



SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN ZAMBIA

Prevalence, Challenges, and Interventions

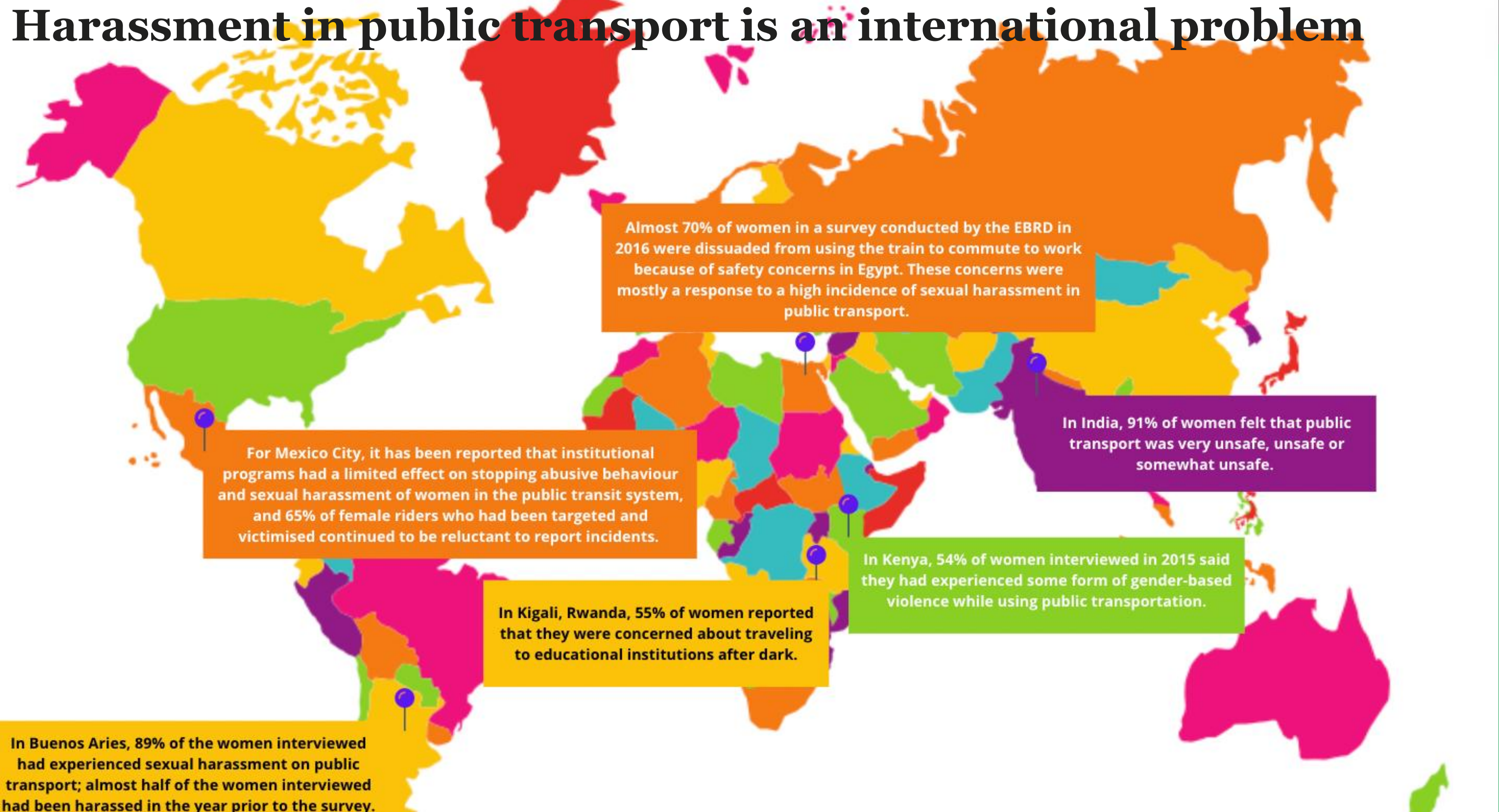


Winneba
12-15 August 2025

Thomas Miyoba
Zambia Road Safety Trust



Harassment in public transport is an international problem



Almost 70% of women in a survey conducted by the EBRD in 2016 were dissuaded from using the train to commute to work because of safety concerns in Egypt. These concerns were mostly a response to a high incidence of sexual harassment in public transport.

For Mexico City, it has been reported that institutional programs had a limited effect on stopping abusive behaviour and sexual harassment of women in the public transit system, and 65% of female riders who had been targeted and victimised continued to be reluctant to report incidents.

In India, 91% of women felt that public transport was very unsafe, unsafe or somewhat unsafe.

In Kenya, 54% of women interviewed in 2015 said they had experienced some form of gender-based violence while using public transportation.

In Kigali, Rwanda, 55% of women reported that they were concerned about traveling to educational institutions after dark.

In Buenos Aires, 89% of the women interviewed had experienced sexual harassment on public transport; almost half of the women interviewed had been harassed in the year prior to the survey.

