



POLICY BRIEF: A SAFE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ENVIRONMENT FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

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Foreword

When I travel in the Central and West Asian region for ADB, it is my job to consult with women to ensure our investments are designed with them in mind. It is only by specifically considering the needs and priorities of women and girls—through gender analysis—that we design infrastructure and services that are truly inclusive. Yet it is through these discussions that I noticed a recurring theme: women and girls continually expressed to me and amongst themselves how unpleasant their journey to meet me had been. From low level discomfort to overt stalking, females moving about the city on public transport described to me how their experience of urban transport infrastructure was different from that of men, and the cumulative impact of this threatening environment led them to change their travel behavior – usually taking more expensive forms of transport like taxis which afford some privacy. Invariably however, when I discussed design interventions to make urban transport systems safer for women and girls, transport companies and government partners denied there was any problem. Why? Because they had received no complaints and they had not witnessed it, so they did not believe it was an issue significant enough to merit any particular intervention.

The following pages will demonstrate that indeed, there is a problem of women feeling unsafe and harassed in our cities. They do not complain because the ‘environment’ is not conducive to it. There is also a fear of being further embarrassed, targeted again, or of escalating an already unpleasant situation. Yet for every woman or girl who gets into a taxi or a private car instead of taking a train or a bus, we are admitting our public transport systems are failing them – and everyone else who gets stuck in the traffic or breathes the polluted air.

This report provides evidence from three quite different cities in ADB’s Central and West Asia region of the prevalence of women being harassed on public transport. It goes on to show the impacts of this harassment on transportation behavior, and the reasons why this situation remains largely unaddressed. In Chapter VI we suggest, often simple design changes or policy considerations which when implemented, can change the behavior of targets, perpetrators and bystanders, and make public transportation systems a safer and preferred commuting option for both women and men.

Shanny Campbell
Senior Social Development Specialist
ADB

Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ILO	International Labour Organization
UN	United Nations
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

I. Introduction: Inclusive Development, Empowering Women

In 2012, the International Labour Organization (ILO) estimated that an additional \$1.6 trillion in gross domestic product could be generated globally by reducing the employment-to-population gap.¹ The context of this estimate was that women's labor force participation rates globally are significantly lower than those of men, and should therefore be addressed to boost economic growth. Lack of access to safe transport has been identified as a particular constraint to women's labor force participation in Pakistan in a recent report by ADB.² Ensuring a safe public transportation system for women has personal as well as professional benefits for female commuters. For many women, labor force participation translates into financial empowerment. Moreover, public transportation is the cheapest form of transport within the city, thus enabling women to save money. A study conducted by the Urban Resource Centre in Karachi reports that most bus users spend at least 10% of their monthly income on transportation, and expecting women to use other, more expensive modes of transport would be a strain on their individual budget.³ Moreover, public transportation is good for society as a whole, contributing to sustainable development by reducing emissions and decreasing traffic congestion.

Freedom of movement in a safe public space would enable women to travel to and from their workplaces without fear. In a report commissioned by the Department for Transport, women in the United Kingdom used public transportation to access employment, reducing their risk of social and economic exclusion.⁴ Because women are less likely than men to own a car, women have come to represent a high proportion of the United Kingdom's public transportation users. A study conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics found that women of all ages were more likely than men to use public transportation to get to work, school, or university.⁵ In 2006, the rate of public transportation use among Australian women was 23%, compared with 16% for men. Safety on the public transportation system also enables women to leave their workplace at the time convenient to them; flexible working hours are appealing for women, who are more likely than men to combine paid work with unpaid home care work. Moreover, women would not be forced to give up their jobs or studies because of lack of safety in public spaces.

¹ ILO. 2012. *Global Employment Trends for Women*. Geneva: International Labour Organization. http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_195447.pdf

² ADB, 2015, *Women in the Workforce: An Unmet Potential in Asia and the Pacific*.

³ Urban Resource Centre. 2001. Urban Poverty and Transport: A Case Study from Karachi. *Environment and Urbanization*. 13 (1): 223–33.

⁴ Department for Transport. 2013. *Valuing the Social Impacts of Public Transport*. Birmingham: Mott MacDonald. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/226802/final-report.pdf

⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2008. *Public Transport Use for Work and Study*. <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4102.0Chapter10102008>

The type of incidents that women experience on public transport that leave them feeling unsafe or victimized, yet often don't constitute a 'crime' can be categorized under the heading of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment refers to "unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature," targeted at a woman because of her gender identity.⁶ The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, paragraph 178, recognizes sexual harassment as a form of discrimination and violence against women.⁷ Sexual harassment includes a wide and varied range of actions, from body language and nonverbal behavior such as leering, ogling, or verbal innuendoes, to inappropriate touching and, at the other extreme, sexual assault. In most instances of sexual harassment on public transportation, the perpetrators are men, because they "can exploit a certain anonymity," leaving women vulnerable and insecure.⁸

Because sexual harassment curtails women's movement in public spaces, it has the potential to negatively affect their productive role and participation in the public sphere. Ensuring that public spaces are safe for women achieves gender equity goals necessary for development and allows women the same rights as men in the development agenda. Moreover, ensuring that public transportation is safe for female commuters represents a step toward gender equality and a gain for women, because it enables them to freely engage in activities they wish to pursue, enhancing their ability to participate in educational and professional activities and in public life without any constraints.

Interventions to Address Women's Safety on Public Transportation

A range of interventions have been adopted by governments and civil society around the world to address women's safety and harassment on public transportation. As part of New York City's fight against sexual harassment on public transportation, it is no longer treated as a misdemeanor but instead is a felony.⁹ "Sexually motivated touching" is now considered a sex crime, carrying the possibility of imprisonment. In the United Kingdom, the Project Guardian campaign, aimed at encouraging women to report sexual assault on public transportation, was launched in 2013.¹⁰ The campaign uses a video clip produced by Transport for London to show a man sexually harassing a woman in a London tube car. Since the campaign's launch, police have recorded a 25% increase in the number of reported sexual assaults.

⁶ UN Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality. n.d. What Is Sexual Harassment? *UN WomenWatch*. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/pdf/whatishh.pdf>

⁷ UN Women. 2012. *Sources of International Law Related to Sexual Harassment*. <http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/492-sources-of-international-law-related-to-sexual-harassment.html>

⁸ Petersen, Barry. 2006. Women-Only Subway Cars. *CBS News*. 25 January. <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/women-only-subway-cars>

⁹ Van Deven, Mandy. 2012. How to Stop Sexual Harassment on Public Transportation. *The Guardian*. 9 October. <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/oct/09/stop-sexual-harassment-public-transportation>

¹⁰ Blundy, Rachel. 2015. Video Shows Female Commuter Being Groped on Tube for Campaign which Encourages Women to Report Sexual Assault. *London Evening Standard*. 15 April. <http://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/video-shows-female-commuter-being-groped-on-tube-for-campaign-which-encourages-women-to-report-sexual-assault-10176072.html>

Other countries have taken steps to curb sexual harassment on public transportation facilities by introducing women-only public transportation. Tokyo, Japan, is one such city, and similar interventions have been implemented in Cairo, Delhi, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, and Manila.¹¹ In response to pressures from women's organizations, Mexico City provided female-only buses, which run along three busy routes throughout the day.¹² In Pakistan, women-friendly public transportation facilities between Islamabad and Rawalpindi have been operating on a pilot basis.¹³ The aim of this pilot project is to promote a safe traveling environment for women, rather than to provide women-exclusive transportation facilities.

Arguments have been made against the allocation of exclusive spaces for women, considering this to be an inadequate, limited response that is unlikely to cause any long-term behavioral change among men.¹⁴ In fact, one study found that female commuters consider these initiatives patronizing.¹⁵ In addition, female commuters reported that it did not facilitate their freedom of movement or their rights in public spaces.¹⁶

Other cities have found ways of dealing with sexual harassment in public places, including on public transportation. In Delhi, Circle of 6 is a phone app that aids targets or potential targets of sexual harassment to reach out to someone they can trust to help them in a time of need.¹⁷ The app also connects users to a 24-hour women's hotline and to the hotline for the women's advocacy group Jagori.

Data collection also has been integral to addressing sexual harassment in public places. In Cairo, Egypt, HarassMap, a volunteer-based initiative, uses crowdsourcing (i.e., information collected through social media platforms and text messaging) to collect reports of sexual harassment.¹⁸ The data is then displayed on a searchable map that, in turn, identifies hot spots where police protection might be stepped up.

¹¹ Boros, Crina. 2014. Poll: Latin American Cities Have Most Dangerous Transport for Women, NYC Best. *The Daily Mail*. 29 October. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/reuters/article-2811835/POLL-Latin-American-cities-dangerous-transport-women-NYC-best.html>

¹² Associated Press. 2008. Mexico City Introduces Women-Only Buses to Deter Groping. *Fox News*. 25 January. <http://www.foxnews.com/story/2008/01/25/mexico-city-introduces-women-only-buses-to-deter-groping>

¹³ ILO Country Office for Pakistan. 2011. *Decent Transport for Working Women*. Geneva: ILO. http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@asia/@ro-bangkok/@ilo-islamabad/documents/publication/wcms_185253.pdf

¹⁴ World Bank. 2014. Sexual Harassment: The High Cost of Being a Woman on a Bus. *World Bank News*. 8 September. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2014/09/08/gender-violence-public-transportation>

¹⁵ Social Policy and Development Centre. 2014. *PAK: Rapid Assessment of Sexual Harassment in Public Transport and Connected Spaces in Karachi*. Manila: ADB.

