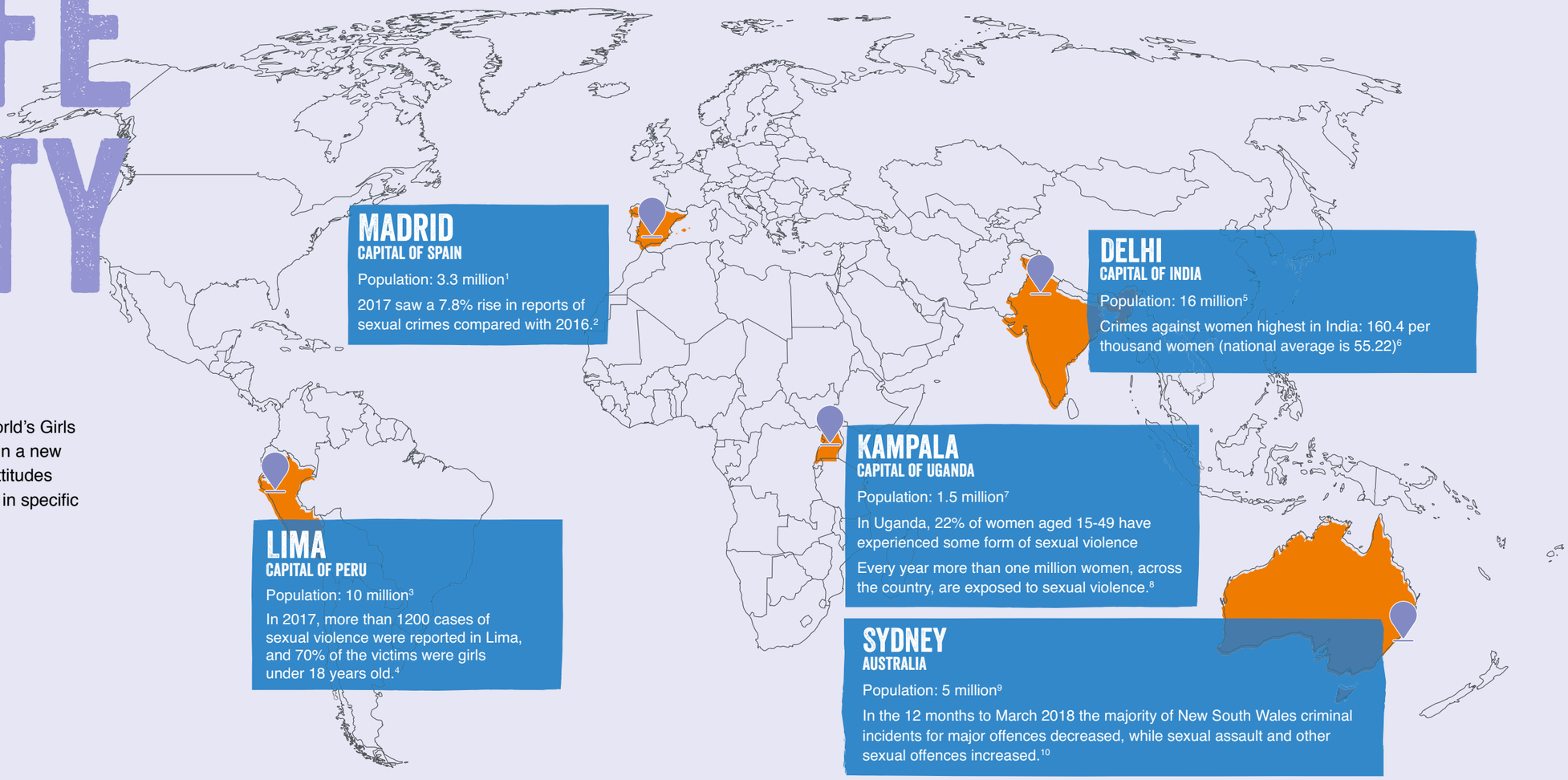
PLAN
INTERNATIONAL
UNSAFE
[THE EVERYDAY EXPERIENCES OF GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN]
IN THE CITY
THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S GIRLS
2018

UNSAFE IN THE CITY

A research report on girls' safety across five cities



MADRID
CAPITAL OF SPAIN

Population: 3.3 million[1]

2017 saw a 7.8% rise in reports of sexual crimes compared with 2016.[2]

DELHI
CAPITAL OF INDIA

Population: 16 million[5]

Crimes against women highest in India: 160.4 per thousand women (national average is 55.22)[6]

KAMPALA
CAPITAL OF UGANDA

Population: 1.5 million[7]

In Uganda, 22% of women aged 15-49 have experienced some form of sexual violence

Every year more than one million women, across the country, are exposed to sexual violence.[8]

LIMA
CAPITAL OF PERU

Population: 10 million[3]

In 2017, more than 1200 cases of sexual violence were reported in Lima, and 70% of the victims were girls under 18 years old.[4]

SYDNEY
AUSTRALIA

Population: 5 million[9]

In the 12 months to March 2018 the majority of New South Wales criminal incidents for major offences decreased, while sexual assault and other sexual offences increased.[10]

THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S GIRLS REPORTS

Plan International first published The State of the World's Girls Report in 2007. The 2018 report on cities is the first in a new series that each year will examine the behaviours, attitudes and beliefs that limit girls' freedom and opportunities in specific environments or sectors.

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By Anne-Birgitte Albrectsen, Chief Executive Officer, Plan International

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FOREWORD

"For us there isn't anything new [in this research]. The most important finding isn't for us but for the world that you can see how insecure we feel. They harass us, they touch us, they do everything to us. There is finally somewhere where it is written down."

YOUNG WOMAN, 21, REFLECTION WORKSHOP, MADRID.

This is the purpose of our new report, *Unsafe in the City*. To shine a light on the relentless sexual harassment and abuse that is the daily norm for so many young women and girls on our city streets. *Unsafe in the City* is the first in a new series of the State of the World's Girls reports from Plan International. It presents a worrying rise in intimidation and insecurity which is stopping girls from realising their true potential in our urban spaces.

We heard the same story in each of the five cities we surveyed (Delhi, Kampala, Lima, Madrid and Sydney): young women are frightened for their physical safety, and angry that this harassment and bullying is not taken seriously. Harassment should not be seen as part of a "normal" life for girls and young women. It is not harmless fun. It is frightening, disempowering and completely unacceptable.

As our cities' populations grow, we are seeing an alarming rise in gender discrimination, sexual violence, harassment, insecurity and exploitation. If this isn't tackled it will become a huge barrier to achieving the Sustainable Development Goal of gender equality, SDG 5.

All girls have the right to feel safe in their city. How can we transform the everyday lives of girls and women? What can we all do to make the cities we live in friendly, safe and equal? Well, instead of blaming the street lighting, or girls themselves by asking questions like, "Why was she alone in the dark?" and not, "Why was he?", let's start by tackling the norms, attitudes, beliefs, systems and structures that prevent girls from achieving equality.

It's time to call out sexist male behaviour, time to challenge the acceptance of groping and cat-calling as 'normal' or 'banter'. If we truly want to achieve gender parity in our urban environments we can make a start by changing the culture of the design and planning industries, by ensuring transport services take gender-sensitive approaches so that they reflect the needs of young women using them, by increasing the gender-parity of decision making bodies, and by offering gender-sensitive training to key personnel so that they don't trivialise girls' concerns.

Cities should be places of great opportunity, where young women can live and work safely. To achieve this, we need to consult with girls and young women, and help them campaign for the changes they want to see at the grassroots level.

I hope that this and other research can encourage city bosses and planners to work with girls and young women to finally make our great cities places where they can thrive.