The sexual harassment and sexual violence against women is one of the biggest transport problems in the World

- **Widespread Issue:** Millions of women worldwide experience sexual harassment on public transport daily.
 - **Africa Focus:** With 733 million women (median age IS 25), an estimated 440–660 million young women face harassment or assault while travelling.
 - **Transport Workers at Risk:** Women in the transport sector face harassment from colleagues and passengers, plus persistent workplace barriers.
 - **Systemic Blind Spot:** The transport industry has largely ignored this issue, resulting in weak policies and limited support for victims.
 - **Urgent Need:** Coordinated action is essential, stronger laws, safer infrastructure, awareness, and gender equity in transport leadership.
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The Problem

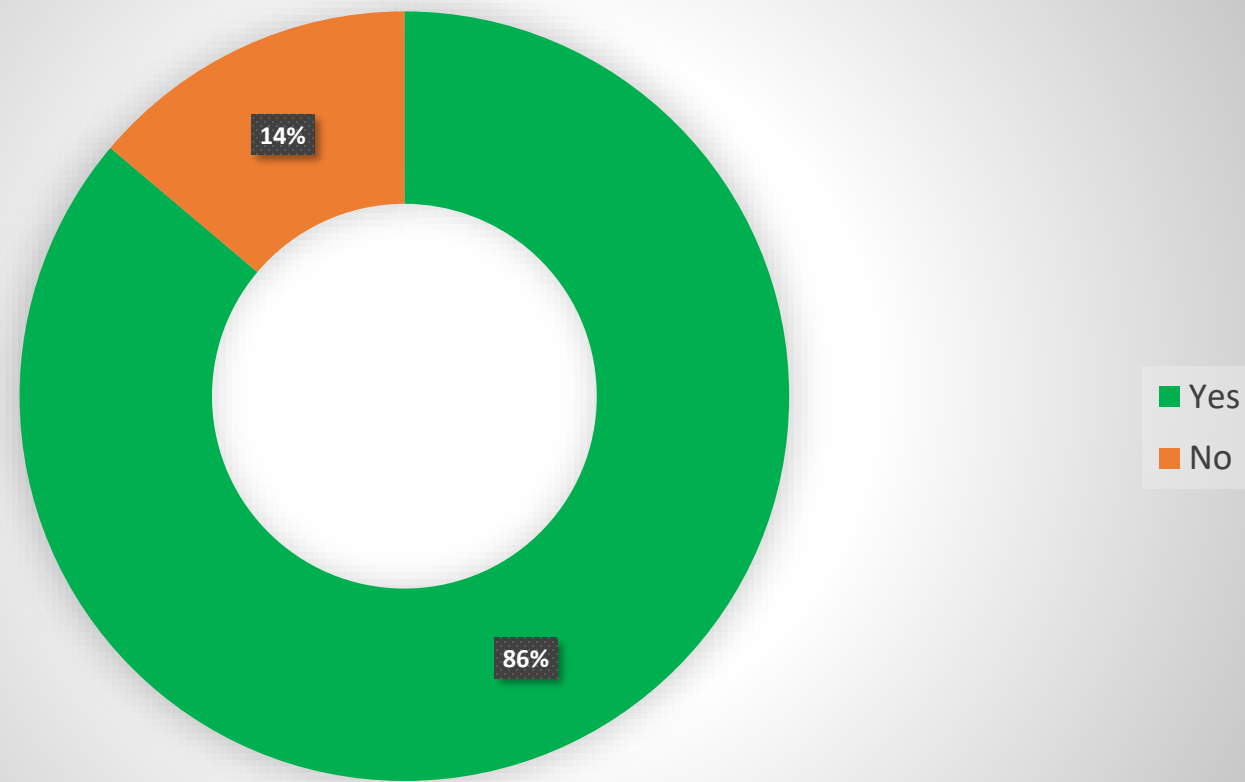
The Urgent Need to Address Sexual Harassment in Public Transport

- Sexual harassment in public transport is a persistent problem that undermines the safety and dignity of passengers
- Every day, people in Zambia especially women, face unwanted advances during their commute, which violates their basic rights and creates an atmosphere of fear.
- This issue remains underreported and unaddressed.

