1

Data Source: ITF impact of future of work in public transport for women in Nairobi

Target: Women public transport workers (29), platform workers from 6 companies, unions, managers and key informants

Study Site: Nairobi, Kenya

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Even though in informal economy, women in PT are largely employed!

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UNDERSTANDING WOMEN IN TRANSPORT

Study Methodology 2

Data Source: Ongoing Social Protection and Informal Economy project – IDS (UoN), Roskilde University (Denmark) & Mzumbe University (Tanzania).

Target: Women public transport workers (29), platform workers from 6 companies, unions, managers and key informants.

Study Site: Nairobi and Kisumu

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Study Implications

1. Concentrated on lighter BUT less paying conductor jobs.

2. Precarious jobs due to lack of formal work contracts.

3. Pool of workers who are an ‘easy replaceable commodity’

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How many women in public transport?

- No number on public transport workers – not just women – and their level and nature of engagement.
- Estimates suggest that out of every 10 workers, 2 are female.
- Nairobi estimated to have about 19000 drivers.

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Formal Social Protection Coverage (IDS Study)

- Health:
  - Overall: 39.8%
  - Nhif/Nssf: 37.2%
  - Other (Mtiba/Mbao): 3.1%

- Pension:
  - Overall: 10.3%
  - Nhif/Nssf: 9.6%
  - Other (Mtiba/Mbao): 1.1%

Depends largely on informal systems

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Why the Gap in Social Protection?

- Too expensive (37%)
- No knowledge about formal SP schemes (7%)
- Cumbersome procedures (4%)
- Opt for own savings (4%)

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Is it really that expensive for transport workers?

- Yes/No! ‘its survival – hand to mouth’; ‘there is money in the matatu sector’
- However, no regular/assured jobs
- Some crew prefer irregular jobs
- No contact with formal schemes (exclusion) – ‘we are missing out from the government because we are thought to be informal’ – FGD participant, KSM

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“It is important to give hope to matatu workers. They need to appreciate that they will age in the industry to make them think about social protection. If they are valued, they will invest in social protection. But often, they do not even think that they will see tomorrow.”

Male Public Transport Association Representative, Nairobi 15.11.2018
Critical questions for social protection

• Can we assure women transport workers social protection if they do not have hope for tomorrow?
• How can this hope be guaranteed/assured?
• Are they valued workers and what is the evidence?
• How does this influence their access to social protection?