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## **The Flone Initiative tackles sexual harassment and violence against women in Nairobi**

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État du projet

Research notes

Visuel

flone initiative Nairobi

Activer

Désactivé

Niveau de profondeur

Balise H2 + H3

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Désactivé

Auteur lié

Mobile Lives Forum (Professionnel-le)

Date

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Date du début

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Présentation longue

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## The project's goal The Flone Initiative is a Kenyan association that aims to tackle sexual harassment and violence against women on matatus - the thousands of informal minibuses that provide public transport in Nairobi. The goal of the study is to document this concrete initiative through its politics, analytical tools, modes of action and operation. ## Key results Created by five feminist students in 2011, the Flone Initiative started to develop and structure its activities from 2015, in the wake of a widespread protest against the violent assault of a young woman at a bus stop. This case garnered national media attention and put the problem of gender-based and

sexual violence on the agenda in public debate. Today, the association has six employees and a budget of \$500,000 per year. ### The Flone Initiative's actions #### Documenting the specific situation of women to set up targeted actions The organization promotes the concept of "gender mainstreaming" (equality between men and women). In this approach all public policies should take into account the specific situations of women and men before actions are taken to implement them. This method must also be followed when assessing public policies, to understand their gender-specific effects. As such, in the case of transport in Nairobi, this means understanding the determinants of women's transport needs, which are conditioned by two main factors: one the one hand social norms and gender roles, which impose particular travel demands (taking care of children and the elderly for example); and sexist and sexual assaults on the other, which means employing avoidance strategies and experiencing fears that then limit certain movements. The Flone Initiative's first job is therefore to document these practices and occurrences, quantitatively and qualitatively, through studies (based on interviews, questionnaires, etc.) and online crowdmapping. This has led to publications that are now a reference for public authorities: for example, a report on gender-based and sexual assaults revealed that 88% of matatus users had already witnessed such behavior. #### Training and raising awareness to transform representations and behaviors The second component of the Flone Initiative's work is to develop training and awareness-raising programs. These programs are first of all aimed at matatus operators (cooperative managers, drivers and their assistants), in order to raise awareness about violence against women and train them to prevent and tackle such incidents. Other programs are intended for women who want to work in the matatus sector. As it remains a male-dominated industry with strong gender stereotypes, it is very difficult for women to work there, and as a result, they are doubly penalized: on the one hand they are deprived of an economic opportunity in a growing sector, and on the other, the lack of women among matatus operators reinforces the sense of impunity with regards to sexual harassment and violence directed towards female passengers. ### The organization's impact While the data may be too recent to measure any concrete impact on the frequency of instances of sexual violence, several observations can nevertheless be made concerning the Flone Initiative's actions: \* The number of projects developed locally is significant and the number of participants keeps growing: the program for matatus operators has already trained over 700 people and the program to support women in the profession, over 150. \* The Flone Initiative has become a leading authority on gender-based and sexual violence in Kenya: its many reports and studies have helped raise awareness about the issue and are considered

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