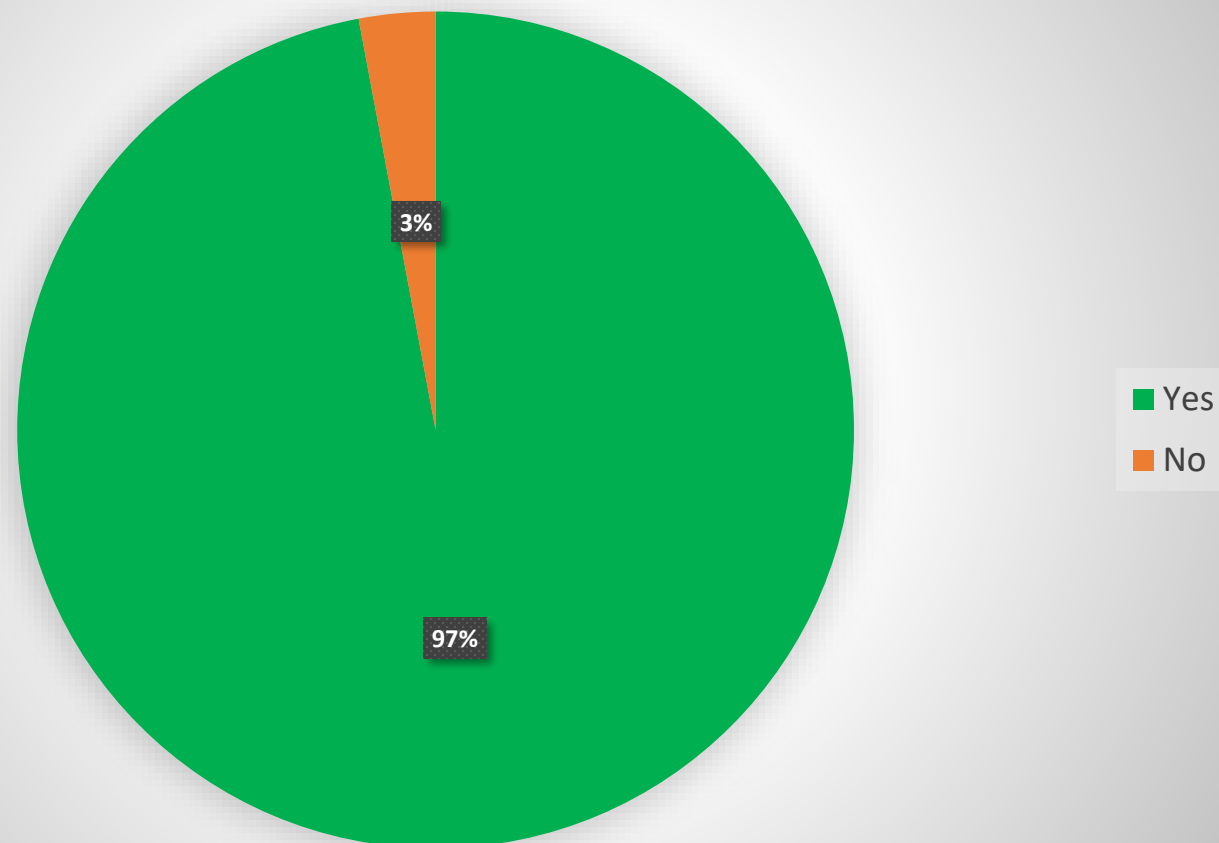
The Scope of the Issue

- ❑ 822 respondents reported personally experiencing sexual harassment, while 1185 witnessed such incidents.
- ❑ This shows a significant proportion of individuals who are either affected or aware of these occurrences.
- ❑ Harassment includes inappropriate touching, verbal abuse, visual harassment, and intimidation, often creating a hostile environment.

Experienced Sexual Harassment



Witnessed Sexual Harassment



What factors increase risk?



High risk locations

- Poor lighting conditions
- Lack of surveillance
- During long waits on deserted stations
- Both overcrowding and undercrowding
- Travelling through neighbourhoods with high crime rates
- Late evenings and at night

What factors increase risk?

