

# Safe Commute



*Safe Journeys,  
Unlimited  
Opportunities.*

Empowering Women Through Safe Public Transport in Sub Saharan Africa  
Category: Solutions that meet the needs of women and girls

## Safe Commute

Design Equality With Innovation 2025

Field:

**Design and  
Engineering**

# THE HIDDEN CRISIS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Harassment is widespread. Reporting is rare.  
Accountability is weak.

**80%+**

of women  
experience  
harassment on  
public transport

Nairobi · Lagos · Gauteng

Source: WhereisMyTransport / WRI, 2024

**Most  
incidents go  
unreported**

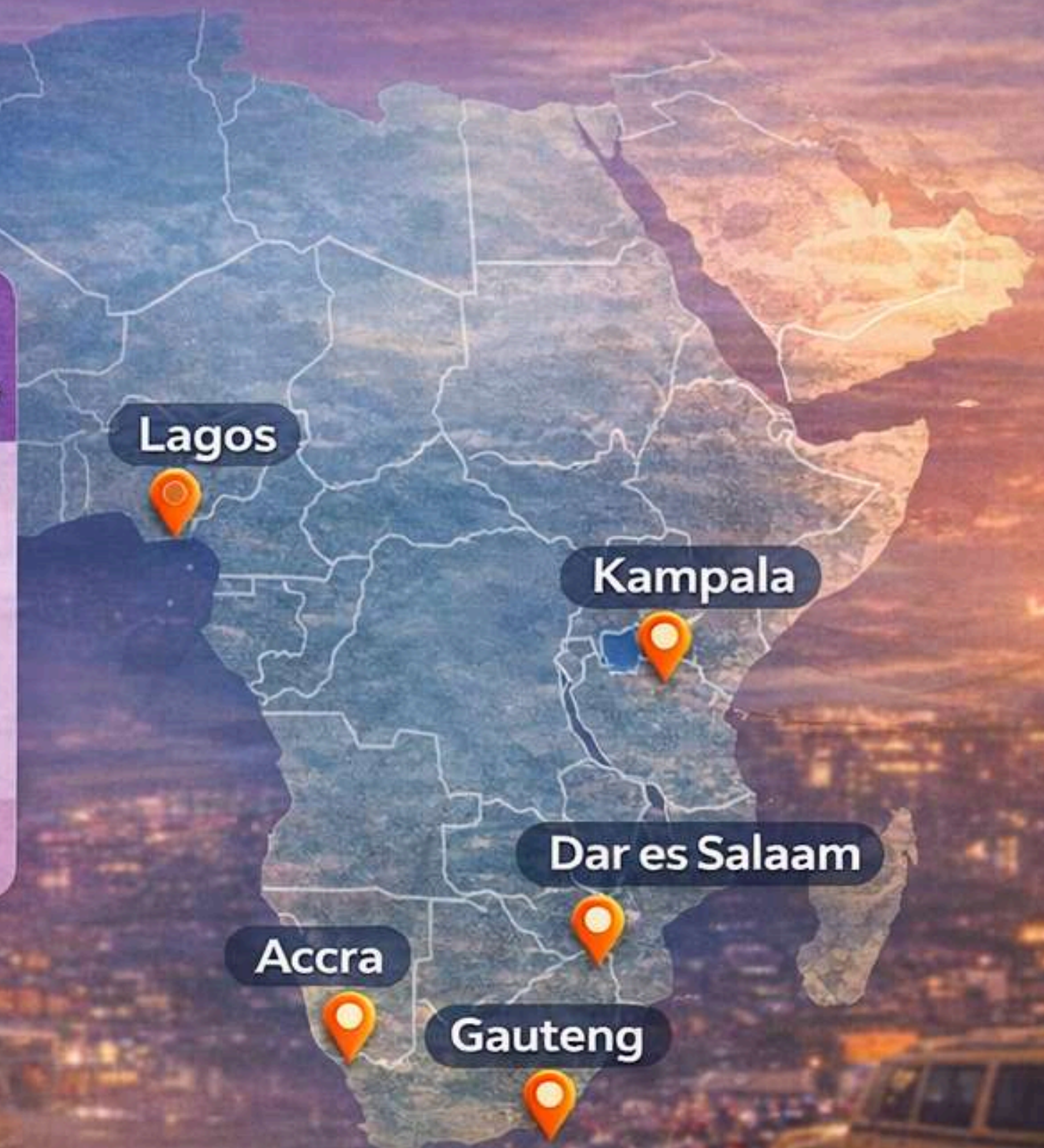
Fear, stigma, and  
lack of trust in  
authorities prevent  
women from  
reporting harassment  
on public transport

Source: Mchunu et al., 2025

**Harassment  
directly restricts mobility**

Women change routes,  
avoid certain times,  
and limit work and  
travel opportunities  
due to safety concerns

Source: Duri, 2025



Cities referenced in recent studies

“When mobility is unsafe for women, opportunities are lost.  
Education stalls. Economic growth slows. Lives are limited.”