¹⁶ The World Bank Group and Australian AID. 2013. *Gender and Public Transport: Kathmandu, Nepal*. http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2014/03/24/000333037_20140324161017/Rendered/PDF/860850WP0Final0Box382164B000PUBLIC0.pdf

¹⁷ Goodyear, Sarah. 2013. In Wake of New Delhi Rape, an App to Protect against Sexual Violence Undergoes Makeover for India. *Next City*. 4 April. <http://nextcity.org/daily/entry/in-wake-of-new-delhi-rape-an-app-to-protect-against-sexual-violence-undergo>

¹⁸ International Development Research Centre. n.d. *Sexual Harassment in Cairo: The Effectiveness of Crowdsourced Data*. <http://www.idrc.ca/EN/Results/Pages/ResultsDetails.aspx?ResultID=272>

II. Legal and Policy Protections for Women: An Overview

Azerbaijan

Women in Azerbaijan enjoy the same legal rights as their male counterparts. The country is committed to gender equality; it participated in the 1995 Beijing Women's Forum and has ratified the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). In 2006, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Affairs was established to spearhead governance practice and policy making on women's issues and gender equality. Since its independence, Azerbaijan has made significant progress in ensuring the protection of women's rights. In 2010, the country adopted the Law on Combating Domestic Violence. In 2011, the family code was amended to set the minimum legal age of marriage at 18 for both women and men (previously it was age 17 for girls). However, unregistered religious marriages (*kabin*), which leave women and girls with little or no legal protection, have persisted.¹⁹ Also in 2011, the criminal code was amended to prohibit early and forced marriages by increasing the sanctions for such offenses.²⁰

Despite robust legislation, gender stereotypes are prevalent in educational materials and in the media, which affect women's role in society and their participation in public life and in paid employment.²¹ Gender discrimination continues to persist in employment, as women tend to be concentrated in the service, agriculture, health and education, and social service sectors.²² In Azerbaijan, there is a law on sexual harassment in the workplace. Articles 4 and 7 of the Law on Guarantees of Gender (Men and Women) Equality, enacted in October 2006, criminalize sexual harassment in the workplace. This legal provision, however, is seldom enforced, due to a lack of proper mechanisms to implement the law.²³ However, there is no law or policy measure specific to sexual harassment in public transportation.

¹⁹ UN CEDAW, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. 2015. *Concluding Observations on the Fifth Periodic Report of Azerbaijan*. 6 March. New York: UN.

²⁰ Women's Association for Rational Development. 2015. *Shadow Report to the CEDAW Committee on Azerbaijan*. Baku: Women's Association for Rational Development.

²¹ UN CEDAW, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. 2015. *Concluding Observations on the Fifth Periodic Report of Azerbaijan*. 6 March. New York: UN.

²² That Azerbaijan continues to face challenges in achieving gender equality was stated at the 44th session of the UN CEDAW in 2009. See Counterpoint International. 2015. *Women's Participation Program in Azerbaijan*. <http://www.counterpart.org/our-work/projects/womens-participation-program-in-azerbaijan>

²³ Zeynalov, Maharram. 2013. *Azerbaijan's Women Endure Workplace Harassment*. *Institute for War & Peace Reporting*. 27 September. <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/azerbaijans-women-endure-workplace-harassment>

Georgia

Georgia ratified CEDAW without reservations in 1994.²⁴ In addition, women's rights are guaranteed under the Constitution of Georgia; women have the right to custody of their children after a divorce, the right to maternity leave, and the right to early retirement. In 2004, the Gender Equality Council was established and has become the permanent institutional mechanism for women's rights and gender equality. The following year saw the adoption of the State Concept on Gender Equality as a framework policy document for equal rights and opportunities. Georgia's labor code includes antidiscrimination and protection clauses for women. In 2010, the Law of Georgia on Gender Equality was promulgated; the law preserves the "equal rights and obligations, responsibilities, and equal participation of men and women in all spheres of personal and public life."²⁵

The most recent national plan for gender is the Gender Equality National Action Plan for 2014–2016, which aims to address gender inequality in the economic, health, and social protection sectors.²⁶ Moreover, the plan aims to promote women's engagement in environmental protection and law enforcement, and to improve legislative and institutional frameworks on gender equality. Although women's rights are equal to men's in many areas, their representation has been fairly low in the military, government, and law enforcement sectors. In addition, women's political participation is relatively low; they represent only 11.1% of the total number of parliamentarians.²⁷ In 2006, the Law of Georgia on Elimination of Domestic Violence, Protection of and Support to Its Victims was promulgated.²⁸ However, there is an absence of legislation on acts of harassment against women in other arenas, such as sexual harassment in the workplace or in public.

Pakistan

Pakistan ratified CEDAW in 1996. Women's rights are protected under both civil law and sharia. Nonetheless, although the Constitution acknowledges women as equals to men and guarantees their full participation in all spheres of national life, gender gaps continue to exist in various arenas, such as literacy and education, employment, and marriage rights.²⁹ In addition, violence against women remains, in the form of domestic violence,

²⁴ Chkheidze, Ketevan. 2010. Gender Politics in Georgia. *Caucasus Analytical Digest*. 21: 2–4. 30 November. <http://www.css.ethz.ch/publications/pdfs/CAD-21.pdf>

²⁵ UN Women. 2014. *Georgia-Beijing +20: National Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*. May. http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/59/national_reviews/georgia_review_beijing20.ashx

²⁶ ADB. n.d. *Country Partnership Strategy: Georgia, 2014–2018, Gender Analysis (Summary)*. Manila: ADB. <http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/linked-documents/cps-geo-2014-2018-ga.pdf>

²⁷ Delys, Sarah. 2014. *Women and Political Representation: Handbook on Increasing Women's Political Participation in Georgia*. Tbilisi: Human Rights Education and Monitoring Center. http://www.coe.int/t/democracy/electoral-assistance/Publications/Handbook-Women-Georgia_en.pdf

²⁸ Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia. 2013. Domestic Violence. <http://police.ge/en/projects/domestic-violence>

²⁹ Pakistan Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 2011. *Statement by Mr. Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Pakistan, on Agenda Item 28: Advancement of Women*. 11 October. New York: Third Committee, 66th Session of the UN General Assembly. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/documents/ga66/Pakistan.pdf>

so-called honor killing, rape, and gang rape. Gender discrimination is also evident in *vani*, in which women are exchanged as pawns in settling disputes. Amendments to the criminal law from 2010 to 2011 also have been concerned with customary practices such as the deprivation of inheritance, forced marriages, the exchange of women in settling disputes, marriage of women to the Koran, and acid crimes against women.³⁰ Most of these pro-women measures, however, have been initiated as private member's bills rather than by the government.³¹

Gender inequality is persistent in other areas as well, such as in domestic violence, social protection, and child rights. Although Pakistan seems to have moved forward with the promulgation of the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) bill in 2009, the legislation faced objections from the Council of Islamic Ideology. As a result, domestic violence is now considered a provincial matter, requiring provincial assemblies to pass the law in order for the legislation to take effect in the province. Girls continue to struggle at a very basic level. For instance, gender gaps continue to be prevalent in education; according to 2010 statistics, for every 10 boys enrolled in primary school, only 8 girls are enrolled.³² In addition, school dropout rates for girls are significantly higher than the rate for boys, because of social and cultural norms that favor boy children over girls. Despite these setbacks, the national assembly unanimously passed the landmark bill, The Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act 2010. Section 509 of the Pakistan penal code makes sexual harassment, including harassment on public transportation, a punishable offense. Prosecution under Section 509 is historically low however (annual data from 2001 to 2014 show an average of 293 prosecutions per annum,³³ which seems low for a country with an estimated population of 191 million).

³⁰ Seibold, Marisol. 2007. Pakistani Women "Married" to Qur'an to Keep Property in the Family, Protect Bloodlines. *Jihad Watch*. <http://www.jihadwatch.org/2007/03/pakistani-women-married-to-quran-to-keep-property-in-the-family-protect-bloodlines>

³¹ Zia, Maliha, and Riffatt Butt. 2012. *Pakistan: NGO Alternative Report on CEDAW—2005-2009 (with Updated Notes—2009-2012)*. Islamabad: Aurat Publication and Information Service Foundation. http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/ngos/AuratFoundationPakistanForTheSession_CEDAW54.pdf

³² UNESCO. 2012. Education for All Global Monitoring Report: Education in Pakistan. Fact Sheet. October. https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/sites/gem-report/files/EDUCATION_IN_PAKISTAN___A_FACT_SHEET.pdf

³³ Prosecution data from AGHS Legal Aid, a free legal aid center in Pakistan.

III. Methodology and Study Limitations

Overview

This report draws on rapid assessments of sexual harassment in public transportation, conducted in three countries in Asia, and it confirms the persistence of such harassment in the cities of Baku, Azerbaijan; Tbilisi, Georgia; and Karachi, Pakistan.³⁴ As the surveys were linked to specific ongoing or planned ADB investments, in Baku and Tbilisi the surveys were conducted on the respective metro rail systems, but were not targeted to any specific users in Karachi. Conducted in 2014, the research aimed to investigate the degree to which women face such harassment and to examine the targets' reactions and public perceptions about sexual harassment in public transportation. To this end, the assessments attempted to specify recommended actions to prevent and address sexual harassment in public transportation and its related spaces such as train platforms and bus stops. Overall, 630 respondents participated in the survey conducted in the three cities. In addition, key informant interviews and focus group discussions were held.

This report reinforces the argument for regulatory and policy measures to combat sexual harassment in public transportation facilities in the cities of Baku, Tbilisi, and Karachi. Evidence gathered from independent assessments in the three cities provides a deeper understanding of the reasons behind the need to address sexual harassment in the planning and operation of public transportation services. The report also emphasizes that ensuring women's safety on public transportation enables their increased participation in the public sphere and, in turn, enhances inclusive growth.

Strengths and Limitations

The research in all three cities combined the responses from a large sample with in-depth interviews, and therefore rendered rich data. In addition, high-quality data was accessible because respondent confidentiality was assured. This was critical in drawing responses, considering the sensitive nature of the issue. In the case of Baku, Azerbaijan, the research fills a gap, because no previous study has measured the incidence of sexual harassment of women in the metro system.

³⁴ ADB. 2014. *Rapid Assessment of Sexual Harassment in Public Transport and Connected Spaces in Karachi*. Consultant's Report. Manila; ADB. 2014. *Georgia: Rapid Assessment of Sexual Harassment in Public Transport and Connected Spaces in Tbilisi*. Consultant's Report. Manila; ADB. 2014. *Rapid Assessment on Sexual Harassment in the Baku Metro Rail*. Consultant's Report. Manila (RETA 7563: Promoting Gender Inclusive Growth in Central and West Asia Developing Member Countries).

Although the data is rich, however, it also represents the subjective views of the respondents and interviewers. In addition, because the assessments deal with a relatively small sample of the total population of the respective cities, it cannot be generalized to the larger population. Finally, the assessments did not include girls younger than age 15, because the survey methodology would have required a specific approach for interviewing children. Thus, the studies fall short of being inclusive of all females who might use public transportation, regardless of age.

The survey questionnaires used in each country were not completely identical, allowing a degree of flexibility for the countries' distinct social and cultural environments and for the type of public transportation facility being assessed. (In Baku and Tbilisi, the study looked at train transport; in Karachi, the focus was on buses and *chingchis*, motorcycle rickshaws with capacity for 6 to 11 passengers). However, all three survey questionnaires included core questions, which permitted a level of comparability across the cities of study.

IV. Background–Public Transport Systems in Three Cities

In Baku, Azerbaijan, public transportation comprises the metro, buses, railways, and minibuses. The Baku Metro subway was built in 1967. There are two lines: the Red Line, which runs from Ichari Shahar to Hazi Aslanov, and the Green Line, which runs from Khatai to Dernegul. Both of these lines operate from 6 a.m. to midnight. For many locals, the metro is considered the safest, most comfortable, and most affordable means of public transportation. The Baku Metro system transports an average of 700,000 commuters daily, mainly students, teachers, and workers.

In Tbilisi, Georgia, modes of public transportation include the metro, buses, minibuses, and railways. There are two metro lines in Tbilisi. According to the website of the Tbilisi Transport Company³⁵, more than 331,000 trips are taken on the metro daily, and the metro is the most-used mode of public transportation in Tbilisi.

Various modes of public transportation are available in Karachi, Pakistan, including cars, taxis, auto rickshaws, buses, minibuses, and *chingchis*. Buses, minibuses, and *chingchis* charge on a per-passenger basis, whereas taxis and auto rickshaws are privately hired and charge by the trip. Minibuses are popular because they cover a greater number of routes than standard buses. Minibuses have a seating capacity of 25 people, 7 of which are located in a women's section. Because minibuses cover a greater number of routes and have less capacity, they generally tend to be overcrowded. The *chingchi* has no seats reserved for women. Social norms dictate that a woman can only sit next to another woman, although women and men can sit facing each other. Auto rickshaws have the capacity to carry three people at a time and are privately hired. They are relatively more expensive than buses because the passenger pays the entire cost of the trip. Car taxis are even more expensive and are seldom used by lower-middle-class riders, and almost never by the poor.

³⁵ http://ttc.com.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=74, accessed 3 December 2015

V. Results of the Incidence Research: How Safe Do Women and Girls Feel?

The responses gathered were based not only on women's perceptions of safety and danger but also on actual, real-life experiences.³⁶ An analysis of the data collected in the rapid assessments demonstrated several significant trends. First sexual harassment in public transportation is a concern for women in all three cities. Second, the data show that women are frequent users of public transportation and thus there is strong incentive to keep public transportation networks safe for them. Third, there is a correlation between frequency of public transportation use and the likelihood of being sexually harassed. Fourth, most female commuters were either students or working women, using public transportation to engage in activities that would build their economic or human capital. Fifth, the majority of women who had faced sexual harassment did not receive help when they needed it; most respondents also said that they did not render help to targets when they witnessed sexual harassment. Sixth, those who had experienced sexual harassment reduced their use of public transportation as a result, and many changed their behavior to be more cautious.

Experience and Frequency of Sexual Harassment on Public Transportation

Rapid assessments undertaken in the three cities indicated that a high proportion of women have experienced sexual harassment. Among women who responded to the question about whether they had ever been touched, followed, stared at, or become a subject of anyone's inappropriate behavior while riding the metro or at the terminal and its environs, 69% out of a total of 630 respondents said they had experienced such harassment while using public transportation (Table 1).

³⁶ See Lupton, Deborah. 1999. Dangerous Places and the Unpredictable Stranger: Constructions of Fear of Crime. *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 32 (1): 1-15.

Table 1: Number and Percentage of Respondents Who Experienced Sexual Harassment

Have you experienced sexual harassment/felt harassed or uncomfortable?	Overall	Baku, Azerbaijan	Karachi, Pakistan	Tbilisi, Georgia
Yes	432 (69%)	162 (81%)	180 (78%)	90 (45%)
No	198 (31%)	38 (19%)	50 (22%)	110 (55%)
Total	630 (100%)	200 (100%)	230 (100%)	200 (100%)

Note: The question was worded differently for each of the three cities.

Sources: Data generated from ADB. 2014. *Rapid Assessment of Sexual Harassment in Public Transport and Connected Spaces in Karachi*. Consultant's report. Manila; ADB. 2014. *Georgia: Rapid Assessment of Sexual Harassment in Public Transport and Connected Spaces in Tbilisi*. Consultant's report. Manila; ADB. 2014. *Rapid Assessment on Sexual Harassment in the Baku Metro Rail*. Consultant's report. Manila.

Of the respondents surveyed in Baku, Azerbaijan, 81% said that they had experienced some form of inappropriate behavior. In contrast, a much smaller proportion of respondents (45%) in Tbilisi, Georgia, reported that they had experienced being sexually harassed, although the question limited respondents to their experience in the previous 6 months. In Karachi, Pakistan, however, 78% of the respondents had felt harassed or uncomfortable at some point while using public transportation in the previous year. Even using the lowest incidence rate (in Tbilisi), where the metro carries 85,000 commuters per day, and assuming that 50% of these commuters are female, the responses indicate that there will be 3,800 sexual harassment incidents per day, 211 per hour, or between three and four women sexual harassment targets every minute on the metro, for an incidence rate of approximately once a week per female commuter.

According to the 162 survey respondents in Baku who said that they had experienced some form of inappropriate behavior that made them feel uncomfortable, 26.5% of respondents experienced sexual harassment almost daily, and 34.6% reported being sexually harassed a few times a week (Figure 1). Among the respondents in Tbilisi who had experienced some form of inappropriate behavior in the previous 6 months, 3.3% reported that they had been sexually harassed almost daily, and 10% reported being harassed a few times a week (Figure 2).³⁷ In Pakistan, 21% (50 respondents) said they had “many times” felt uncomfortable or harassed by men’s behavior while commuting on a public bus or at the bus stop in the previous year; 41.7% (96 respondents) said they “sometimes” felt uncomfortable or harassed (Figure 3).

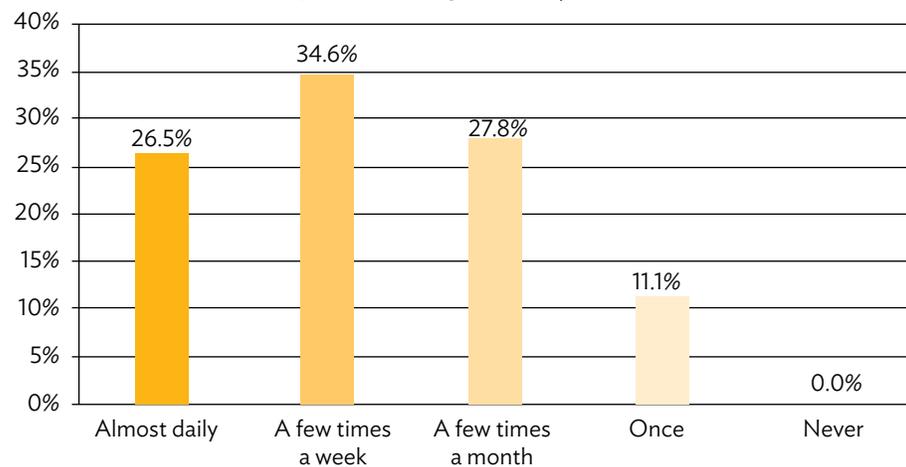
³⁷ Among the 90 respondents in Tbilisi who had experienced some form of sexual harassment, 14 then responded “Never” when asked about the frequency of harassment in the previous 6 months. It is plausible that these women were harassed prior to the previous 6 months.