ANNE-BIRGITTE ALBRECTSEN, CEO,
PLAN INTERNATIONAL

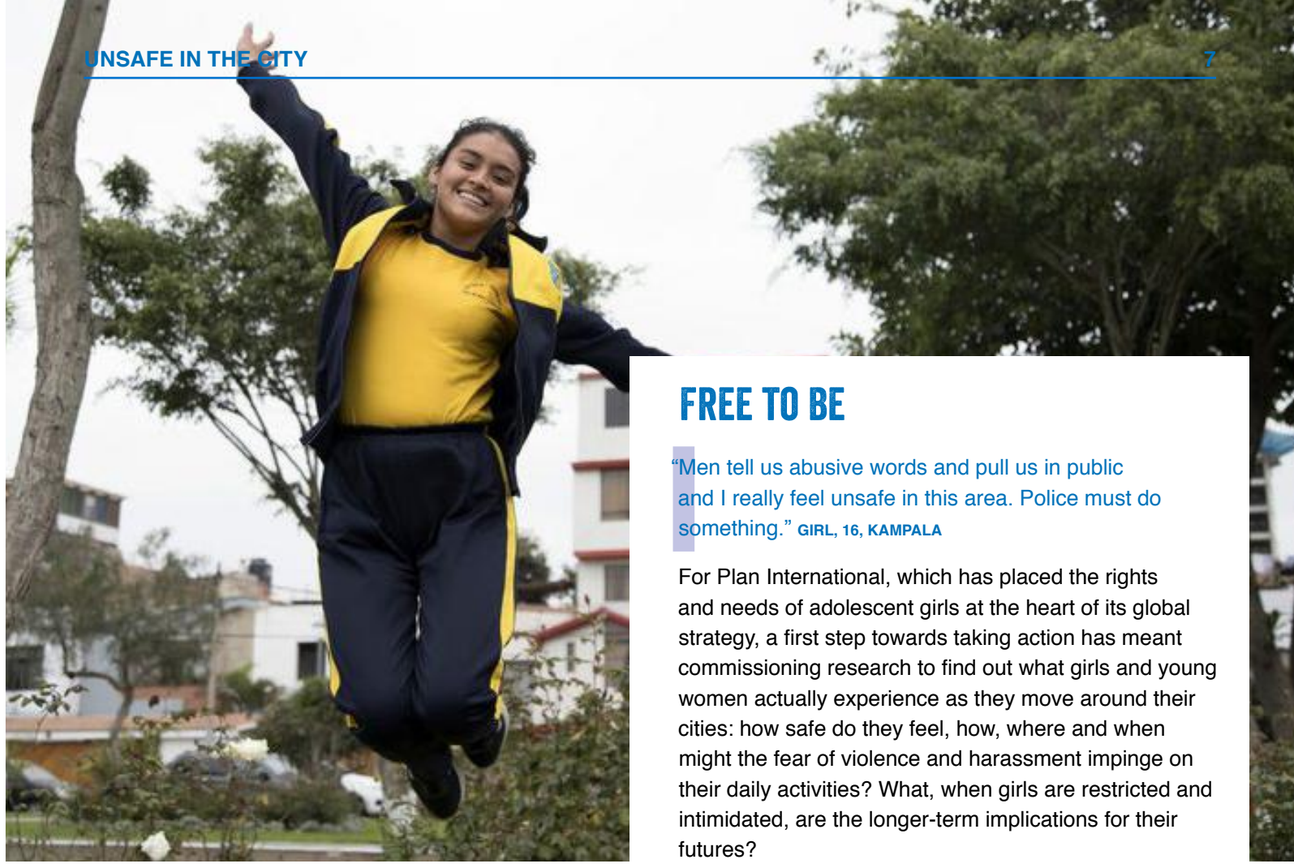
PART ONE
INTRODUCTION

For the first time in history, there are more people living in cities than in rural areas. Today, cities are home to **54%** of the world's population, and by the middle of this century that figure will rise to **66%**.[11] There will be approximately one billion girls under the age of 18 alive in 2025; millions of them will be among the five billion people who will be living in towns and cities by 2030.[12] Despite the economic opportunities that urban areas can offer, this migration from the countryside and villages to towns and cities is challenging: poverty, overcrowding, casual employment, bad housing and inefficient public transport create an environment that penalises the most vulnerable,[13] including those who are young and female.

Not only is the experience of the city shaped by one's gender, but it is further shaped and re-shaped by additional factors, including age, ethnic background, religion, marital status, sexual orientation and disability.[14]

Girls brought up in cities contend with its contradictions. Although they are more likely to be educated, less likely to be married at an early age and more likely to participate in politics than girls brought up in rural areas,[15] these advantages come at a cost. As the research conducted for this report reveals, city life also brings with it a frightening level of sexual harassment, exploitation and insecurity. Gender discrimination and sexist attitudes, prevalent everywhere, exacerbate the effects of inadequate infrastructure, poor pay and underemployment that are characteristic of so many cities. And girls and young women are easy targets.

"Being a woman and sitting alone quietly to read or rest is impossible. After 10 minutes you will be approached by different types of slimeballs to annoy you, some even try to touch you. My last experience was a beggar who is always in that area who literally told me to jerk him off. It's disgusting." **YOUNG WOMAN, 26, MADRID**



The impact of this harassment can be far-reaching and it is clearly a barrier to achieving SDG 5, the Sustainable Development Goal of gender equality, the stated aims of which include:

- Ending all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.
- Eliminating all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.
- Ensuring women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.

Throughout our research girls and young women, whose voices are seldom heard, let alone sought out, have told us loudly and clearly that their lives "in the public sphere" and any opportunities for "effective participation" or "leadership" are limited by the fear they experience. On the city streets gender equality is a non-starter.

"I have just left Sydney after 5 years living and studying here. Both love and hate for the city, as a female, especially an Asian female with curves. I never felt safe in this city. I get sexual harassment (catcalling, swears, pervert stares) almost everywhere I go. No matter how much I cover myself with hideous clothes, this never stops." **YOUNG WOMAN, 28, SYDNEY**

FREE TO BE

"Men tell us abusive words and pull us in public and I really feel unsafe in this area. Police must do something." **GIRL, 16, KAMPALA**

For Plan International, which has placed the rights and needs of adolescent girls at the heart of its global strategy, a first step towards taking action has meant commissioning research to find out what girls and young women actually experience as they move around their cities: how safe do they feel, how, where and when might the fear of violence and harassment impinge on their daily activities? What, when girls are restricted and intimidated, are the longer-term implications for their futures?

Research was carried out through **Free to Be** – a map-based social survey tool designed, with the help of girls and young women, to enable them to identify, without fear of recrimination, the areas in their city where they feel safe or unsafe. The research project was rolled out in Delhi, Kampala, Lima, Madrid and Sydney[16] over six weeks in April and May 2018. Reflection workshops were held subsequently in every city in June and July to enhance the analysis of the research findings.

"But I've been thinking that I don't want a perfect city either; the only thing that I want is that guys stop taking the liberty of commenting on me and saying things to me. I don't want much. I don't want birds or the smell of bread in the streets. All I want is for them to treat you normally, like a human being, and that's all." **YOUNG WOMAN, 18, REFLECTION WORKSHOP, MADRID**

The response from girls and young women to the **Free to Be** project has in many ways been overwhelming. Their use of this platform demonstrates clearly that they want to be heard, that they are actively looking for change and want to be involved as leaders in bringing it about. Many had already taken risks in calling out and reporting the harassment they face. The research also focused on safe spaces in cities to find out from girls themselves how they think city life might be improved. How can girls and young women equally, alongside boys and young men, take advantage of the multitude of opportunities a city has to offer?

METHODOLOGY

The Free to Be online map-based social survey tool was first piloted by Plan International Australia in Melbourne in late 2016. The findings highlighted latent inequalities in the city which caused many to sit up and take notice. As a result Plan International commissioned a further study, extended to five cities, with the same methodology and partners: **Crowdspot**, a digital company specialising in map-based data collection, and **XYX Lab** based at Monash University in Melbourne. Digital mapping, and the anonymity it provides, was chosen as the research tool to encourage a diverse range of participants with varied experiences and opinions: reaching sections of the young, female population that other systems might not. The digital maps for the five city project went live in April 2018 and the cities included in the research represent a wide range of populations, cultures, histories and regions. Young women and girls were encouraged to use the web-based map of their city, by dropping a purple 'good' pin on areas of the city they enjoy and an orange 'bad' pin on the precise locations where they feel unsafe or uncomfortable. They were then invited to leave a comment about why they liked or disliked that part of the city. Some participants reported specific incidents, some overall impressions. They were also asked to describe how they had responded and what happened next, as well as to identify any discrimination they felt was the reason for defining a place as bad: for example, gender, age, ethnicity or (in Delhi) caste. All responses were anonymous*.

Recruitment of participants varied enormously across the five cities. Social media campaigns promoted the project in each city, followed by news media reports including television and radio coverage. In Delhi and Kampala the response to this was poor. In order to collect data from those who might have limited access to digital and online facilities, the India and Uganda offices of Plan International recruited large numbers of young women and girls on the street, inviting them to participate using handheld devices. To a lesser extent, Lima and Madrid also had recruiters on the streets.

This analysis, which was conducted by the Monash University XYX Lab, focuses on women, girls and those who identified as trans, non-binary and other gender participants, up to the age of 30. Data from men, older women and contributions identified as maliciously offensive or false were removed from the analysis.

Free to Be, like all online map-based social surveys, is an excellent collector of wide-ranging stories and impressions of a city from those whose voices are not often recorded. The sheer volume of responses gives weight and credibility to the experiences described and enables the research to draw valid conclusions from what so many girls and young women, in all five cities, have reported.

However, it is not a probability sample. This means that any percentages generated are indicative, not representative of the thoughts and experiences of all young women and girls in a city: it would not be correct to say that "x% of young women in a city experienced y." All statements citing statistical data from this and the individual city reports need to be understood in this light.