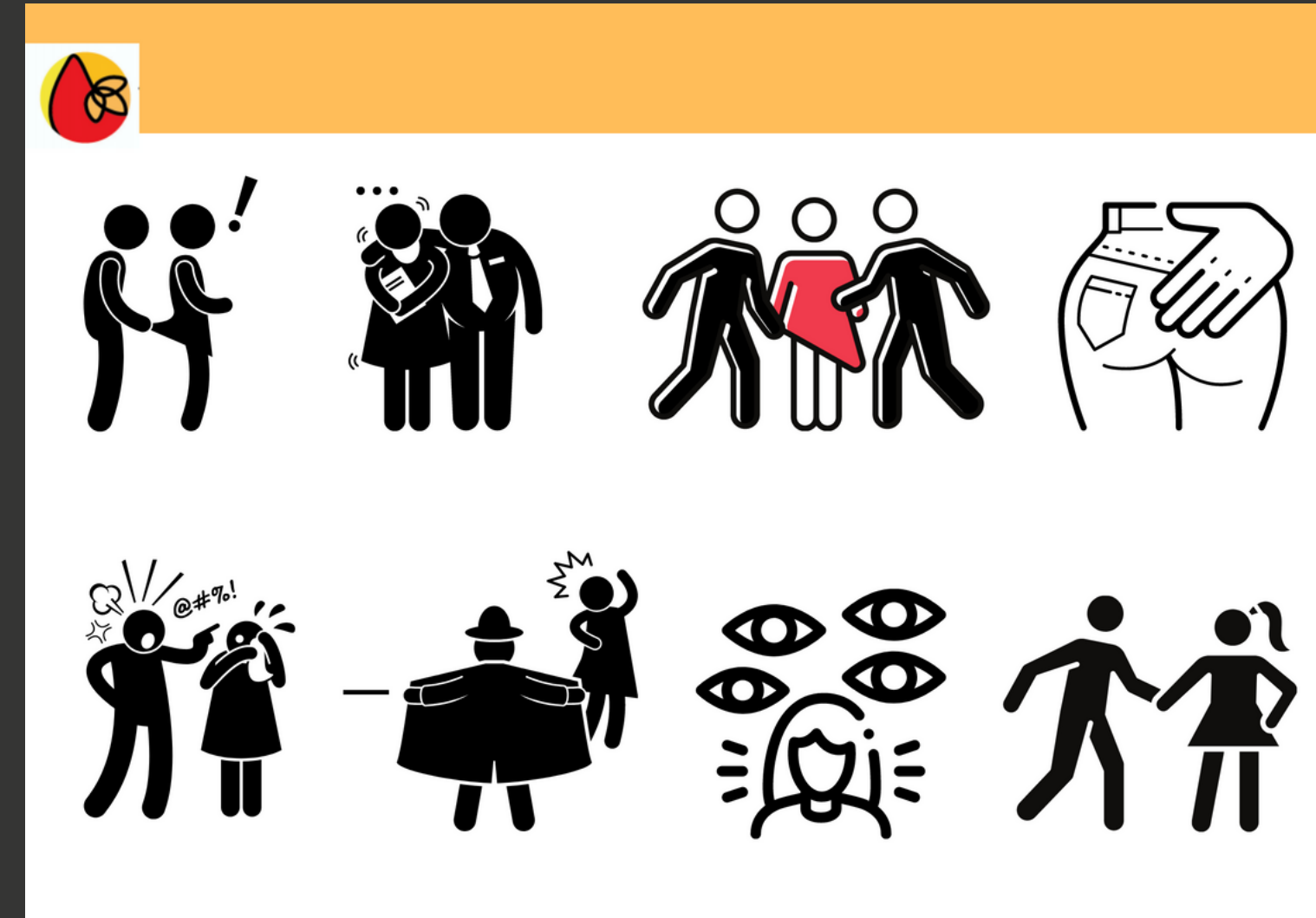
High risk locations

- Absence or non-functioning emergency buttons for passengers and operators
- Lack of protocols so workers and transport users don't know how to report incidents
- Lack of legal and regulatory frameworks
- Lack of trust in authorities to file and investigate reports

What is sexual harassment?

The unwanted advances of a sexual nature given by someone to another:

- Verbal – threats, sexual comments
- Visual – leering, photography
- Physical – groping
- Psychological – stalking



Types of sexual harassment and pictograms



The figure shows the final versions of the pictograms that were used in the main survey collection and the focus groups:

- A - unwanted touching;
- B - pushing and intimidation;
- C - groping;
- D - verbal abuse (including catcalling);
- E - leering, intimidation and staring; and
- F - stalking and following.



Where does it take place?

It takes place:

- At public transport waiting areas
 - Onboard public transport
 - Walking to and from transport stops
- 

Solutions

Many interventions
can help tackle sexual
harassment

Lighting



Diversity



Design



Campaigns



Technology



Security



About Us

- The Zambia Road Safety Trust (ZRST) is the **leading non-governmental organization (NGO)** dedicated to **building a safer and more sustainable transportation system in Zambia.**
- We are deeply committed to enhancing **safe mobility for all**, addressing not only **preventable road accidents** but also the critical issue of sexual harassment in public transport, challenges that disproportionately affect vulnerable groups such as pedestrians, cyclists, school children, and women.



Vision

To match and exceed international road safety excellence consistent with the Safe Systems

Approach to free Zambia's roads from serious deaths and injuries.

Our Mission

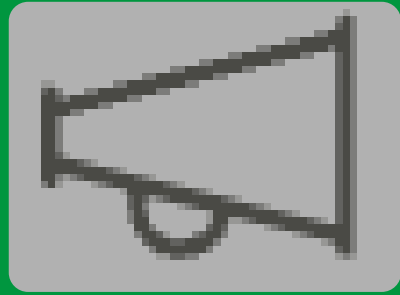
To transform the culture of Zambian road users and authorities by fostering awareness, passion, and genuine commitment to road safety, while serving as the nation's peak body for road safety through: Research, Advocacy, Promotion of effective standards and initiatives.