Frequency of Use of Public Transportation by Female Commuters

The rapid assessments also disclosed that women in all three cities frequently use public transportation. More than 80% of the women participating in the research used public transportation regularly, almost every day, or at least one to four times a week (Table 2).

Figure 1: Frequency of Harassment among Respondents in Baku, Azerbaijan

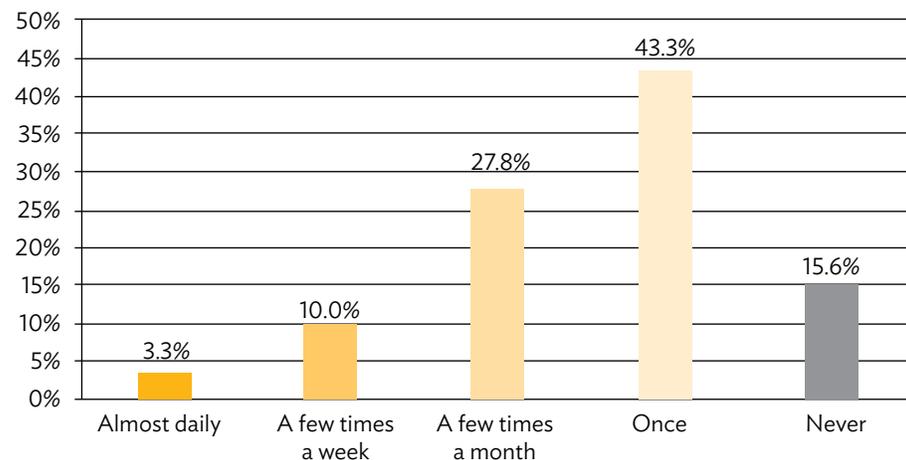
In the past 6 months, how often did you get annoyed by sexual actions or behavior directed at you while taking the metro/bus?



Source: Data generated from ADB. 2014. *Rapid Assessment on Sexual Harassment in the Baku Metro Rail*. Consultant's report. Manila.

Figure 2: Frequency of Harassment among Respondents in Tbilisi, Georgia

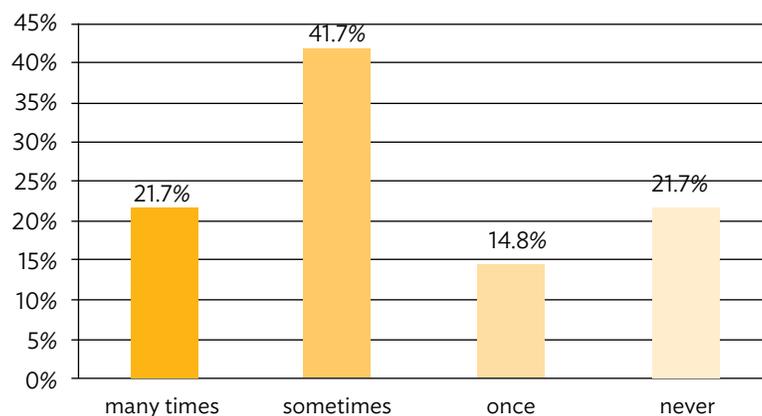
In the past 6 months, how often did you get annoyed by sexual actions or behavior directed at you while taking the metro/bus?



Source: Data generated from ADB. 2014. *Georgia: Rapid Assessment of Sexual Harassment in Public Transport and Connected Spaces in Tbilisi*. Consultant's report. Manila.

Figure 3: Frequency of Harassment among Respondents in Karachi, Pakistan

Have you ever felt uncomfortable or harassed by men's behavior while commuting in a public bus or at a bus stop during the last 1 year?



Source: Data generated from ADB. 2014. *Rapid Assessment of Sexual Harassment in Public Transport and Connected Spaces in Karachi*. Consultant's report. Manila.

Table 2: Frequency of Use of Public Transportation by Female Commuters

Frequency of Use of Public Transportation	Overall	Baku, Azerbaijan	Karachi, Pakistan	Tbilisi, Georgia
Almost every day (5 to 7 days a week)	276 (43.8%)	130 (65.0%)	118 (51.3%)	28 (14.0%)
Often (1 to 4 times a week)	229 (36.3%)	41 (20.5%)	56 (24.4%)	132 (66.0%)
Sometimes (2 to 4 times a month)	98 (15.6%)	19 (9.5%)	56 (24.3)	23 (11.5%)
Seldom (less than twice a month)	27 (4.3%)	10 (5.0%)	0 (0.0%)	17 (8.5%)
Total	630 (100.0%)	200 (100.0%)	230 (100.0%)	200 (100.0%)

Sources: Data generated from ADB. 2014. *Rapid Assessment of Sexual Harassment in Public Transport and Connected Spaces in Karachi*. Consultant's report. Manila; ADB. 2014. *Georgia: Rapid Assessment of Sexual Harassment in Public Transport and Connected Spaces in Tbilisi*. Consultant's report. Manila; ADB. 2014. *Rapid Assessment on Sexual Harassment in the Baku Metro Rail*. Consultant's report. Manila.

In Baku, 65% of those surveyed used the metro almost daily, while 20.5% used the metro one to four times a week. In Tbilisi, 14% used the metro almost every day and another 66% used it one to four times a week. In Karachi, a little more than half of the respondents said that they used public transportation every day, whereas 24.4% used buses or *chingchis* one to four times a week.

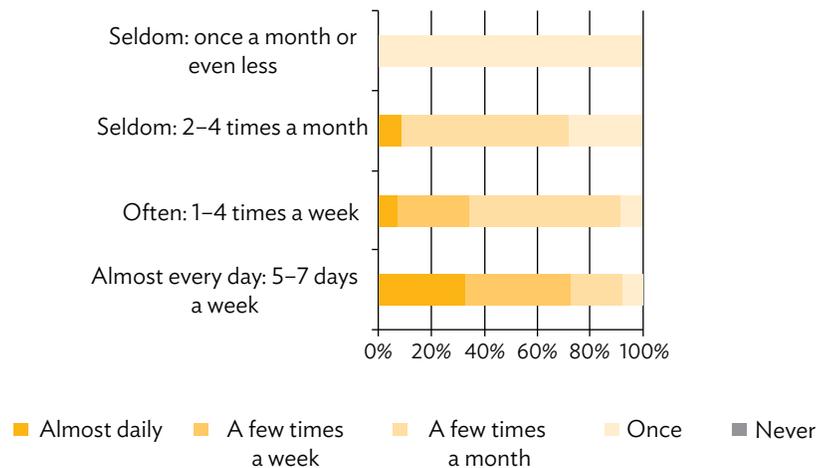
Frequency of Use of Public Transportation and Sexual Harassment

As might be expected, there was a correlation between frequency of use of public transportation and the likelihood of being sexually harassed. In Baku, one-third of survey respondents who had used the metro almost every day said that they had felt sexually harassed daily (Figure 4). In Tbilisi, more than 80% of those who had used public transportation for 150 days or more in the previous 6 months reported being sexually harassed at least once (Figure 5). In Karachi, 77% of the women who used public transportation almost every day said that they had been sexually harassed many times or sometimes (Figure 6). In other words, those using public transportation daily or often were subjected to sexual harassment or feeling uncomfortable more frequently than those who only used the metro sometimes.

Use of Public Transportation to Engage in Economic and Related Activities

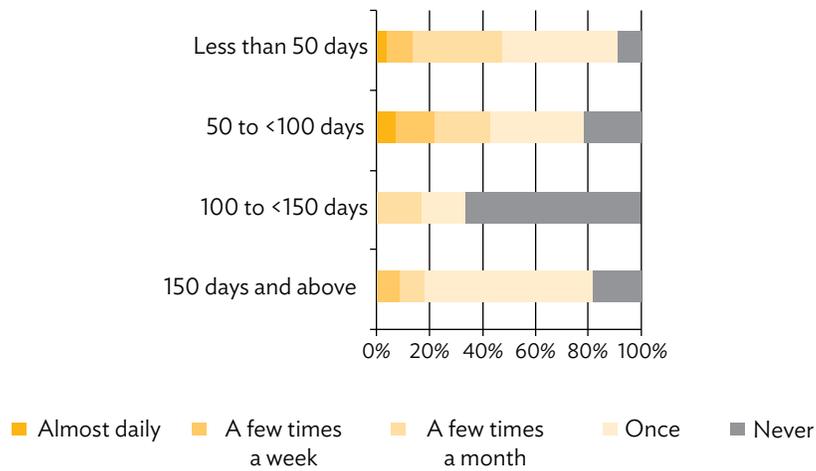
The survey data also revealed that most of the female commuters were either students or were working. In other words, these women were using public transportation to engage in activities that would build their economic or human capital. In Baku, for example, 47.5% of female commuters used public transportation to travel to school (including university), while 24% used the metro to get to work (Figure 7). The data also revealed that younger women, especially those aged 15 to 30, were more likely to be harassed than women age 40 or older (Figure 8).

