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Empowering Woman in Mountainous Regions through Mobility and Gender Equality.

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Role of Women in the Cypriot Economy & Community

- Agriculture and food production
- Tourism (hospitality, guiding, cultural services)
- Local businesses (retail, crafts, entrepreneurship)
- Balance paid work with caregiving (childcare, elder care, community support)



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Role of Women in the Cypriot Economy & Community



Tourism & Hospitality:

- Hotels, restaurants, and travel services
- Managers & business owners
- Promote local culture, food, and traditions

Local Businesses & Entrepreneurship:

- Small businesses (shops, cafés, salons)
- Online & creative industries
- Supported by EU programs and networks

Agriculture & Rural Life:

- Family farms and food production
- Traditional goods (olive oil, dairy products)
- Agrotourism initiatives



Role of Women in the Cypriot Economy & Community

Caregiving & Social Services

- Primary caregivers for children & elderly
- Strong presence in education & healthcare jobs

Community & Cultural Life

- Local events and festivals
- Volunteering and social initiatives

Changing Role

- Progress toward equality, but challenges
- More women in higher education & leadership remain



Women's Mobility in Rural & Mountainous Areas

Shaped by:

- Geography
- Limited transport infrastructure
- Strongly gendered social roles

Daily mobility patterns:

- Fragmented
- Localised
- Multi-purpose
- Trip chaining, mobility of care

Women make multiple short trips each day for caregiving and daily needs:

- Workplaces
- Local markets and supermarkets
- Healthcare services
- Children schools & childcare facilities
- Public transport stops
- Churches or community centres
- Relatives' homes

Women's Mobility in Rural & Mountainous Areas



Seasonal changes:

- More travel during **harvest & tourism seasons**
- Earlier or later travel times to avoid extreme heat during summer
- Reduced mobility during **winter** (weather conditions, difficult roads) → limited access to healthcare and services

Compared to men:

Women: short, frequent, localised, multi-purpose trips

Men: longer-distance, less frequent, single-purpose trips



Constraints shaping women's mobility

Women face **interconnected barriers** that affect how, when, and where they can travel:

Physical

Poor road infrastructure, limited/unreliable public transport, and safety concerns - especially at night or in isolated areas

Economic

High transport costs, lower incomes, and limited access to private vehicles

Cultural

Social norms and gender roles may discourage women from traveling alone or driving

Time-related

Heavy caregiving and household responsibilities restrict available time and flexibility

Impact of Limited Mobility on Women in Cyprus

1. Economic Opportunities:

- Restricted access to jobs outside villages → reliance on low-paid or informal work
- High transport costs and lack of private vehicles increase dependence
- Rural gender employment gap: **12.2%**

2. Education:

- Difficulty reaching universities or vocational training in cities
- Safety and caregiving responsibilities limit attendance

Consequence: women remain concentrated in lower-skilled and lower-paid sectors, reducing long-term economic empowerment

3. Healthcare Access:

- Delayed appointments and reduced preventive care → pregnant, elderly and disabled women affected
- Older women (35% of 65+) face health limitations exacerbated by poor transport

Consequence: well-being & quality of life affected.



Impact of Limited Mobility on Women in Cyprus

4. Social Participation & Empowerment:

- Limited engagement in community activities, social networks, or civic life
- Increased dependence on others for mobility
- **Consequence:** lack of independence & risk of isolation
- Women hold only **14.3% of parliamentary seats** in Cyprus

5. Safety constraints:

- Limited traveling at night or during off-peak hours due to fear of harassment
- Longer or more expensive routes for safety
- May not travel at all, limiting access to opportunities

6. Time poverty & unpaid care burden

- Mobility of care and poor transport systems reduce time available for paid work, education & rest and well-being

7. Everyday Consequences:

- Reduced access to essential services
- Limited economic independence
- Lower participation in education & public life
- Increased dependency



Lessons Learned & Remaining Gaps

Key Lessons:

- Symbolic actions alone are **not enough**— structural improvements are needed
- Policies work best when **implemented locally with measurable targets**
- Supporting women in transport professions increases empowerment and representation

Remaining Gaps:

- Limited **practical measures** addressing transport access, safety, and affordability
- Need for **data-driven, transport-specific programs** to reduce mobility barriers



Example of a Bus route in rural areas

Approx. measures

37 km

50mins via bus

28mins via car

Stops:

Karavela Station,
Andrtea Geroudi,
Evagora Pallikaride,
Ellados Avenue,
Mesogis Avenue,
Tsada,
Polemi,
Psathi,
Agios Demetrianos,
Kannaviou, Asprogia*,
Panagia

Time Dependant

Time Consuming

Bus route finish early

DEPARTURES FROM PAPHOS:
MON. - FRI.: 06:10, 09:00, 11:50, 15:40
SATURDAY: 09:00, 12:00, 14:30

DEPARTURES FROM PANAGIA:
MON. - FRI.:
07:35, 10:00,
14:30, 15:05
SATURDAY:
07:10, 10:00, 13:00

*NO AVAILABLE ROUTE ON SUNDAY

No Route on Sunday



Women's Mobility Initiatives in Cyprus

Symbolic & Visibility Initiatives

- Traffic lights with **female pedestrian figures** in Nicosia, Limassol, Larnaca, and Paphos
- Raises awareness and challenges stereotypes