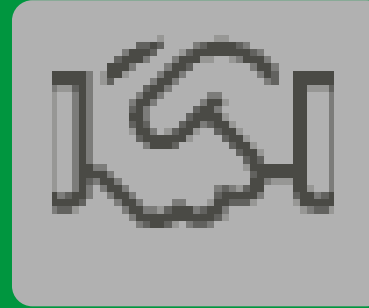
Achievements and Milestones

- 1.Safe school infrastructure
- 2.Advocacy and awareness campaigns
- 3.Car Free Day
- 4.Research
- 5.Climate resilience planning with digital mapping
- 6.EU Horizon Project
- 7.Sexual Harassment in public transport

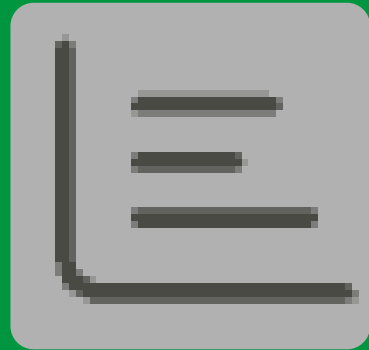
ZRST's Response



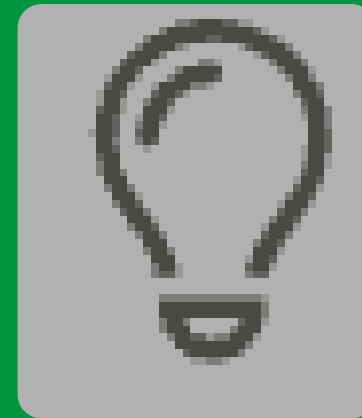
**Raising
Awareness**
Educating the public



**Engaging
Stakeholders**
Fostering collaboration



**Driving
Advocacy**
Using evidence for change



**Promoting
Policy**
Advocating for reform and improvement

Our commitment to safer, inclusive transport is multifaceted, focusing on public education, multi-sector collaboration, evidence-based advocacy, and policy influence to create lasting change.

What We've Done So Far





EMPOWER Seminar & SHE CAN Tool

Tackling Sexual Harassment in Public Transport

4 October 2024, Cape Town & Online

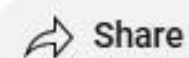
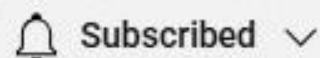




POLICE AND THE COMMUNITY SEXUAL HARASSMENT PUBLIC TRANSPORT 8 04 25



ZANIS TV
3.5K subscribers



Links to the SHPT Engagements and reports

<https://transport-links.com/hvt-publications/empower-ii-tackling-sexual-harassment-on-public-transport-in-sub-saharan-africa-final-report>

https://youtu.be/ixv3iwBtcYM?si=_ounfPWWmFt3uM_U



SHE CAN Tool

Web-based tool to help decision-makers tackle sexual harassment in public transportation

Sexual
Harassment
Engagement

Changing
Attitudes meeting
Needs



SHE CAN Tool

Web-based tool for helping decision-makers tackle sexual harassment in sub-Saharan public transport.

The SHE CAN Tool – Our Game Changer

The SHE CAN Tool is a user-friendly, web-based resource supporting decision makers, authorities, organizations and transport providers.

Evidence-Based Solutions

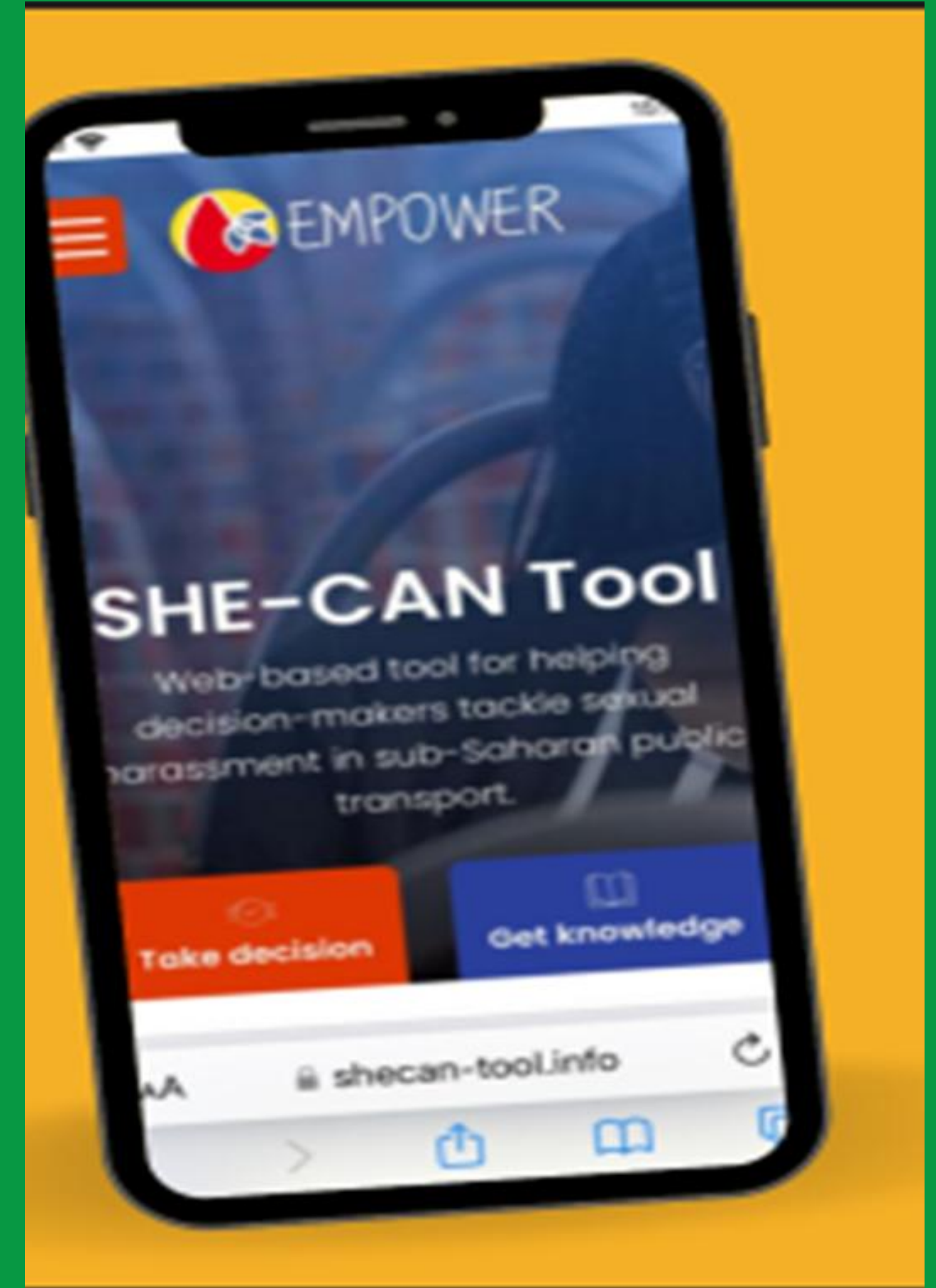
Addresses sexual harassment with proven interventions

