

Presentation title:

Transit safety for women and girls in rural environments

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The existence of schools, jobs and health care across rural areas is an essential component of the empowerment of women and girls around the world, but less attention has been given to their access to safe, reliable and affordable transport. In this presentation, drawing from evidence from a study on women and girls living in Swedish rural areas, I characterize their transit safety and highlight some of their specific safety needs. I show that although rural women and girls feel safe where they live or on the way to public transportation, they more often take precautionary measures to prevent themselves from victimization than their urban counterparts do while in transit (they prefer to travel with someone else, during the daytime, avoiding certain stations and desolated places). Given that rural areas are heterogeneous places, I show that we need to know more about women and girls' particular challenges to access transportation vis-à-vis the different degrees of remoteness and the sparsity of transportation services. These findings call for non-gender-neutral mobility policies that take the intersectionality of transit safety in rural areas into account and embrace women's and girls' multiple roles.