Figure 4: Metro Use and Sexual Harassment, Baku, Azerbaijan



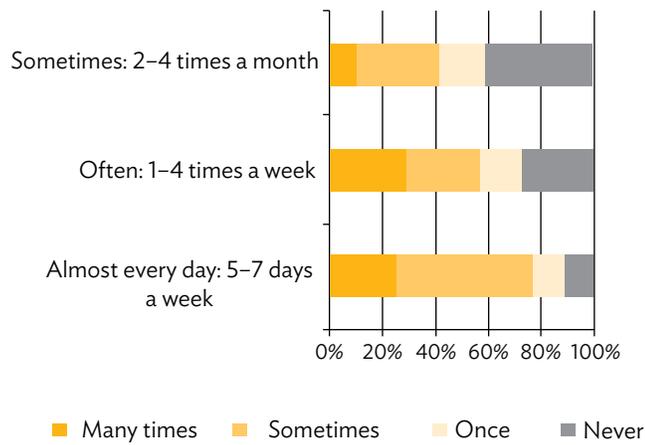
Source: Data generated from ADB. 2014. *Rapid Assessment on Sexual Harassment in the Baku Metro Rail*. Consultant's report. Manila.

Figure 5: Metro Use and Sexual Harassment, Tbilisi, Georgia



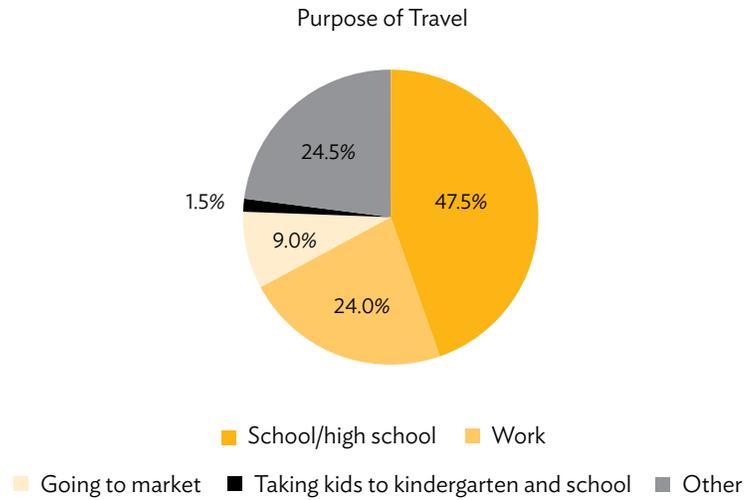
Source: Data generated from ADB. 2014. *Georgia: Rapid Assessment of Sexual Harassment in Public Transport and Connected Spaces in Tbilisi*. Consultant’s report. Manila.

Figure 6: Public Transportation Use and Sexual Harassment, Karachi, Pakistan



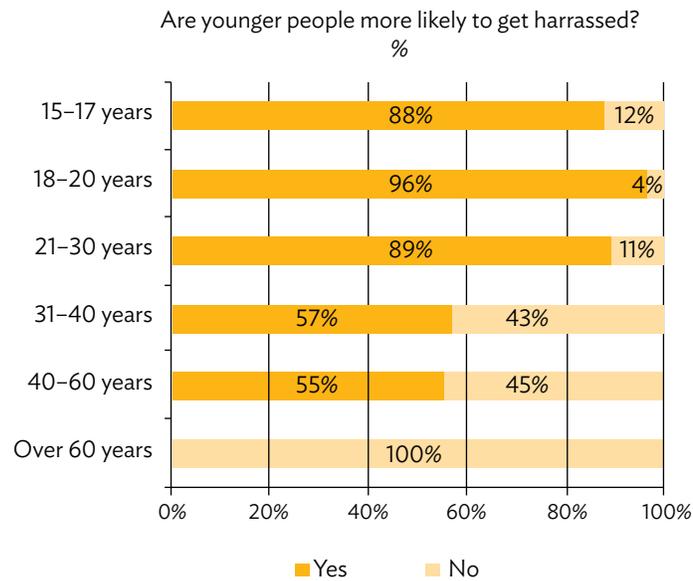
Source: Data generated from ADB. 2014. *Rapid Assessment of Sexual Harassment in Public Transport and Connected Spaces in Karachi*. Consultant’s report. Manila.

Figure 7: Respondents' Reasons for Using Public Transportation, Baku, Azerbaijan



Source: Data generated from ADB. 2014. *Rapid Assessment on Sexual Harassment in the Baku Metro Rail*. Consultant's report. Manila.

Figure 8: Sexual Harassment by Age Group, Baku, Azerbaijan



Source: Data generated from ADB. 2014. *Rapid Assessment on Sexual Harassment in the Baku Metro Rail*. Consultant's report. Manila.

Data from respondents in Pakistan showed that students, teachers and lecturers, domestic workers, and retail and office workers most frequently used buses, minibuses, and *chingchi*. Homemakers, by contrast, used public transportation less frequently—one to four times a week or two to four times a month (Table 3). This suggests that public transportation is critical to women who are engaging in productive and human capital–related activities.

Targets Tended Not to Receive Help

The majority of women who had faced sexual harassment did not receive help when they needed it. In Baku, Azerbaijan, 75.3% of women who had been harassed did not receive help. In Tbilisi, Georgia, 85.5% of targets did not receive help.

Commuters also were not likely to help a target of sexual harassment. Among women who have seen or witnessed an act of sexual harassment perpetrated against another female passenger, about 63% did not help the target (Table 4). Because targets are unlikely to receive help from fellow commuters, there is strong justification for measures to empower targets of sexual harassment and encourage bystanders to act.

Table 3: Frequency of Use of Public Transportation by Occupation, Karachi, Pakistan

Occupation of Female Commuter	Frequency of Use		
	Every day (5 to 7 days a week)	Often (one to four times a week)	Sometimes (two to four times a month)
Homemaker	7	33	35
Student	47	15	13
Teacher or lecturer	24	2	2
Domestic worker	12	0	2
Saleswoman	8	1	2
Office worker	8	1	1
Paramedic	7	2	0
Beautician	2	1	1
Doctor	2	1	0
Factory worker	1	0	0

Source: Data generated from ADB. 2014. *Rapid Assessment of Sexual Harassment in Public Transport and Connected Spaces in Karachi*. Consultant's report. Manila.

Table 4: Women Who Have Helped a Female Commuter Who Was Being Harassed

Have you helped a female target of sexual harassment?	Overall	Baku, Azerbaijan	Karachi, Pakistan	Tbilisi, Georgia
Yes	162 (36.7%)	41 (28.7%)	104 (45.2%)	17 (25.0%)
No	279 (63.3%)	102 (71.3%)	126 (55.8%)	51 (75.0%)
Total	441 (100.0%)	143 (100.0%)	230 (100.0%)	68 (100.0%)

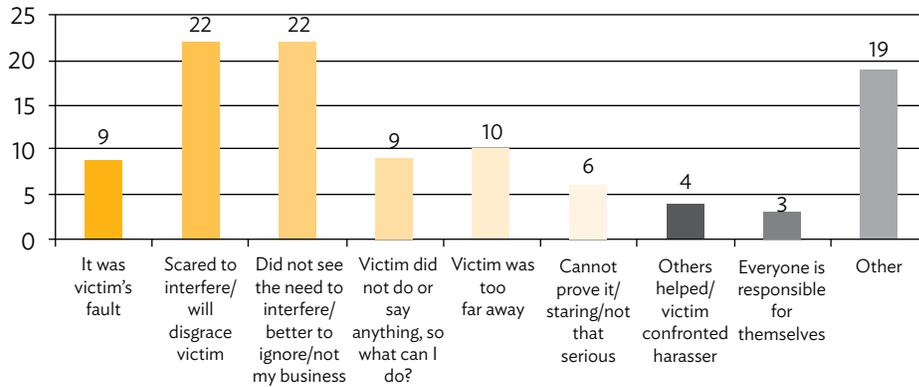
Note: The question was worded differently for each of the three cities. The questionnaires applied in Baku and Tbilisi included a preceding question, which asked: “While riding the metro or at/near its terminal in the past 6 months, have you ever seen or witnessed an act of sexual harassment perpetrated against another female passenger?” Only the responses from respondents who had seen an act of sexual harassment were tabulated for those cities. Responses from respondents who had not seen an act of sexual harassment on the metro were left out of the analysis. In Karachi, however, the survey questionnaire did not include this question. Instead, the questionnaire only asked, “Have you or another female traveler ever helped anyone being harassed?” Moreover, this question was posed to all respondents, regardless of whether they had seen another female passenger being harassed.

Sources: Data generated from ADB. 2014. *Rapid Assessment of Sexual Harassment in Public Transport and Connected Spaces in Karachi*. Consultant’s report. Manila; ADB. 2014. *Georgia: Rapid Assessment of Sexual Harassment in Public Transport and Connected Spaces in Tbilisi*. Consultant’s report. Manila; ADB. 2014. *Rapid Assessment on Sexual Harassment in the Baku Metro Rail*. Consultant’s report. Manila.

In Karachi, the majority of the 230 female respondents surveyed said that they had never helped a woman they had seen being sexually harassed by a male commuter. In Tbilisi, 75% of respondents who had seen an act of sexual harassment said that they had not offered help to the target. Similarly, in Baku, 71.3% of respondents (all female) who witnessed an act of sexual harassment said that they had not done anything for the target.

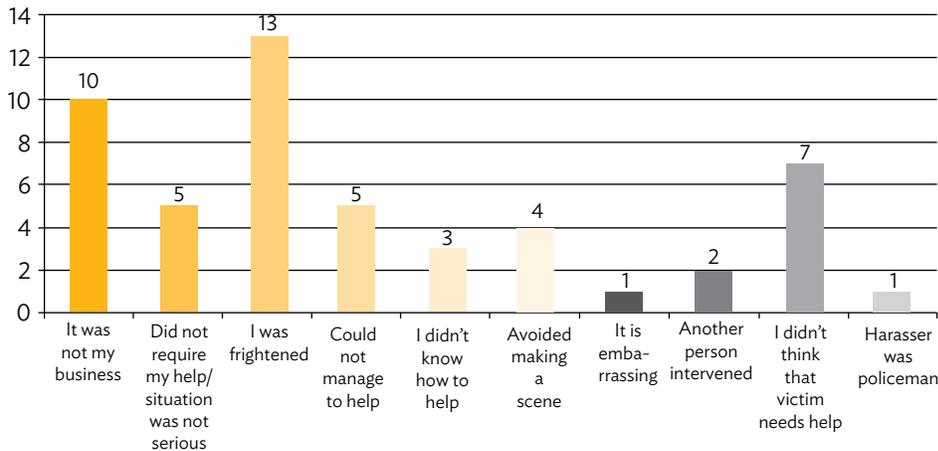
It is possible that onlookers were unwilling to help the target out of fear of repercussions or because they did not consider it their business to interfere (Figure 9 and Figure 10). Moreover, it is evident that many onlookers did not know what to do to help the target, demonstrating that empowering the onlooker is an important element in the effort to eliminate sexual harassment on public transportation networks. Some onlookers said that they did not want to help a target because they did not want to make a scene. In addition, the phenomenon known as social paralysis is common in situations of public sexual harassment. In such a case, a target fails to react—perhaps because she is shocked, self-questioning, or embarrassed. Nonetheless, because the target gives no overt signs of distress, witnesses have no stimuli to step in. Others, looking around for social cues and receiving none, also fail to act. Ultimately, the perpetrator is not stopped and the target feels unsupported.

Figure 9: Reasons for Not Helping a Target, Baku, Azerbaijan



Source: Data generated from ADB. 2014. *Rapid Assessment on Sexual Harassment in the Baku Metro Rail*. Consultant's report. Manila.

Figure 10: Reasons for Not Helping a Target, Tbilisi, Georgia



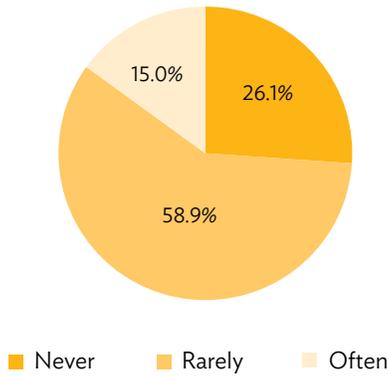
Source: Data generated from ADB. 2014. *Georgia: Rapid Assessment of Sexual Harassment in Public Transport and Connected Spaces in Tbilisi*. Consultant's report. Manila.

Targets' Reactions to Sexual Harassment

It was not uncommon for targets to fail to react to the sexual harassment they experienced. Among the 180 survey respondents in Karachi, Pakistan, who had experienced some form of harassment, 26.1% never responded to the offender, while another 58.9% said they rarely responded (Figure 11). Among the respondents from Baku, Azerbaijan, 43.8% ignored the harassment and 18.5% did nothing (Figure 12). The respondents from Tbilisi, Georgia, gave similar feedback: 36.7% said they ignored the offender and 14.4% did nothing (Figure 13).

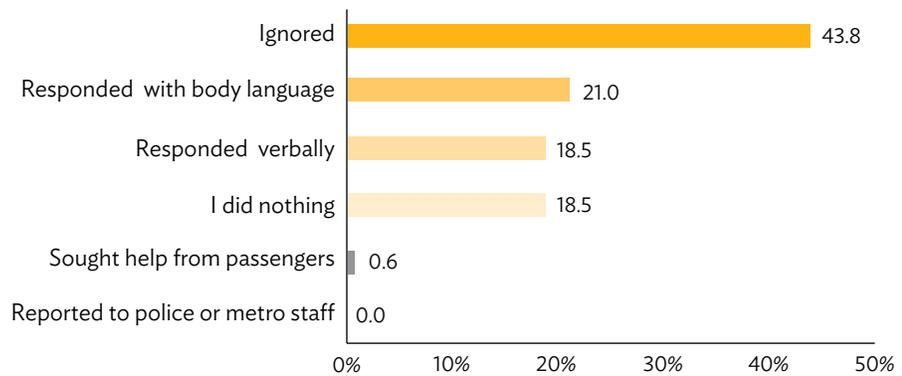
Figure 11: Respondents’ Reaction to Sexual Harassment, Karachi, Pakistan

Have you ever reacted/taken action when someone harassed you?



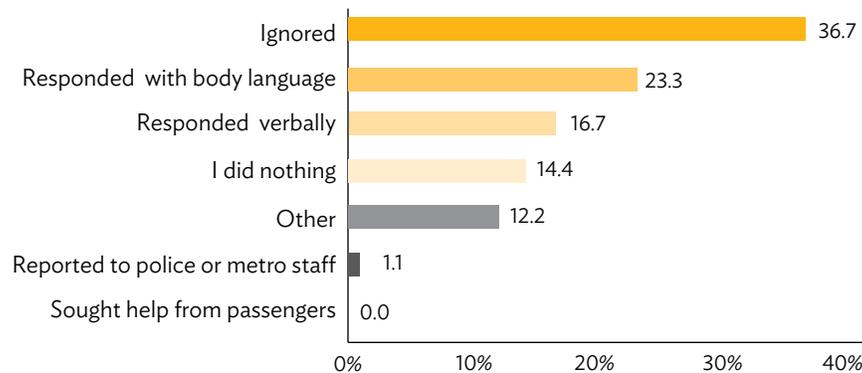
Source: Data generated from ADB. 2014. *Rapid Assessment of Sexual Harassment in Public Transport and Connected Spaces in Karachi*. Consultant’s report. Manila.

Figure 12: Respondents’ Reaction to Sexual Harassment, Baku, Azerbaijan

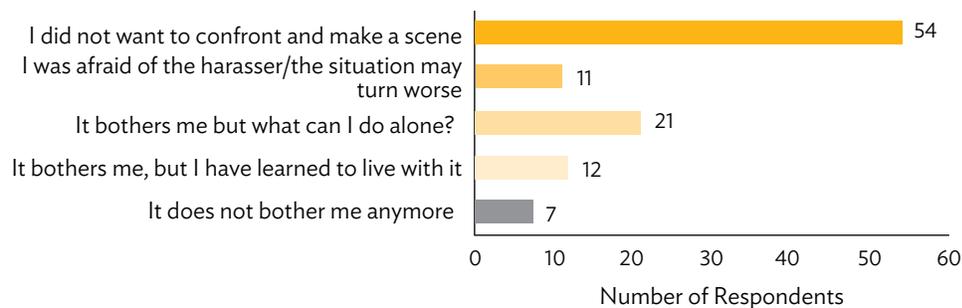


Source: Data generated from ADB. 2014. *Rapid Assessment on Sexual Harassment in the Baku Metro Rail*. Consultant’s report. Manila.

Among the respondents in Baku, the majority said that they did not do anything at the time of the sexual harassment because they did not want to confront and make a scene (Figure 14). Although the survey in Tbilisi received a similar response, another finding was that respondents kept quiet because they were afraid of the harasser and worried that the situation might turn worse (Figure 15). Focus group discussions conducted in Baku indicated that women tended to keep quiet if they were sexually harassed, out of fear of reprisal and condemnation by their own families, especially in light of recent incidents of so-called honor killings. It appears that both targets and witnesses need assurance of a supportive, safe environment in order to speak out about harassment.

Figure 13: Respondents' Reaction to Sexual Harassment, Tbilisi, Georgia

Source: Data generated from ADB. 2014. *Georgia: Rapid Assessment of Sexual Harassment in Public Transport and Connected Spaces in Tbilisi*. Consultant's report. Manila.

Figure 14: Reasons for Respondents' Inaction, Baku, Azerbaijan

Source: Data generated from ADB. 2014. *Rapid Assessment on Sexual Harassment in the Baku Metro Rail*. Consultant's report. Manila.

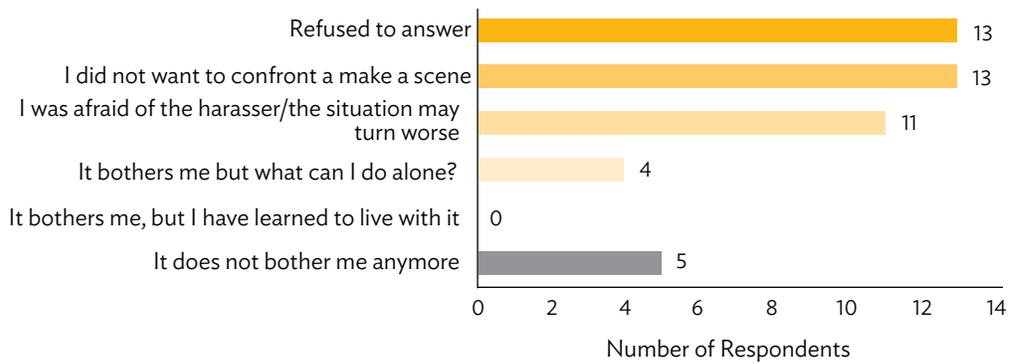
Sexual Harassment Is a Matter of Concern and Affects Mobility

About half (52.5%) of the 200 survey respondents in Baku, Azerbaijan, strongly agreed (and a further 32% agreed) that sexual harassment in the metro and the surrounding vicinity is a matter of concern (Figure 16). Despite lower overall incidence data in Tbilisi, Georgia, a higher percentage of respondents (62.5%) strongly agreed that sexual harassment in public transportation is a matter of concern; a further 17.5% agreed (Figure 17).

In all three cities, a considerable proportion of those experiencing sexual harassment said that it has affected their use of public transportation (52.8% in Karachi, 29.6% in Baku, and 21.1% in Tbilisi) (Table 5). Fifty-nine percent of students in Baku and 54% of students in Tbilisi said they had started using the metro less often or only when necessary. In

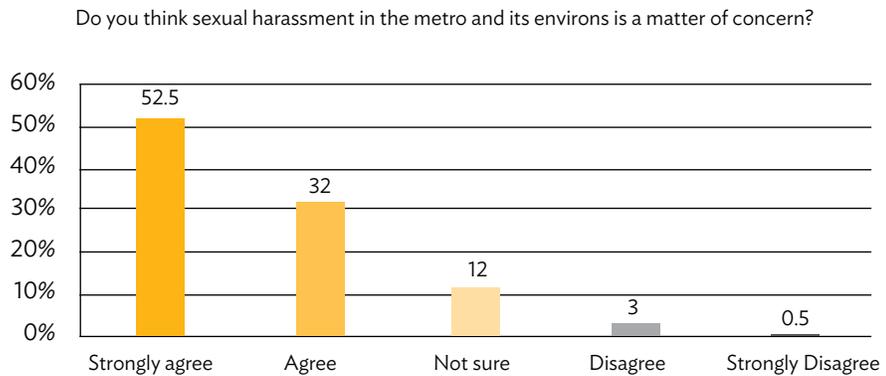
Karachi, 31% of students, 23% of working women, and 20% of homemakers reduced their use of public transportation and instead chose to use privately hired taxis or rickshaws. Additionally, women in Karachi were more likely to wear “cover-up” clothing, and they reduced their use of transport in the evenings, with an assumed decrease in access to continuing education, flexible working arrangements or night shifts, and leisure activities. Use of private transport has implications of increased cost to the family, reduced access to jobs or education for women or girls, increased traffic congestion, and pollution. Ultimately, reduced use of public transportation has implications for the empowerment of women and girls.

Figure 15: Reasons for Respondents’ Inaction, Tbilisi, Georgia



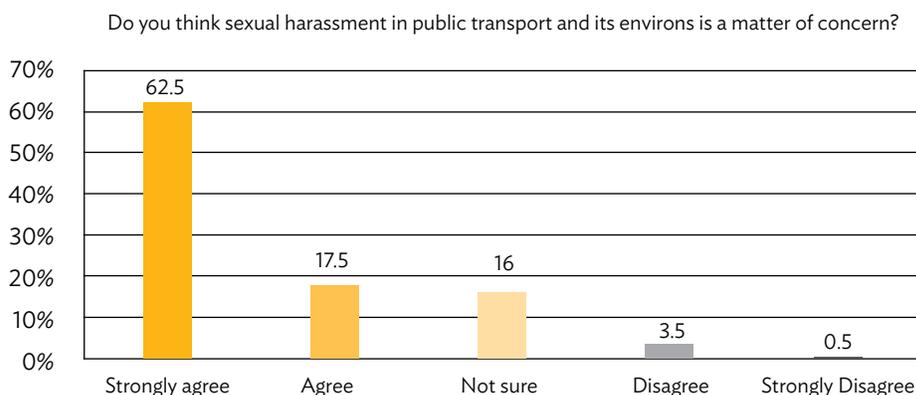
Source: Data generated from ADB. 2014. *Georgia: Rapid Assessment of Sexual Harassment in Public Transport and Connected Spaces in Tbilisi*. Consultant’s report. Manila.

Figure 16: Respondents’ Concern about Sexual Harassment in the Metro, Baku, Azerbaijan



Source: Data generated from ADB. 2014. *Rapid Assessment on Sexual Harassment in the Baku Metro Rail*. Consultant’s report. Manila.

Figure 17: Respondents' Concern about Sexual Harassment in the Metro, Tbilisi, Georgia



Source: Data generated from ADB. 2014. *Georgia: Rapid Assessment of Sexual Harassment in Public Transport and Connected Spaces in Tbilisi*. Consultant's report. Manila.

Table 5: Effect of Sexual Harassment on Respondents' Use of Public Transportation

Have the incidents you have faced affected your use of public transportation?	Overall	Baku, Azerbaijan	Karachi, Pakistan	Tbilisi, Georgia
Yes	162 (37.5%)	48 (29.6%)	95 (52.8%)	19 (21.1%)
No	270 (62.5%)	114 (70.4%)	85 (47.2%)	71 (78.9%)
Total	432 (100.0%)	162 (100.0%)	180 (100.0%)	90 (100.0%)

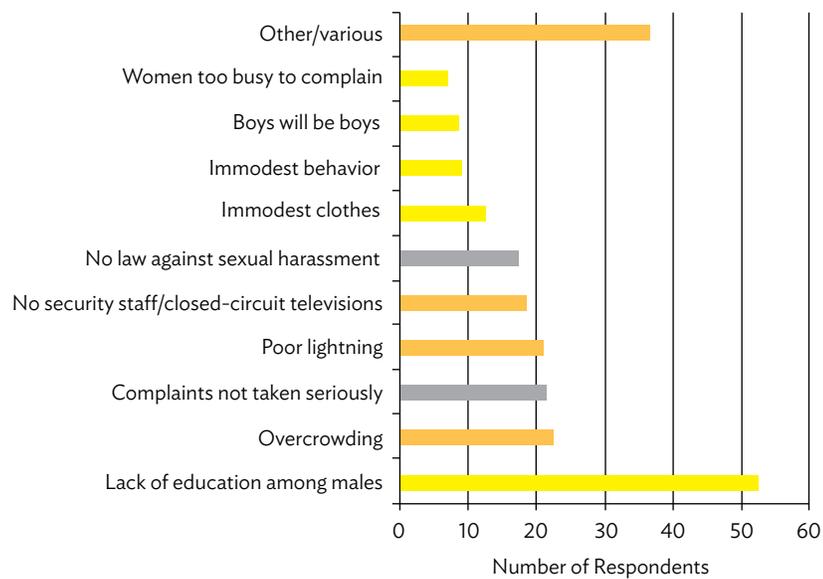
Note: The question was worded differently for each of the three cities.

Sources: Data generated from ADB. 2014. *Rapid Assessment of Sexual Harassment in Public Transport and Connected Spaces in Karachi*. Consultant's report. Manila; ADB. 2014. *Georgia: Rapid Assessment of Sexual Harassment in Public Transport and Connected Spaces in Tbilisi*. Consultant's report. Manila; ADB. 2014. *Rapid Assessment on Sexual Harassment in the Baku Metro Rail*. Consultant's report. Manila.

Why Does Sexual Harassment Occur?

Although sexual harassment, like other forms of gender-based violence, can be considered an unwanted display of power over a target based on his or her sex, it is interesting to note the perceptions about the reasons for sexual harassment, using Baku as an example. In Figure 18, the responses to this question are colored orange, gray, or yellow. The yellow responses could be grouped as issues of social attitude, gray responses as regulatory or policy issues, and orange responses could be issues of infrastructure and operation. These issues can be addressed by a more gender-sensitive approach to public transport (see Recommendations).

Figure 18: Perceived Reasons for Sexual Harassment on Public Transportation, Baku, Azerbaijan



Source: Data generated from ADB. 2014. *Rapid Assessment on Sexual Harassment in the Baku Metro Rail*. Consultant's report. Manila.

VI. Recommendations

Female commuter safety should be central to the planning and operation of public transportation networks in Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Pakistan. Municipal governments or state transit companies operating transport services or granting licenses to private service providers should require robust service standards and operational policies that ensure that public transportation is free of sexual harassment. Improvements in operational policies and management, infrastructure, and security technology, as well as raising public awareness or promulgating behavior-change communications, will benefit all transport users while ensuring women and girls' equal access to public transportation and the benefits that mobility affords.

Operationalize a Sexual Harassment-Free Public Transportation Environment

- (i) Require public transportation operators to have, advertise, and enforce a public safety policy and related initiatives to ensure that the public transportation network and related spaces are free of sexual harassment. Local governments should work with transport companies and associations to integrate such strategies into a broader “safe city” plan.
- (ii) Improve coordination between transport security and police in monitoring, responding to, and tracking violent sexual harassment cases.
- (iii) Set up databases to track sexual harassment cases on each public transportation network to identify mitigation measures, such as increased capacity, to prevent crowding; better lighting; security patrols in known hot spots; and closed-circuit television.
- (iv) Promulgate behavior-change communications (e.g., posters, cell phone applications, advertisements, stickers, or social media campaigns) empowering men and women to act and to discourage sexual harassment perpetrators.
- (v) Sensitize transport company officials about handling gender-related cases so that sexual harassment targets are more confident in reporting an offense.
- (vi) Develop safety and security teaching materials related to sexual harassment-free environments, and use these materials in training and consultative workshops targeted at transport owners, drivers and conductors, and all other public transportation personnel and staff. Transport owners, drivers and conductors, and personnel and staff should be issued clear guidance on how to respond, report, and document sexual harassment cases.

