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GreenMove Project:

Transforming rural mobility for a
sustainable future



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Empowering women in mountainous regions through mobility and gender equality

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Context: Gotse Delchev Region

- Gotse Delchev region is a **mountainous area** characterized by natural beauty, strong local communities, and a relatively safe living environment;
- A large part of the population lives in **small, remote settlements with limited accessibility** due to terrain and infrastructure;
- These geographical conditions create **significant mobility challenges**, especially in accessing essential services and employment;
- **Limited public transport**, irregular timetables and reliance on private cars make it difficult to access work, health and social services. These challenges affect women disproportionately, as they often juggle multiple daily roles and commutes.
- **Mobility is a key issue** for sustainable and inclusive development;



Delchevo village

Context



Nevrokop valley

Women's role in the local economy

Women in Gotse Delchev municipality and Blagoevgrad region play a significant and multifaceted role in economic development and social life. Their participation encompasses both traditional activities and modern forms of entrepreneurship and social activism.

- ✓ Women play a **central role in the local economy**, particularly in agriculture, tourism, services, and small-scale entrepreneurship;
- ✓ They are **actively involved** in family farming, food production, and informal economic activities;
- ✓ At the same time, women often combine paid work with **unpaid domestic and caregiving responsibilities**;
- ✓ Despite their significant contribution, much of their work remains undervalued and part of the **"invisible economy"**;



Minister Lilyana Pavlova meets with citizens

Women in community and cultural life



- **Women are key actors** in maintaining social cohesion and community life in both urban and rural areas;
- They **actively participate in cultural institutions** such as community centers, folklore groups, and local events;
- Women **play a major role** in preserving traditions, crafts, and local identity, which are also important for tourism;
- Their engagement **strengthens community** resilience and supports intergenerational knowledge transfer;

Participation of local women in a traditional food festival

Women in community and cultural life



Folklore festivals and amateur folk dance groups are usually predominantly female

Women's Daily Mobility Patterns

- Women's daily mobility is typically complex, involving **multiple short trips throughout the day**;
- Their main destinations include **workplaces, schools, healthcare facilities, shops**, and administrative services;
- A large share of their mobility is related to **caregiving responsibilities**, such as accompanying children or elderly relatives;
- Women often **combine several tasks** into one trip due to time constraints and limited transport options;

Women's Daily Mobility Patterns



Women's mobility is multi-purpose and involves combining several daily tasks into one continuous trip.

The Gender Mobility Gap

Men		Women
Linear (Point A to Point B)	Dimension 1: Trip Architecture	Multi-purpose "Trip Chaining"
Single-focus (Work-related travel)	Dimension 2: Primary Focus	Blended (Economic, social, and caregiving)
Priority access to private household vehicles	Dimension 3: Transport Mode	High reliance on limited public, shared, or non-motorized transport
Long-distance commuting	Dimension 4: Geographic Range	Highly localized travel dependent on immediate community services

Differences between women's and men's mobility



Women participating in a bazaar for home-made products for additional income

- **Men's mobility** patterns are usually **more linear** and focused on work-related travel;
- **Women's mobility is multi-purpose** and involves "trip chaining," combining economic, social, and family-related tasks;
- **Men** are more likely to **travel longer distances** and have higher access to private vehicles;
- **Women are more dependent on local services** and public or shared transport, which limits their flexibility;

Main Barriers to Transport Access

Public transport in the region is **limited**, with infrequent schedules and weak connections between rural settlements. Physical barriers include **poor road conditions, especially in winter**, and inadequate infrastructure such as sidewalks and lighting. **Safety concerns**, particularly during early morning or late evening travel, **affect women more strongly**. The **lack of reliable and coordinated transport services** restricts access to jobs and essential services



Nevrokop song ensemble participates in an official event

Economic, Cultural, and Time Constraints

- Women often have **lower incomes**, which limits their ability to afford transport or maintain a private vehicle;
- In many households, the **family car is primarily used by men**, leaving women dependent on public transport or others;
- Traditional gender roles **assign women the main responsibility for caregiving and household work**;
- These **responsibilities create time constraints** and force women to carefully plan and limit their mobility;



Women often take an active position in scientific projects with leadership roles.
An event from an international scientific project with participation of foreign experts.

Impacts of Limited Mobility

Reduced Economic Opportunities

- Difficulty accessing jobs & markets
- Lower income & economic dependence



Limited Access to Healthcare & Education

- Missed medical check-ups
- Challenges in attending school & training



Greater Social Isolation

- Difficulty participating in community events & decision-making

Greater Social Isolation

- Difficulty participating in community events & decision-making



Limited mobility increases isolation and restricts access to jobs, education, healthcare, and participation in community life.

Impacts of Limited Mobility - Specialized medical transport



Example of a project that provides healthcare to remote mountainous regions – purchased mobile health office. **For the period 2019-2025, it was used for more than 5 thousand examinations.**

Existing Initiatives and Good Practices

Local projects support women's entrepreneurship, health services, and access to skills and digital tools. Community-based initiatives, such as **health campaigns and training programs**, reduce mobility-related barriers. These experiences show that inclusive, **locally adapted solutions** are more effective and sustainable.



Bazaar of homemade products, organized by a project, created only for female participants – for Bulgarian and Macedonian women.



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Thank you!

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