



GENDER AND TRANSPORTATION TOWARDS COVID-19 RECOVERY



Is transport gender-neutral?

Traditionally, it may be unusual to merge the concepts of “gender” and “transportation” because we perceive transportation to benefit both men and women. But this notion is challenged by the powerful and inspiring women leaders-slash-researchers in the **“Gender and Transport Assemblage of Learning and Knowledge (GTALK)”** last March 17, 2022.

The U.P. National Center for Transportation Studies (UP NCTS), in cooperation with the Women in Transportation Leadership knowledge network (WiTL), Transportation Science Society of the Philippines (TSSP), Transformation Science Society of Malaysia (TSSM), and Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) conducted the online international forum “GTALK.”

In the first GTALK forum, the panelists are women from different parts of Asia and Australia who shared their notable country-specific research about women’s mobility conditions, landscape and transport opportunities shaped by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The forum, which aims to raise awareness and advance gender-inclusive transport planning ideas and strategies, also aims to support the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 5 and 11. SDG5 seeks to empower women and girls while SDG11 seeks to make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

Women Leaders in Transport

Most panelists are members of the Women in Transportation Leadership (WiTL). The WiTL is the first knowledge network dedicated to empowering women and developing a critical mass of female transport leaders as they advocate for stronger representation, celebrate women leadership, and employ research to assist in addressing the gendered dimension of transport planning and design.

The network held various activities for their advocacy, such as workshops, research works, webinars and forums such as GTALK.

Dr. Anabel Abuzo, representing the Philippines, said that they have already engaged with the national and local governments by implementing mobility initiatives in Cagayan de Oro (CdeO). These initiatives include:

- Roads to SDGs thru Good Governance (in partnership with United Nations Development Programme)
- Road Clearing of Illegal Structures and Constructions
- Cycling and Walking (in partnership with CdeO Active Transport Mobility Task Force)

GEDSI as Framework

However, it is important to note that tackling women’s issues is just a fragment of the bigger picture.

“We’re not just looking at gender anymore,” Dr. Maria Sheilah Napalang said when asked about the gender-inclusive policies that the next administration should prioritize. Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) should now be the paradigm we’re using when developing policies and infrastructure.



Equity and justice are also crucial ideas that should be incorporated when talking about inclusive transportation.

“For example, if you are a PWD, it’s not your fault why you cannot navigate a building,” Dr. Derlie Mateo-Babiano pointed out. She underscored the value of *“designing a building that enables you to move freely around. That’s what justice looks like—it’s not you trying to change your behaviors and ways.”*

She also mentioned that architects and built professionals should recognize the challenges faced by different sectors such as women and children, and facilitate in taking down those barriers. *“That’s the perfect world that we want, right?”*

Because the pandemic has put a spotlight on social and economic issues that we have overlooked before, it is now vital to raise awareness and advance gender-inclusive transport planning ideas and strategies towards a progressive and people-centered COVID-19 recovery.

“With this, we hope that we would be assisting some [policymaking] and make sure that [what we have] is the kind of transportation sector that would benefit everyone,” Dr. Guillen stated. ■ **Arianne Q. Zurbano**

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