

# Towards equality in the electric field

## Inclusive projects around TUMI E-Bus Mission cities in LATAM

Mariana Binder – March 2023



Women drivers on an e-bus in Bogotá, Colombia.  
Photo: Alcaldía de Bogotá.

All around the world, the transport sector has historically been overwhelmingly male dominated, with culturally established gender roles limiting women's participation in the sector. In Europe, the number of women in the sector comes in at only around 22% (or 14% for land transport exclusively) as of 2016 <sup>1</sup>; in Latin America, that percentage drops to an average below 11% (as of 2015) <sup>2</sup>. Yet the transportation and mobility sector are cross-cutting, providing essential

services for those who live in cities. As women represent 66% of public transport users <sup>3</sup>, why should they be less a part of decision-making in the sector than men?

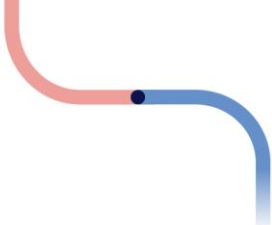
In 2018, TUMI launched Women Mobilize Women (WMW) in order to promote inclusion and raise awareness on the topic of gender in transport. This global initiative works towards gender equity and female empowerment in the sector and therefore advocates for women to be at the center of a just mobility transition. Through the development of leadership trainings and mentoring, WMW works together with partners around the world actively on feminist development policies and promotes women's access to transportation and their presence in the mobility sector.

The mobility sector is particularly fundamental in urban areas; through transport, inhabitants get access to basic services and rights, can go to school and work, meet friends and take care of family members, do leisure activities, buy food, get medical assistance. The sector also provides a wide array of employment opportunities. Some cities are starting to take action to ensure that these opportunities also target women and thus promote their presence in the sector. In that

<sup>1</sup> Source: Heinrich Böll Stiftung (2021): *European Mobility Atlas*.

<sup>2</sup> Source: CEPAL (2017): *Género y Transporte: Experiencias y Visiones de Política Pública en América Latina*.

<sup>3</sup> Source: Bellman, Polack, Ypma (2020): *Women move differently – what everyone working in mobility should know*.



way, local authorities together with operators are actively encouraging female participation, increasing their employability, and enhancing inclusivity in the sector.

Such actions go a long way in supporting the transition towards electric mobility in cities supported by the TUMI E-Bus Mission, which helps cities worldwide to accelerate the deployment of electric buses. Present in over 70 cities in the Global South, the Mission promotes a just transition towards clean public transportation. This entails the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through the adoption of electric technologies, and it likewise translates into better air quality in cities, as well as into the improvement of its population's overall health. The electric transition furthermore represents a solid economic case: innovative business and financial models can translate into economic benefits for cities, and most importantly, create new green jobs. In that sense, the transition towards e-bus deployment can turn into a just transition if the job creation opportunities are used to increase inclusivity in the sector. Through women's employment, projects can help overcome gender stereotypes and promote diversity while contributing to women's training and education and getting closer to achieving gender equality within the sector. This topic has been at the centre of recent debates and actions, particularly in Latin America, a region in which the TUMI E-Bus Mission is very active. Let's have a look at some of the inspiring programs that the cities are planning, developing and implementing.

## Diversity and Inclusion Training



Photo: Ana Jayme, IPPUC.

In July 2022, the TUMI E-Bus Mission together with our partner UITP held a 4-day online training called *Diversity and Inclusion in Public Transport*, where the benefits of developing inclusive public transport systems were explained and promoted. The training focused on the spheres of both the public transport operation and the implementation of e-bus projects, and provided attendees with a space for learning and exchange. Successful case studies and good practice examples were

presented, and participants engaged in discussions on diversity and gender equity in the transport sector. The training was a great opportunity to build organizational strategies in favor of inclusion.

## Bogotá, Colombia



Female drivers with Bogota's Mayor and Transport Minister.  
Photo: Alcaldía de Bogotá

In the South American capital, one of the TUMI E-Bus Mission's deep dive cities, electric mobility is well developed, and e-buses are an important part of the public transport system. In 2022, the Secretariat of Mobility created the program *Eco-Conducción*, where women are educated and trained to drive public electric buses. The project provides them with the opportunity to re-categorize their driving

licenses and thus be habilitated to drive passenger buses, which allows them to be hired by operator companies. With the support of the TUMI E-Bus Mission, represented by C40, the initiative managed to count three e-buses that were used for the trainings during the project's first phase. The program also counted on the Mission's support to meet the electric costs associated with the operation of the buses. More than 450 women entered the program and will be able to drive e-buses that serve around 35,000 users daily. *Eco-Conducción* aims to incorporate 195 e-buses and cover 11 bus routes through the recently established public operator company, *La Rolita*, which is both managed and operated by women. The project not only promotes the deployment of a clean green technology, following one of the TUMI E-Bus Mission's key goals, but also increases accessibility and inclusivity by empowering women and setting an example for the population through the presence of female bus drivers in the public transport system.

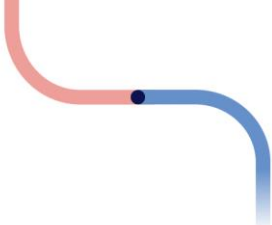
## Guadalajara and Mexico City, Mexico



Photo: Mensch Creative

As part of the project *Mi Transporte Eléctrico*, the TUMI E-Bus Mission partner WRI Mexico together with local stakeholders are working on the inclusion of women in the transport sector through the *Public Program of Women Drivers*, in the state of Jalisco, and through public policy development in the state of Mexico. Both regions are home to TUMI E-Bus Mission deep dive cities: Guadalajara and

Mexico City. With the support of the E-Bus Mission, WRI Mexico is working together with the bus



rapid transit system operator *Metrobus* and the Secretary of Mobility (SEMOVI) in designing and developing public policies that promote the inclusion of women in the transport sector. In Guadalajara, women are trained to become drivers and have been incorporated as workers on the city's first 100% electric route, implemented with the support of the TUMI E-Bus Mission. Based on the city's case, we are working to develop best practice guides for other cities to use as reference on how to promote the inclusion of women with affirmative action in the process of electrifying public transport fleets. These initiatives are essential for the job opportunities that they provide for Mexican women, who are highly employed in the informal sector and who have less access to economic resources in the country. They promote women's autonomy through specific formal job creation and enhance women's empowerment through trainings, while simultaneously deploying zero emissions vehicles. The initiatives concurrently turn the transport environment into a safer and more diverse sphere, which is highly relevant in a country where 73.8% of women perceive the public transport system as an insecure sphere <sup>4</sup>. In this way, the electric transition serves economic, environmental, and social purposes. A truly just transition!

For the transport sector to become more inclusive and diverse, these kinds of actions are essential. Putting women behind the wheels expands economic benefits and promotes female professional growth. The road towards clean transport systems cannot be driven without women, and having them on board helps overcome cultural barriers, breaks stereotypes, and sets an example for future generations.

If you want to find out more about transport electrification with a gender perspective, watch [this video](#) about the work of the TUMI E-Bus Mission on the topic of Just Transition or visit the TUMI E-Bus Mission [website](#) to learn more about our worldwide support.

---

<sup>4</sup> Source: Mexico (2022): Encuesta Nacional de Victimización y Percepción sobre Seguridad Pública.

Thank you to our TUMI E-Bus Mission Partners:

