

Safe transport for all

Issues and operational lessons from the Egyptian National Railways

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GENDER AND MOBILITY

The transport sector is a key enabler of economic growth and transition in the countries where the EBRD invests. It supports individual mobility so that everyone can access essential public services, such as health and education, and the labour markets, which has important implications for economic inclusion and gender equality.

Freedom of mobility – both the act of moving around and the ability to do so – is a fundamental right. Yet not all members of society are able to move freely, which is often determined and restricted by existing social norms. This creates a gap between those who are and feel mobile and can access opportunities, and those who cannot due to their gender, age, economic situation, disability or health.

Public transport operators can play a key role in closing this gap by providing safe transport services for all.

In Egypt, many women report facing harassment in public spaces, including when using public transport (see page 2).

So Egyptian National Railways (ENR) has been working with the EBRD to assess its passenger services and identify ways to make them safer for everyone. ENR delivers 1.2 million passenger journeys each day, including significant commuter traffic in and out of Cairo.

Under the EBRD's Gender Advisory Services Technical Cooperation Programme, a team of specialists undertook a holistic assessment of the gender issues relevant to ENR's service design, operations and management to understand the different needs of female and male rail users in Egypt, and to recommend ways of enhancing the quality, safety and security of ENR passenger services.

This note summarises findings of the report "Egyptian National Railways Gender Assessment: Achieving High Quality, Safe and Secure Rail Services", prepared by Vectos for the EBRD and funded by the EBRD's SEMED CFA fund. It has been prepared by Gabriella Borovsky and Elena Ruiz Abril of the EBRD Gender Team.

KEY MESSAGES

- ▶ Transport is not a gender-neutral issue; women and men have different needs and not everyone is able to use the roads, railways and other systems without discrimination or constraints.
- ▶ Safe transport services are essential for women's economic and social opportunities.
- ▶ For low-income women in particular, safe public transport becomes critical as they may not be able to afford "not to work".
- ▶ From putting locks on toilet doors to awareness-raising campaigns and better lighting in stations, there are many ways that transport operators can improve their services for men and women.

#safetransport4all

GENDER-RESPONSIVE PASSENGER RAIL SERVICES: THE CASE OF ENR

Rising insecurity is recognised as a factor restricting women's freedom of movement in Egypt,¹ with women reporting frequent sexual harassment when using public transport. In Egypt, 99.3 per cent of women surveyed by UN Women (2013) reported having experienced sexual harassment, most commonly in the form of touching or groping. The study shows that streets and public transport are where women are most at risk.

Safe transport is essential for women's economic inclusion. For many women, safe transport can make all the difference, enabling them to access essential economic opportunities. Almost 70 per cent of women in the EBRD survey were dissuaded from using the train to commute to work because of security concerns. This is particularly serious because when a family owns a car, respondents admitted that male family members were more likely to use it. While many women would prefer not to use the train under the current conditions, they see themselves forced to do so. This means that low-income women – those who cannot afford “not to work” – become more reliant on train services, which makes safe transport all the more important for their economic inclusion.

How can transport services become safer and more responsive to the needs of all? Research has provided

ENR with an insight into the needs of female train passengers and what it must do to meet those needs. For example, the survey revealed that 1 in 5 trips by women involve a change of trains, which underscores the importance of improving the platform environment in main stations and interchanges. The research also identified new “risk areas” for harassment, such as queues for tickets, and female passengers travelling in second and third-class expressed a greater need to feel safe and secure.

Unlocking dialogue on gender within ENR. Over a period of 18 months ENR worked with the EBRD to assess its services and operations from a gender perspective. This work took into account: international best practices; a survey of 2,000 railway users undertaken in Cairo's main railway station; several focus groups; and a validation workshop with staff from ENR.

The participation of ENR staff throughout the process has unlocked internal dialogue within the company around possible gender-related improvements to transport services – something unheard of at the beginning of the EBRD's involvement. ENR has already started implementing some recommendations, such as providing a customer telephone hotline, installing surveillance cameras, improving lighting and placing trained security personnel in the most crowded stations.

“I don't want my fiancée to go to university because she would have to travel by train to get there.”

Young man interviewed during EBRD research

99.3%

of women in Egypt have experienced sexual harassment, most commonly in the form of touching or groping

82.6%

of women in Egypt do not feel safe or secure in the street

86.5%

of women in Egypt do not feel safe or secure on public transport, a UN Women study reports²

69%

of women in the EBRD survey are dissuaded from using the train to commute to work because of security concerns

33%

of women in the EBRD survey commute to school or university

25%

of women in the EBRD survey make their trips for family reasons

20%

of women in the EBRD survey use rail services to commute to work compared with 40% of men



1. *Enhancing Women's Voice, Agency and Participation in the Economy*, EBRD, 2015

2. “Study on the Ways and Methods to Eliminate Sexual Harassment in Egypt”, UN Women, 2013.