NUMBER OF PINS RECEIVED PER CITY

LIMA — 2,037 VALID PINS
On and offline media campaign, some direct recruiting from Plan International

MADRID — 951 VALID PINS
Extensive off and online media campaign, some direct on the street recruitment

KAMPALA — 1,253 VALID PINS
Mainly direct recruiting through Plan International youth activists

DELHI — 14,876 VALID PINS
Mainly direct recruiting through Plan International staff and independent agency

SYDNEY — 2,083 VALID PINS
Recruitment by social and traditional media campaigns

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

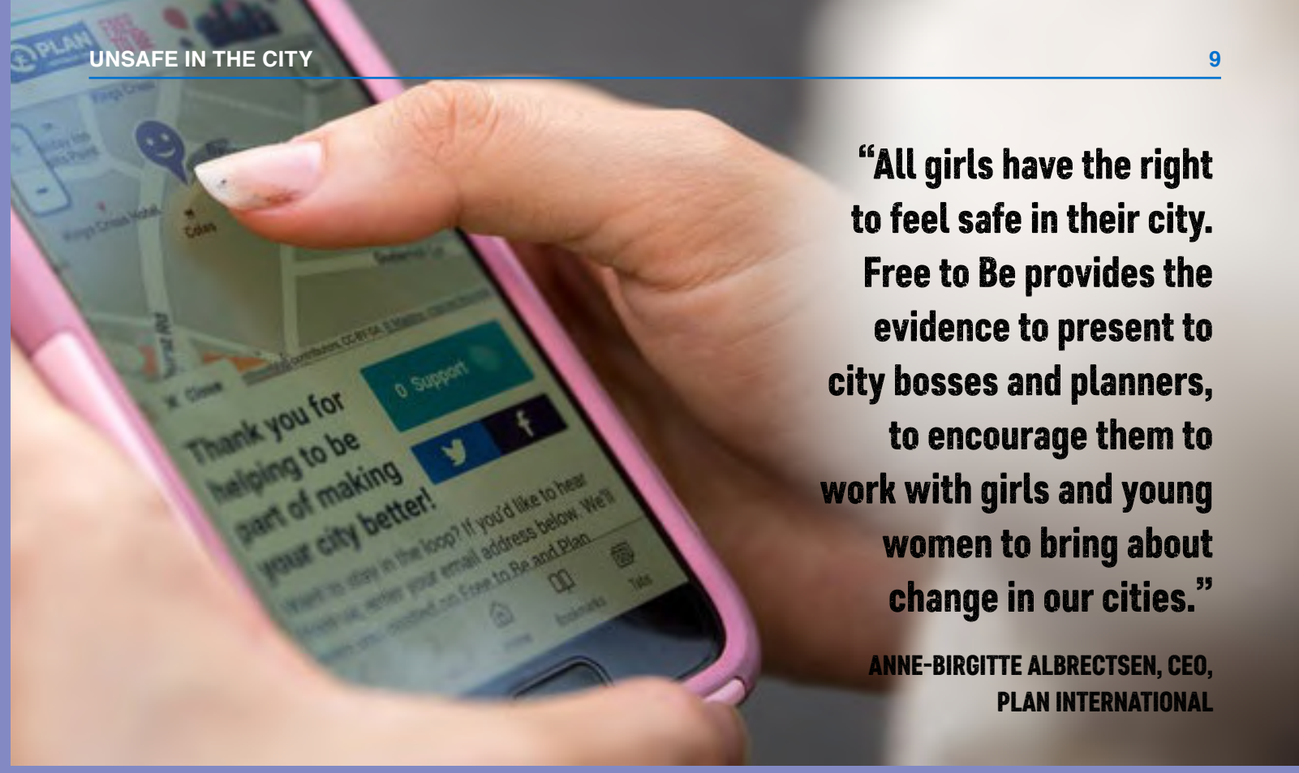
- Anonymity is one of the advantages of crowd-mapping. It allows women and girls who have experienced, or fear, sexual harassment to disclose the location and context of their experience in their own words without the pressure or embarrassment of an official report. This openness has its disadvantages: trolls are not uncommon and anyone may enter false data. Madrid was particularly hit by trolls and over half the pins were deemed inappropriate, or designated as 'false' by the research team and excluded: excluded pins included those judged to be nonsensical, gratuitously offensive, or where there was an error in placement.

- In the **Free to Be** project the differences in recruiting methods, mentioned above, will also have an impact on the responses received. Direct recruitment, particularly in Delhi and Kampala, represents less of a typical crowd-sourcing method and, although it helped to reduce trolling activity, it could have compromised anonymity and may have affected the willingness of young women to be candid. Also, in a small number of cases, recruiters are thought to have filled in the survey on the participant's behalf, summarising comments and reducing the researchers' ability to hear the voices of the participants. However, data quality assurance checks were in place and the analysis suggests that this occurred in only a small number of instances and therefore would not affect the overall trends or patterns.

Because of these variable factors, crowd-mapping is best used alongside other methods of engagement, such as testing the rough findings of the map through focus groups and workshops. This testing was done during follow-up reflection workshops with girls and young women in all five cities.

Regardless of any limitations, the research is enormously revealing. Thousands of girls and young women across five cities told their stories and despite differences of culture, context and location, it is what they have in common that stands out.

* Plan International takes very seriously its duty to safeguard all children and young people. Due to the anonymous method of the data collection from participants through a digital platform, it was not possible to follow up directly with survivors of violence, but any participant who dropped a pin on Free to Be was alerted to local support services and provided with their contact details.



"All girls have the right to feel safe in their city. Free to Be provides the evidence to present to city bosses and planners, to encourage them to work with girls and young women to bring about change in our cities."

ANNE-BIRGITTE ALBRECTSEN, CEO, PLAN INTERNATIONAL

SPECIAL FEATURE

SEIZE THE MOMENT

Claiming the Urban Environment for Girls and Young Women

by Ellie Cosgrave
Director of the City Leadership Lab
at University College London

Plan International's Free to Be research speaks to me both professionally, as someone working in urban design and engineering, and personally, as a young woman living in the city. As a girl growing up in London, I learnt very early on to be vigilant in public spaces. By the age of 12 my friends and I were all too aware of the ways in which existing as a girl in the city put us at risk. Whether it's the shock of being groped for the first time, the shame that follows being stalked after having "been out far too late for such young girls," the embarrassment of having your newly developed breasts stared at by strangers, or learning what "kerb crawling" is as your friend tells you to walk faster and pretend not to notice: the multiple and constant threats that tell young girls the city is not a place in which they belong. I, and most young women across the world, have been let down by a system that does not prioritise or truly understand our needs.

We already know the ways in which this is a social problem. We know that in many cities it's unlikely that bystanders will intervene when they see a woman, or even a young girl, being harassed and that the policing system means violence against girls and women often goes unreported and unprosecuted. But I argue that it is also a problem of a city's physical infrastructure and how it is designed. It's the unlit streets and overcrowded trains and buses that allow assaults to go unnoticed, the unsafe and inappropriate toilet provision and the public transport that provides no space for prams or pushchairs. I have spent many years researching the ways in which our cities could be designed to support the needs of women as well as men and, by extension, a diversity of body types.

Plan International's Free to Be research is important as it reveals key tensions that exist between the city as both a place of opportunity and liberation for girls and women, as well as the ways in which it puts them at risk: risks of violence and harassment that are particularly harmful to adolescent girls as they begin to negotiate the city. The research illustrates that the hurdles which need to be overcome to make cities safer are significant and go beyond design and infrastructure. However they are in no way insurmountable: we are at a moment in history when these concerns, especially tackling the violence experienced by girls and women, are beginning to be taken seriously by local, national and international governments and organisations. There are opportunities to address the challenges faced by girls and women in cities through the wider inclusion of their voices and ideas and by broadening the disciplines involved in urban design and planning.

We know implicitly that the way in which a city is experienced is

> **Women and girls need to plan with the city and not be planned for.** [17]

contingent on a person's gender, age, race, class, sexuality, physical ability and many other categories of identity. The young single mother with a baby, for example, may have wholly different needs of public transport than that of the 9-5 city worker. Historically, there has been little action to understand the diversity of need around transport systems in cities, and most urban infrastructure is standardised: planners envisage only one type of traveller and design revolves around him. In order to appreciate this fully, we must expand our understanding of girls' and women's safety beyond sexual violence, to include their ability to move freely throughout the city. It is only then that the resources and opportunities (and the associated rights and liberty) inherent in cities can be justly distributed.

MOVING THROUGH THE CITY

Transport planning provides a clear example of how cities' physical infrastructure is inherently gendered. Most urban transport systems are designed to optimise flow into the city in the morning and out of the city in the evenings. We see this in how most urban metros are designed with radial rather than orbital routes. Here we see that the implicit assumption is that the system should be designed for people who are accessing the paid, daytime labour market. Therefore, those who are accessing night-time work, are engaged in the informal labour market, are at school or college, or have caring responsibilities (which may involve many local, multi-stop encumbered journeys) are at best an afterthought in the design practice of most cities.

Of course, even if we were able to provide more inclusive public transport routes, women and girls' mobility remains constrained across the world due to a lack of fundamental safety provision. In London, Amy Lamé, the city's first Night Czar, is responding to this challenge with the Women's Night Safety Charter.[18] The charter, drawn up as a seven-point pledge, is the first of its kind covering the entire capital, and sets out guidance for venues, operators, charities, councils and businesses to improve safety at night for women. Potential measures include training for front of house staff, posters to discourage harassment and encourage reporting of incidents, and a commitment to ensure women leave venues safely. The Night Czar is also pushing for gender audits of public transport at night.

Globally, UN Women's Safe Cities Initiative encourages innovative, locally owned and sustainable approaches to prevent and respond to sexual harassment and other forms of violence against women and girls in public spaces. To date, the initiative has supported a variety of projects: including adopting women's safety audits in Cairo to guide urban planning and engaging more than 100 youth agents of change to lead transformative activities in schools in order to promote respectful gender relationships, gender equality and safety in public spaces.[19]

Likewise, a study carried out in Vienna found a rapid decline in the use of public parks by girls above the age of nine, while the number of boys remained constant. Parks were redesigned to create sports-specific spaces and divided into smaller areas where groups would not compete for space. After this simple change, girls came back to the areas and gender-balance was restored.[20]

A WEALTH OF OPPORTUNITY

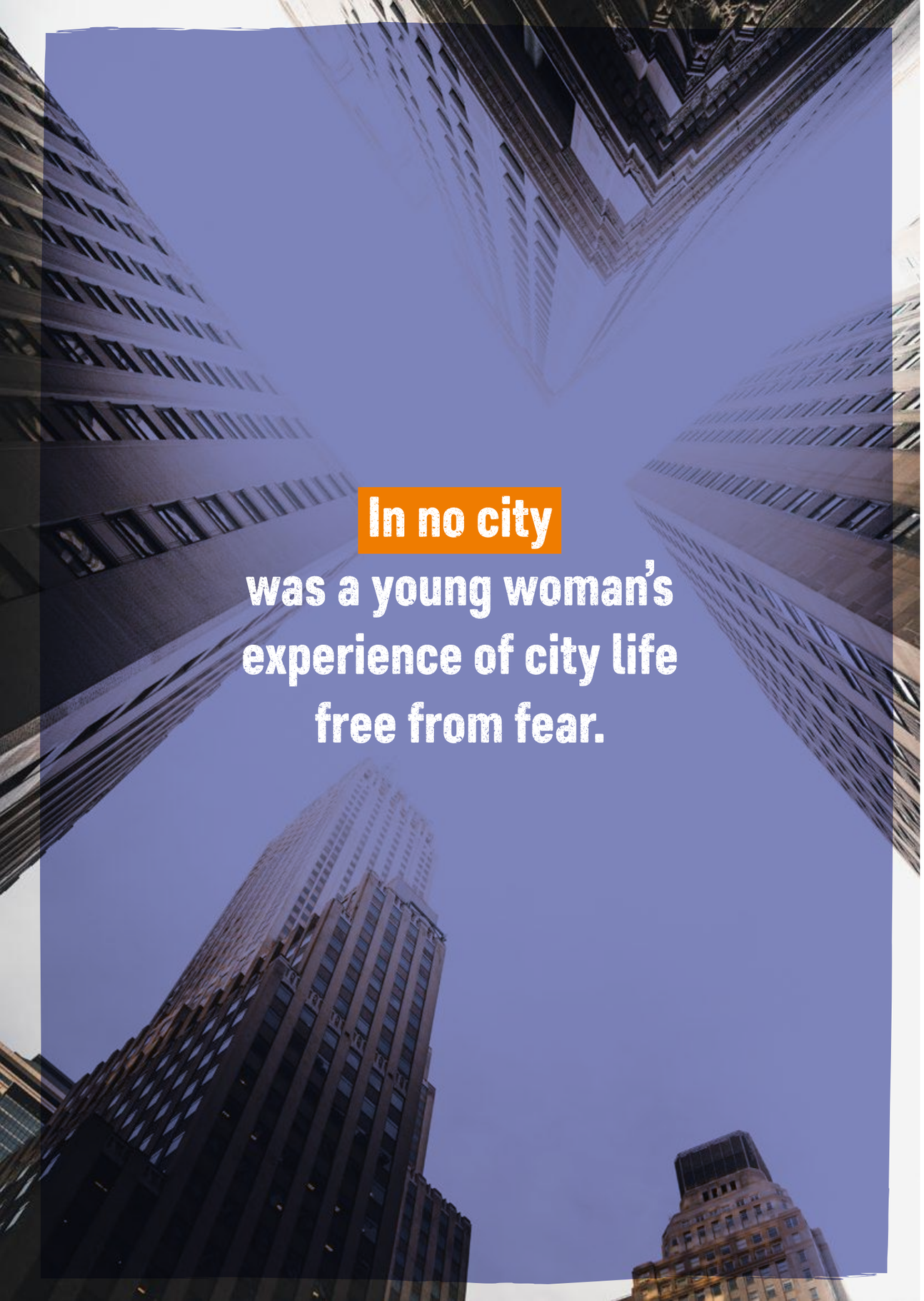
As the digital revolution takes hold, the possibilities for harassment and stalking multiply. We have seen this in the development of the (now closed) app **Girls Around Me** which collected social media data including location and photos, without the explicit consent of the women and girls involved, allowing men to track and proposition them. This is a clear example of smart-city enabled stalking and harassment, developed by a tech sector that is predominantly male. However, these same technologies are also allowing female voices to be heard and be taken seriously for the first time. The **#metoo** movement for example, fuelled online, has united women's voices across the world and has helped to create a momentum around action against sexual violence. When we translate this movement to the urban environment and initiatives like the **Free to Be** mapping tool, we give girls and young women a new and powerful voice so they can begin to use this data to create real change in the ways in which we design the built environment.

Although there are a great many hurdles to achieving gender parity in the urban environment, much can be done to make progress, both in the short and long term. We could start by changing the culture of the design and planning industries: increasing the gender-parity of decision making bodies[21] and offering gender-sensitive training to key personnel.[22] We must also collect more evidence: including carrying out safety audits, listening to the experiences of women and girls in cities and collecting disaggregated data in order to conduct a thorough gender and age analysis of urban infrastructure investment.[23]

Finally we must provide the right tools, both by developing standards that can help engineers understand the infrastructure requirements that would support more inclusive cities and by including female voices in the design process.

In many ways the city represents a great opportunity for girls' and women's liberation. The wealth of opportunity that attracts millions of people[24] to cities every week has the possibility to provide them with education and training, financial freedom and a strong network of social ties. However, if key safety and accessibility requirements are ignored during the design process we are at risk of perpetuating violence against women and girls, and restricting their opportunities. When girls and women are excluded from public spaces they are excluded from the opportunities the city has to offer. This is perhaps especially true during adolescence, a time of exploration and growing independence, but, whatever their age, girls and women need to be heard, they must feel safe and, above all, "Free to Be." ●●●

Ellie Cosgrave's research focuses on how urban design and engineering can contribute to more inclusive cities. She is also co-founder and Director of ScienceGrrl, an organisation that supports women in science and engineering careers and is the Chair of the My Body Back project which provides health services to women who have experienced sexual violence.



PART TWO
FREE TO BE RESEARCH FINDINGS

Each one of the cities taking part in the project is unique, with its own language, culture and geography. And yet, in each of these cities, and all over the world, girls and women face barriers to using the public spaces which boys and men take for granted. Unwanted attention and harassment, fear of assault and abuse when travelling alone, after dark and even in broad daylight change how girls and young women experience city life and in many cases are severely restrictive.

"A disgusting man shouted dirty things at me, followed me to the door of the college. The worst part is that after several hours, I went out into the street and he was still waiting for me on a bench. It has given me very bad vibes and right now I am really afraid." **YOUNG WOMAN, 19, MADRID**

According to one study, 80% of public space in cities is used by men, and girls feel 10 times less secure in these public spaces than men.[25]

Across the five cities the number of pins dropped was 21,200, and the "bad" pins, places where girls and young women felt unsafe or uncomfortable, greatly outnumbered the "good". Similarly, out of the 9,292 comments left, the negative ones outweighed the positive ones. In no city was a young woman's experience of city life free from fear.

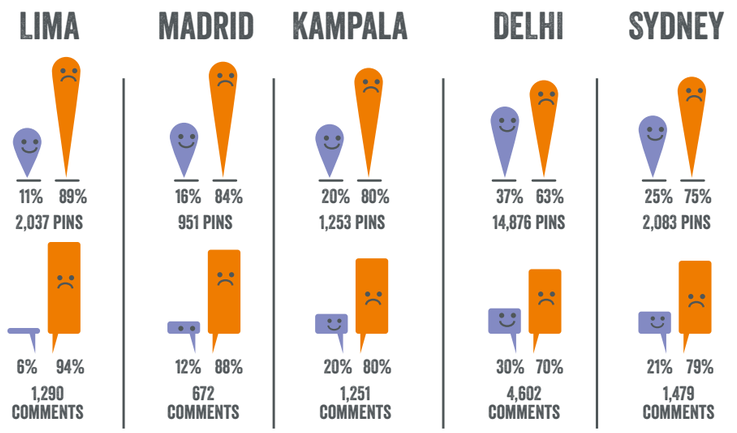


FIGURE 1: TOTAL NUMBER OF VALID PINS AND COMMENTS, BOTH POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE

Apart from **Sydney** where the majority of the contributors were in work, the majority of the girls and young women taking part in Free to Be described themselves as students. Across the five cities the average age of all participants was 21. It was younger women between the ages of 16-20, a time in their lives when they might expect to enjoy a new independence, who posted a higher proportion of bad pins.

WHAT HAPPENS TO GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN AND WHY?

"Far too many men around the world grew up in households where their mother was beaten by their father. They grew up seeing violent behaviour towards women as the norm, as just the way life is lived."

MICHAEL KAUFMAN[26]

What happens on our city streets, as the research reveals, is relentless sexual harassment and abuse and the short answer to the question of **why?** is endemic misogyny and what a young woman in Sydney described as "toxic masculinity".

In all the cities except Kampala, sexual harassment – verbal and physical – was by far the major factor in creating bad spaces. In both Lima and Madrid, a high 84% and 85% of comments, attached to bad pins, described sexual harassment, ranging from catcalling and intimidation to assault.