Gender Equality Policies

- EU-aligned frameworks & Roadmap for Women's Rights
- Promote gender mainstreaming in transport and urban planning

Workforce Inclusion Projects

- Encouraging women as **professional drivers** in public transport
- Improves economic opportunities and challenges norms



Mountain Women On- Demand Shuttle Service



Concept:

- Flexible **on-demand shuttle service** for women in mountainous/rural Cyprus
- Connects **homes → markets → schools → healthcare → workplaces**
- Combines **digital booking, safety, and affordability**

Key Features:

- **Digital platform:** App/SMS booking, ride-pooling, real-time updates
- **Safety:** Female drivers, GPS tracking, emergency buttons, secure stops
- **Community-driven:** Subsidized fares, local input on routes/schedules
- **Integration:** Links with buses, taxis, and urban centers



Addressing Barriers & Benefits

Barrier Solutions:

- **Physical:** Small shuttles navigate mountain roads, flexible routes
- **Economic:** Affordable fares, job opportunities for local women
- **Cultural:** Female drivers, private travel reduce social restrictions
- **Temporal:** On-demand scheduling fits caregiving and multi-task duties

Additional Benefits:

- Increases access to **jobs, education, healthcare, social life**
- Provides **data for improved transport planning**
- Environmentally friendly → reduces emissions
- Scalable → can expand to other rural areas



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Engaging Women in Mobility Planning

Direct Participation:

Focus groups & workshops → gather women's experiences and priorities

Community mapping exercises → identify key routes and unsafe areas

Pilot testing & feedback → women test transport solutions (shuttles, apps, infrastructure)

Participatory Methodologies:

- Inclusive surveys (paper, digital, SMS)
- Co-design sessions with planners
- Advisory committees including women from rural and marginalized communities



Ensuring Marginalized Voices Are Heard

Strategies:

- Schedule meetings to **fit caregiving/work responsibilities**
- Provide **childcare, transport, or digital access** for participation
- Use **trusted local facilitators** to reach women facing cultural or social barriers

Takeaway:

Direct engagement ensures **mobility solutions reflect real needs**, improve **safety and accessibility**, and empower women—especially those from marginalized groups—to influence transport planning.



Measuring Women's Empowerment in Mobility Projects

Economic Participation:

- Jobs and income gains from better transport access
- Women working as drivers, coordinators, or entrepreneurs

Education & Skills Access:

- Increased attendance at schools, universities, and training programs

Time Savings & Work-Life Balance:

- Reduced travel time and fewer trips needed
- More flexibility for caregiving and work

Social Inclusion & Reduced Isolation:

- Increased visits to family, friends, and community events
- Greater participation in social and civic activities



Safety, Agency & Equity Indicators

Safety & Comfort:

- Perceived safety while traveling
- Satisfaction with accessibility and convenience

Decision-Making & Agency:

- Women involved in **planning and governance** of transport services
- Input on routes, schedules, and policies

Equity & Accessibility:

- Access improvements for marginalized women
- Affordable, reliable, and inclusive transport services

Takeaway:

Holistic indicators capture **economic, social, temporal, safety, and participatory impacts**, showing how mobility projects empower women beyond simple ridership.



Planning & Design for Gender- Sensitive Transport

Gender-Responsive Planning:

- Conduct **gender impact assessments** for all transport projects
- Map women's travel patterns and barriers
- Prioritize **safety, accessibility, and flexibility**

Participatory Design & Governance:

- Include women, especially rural/marginalized, in **planning committees**
- Use **workshops, focus groups, and co-design sessions** to guide policy
- Support **local advisory boards** with decision-making power

Flexible Services:

- Promote **ride-sharing, micro-shuttles, and on-demand transport**
- Coordinate with schools, healthcare, and markets
- Seasonal adjustments for high-demand periods



Funding, Safety & Monitoring

Funding & Incentives:

- Dedicated funding for **gender-sensitive infrastructure and services**
- Subsidize fares for low-income or remote women
- Grants to support women as **drivers or operators**

Safety & Accessibility:

- Improve roads, lighting, and public stops in rural areas
- Ensure vehicles are **safe, accessible, and female-friendly**
- Employ female staff in public transport for comfort and acceptance

Monitoring & Evaluation:

- Track **economic participation, education, time savings, social inclusion, decision-making**
- Use data to refine services continuously
- Align with **EU and national gender equality frameworks**

Takeaway:

Integrating **gender perspectives in planning, funding, and governance** empowers women and reduces inequality in mountainous and rural regions.



Key Commitment & Challenge

Key Commitment:

- Establish a “**Women’s Mobility Task Force**” to advance gender-responsive transport in mountainous areas.
- Monitor local mobility needs, co-design services, and implement **safety and accessibility improvements**.

Question/Challenge for the Consortium:

- *“How can mountainous and rural European regions scale gender-responsive mobility solutions while ensuring affordability, safety, and cultural acceptance?”*
- Encourages discussion on **policy harmonization, funding, and knowledge sharing**.



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Best Practice & Takeaway

Mountain Women On-Demand Shuttle Service

- Digital booking and flexible routing
- Safety measures and female drivers
- Community participation in planning

Takeaway:

- Sustainable mountainous development requires **gender equality and social inclusion** in transport.
- Local action, shared challenges, and successful pilots can **guide other European regions** in implementing scalable solutions.



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Thank you for your attention!

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