- (vii) Make drivers and conductors aware that they should eliminate inappropriate and antisocial behavior on buses. In addition, drivers and conductors should ensure that seats reserved for particular people are made available only to them. Cities that employ inspectors (such as Karachi, which monitors noise from bus radio/stereo systems) could include monitoring of reserved seats.
- (viii) Ensure that uniformed security officers patrol metro platforms, train station entrances and exits, and bus stops so that targets can get immediate help and the police are quickly alerted to any serious sexual harassment incident. In this connection, police and security personnel should work collaboratively, and both groups should receive training on antisexual harassment legislation or policy and how it is implemented.
- (ix) Sensitize all public transportation staff to sexual harassment and grant rewards for recognition of good work. In this case, staff would include drivers and conductors, whether working on the metro or on buses.
- (x) Encourage women to work in the public transportation and security enforcement sectors. This should include increasing the number of uniformed women security officers in the transport sector and increasing the number of women in the police force overall.
- (xi) Identify unsecure spaces through consultation with public transportation commuters. Monitor these unsecure spaces and ensure better lighting and use of closed-circuit television in these areas.
- (xii) Establish a hotline for reporting complaints, including complaints of sexual harassment. Complainant confidentiality should always be maintained. Analyze the complaints data for patterns and sexual harassment hot spots.
- (xiii) Include women participants in transport planning and design of future upgrade programs.
- (xiv) Provide larger buses and increase the frequency of trains to reduce overcrowding, which is linked to increased sexual harassment.

Infrastructure and Security Technology

- (i) Make infrastructural changes, such as installing closed-circuit television in buses and metro cars, along the metro platform, in bus terminals, and at bus stops.
- (ii) Provide lighting in all dim areas, whether in the metro, on buses, at bus stations, or on metro platforms. Parking areas also should be well lit, especially at night.
- (iii) Install emergency telephones at metro platforms, metro stations, bus stations, and bus stops.

Public Education

- (i) Develop behavior-change materials to raise awareness of and sensitivity to sexual harassment in public transportation networks.
- (ii) Communicate the purpose and import of the new policies to the public through campaigns; advertisements on television, social media, and radio; and through radio talk shows that highlight and discuss the issue.

- (iii) Ensure that the language and visuals used in all communication efforts are unambiguous and direct, yet culturally sensitive.
- (iv) Develop signage and posters to be displayed in public transportation networks and other public spaces. These posters should also highlight the role fellow commuters can play to improve safety.
- (v) Develop banners to raise awareness about sexual harassment in public transportation networks. Include messages that encourage men to stand up for women being harassed.
- (vi) Develop safety-and-security teaching materials targeted at secondary school children and at young adults in tertiary education. These materials should promote interactive learning and the building of social solidarity around individual and collective responsibility for safety in public spaces.
- (vii) Utilize the public address system in metro stations to raise awareness about sexual harassment. In this case, recorded or verbal messages should be used to highlight antisocial behavior and to stress that sexual harassment is unlawful.
- (viii) Conduct regular passenger satisfaction surveys and safety audits. The sex-disaggregated data from these surveys and audits might be collected through apps or through a website, with information on how to participate displayed on trains and buses. Participation could be rewarded with a onetime fare discount. Results should feed back into planning initiatives.
- (ix) Grant recognition to witnesses of a sexual harassment incident who help a target.
- (x) Name and shame perpetrators as one of several strategies to raise awareness that sexual harassment is shameful for the perpetrator, not for the target³⁸

³⁸ Hui, Stephen. 2013. Harassment on TransLink Project Seeks Safer Transit for Women. *The Georgia Straight*. 23 October. <http://www.straight.com/news/516381/harassment-translink-project-seeks-safer-transit-women>

VII. Conclusion

Past research has determined that women are much more fearful than men of becoming a target of crime.³⁹ Responses gathered from the rapid assessments in Baku, Tbilisi, and Karachi show that, given high incidence data, women do have cause for concern. Certainly, women have distinct safety and security needs when traveling on public transportation. It makes sense, therefore, to design public transportation with women in mind, though both women and men would benefit from the resulting improvements. The data also show that gender emerges as a significant factor because harassment affects not only the use of public transportation (in all three cities), but also the freedom of movement in general (in Karachi). At a basic level, if public transportation is seen as an investment to stimulate growth, it makes sense that both women and men should be able to access its benefits, to contribute to that growth.

Incidence of sexual harassment is a common phenomenon. The frequency of sexual harassment increases as frequency of public transportation usage rises. In addition, targets tended not to receive help from those around them who were aware of the incident, and witnesses were less likely to provide help to a target, out of fear of a range of personal consequences. Finally, a significant proportion of respondents are of the opinion that serious measures should be taken to address sexual harassment in public transportation.

Although sexual harassment involves private acts perpetrated by an individual or group and directed at an individual, it is a public issue, because it violates the rights of women to safe movement in public spaces, and thus it necessitates a legislative or public policy solution.

In terms of surveyed countries, at present, Azerbaijan and Georgia lack legislative and policy measures to address sexual harassment on public transportation, although these countries have in place various legislative and policy measures to protect women's rights in other arenas. Although Pakistan does not have legislation explicitly dealing with sexual harassment in transportation, it does have legislation against sexual harassment incidents in the workplace.⁴⁰

The role of transport companies, whether privately or publicly owned, is critical in addressing sexual harassment. The goals of public transportation should be aligned with the goal of making public transportation facilities safe and friendly toward women, particularly because there is evidence that women depend more than men on public transportation,

³⁹ Gordon, Margaret T., and Stephanie Riger. 1989. *The Female Fear: The Social Cost of Rape*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

⁴⁰ The implementation of the legislation (The Protection of Harassment Against Women at the Workplace Act 2010), however, has been mostly weak.

given their lower likelihood of owning or having priority use of a private motor vehicle. The management of transport companies should aim to ensure that all commuters feel safe in public transportation, including the metro, buses, and *chingchis*. Moreover, the management of transport companies in the surveyed countries should work with the governments of these countries to provide a safe transport environment for women. A safe travel environment also would benefit transport companies by increasing commuter travel among women, who comprise a significant proportion of public transportation users.

A regulatory environment to combat sexual harassment on public transportation could include city ordinances or public safety policies requiring public transportation operators to prevent and respond to sexual harassment. Public safety policies include preventive measures such as the use of behavioral change communications, hotline services, closed-circuit television, good lighting, and ensuring optimal passenger capacity at peak commute times to prevent overcrowding. Related measures could include banning perpetrators by revoking their monthly commuter passes (on the grounds that purchasing a ticket means agreeing to conditions laid down by the transport company), publishing pictures of repeat offenders, recording and responding to reports of sexual harassment, and documenting data on sexual harassment hot spots.

Such measures are expedient and are necessary to curbing sexual harassment. A legal injunction or strong antisexual harassment policies would act to deter potential perpetrators and provide protection to sexual harassment targets. In addition, such measures would be advantageous because they would include strategies to combat sexual harassment, requiring the involvement of all concerned in formulating a clear statement of intent and actions.

Strong public safety policies would reflect a real commitment by all concerned parties to recognize the importance of preventing sexual harassment in public transportation. Legislation and public safety policies also would indicate to all concerned that sexual harassment in public transportation is a serious issue that will not be tolerated. Such policies also should outline the proper response of public transportation employers and employees to incidents of harassment. In addition, well-publicized antiharassment policies empower targets to make a complaint and bystanders to provide support, with the full understanding that the behavior is not acceptable and that steps will be taken to address it. As the example of Project Guardian shows, women are more willing to report cases of sexual harassment if policies on sexual harassment are in place. Conversely, in the absence of legislation and antisexual harassment policies, targets are less likely to come forward, because they face twin obstacles of burden of proof and a lack of confidentiality. Operational policies and systems are an integral part of an effective strategy to combat sexual harassment, especially in countries such as Pakistan, where a strongly patriarchal mindset may still exist.⁴¹

An effective antisexual harassment policy in public transportation networks will help deter harassment and create a positive culture for female commuters. Targeted nonworkplace harassment regulations and/or policies against indecent acts and other forms of sexual

⁴¹ Critelli, Filomena M., and Jennifer Willett. 2012. Struggle and Hope: Challenging Gender Violence in Pakistan. *Critical Sociology*, 39 (2): 201–21.

assault in the public arena has the effect of framing sexual harassment as an injury to human dignity, rather than associating it exclusively with sex-based discrimination.⁴²

Antisexual harassment regulations and policies will only be effective if they are accompanied by relevant procedures to address sexual harassment on public transportation. In Tbilisi, for example, metro station and administrative personnel were not informed about sexual harassment on the transport network, but they indicated that they would be ready to cooperate in efforts to combat sexual harassment.⁴³ Training for public transportation personnel and administration is critical in the effort to prevent sexual harassment. A system for reporting offenders, recording times and locations to look for patterns and plan responses, and recognizing the efforts of staff who assist targets are all good practices.

⁴² Raday, Francis, and Shai Oskenberg. n.d. *The Impact of Violence against Women and Women's Economic and Social Life*. Unpublished paper.

⁴³ Women's Information Center. 2014. *Georgia: Rapid Assessment of Sexual Harassment in Public Transport and Connected Spaces in Tbilisi*. Manila: ADB.

Policy Brief: A Safe Public Transportation Environment for Women and Girls

It is only by specifically considering the needs and concerns of women and girls that we design infrastructure and services that are truly inclusive. This three-country study analyzes the incidence and impacts of sexual harassment on public transport. It proposes simple design changes and policy considerations which when implemented, can change the behavior of targets, perpetrators and bystanders, and make public transportation systems a safer and preferred commuting option for both women and men.

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