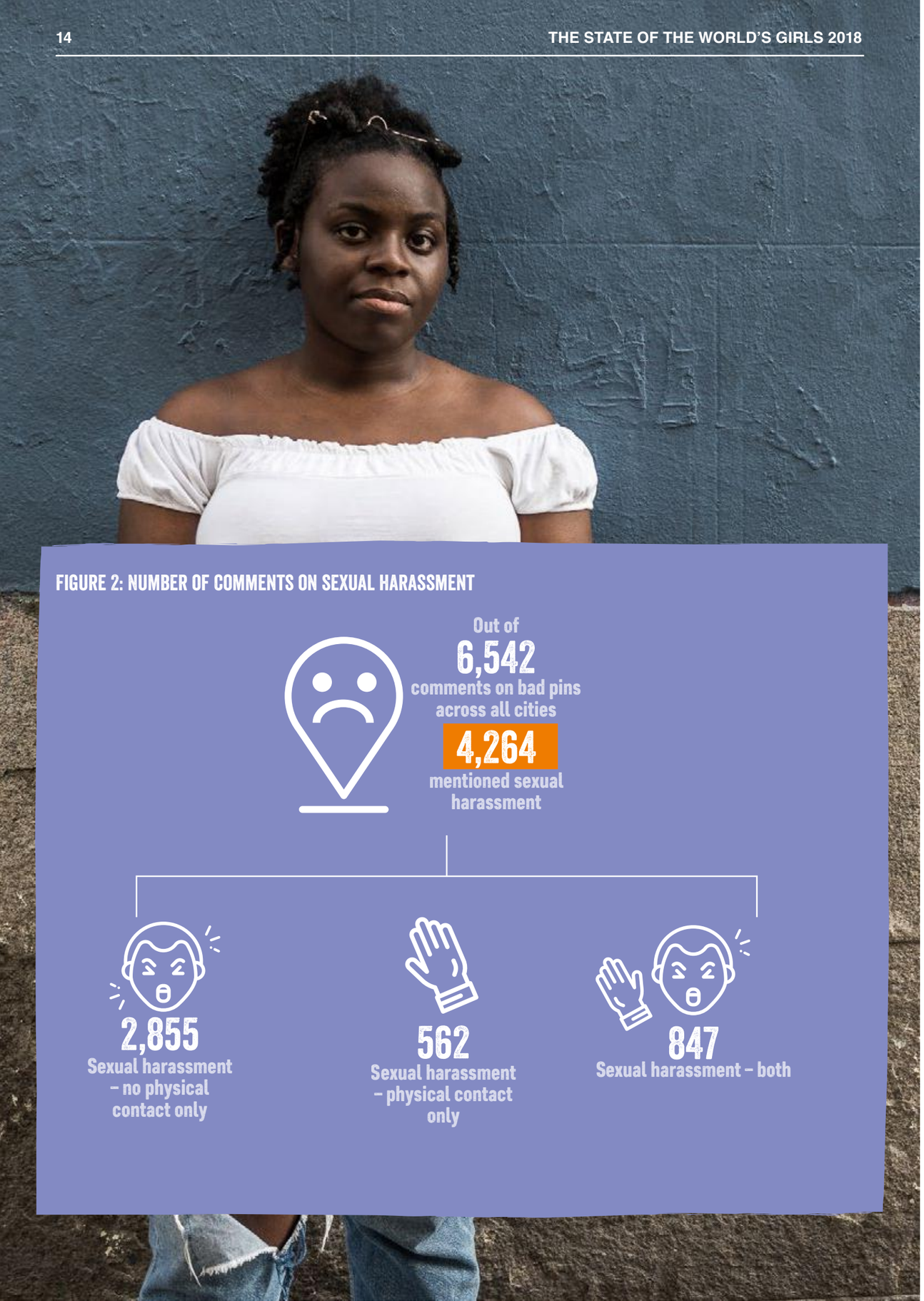


FIGURE 2: NUMBER OF COMMENTS ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT

84% LIMA **85% MADRID** Percentage of comments made by participants reporting sexual harassment in public spaces

"I suffered from street sexual harassment, a man touched me in front of a police patrol and they did not do anything even though I called them." YOUNG WOMAN, 23, LIMA

In Kampala participants felt unsafe because of theft, both feared and experienced, often accompanied by assault. Half of those involved thought that a lack of police and overall security, rather than abuse targeted specifically at girls and young women, was the main reason they felt a space was unsafe. Although, as young women, they felt particularly vulnerable.

"There are drug users who abuse people who pass by that shortcut. The place is filled up with idle people who have nothing to do. The police should always patrol that place to either arrest or scare away those drug users." GIRL, 19, KAMPALA

In Delhi, Lima, Madrid and Sydney however the majority of participants do feel they are targeted just because they are young and female: in Delhi 78% of bad pins identified gender discrimination as the main factor at play. In Sydney the combination of ethnicity and gender was also noted as an increased risk for young women:

"A group of teenage boys followed me on bikes and scooters. They took turns riding past me and hitting me. They would make comments on my race and sexist comments." YOUNG WOMAN, 21, SYDNEY

Everywhere the perpetrators of harassment were predominantly male. There were also a number of comments referring to men or boys operating in groups or gangs, in several cases under the influence of drink or drugs. In Sydney alcohol or drug use was a factor in nearly a quarter of all "bad pins", in Madrid it was 22% and it was 16% in Lima.

"There are always drunk men in a group, annoying the women who pass by. It is very uncomfortable because there are a lot of them and it is impossible to ignore it." YOUNG WOMAN, 25, LIMA

"IT'S JUST DISGUSTING"

Some of the violence reported is rape and physical sexual abuse which in most countries is illegal, though enforcement or intervention is a different issue:

"I was grabbed by a man and forced to the ground, my underwear pulled down then digitally penetrated until I could struggle free and run." YOUNG WOMAN, 19, SYDNEY

However, the majority of reports are of non-physical abuse, which in many cases is not covered by legislation. It is unremitting: girls are chased, stalked, leered at, insulted verbally and subjected to indecent exposure.

"A man in his car started following me while I walked. He asked me why I did not listen to him. I got fed up and asked him to stop harassing me. He said laughing: 'Ah, this is harassment?' 'Yes' I answered, realising the ignorance or brazenness that exists in this country." YOUNG WOMAN, 24, LIMA

In Lima, Madrid and Sydney, participants reported that men masturbate in front of them:

"It was a few years ago, and I was on the subway with some friends. To begin with, a guy came over who was very drunk, and began to rub his private parts against my friend and me. That day the carriage was really busy and another man who was sitting began to masturbate covering himself with a bag. It's just disgusting." YOUNG WOMAN, 19, MADRID

In Madrid public masturbation was mentioned in 11% of comments on unsafe places

WHERE DO GIRLS FEEL MOST UNSAFE?

"I'm tired, street harassment hurts me to the bone. Is it that perhaps they do not realise that their 'compliments' hurt? I am starting to be afraid to leave home." GIRL, 16, LIMA

The majority of reports for both the good and the bad in all the cities were recorded as occurring on the street. This finding is not surprising since the publicity and invitations to submit to **Free to Be** highlighted the tool as an opportunity to discuss street harassment and inevitably, also, the streets would be where the participants spend the most time as they go to school, college, work or to meet friends. It is interesting that on the street rates the highest for good spots too: few places had only good or only bad pins. In a park, for example, was frequently tagged for good spots, and it was also the site for bad pins.

Public transport was the next highest tagged location for bad spots, though in Kampala and Sydney going to and from work was particularly noted. In practice, all these categories have considerable overlaps and participants often selected more than one location. A picture emerges of girls and young women feeling uncomfortable or unsafe, at some time or other, all over the cities they live in.

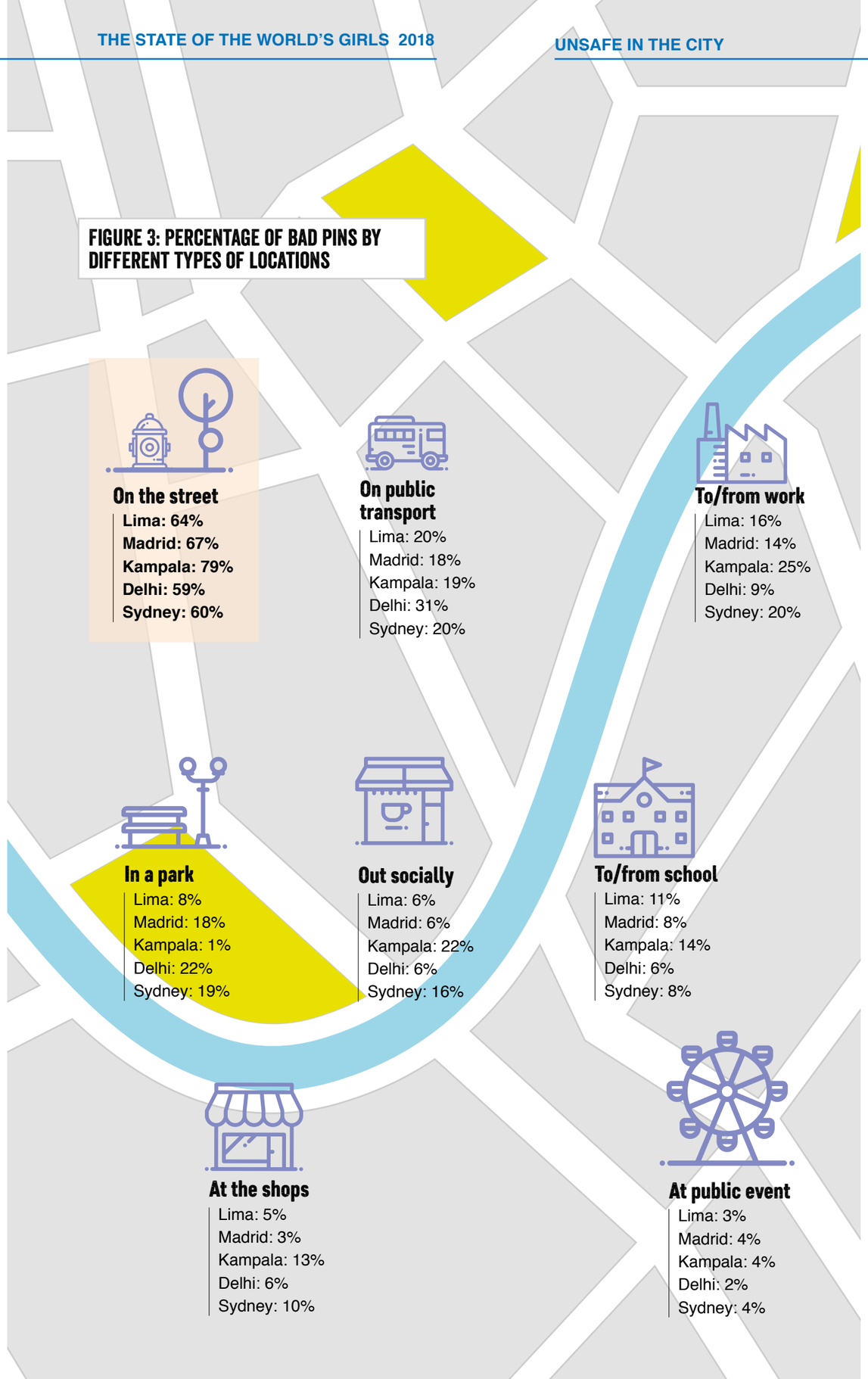
"Old men follow me in their cars, often asking me for sex when I am coming from work." YOUNG WOMAN, 22, KAMPALA