# THE PERFECT STORM: CONVERGING BARRIERS

Harassment is widespread. Reporting is rare.  
Accountability is weak.



Unaffordability



Long wait times



Overcrowding



Inadequate safety measures



Harassment with low reporting and low consequences



Cities referenced in recent studies

**Sources:** WhereIsMyTransport / World Resources Institute (2024) – discussion of barriers and findings in multiple Sub-Saharan cities; UN Women (2025) – mobility constraints

# INTRODUCING SAFECOMMUTE

Community-Powered Safety Technology for Women  
Across Sub-Saharan Africa

## What SafeCommute Delivers



### Real-Time Safety Mapping

Crowdsourced, time-aware routes that help women choose safer paths.



### Emergency SOS

One-tap alerts with live location sharing and offline SMS backup.



### Community Accountability

Anonymous reporting and transparent safety ratings for transport operators.



### Journey Sharing

Live trip sharing with trusted contacts and automatic alerts.



## Designed for Local Realities

- Offline functionality
- SMS backup
- Low data usage
- Mobile money integration
- WhatsApp connectivity
- Multiple local languages

# REAL-TIME SAFETY MAP

See risk before you move.

Crowdsourced safety intelligence for women in Sub-Saharan Africa.



Live, color-coded safety zones  
Time-aware risk alerts (day vs night)



Community-verified reports  
Safer route recommendations, not just the fastest.



Affordability Options  
Balances cost and risk, suggesting  
least expensive and safest nighttime routes.

## How It Works

- Women report incidents anonymously
- Data updates the safety map instantly
- Routes are scored by safety level
- Users choose safer paths with confidence.

Powered by community reports, not assumptions.



# EMERGENCY SOS

Instant Help When Women Need It Most

## How It Works



### One-Tap SOS Alert

With one tap, send an immediate SOS alert, activating an audio recording as needed, red-unsafe).



### Live-Location Sharing

Dynamic system adapts to time of day, advising women of heightened evening risks.



### Safe Route Planning

Women find the safest, well-lit, most populated routes with real time risk level updates.



### Actionable Safety Insights

Markers show safe havens like police stations, women's centers, and well-lit streets.

## Designed for Local Realities

- **Discreet Mode** – SOS button has hidden behind normal phone interface for low-profile activation



# COMMUNITY ACCOUNTABILITY (REPORTING & VERIFICATION)

Building Trust in Local Public Transit

## How It Works



### Anonymous Incident Reporting

Women report incidents of harassment or unsafe conditions through brief, anonymous submissions



### Transparent Safety Alerts

Instant alerts inform others of danger zones and transit lines rated by other women.



### Safe Driver Verification

Passengers give ratings, based on respectful behavior, to reward SafeDriver badges.

## Status Built by the Community

- Verified "SafeDrivers" earn status badges
- Local transit rated for safety & respect
- Anonymous reports aggregate into community alerts.

## Designed for Local Realities

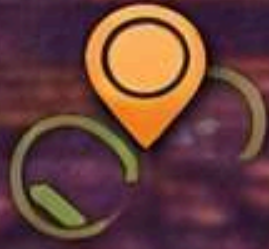
Offline functionality    SMS backup



# JOURNEY SHARING

Secure and Affordable Transit Navigation

## How It Works



### Trip Setup

Women start trips, automatically setting time-aware **Share Journey** updates.



### Trusted Contacts.

Women select trusted individuals to monitor their progress live.



### Automatic Alerts

Automatically notifies contacts of safety stops, detours, and delays.



### Affordability Options.

Balances cost and risk, suggesting least expensive and safest nighttime routes.



Designed for Local Realities

# ENHANCED ROUTE GUIDANCE

Optimizing Personal Transit Safety & Affordability in Sub-Saharan Africa



REPORT



ACCOUNTABILITY



SAFETY

Empowering local women to lead safety and trust in their communities.



Smart Safety Routing

Saves time, balances cost, and minimizes **risk** by choosing the safest route



Balanced route

ETA and cost estimates pre-negotiated to minimize uncertainty



Affordability Options

Live safety alerts displayed along selected routes.



Safest and most affordable path



Reliable time & fare estimates up-front



Resilience to changing safety risks



# You Never Travel Alone

Journey Sharing & Virtual Companionship



# You Never Travel Alone

Journey Sharing & Virtual Companionship

## Journey Sharing

- Share your live trip with trusted contacts
- Real-time location updates
- Automatic alerts if routes change or delays occur

## Virtual Companionship

- “Walk With Me” feature for vulnerable moments
- Friends or family follow your journey remotely
- Arrival confirmation for peace of mind

Safety is not isolation. It is connection.



# Impact at Scale

What safer mobility unlocks for women and cities

**SafeCommute** is an economic, social, and systemic enabler for women in Sub-Saharan Africa.

## Individual Impact For Women & Girls



### Individual Impact For Women & Girls

- Freedom to move without fear
- Access to jobs, education, healthcare
- Reduced anxiety during daily commutes

**80% +** of women experience harassment on public transport.

## Community Impact Powered by Collective Action



### Community Impact Powered by Collective Action

- Safer routes identified and avoided
- Bad actors exposed, good drivers rewarded
- Families and friends actively involved in safety.

**90%** of incidents go unreported

## Systemic Impact Data That Drives Change



### Systemic Impact Data That Drives Change

- Evidence for better lighting and policing
- Accountability for transport operators
- Policy insights for safer cities

Safer mobility increases women's economic participation.

# Sustainable by Design

A business model that ensures long-term impact beyond grants


**SafeCommute** is built to remain accessible for women while being financially sustainable.

## Revenue Streams



### Freemium Model

- Core safety features always free
- Premium features at low monthly cost
- Ensures inclusion across income levels

 Short Term (6 months)



### Corporate Safety Programs


- SafeCommute for female employees
- Employers support safe commuting
- Improves retention and productivity

 Medium Term (1–3 years)



### Municipal & City Partnerships


- Aggregated, anonymised safety data
- Supports urban planning and safer infrastructure
- Subscription-based access for cities

 Operations & Support



### Driver Verification & Training

- SafeDriver certification programme
- Incentivises safer driving behaviour
- Creates trust and accountability


 Data Security & Infrastructure

## Cost Structure

 Technology & Maintenance

 Community Engagement & Partnerships

 Operations & Support

 Data Security & Infrastructure

# Implementation Roadmap & Scalability



Building on local trust, technology, and knowledge for sustainable impact



## Key Enablers



### Community-Rooted

Diverse Advisory Board & user feedback



### Adaptable Technology

Offline-ready, low data



### Sustainable Model

Incentive-driven, freemium approach

# SWOT Analysis – SafeCommute

SafeCommute is an economic, social, and systemic enabler for women in Sub-Saharan Africa.

## STRENGTHS

- Strong Social Relevance
- Community-Powered Model
- Context-Aware Design
- Multi-Layered Impact
- Scalable Digital Platform
- Gender-Focused Innovation

## WEAKNESSES

- Reliance on User Participation
- Initial Trust Barrier
- Limited Immediate Enforcement Power
- Smartphone Access Gap
- Early-Stage Brand Recognition

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Data Privacy & Security Risks
- Resistance from Transport Operators
- Regulatory Uncertainty
- Competition from Generic Safety Apps
- Global Replication Potential
- Alignment with Global Agendas

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Growing Urbanisation in Africa
- Policy & City Partnerships
- Corporate & Employer Programs
- Expansion Beyond Public Transport
- Global Replication Potential

## THREATS

- Growing Urbanisation in Africa
- Policy & City Partnerships
- Corporate & Employer Programs
- Expansion Beyond Public Transport
- Global Replication Potential

## THREATS

- Data Privacy & Security Risks
- Resistance from Transport Operators
- Regulatory Uncertainty
- Competition from Generic Safety Apps
- Digital Misinformation or Misuse

# THE RIPPLE EFFECTS

This crisis extends far beyond individual journeys. Unsafe transport reshapes lives, limits opportunity, and reinforces inequality across communities.



Girls miss school or **abandon education** due to unsafe daily commutes



Women restrict job searches to “safe-route” areas, reducing employment opportunities by **16.5%**



**Pregnant women** delay essential medical appointments, risking health outcomes



**Female entrepreneurs** limit operating hours, reducing income and growth



Daughters inherit **restricted mobility patterns**, normalising fear as part of daily life

**When women cannot move freely, entire communities lose potential.**

# Protecting Women on Public Transport

**In Lagos, Nigeria,**

I have witnessed **women being harassed on public transport.**

The fear, silence, and lack of **accountability** in those moments stayed with me.

It became clear that for many women, a simple commute **can quickly turn unsafe.**

These experiences made me deeply committed to solving this problem.

They pushed me to build **SafeCommute**—  
to prevent harassment, support reporting,  
and create accountability.

*—Onalaja Oloruntimilehin Ogoluwa*