Supports Targeted Interventions

Identifies hotspots for harassment

Creating Safer Public Transport Environments

Promotion of safe mobility



Stakeholders



- There are examples across the World of stakeholders implementing these gender-sensitive measures, but the practice is scattered.

Given the scale of the problem, champion stakeholders find it challenging to make a start and assemble those who need to be engaged.

SHE-CAN provides the focus to do this



**SAY NO TO
SEXUAL**



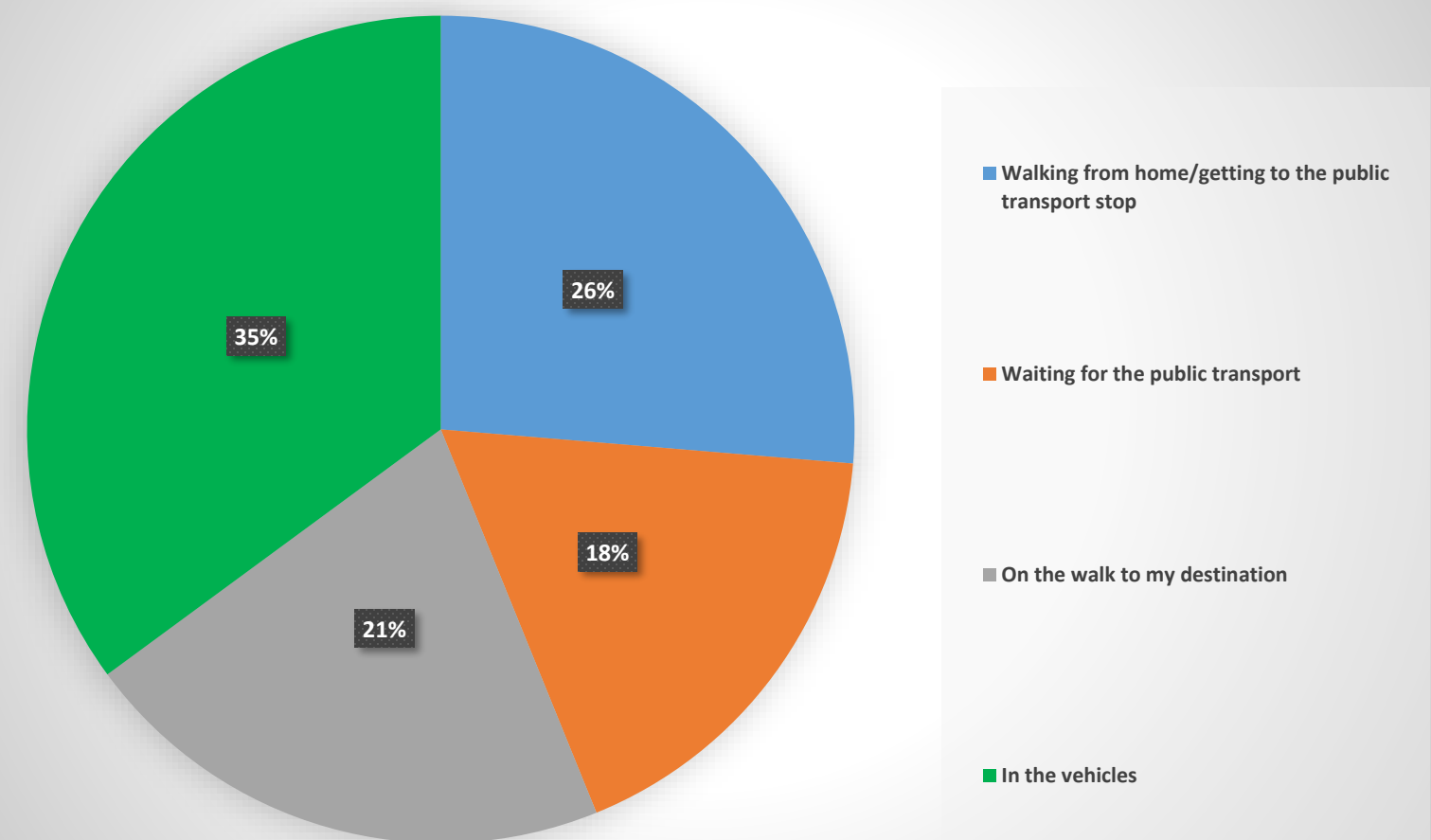
HARASSMENT
IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT



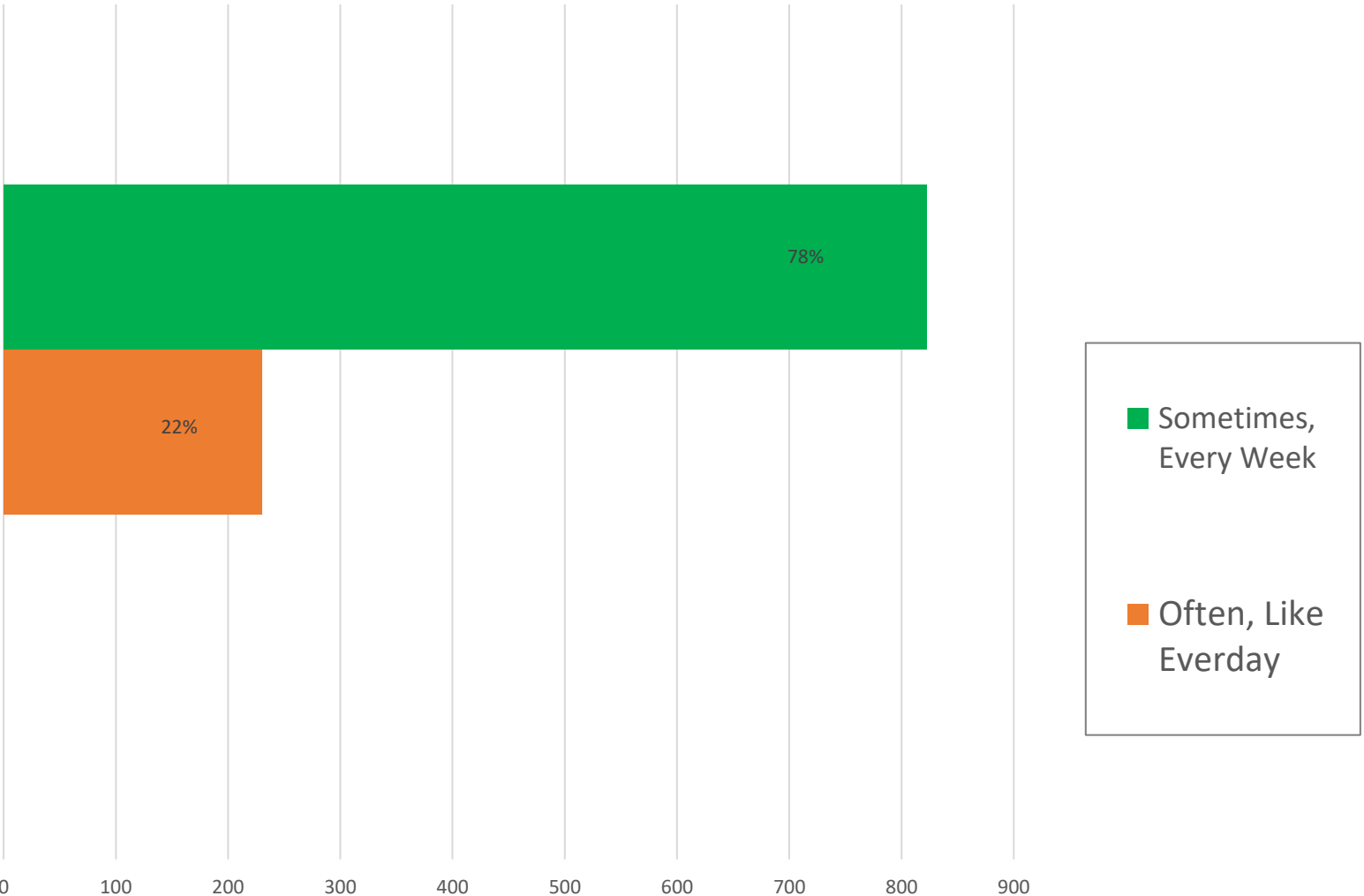
Summary Table of Harassment Types		
Type of SHPT	Experienced	Witnessed
Inappropriate Touching	18%	20%
Verbal Abuse	25%	13%
Visual Harassment	14%	7%
Intimidation by Groups	21%	53%
Groping	11%	7%
Total	100%	100%

Prevalence and Frequency of SHPT

Prevalent Location of SH

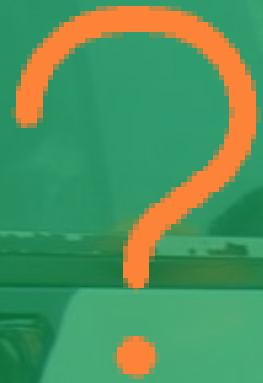


Frequency of Sexual Harassment



Top 5 Most Helpful Solutions to Prevent Sexual Harassment		
Rank	Solution	Description
1	Education and Awareness Programs	Conduct workshops and training sessions to educate individuals about sexual harassment and promote respectful behavior.
2	Increased Security Presence	Enhance the visibility of security personnel and implement surveillance systems in high-risk areas, such as public transport and workplaces.
3	Clear Reporting Mechanisms	Create straightforward and confidential reporting systems that allow victims to report incidents without fear of retaliation.
4	Bystander Intervention Training	Equip community members with the skills to intervene safely when witnessing harassment, creating a culture of support.
5	Strict Enforcement of Policies	Ensure all institutions have clear policies against harassment and enforce disciplinary measures for offenders.

Key Challenges and Barriers



Fragmented Responsibility

Clear roles and responsibilities are vital for effective prevention and response. Each stakeholder must play a defined role.



Cultural and Religious Factors

Respectful and inclusive approaches are needed to address cultural and religious sensitivities. Collaboration with communities is key.



Legal and Evidential Issues

Navigating legal complexities and collecting evidence can be challenging. Ensuring fair and just procedures is essential.

Key Challenges and Barriers...



Lack of Awareness and Training

Insufficient knowledge and training on sexual harassment policies and procedures can hinder effective prevention and response.



Inadequate Reporting Mechanisms

Limited or unclear reporting mechanisms can discourage victims from coming forward.



Retaliation and Fear of Reporting

Fear of retaliation or negative consequences can deter victims from reporting harassment.

Cat calling

is harassment. Report It Stop It.









**SAY NO TO
SEXUAL**

HARASSMENT
IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA



Say No
to

SEXUAL
HARASSMENT

IN PUBLIC
TRANSPORT

FOR COUNSELLING / REFERRAL SERVICES

CONTACT
ZAMBIA POLICE
VICTIM
SUPPORT UNIT
(VVSU)

ZAMBIAVVSU@GMAIL.COM
OR CALL LIFELINE/CHILDLINE
TOLL-FREE 116 (CHILDREN)
OR 311 (ADULTS)

SEE IT. SAY IT. STOP IT.





16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GBV

Towards Beijing +30: UNiTE to End
Violence Against Women and Girls

"Safe Journeys, Safe Lives: Say No to
Sexual Harassment in Public
Transport!"



Republic of Zambia
Cabinet Office
Gender Division

ABOUT US

Zambia Road Safety Trust (ZRST) supports the 16 Days of Activism Against GBV by advocating for safer public transport for everyone especially women and girls. Through awareness campaigns and policy advocacy, we address sexual harassment. ZRST promotes the SHE CAN Tool to help stakeholders like policymakers, local authorities, enforcement agents and transport operators tackle harassment and create safer, harassment-free transport environments.

CALL TO ACTION

Join Zambia Road Safety Trust as we take a stand to protect women and girls in public transport. Together, we can create safer, inclusive spaces for everyone.

OUR SERVICES

- Awareness
- Education
- Infrastructure improvements
- Research
- Advocacy

CONTACT US

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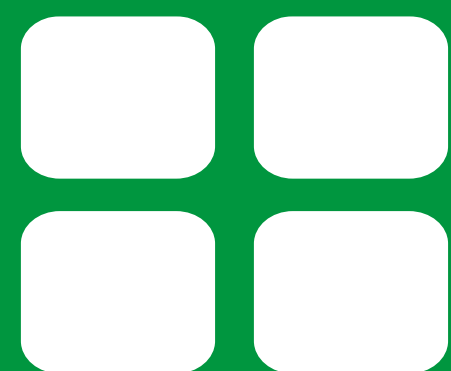


Conclusion

- ❖ Sexual harassment in public transport remains a major barrier to safe mobility yet it is still underreported and inadequately addressed.
- ❖ Many especially women continue to face sexual harassment in public transport, with limited access to justice and support.
- ❖ Stronger enforcement, awareness, and collaboration are essential to create safer public transport environments.
- ❖ Ensuring safety in transport is key to empowering women and promoting gender equality.



**"If you can't feed
a hundred
children, then
feed just one."**



Thank You..!

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