Transport hubs, train and bus stations and bus stops were prime locations for groping and harassment – central meeting points, crowded places through which men could pass quickly without being identified.

"Because it is an informal bus stop, most drivers harass as many women or teenagers as possible. It is a very insecure area. I have been harassed more than once while passing by." YOUNG WOMAN, 22, LIMA

In Lima, 89% of pins indicated bad spots, the highest in the survey, with Delhi the lowest at 63%.

FIGURE 3: PERCENTAGE OF BAD PINS BY DIFFERENT TYPES OF LOCATIONS



"IT SHOULDN'T BE LIKE THAT"

Harassment takes place at all times of day, though in many places there is an evening or late night peak. In several cities, some of their most famous tourist destinations, like Old Delhi's main bazaar, were harassment hotspots. In Madrid there were clusters of bad spots around critical central points in the city where you would expect girls would be able to go to without feeling afraid. This was also the case in Lima, Delhi and Kampala where places that are largely unavoidable were also pinned as areas of high risk.

"It's very crowded. One time, when I was returning from school, some boys passed comments at me and followed me. One of my brothers' friends saw me and complained to my brother that I was spending time with these boys." GIRL, 15, DELHI

In Sydney young women in the reflection workshops picked out the number of bad pins in the university areas and agreed how prevalent harassment was there: "I'm really glad that [the university] got so many bad spots. We needed that, because I feel like no one calls it out."

In several cities although the heart of a shopping centre or mall might be somewhere girls felt safe, the surrounding areas to and from the malls were often both pinned as bad, and commented on as threatening.

"We think that they ought to focus not only on what happens inside it but also on what happens around it, provide security around these streets, because to get to this shopping mall, people have to go through unsafe streets and this is wrong, it shouldn't be like that." YOUNG WOMAN, REFLECTION WORKSHOP, LIMA.

The research also shows that not only is violence against girls and women widespread, it also limits participation and infringes the right to education.

In Delhi one 14-year-old girl noted: "Because this happens to me, my mother took me and my sister out of school," while another commented: "My mother and father, observing the bad environment, tried to put an end to my education but my elder sister intervened and sided by me, and helped me to continue my studies."

COPING STRATEGIES: AVOID WHEN ALONE

For the young women and girls who participated in **Free to Be** the most common reaction to bad places in all the cities was to avoid the area when they were on their own. Some never went back. In every city, there were a number of participants who had stopped studying, working or moved because of a particular incident or the level of threat they felt.

"I quit my job because I was terrified." YOUNG WOMAN, 24, SYDNEY

The examples of missed education, confinement to the home or neighbourhood – which will affect their future employment prospects and limit their ability to lead independent lives and become active and engaged citizens – are mentioned by several young women. Often they are afraid to go out alone and if they are not, their parents are afraid for them. In Lima, 33 participants stopped attending school, work or college because of their experience of abuse and harassment.

"Almost every day I met different men who said: "Hello." All over 40. And me wearing my school uniform." GIRL, 14, LIMA

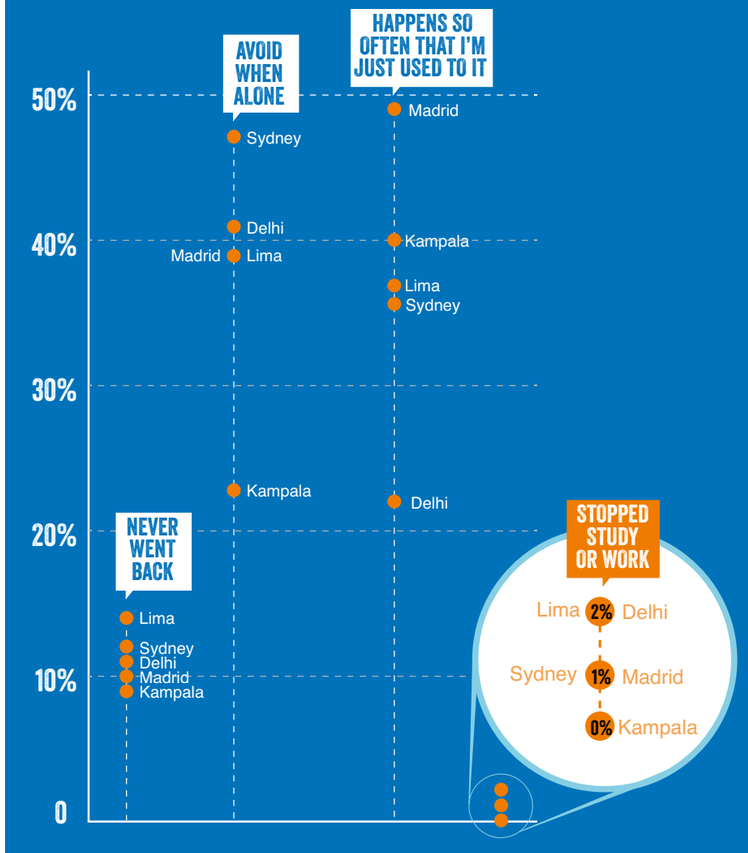
Overall, within the group of survey participants, threatening male behaviour – girls and young women being terrified – has significantly disrupted 208 lives. Restrictive survival strategies which limit their ability, and their right, to study, work or just walk on the streets, are forced on young women rather than behaviour change on their intimidators.

"...**because the men aren't punished for this**, women see it as their fault and we have to change our actions rather than men changing their actions. The consequence is that women feel as if they are lesser, they begin to question the validity of their experience...so it's a whole cyclic effect which begins and starts with the culture of gender-based street harassment, toxic masculinity and lack of education on that." YOUNG WOMAN, SYDNEY, REFLECTION WORKSHOP

In Madrid
49% of participants noted that harassment "happens so often, I am just used to it"

In all the cities to varying degrees, the participants noted that harassment of some kind was so frequent that they were "just used to it". This was strongest in Madrid and weakest in Delhi. This acceptance of what should be unacceptable male behaviour, not just by girls and young women, but by society as a whole, is the crux of

FIGURE 4:
WHAT DID THE YOUNG WOMEN DO IN RESPONSE TO HARASSMENT
How girls responded, expressed as percentages of total bad pins per city



the problem. It demonstrates all too clearly that as far as society is concerned girls are second-class citizens. It is the reason why girls and women often suffer in silence, frequently blame themselves, and are blamed by others, and expect little help from the authorities.

"As a woman I have repeatedly been harassed around this place, in and around North campus. The police were utterly useless in helping me and rather indulged in moral policing. Surprisingly nothing has changed in years and people continue to get harassed and mugged as well." YOUNG WOMAN, 22, DELHI

"THEY WON'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT"

Free to Be also asked participants to detail who they had told of the incident and, if officially reported, whether any action had resulted. Apart from Kampala, reporting of events to the authorities was typically not nearly as frequent as telling a family member or friend. In each city more than 30% of participants spoke to someone they knew and trusted. Official reporting was not high (around 10% of incidents in Lima, Madrid and Sydney) and in the majority of cases, the authorities did nothing. In Kampala reporting was higher at 33% but in only 16% of cases was anything done:

"Those thugs work together with the police in that if you report, they won't do anything about it." YOUNG WOMAN, 19, KAMPALA

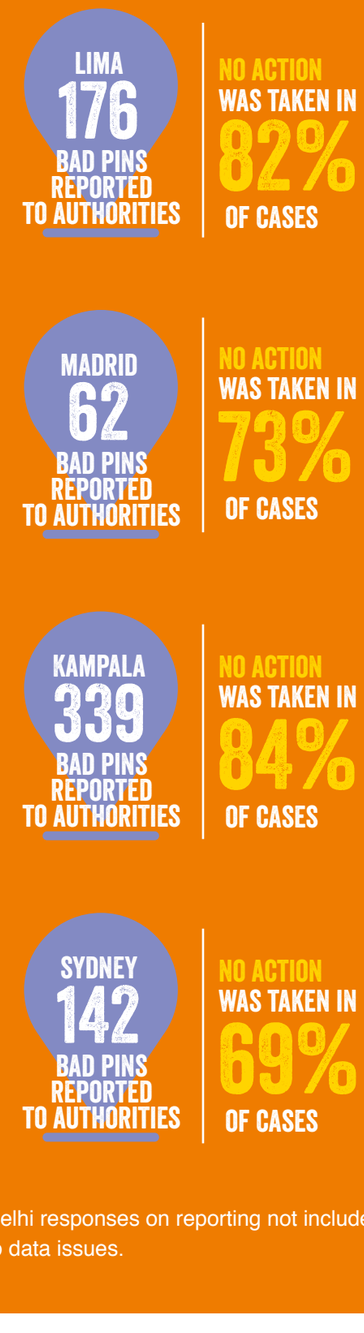
This distrust of the police was not confined to Kampala:

"One night I was waiting for a friend to come, a man who was constantly prowling around suddenly stood between two cars looking at me and started to masturbate, I started shouting at him that I was going to call the police and he left running. Five minutes later I passed a police car, told them what had happened to me and the policeman started to flirt with me." YOUNG WOMAN, 25, MADRID

Girls and young women held back from reporting incidents not just because they did not expect the authorities to do anything, or because harassment is just "normal," but also because they feared the consequences:

"We thought about telling the police but we did not do it for fear that someone would see us as we live nearby." WOMAN, 26, MADRID

FIGURE 5:
NUMBER OF BAD PINS REPORTED TO AUTHORITIES AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSE BY AUTHORITIES



Delhi responses on reporting not included due to data issues.