ENHANCING PASSENGER SAFETY AND PREVENTING SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The research identified numerous cost-effective ways to meet the needs of female passengers. Combined with a strong public awareness campaign to reinforce the acceptance of these new measures, the recommendations could go a long way to improving safety and security for all.

Service delivery

- ▶ Employ additional security personnel on platforms and trains.
- ▶ Train new and existing security personnel to be more gender-aware with a focus on preventing sexual harassment in trains and stations.
- ▶ Launch a public awareness campaign on train traveller behaviour.
- ▶ Distribute leaflets at stations and on trains to raise awareness of how to treat passengers with respect (giving up seats, making less noise and not harassing).
- ▶ Introduce fines for inappropriate behaviour and communicate them via message boards on trains and platforms.
- ▶ Introduce online ticket sales to reduce crowding – and associated harassment – at station ticket offices.
- ▶ Introduce a telephone hotline for security alerts.

Infrastructure

- ▶ Upgrade carriages, specifically windows, doors, seats, toilets and lighting in first and second-class carriages.
- ▶ Install and advertise toilets (with locks) and when possible, make them gender-segregated.
- ▶ Install surveillance cameras on trains and platforms and communicate their existence via signage.
- ▶ Increase the number of information boards showing locations of complaints offices.
- ▶ Provide wi-fi on new carriages to offer passengers guaranteed means of communication.
- ▶ Introduce ticket machines at the main stations to relieve pressure of crowding at ticket offices.
- ▶ Paint carriage numbers and pedestrian lane markings onto the platform to improve the flow of boarding and alighting passengers and manage crowds.

Management

- ▶ Nominate a gender equality champion within ENR to help implement recommendations and monitor progress, and develop/implement a comprehensive gender training programme for employees.
- ▶ Promote equality to improve career opportunities for women employees within the company, or to improve opportunities for employment, particularly via university engineering courses.



Separate carriages for women or families?

Separate carriages are one way in which transport operators can provide safe services for female passengers and help prevent sexual harassment. These carriages, where only women or families are allowed to travel, have been implemented on different modes of transport in cities such as Tokyo, Kuala Lumpur and Mexico City, or on intercity transport in India.

Separate carriages are, however, controversial as they can be perceived as reinforcing segregation and endorsing, rather than combating, the violence and gender discrimination which lie at the origins of women's lack of safety.

ENR did pilot family carriages on one of its routes but with limited success. The impact of the experiment seems to have been hindered by emphasis on the carriages themselves rather than the communication strategy around this change, as well as a lack of attention to proper signage in trains and on platforms, and awareness-raising.

During the focus groups conducted under the EBRD project, women and men expressed their support for family carriages as a measure to tackle harassment and unsafe travelling conditions currently experienced by female passengers. At the time of writing this note (January 2016), ENR had announced the re-introduction of women-only carriages on its Benha-Menouf line following requests from users.

GENDER-RESPONSIVE TRANSPORT IN EGYPT AND BEYOND

How the EBRD can help

The EBRD works with its clients to close the gender gaps regarding access to public services, including through its investments in urban transport. The findings of ENR's Gender Assessment will contribute to designing other applicable transport investments in Cairo, and to building the case for safe transport components in investments in other EBRD countries of operations.

The EBRD also promotes **equal opportunities** and women's participation in the workforce of the transport operators it supports. For example, in Almaty, Kazakhstan, technical support to the municipal tramway authority has enabled the company to improve its human resources policies, and has led to the appointment of the first female bus drivers in the company's history.

The EBRD also promotes policy dialogue, awareness-raising and **dissemination of good practices** in safe transport. In October 2015 it co-organised with UNDP a regional conference in Central Asia on sustainable transport, where the ENR and Almaty experiences were showcased and international experts, as well as transport operators from the region, discussed the social dimensions of public transport.



Best practices in gender-responsive and safe transport

In the train

Carriage design should include seating arrangements that face each other, wide aisles, emergency buttons next to the doors and **CCTV**. This is particularly important in driverless trains. A different option altogether is **segregated carriages** and waiting areas on platforms.

At the station

Station design should include clearly marked **customer information centres, help points and cameras** (that can produce identifiable images). **Dead-ends** and alcoves should be avoided.

Proper **lighting** is essential to discourage criminality. Security personnel should be visible and staff should be **properly trained** on gender-related aspects of health and safety to help them identify, prevent and combat sexual harassment more effectively.

Effective **wayfinding** through signage, staff, tactile and audible information, announcements and maps all reduce crowding at decision points and can contribute to enhanced safety and the prevention of harassment.

Also...

Publicity campaigns, such as "Report It to Stop It" by Transport for London and the British Transport Police, can reduce sexual harassment on public transport by encouraging passengers to report instances of sexual harassment on the London Underground via social media.

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