"THE PEOPLE HERE SAVED ME"

As we have seen, in all five cities, the ratio of good to bad pins and comments was weighted heavily towards the bad but some spaces were rated safer than others. And, as you might expect, there was a variety of responses to the question of **"why?"**.

In Delhi and Madrid, girls and young women prioritised a community environment, a place where you would find families, and someone might come to your aid:

"Someone harassed me and the people here saved me and helped me out." YOUNG WOMAN, 18, DELHI.

Understandably, girls also felt safer somewhere that was more familiar, where they were known, as one 15-year old in Delhi commented: **"Everybody knows me in O block."** In Kampala and Lima, despite plenty of negative comments about police attitudes and inactivity, girls felt safer when there was visible security and police presence.

The physical state of an area also had an effect in determining whether a place was good, with adequate lighting, cleanliness and the presence of good infrastructure all appearing in the comments in varying degrees across the cities. Lighting mattered most in Kampala, where nearly a quarter of positive comments mentioned it, and was quite important, too, in Sydney at 18%, but for girls in the other three cities it was not a priority.

"WE NEED TO INCREASE AWARENESS"

The girls and young women who left their comments on our **Free to Be** maps did not underestimate the difficulties involved in bringing about lasting change. They recognise that making cities **"inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable"**[27] would be challenging. However one theme emerged strongly: **"we need to increase awareness,"** about what is happening on our streets, one young woman in Delhi commented. **"Ignorance undermines girls,"** wrote another in Kampala, **"sensitise men about the rights and dignity that everyone deserves."** Getting to the root cause of male behaviour, in order to change it, was high on their agenda. This idea was also taken up in Lima and Madrid: **"I do not know how to improve things, maybe educating the new generations better?"**

So, in terms of what can be done to make our cities safer, a proper acknowledgement of what is happening to girls and young women on our streets, in our parks, in shopping centres, in taxis and on buses and trains, is, they think, a good place to start. Everywhere girls report fear, sexual harassment and restricted mobility limiting their opportunities and not knowing what to do or who to turn to. Priorities in Kampala may be different from those in Delhi or Madrid, but the underlying issues are constant and constantly ignored. In all the cities studied, for example, the police and the authorities have a poor track record: girls and young women accept the unacceptable because they do not expect a response when they report incidents to the authorities or shout for help on the streets.

"I was sitting on the lawn. A man passing told me that there was a guy behind me. When I turned around, a man had his penis out. He was masturbating, looking at me, sitting on a bench in plain sight and ignored by all. Nobody did anything. I was underage, I did not say anything, I just retired to cry alone. It was horrible!" YOUNG WOMAN, 23, LIMA

A COMMON EXPERIENCE

Despite the differences of context, culture and geography the experience of harassment and the consequent feelings of both fear and anger are universal across the five cities.

"This research will allow Plan International to advocate on behalf of young women and girls so that their voices are heard by key decision-makers in architecture, urban planning, government and public transport,"

DR NICOLE KALMS, DIRECTOR,
MONASH UNIVERSITY XYX LAB, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

My name is Faridah and I’m 20. I live in Kampala, a city of 3.2 million inhabitants, and for the last two years I’ve been part of Plan International’s Safer Cities programme.

It’s very dangerous to walk alone in Kampala – the biggest problem is street harassment whether we walk by ourselves or in a group. But it costs money to pay for a *bodaboda* [motorcycle taxi] and if you do, the drivers sometimes make you have an affair with them. If you reject them, they won’t help you when you have a problem.

I sell nuts and chips by the roadside and I work in the evenings, from 6pm till midnight. When it’s night here, girls are not safe. I’ve been assaulted several times and a year ago when I was pregnant I was walking in the street with a friend when she was raped and killed by a gang of drug dealers.

She’s not alone. Every year in Uganda, more than one million women are exposed to sexual violence across the country.[28]

I was also robbed recently. My handbag was taken when I was leaving work.

To feel safe and be safe in this city, you need a man – your brother or father – to go out with you. But even then, other men shout out, “Give me your sister, give me your daughter,” and it’s embarrassing.

I’m a single mother with two children, aged four and 10 months. I decided to take part in Safer Cities because I used to be so ashamed of myself because I was a child mother and I dropped out of school. I couldn’t even walk down the street. When I joined the programme, I got empowered. I knew I could stop other girls from having to face what I went through when I became a child mother. I feel more courageous. I gained confidence because of what we’ve achieved.

My family now see me as valuable, because of my goal that I want to be a champion of change in our society. I’m trying to change my fellow girls’ mind sets now – how they see themselves. We’ve also spoken to bodaboda authorities and got a chance to present our asks to municipal councillors.

We as girls asked the local authorities for street lights – because we couldn’t be seen or see where we are going. We asked for our city to be more clean and welcoming. We asked for more recreational activities like football so that girls could feel more included. All of these areas are now improving.

My biggest hope is that people who work in local transport will become aware of girls’ rights and their value and help to make our city safer for girls. If that happens, our city will be greater.

As part of **Safer Cities**, we did what we call the safety walk, where we identify the risks that make girls feel unsafe in Kampala. It helped us because even though we live here we didn’t know about certain areas which are very dangerous but now we know them, we know where to avoid.

In my community, most of us are child mothers. Before, we never knew our rights but this programme has taught us to stand up for ourselves. We girls are no longer passive – we now know how to speak, how to behave, how to keep ourselves safe.

Last year, when I was out in the city with other girls, a mechanic in a local garage started abusing me. He sprayed water at me and when I spoke to him, he slapped me and tried to treat me like a sex object. This time I fought back: I went to the police and got him arrested. As this kind of harassment of girls is so common in Kampala, we need to engage men in dialogue.

We also need to spread the word to more girls, so they realise they don’t have to put up with this kind of treatment. I’m now a Champion of Change trainer. I train my fellow girls. We want to do outreach to girls in areas where Plan International does not have reach and communicate how to keep themselves safe in school.

When some men change their mind-sets, when abuse like carpet interviews [bosses who make love to girls before they will employ them], no longer takes place, when girls know their rights and are confident to stand up for themselves, we will transform our lives.

PART THREE
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The evidence and testimony of girls and young women in Delhi, Lima, Kampala, Madrid and Sydney makes for grim reading. They have a lot in common. In all five cities they experience sexual harassment and physical violence which ranges from cat-calling to assault on a daily basis. Too many of them, nearly half of the research respondents in some cities, accept the treatment that they receive: "you just have to put up with it", it is what happens, it's "normal". And therein lies the problem. Male behaviour towards girls and women – the groping, leching, name-calling, chasing, bottom-pinching, grabbing, public masturbation and horrendous overall harassment is condoned by society. It is part of life and girls feel powerless to stop it.

"You have to be quite covered in ethnic clothes otherwise if anything wrong happens to you when you are wearing western clothes, or if you are out late, you alone are supposed to be responsible." **YOUNG WOMAN, DELHI**

The findings demonstrate that girls and young women are forced into changing their behaviour in order to avoid harassment, when clearly it is the behaviour and attitudes of many men and boys, and society's collusion, that need to change. And we need to talk about this: to recognise that large sections of the female population are frequently afraid, are denied the space and opportunity to work, study or play in our cities, or to influence and lead change in their own communities.

"The same man on multiple occasions has followed me through train carriages and around Central Station harassing me for my number. This man (over 50) made me (aged 17) feel so uncomfortable and unsafe that I now don't attend university lectures that align with the times I found him there. Didn't believe I could report it due to lack of evidence and was afraid I would be told that 'He is just being friendly' or some other BS excuse." **GIRL, 17, SYDNEY**

As increasing numbers of people move into, and are born in, cities, how can we transform the everyday lives of girls and women? What can we all do as individuals, families, communities and municipalities to make the great urban areas in which so many of us live, friendly, safe and equal? It is unthinkable that, as one young woman in Delhi wrote, she was being attacked and **"nobody stopped to help"**.

"In my imaginary city there would be equality but in my current city there's no equality." **YOUNG WOMAN, KAMPALA, REFLECTION WORKSHOP**

"I pass through here twice a day to get to work and am routinely verbally abused by men. I feel unsafe and would never go through here at night. I wish the police or government would listen to women's stories and do something about this place."

YOUNG WOMAN, SYDNEY

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the comments left on the city maps, and on the follow-up reflection workshops with groups of girls and young women, three overarching recommendations have emerged:

1. BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

It is everyone's responsibility to condemn harassment and violence against girls and women. More specifically men and boys need to recognise that sexist behaviour is intolerable and change it by learning to respect girls and women as their equals: standing out against the culture of verbal and physical abuse, not standing by. And understanding also that harassment should not be part of a "normal" life for girls and young women. It is not harmless fun, it is frightening, disempowering and completely unacceptable.

Start the conversation: whether it be one to one, within the family between parents and children, at school or at work, everyone should be talking to each other about girls' and women's experiences and the unacceptable behaviour of men and boys. The discussion needs to be shifted away from making girls take the responsibility for their own safety – by coming home early, travelling in groups, covering themselves up and avoiding many busy places – to the responsibility of everyone, especially boys and men, to understand that harassment is a form of violence, and that it is their behaviour that creates the fear that accompanies girls in so many public spaces. In particular, boys and young men need to be empowered to be champions of change, not to be afraid to intervene and challenge the group culture that normalises catcalling, groping and stalking girls and young women.

Public discussion: this may range from formal discussions, led by girls and young women, in community centres, schools and colleges to city-wide public hearings taking place in the centres that have been identified by girls and young women as hostile spaces. This in turn should generate media coverage and more public discussion. It is important to create space for girls and young women to lead the conversation about discrimination in cities without fear of recrimination – encouraging media and civic campaigns to include the voices of girls and young women and creating platforms and processes for their ongoing participation in managing the urban environment. The stories that girls tell about their experiences in public spaces need to be publicly heard and addressed in the corridors of power.

Public campaigning: abuse of young women and girls should be treated with the same seriousness and the same commitment, as the campaigns to ban drunk driving or to stop smoking. Municipal governments, private sector, donor and civil society organisations can all play a part in funding and publicising effective public campaigns against harassment and abuse, ensuring the issues are prominent across print, radio, television and online. Journalists, advertising executives, chat show hosts and editors – all those who publicly present ideas and images about a girl's or woman's place in the world – need to recognise discrimination and change the public conversation about girls and women to challenge the sexism that normalises harassment. Grassroots campaigning, involving girls and young women at community level, also needs to be supported.

Allies and champions: changing behaviour and accepted social attitudes means everyday acts of courage and kindness from us all but especially from leaders: those whose words and behaviour in society count for something in the public sphere. Active bystander campaigns need to encourage a "call it out" culture, helping everyone to challenge and call out toxic behaviour. Recruiting and celebrating champions, who have listened to and take seriously the experiences of girls and young women, is also important. They may be politicians, celebrities from media, sport and culture, business women and men, head teachers or football managers. The work cannot be left to girls and young women alone: girls do not need "protectors" but they want people to stand by them. They are entitled to respect and have the right to safety and freedom. They must also be supported to take their proper place as decision makers around the issues that affect their lives.

2. GIRLS' PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING

Those in authority and positions of power, at all levels, must listen to and work with girls and young women, respect their experiences and recommendations, and involve them in co-designing their cities, including infrastructure, the provision of services and the policies that govern them.

Gathering information: to tackle the problem, the extent of it must be determined. City authorities need to prioritise data collection – disaggregated by gender, age, and exclusion criteria like disability – in order to properly quantify the levels of abuse. And they need to work with girls, community leaders, transport staff and police to use this information to design policies and oversee procedures that will address the abuse that girls and young women are subjected to. Schools and work places must have protection policies that respond to harassment and demonstrate that abuse is taken seriously. They should also have processes that record abuse not just at school or at work but harassment that is experienced in the surrounding streets on the way to and from school, work and college. Only then will the scale of the everyday violence that limits girls' access to the ordinary opportunities of city life be properly understood. This data needs to be used effectively and made public.

Safe spaces: the business community, municipal and transport authorities must provide support for girls in difficulty by setting up and labelling girl friendly spaces. In the course of the research girls and young women often commented on harassment in transport and entertainment hubs so safe places in the heart of the city are a priority for them. These could include spaces in existing shops, bars, restaurants and public buildings, with specially trained staff, where girls can go, both to report harassment and to escape from it. These spaces not only provide shelter but also signal that the issue of sexual harassment is taken as seriously as girls and young women would like it to be. They must be highly visible and well publicised.

"The atmosphere here is really bad, men verbally harass girls with awful comments so I'm really scared here." YOUNG WOMAN, 22, DELHI

Design and planning: cities should work for all. City mayors, managers and planners need to be aware of the needs of everyone who lives, works and moves through the city. This means actively engaging and working with girls and young women in the design, implementation and monitoring of both infrastructure and services. It also means involving more professional women at the decision-making levels of urban planning and providing gender sensitive training to key personnel, both male and female. Girls feel safer in better lit streets and they need reliable public transport, especially at night. In Sydney girls told us that the buses and trains stopped running before the bars and restaurants and clubs closed. They cannot get home using public transport, have been taught not to catch taxis alone and the streets feel unsafe: full of groups of men who have drunk too much.

"Why do trains end at 12 but lock out's at 1:30 and then clubs close at 3 – like I literally cannot get home and so everyone's just trapped." YOUNG WOMAN, REFLECTION WORKSHOP, SYDNEY

3. ENFORCEMENT

Governments, both municipal and national, must adopt and implement laws and policies that criminalise all forms of gender-based violence, including sexual harassment, and send a clear signal that the abuse of girls and women will not be tolerated. This includes the authorities taking action to remove barriers to reporting.

Legislation and policy change: governments should put in place effective legislation to ensure girls' safety and inclusion, including criminalising all forms of gender-based violence against women and girls, tackling the areas where alcohol and drug taking facilitates abuse by providing more properly trained security personnel and reviewing licensing laws. Many aspects of sexual and street harassment are not covered by current legislation so public law and policy making needs to be extended to fill these gaps. A government review of the judicial system – police, judges, lawyers – to try and achieve an equal gender balance would go some way to improving girls and young women's trust in the system and make them more inclined to report abuse.

"We also think that there should be more gender diversity in the judicial system, in the criminal justice system. Because a man cannot put himself in the place of a girl who has been harassed or raped." YOUNG WOMAN, MADRID, REFLECTION WORKSHOP

Training and targeting of frontline staff: police, transport staff, security companies, and local government officials of all kinds need to take this issue seriously. They need to listen to girls and young women on a regular basis, walk the city in their shoes and make a public commitment to building safer cities: including designing effective reporting mechanisms that both respond to girls' needs and initiate action against the perpetrators of abuse. They need specific training in how to listen to complaints of harassment and in what action can be taken. They also need to understand how to enforce and use existing legislation to protect the rights of girls and young women.

"A man chased me for blocks harassing me and when he confronted me he told me he would take me to a hotel and kill me. I had to defend myself with a bottle and he still did not leave. Nobody helped me. I found a police officer who only managed to help me get in a taxi and tell me that I could not do anything because the guy had not hit me." YOUNG WOMAN, 24, LIMA

Changing behaviours, and the attitudes that drive them, is never easy and the misogyny that characterises our city streets and constrains the lives and freedoms of girls and young women has been there for countless generations. But it does not have to persist. Listening to girls and young women, giving them the chance to lead and implement change is the prerequisite for transforming their lives and ending the discrimination and harassment that characterises the society we live in. We all, particularly those in positions of authority, need to understand girls' experience and listen to their ideas. Many of the steps outlined above come from listening carefully and taking seriously what we are being told. Some ideas may be hard to realise; they may not be applicable to every situation, but they must not be dismissed out of hand. Every change matters, however small, as do the girls and young women who are entitled to feel free, safe and equal when they go about their lives, wherever they are.

"We obviously think that behind it there is a fundamental problem which is that these situations happen because there is a lot of sexism in society. The girls have already mentioned a need for gender-focused education to be able to change this. For the change to be real, we need to go deeper, not try to solve and alleviate the issues superficially but drill down to the root cause: entrenched sexism." YOUNG WOMEN, REFLECTION WORKSHOP, LIMA

"The state has an unrealistic view of day-to-day life. For this reason, it addresses problems ineffectively."

YOUNG WOMEN, MADRID, REFLECTION WORKSHOP

MAKING CITIES SAFER: PROMISING PRACTICE

CHANGING THE HEARTS OF MEN: CLEVER WAYS TO CHALLENGE SEXISM[29]

"What we must do... is ensure that we change the hearts of men to respect women. Australia needs to start with the youngest men, the little boys, our sons and grandsons." Malcolm Turnbull, former Prime Minister, Australia

As we have seen educating men, raising awareness about the realities of girls' and young women's daily lives and campaigning against sexism is a priority for many of the young women we spoke to. And there are already projects across the world that are trying to do just that.

A wide variety of people and organisations are working, often in partnership, specifically to challenge the everyday sexism that leads to the high levels of gender-based street harassment experienced in every city's public spaces and places.

Keys to campaigning success include: digital innovation, working not just to improve street safety but to tackle the underlying causes of gender-based harassment and, most crucially, to involve girls and young women, using their experiences and ideas to bring about lasting change.

Following is a non-exhaustive list of campaigns, policies and programmes that, though often in their early stages, have had some success and may give others useful ideas of what can be done.

LAWS AND POLICIES

Laws against street harassment exist in **Belgium, Portugal, Peru, New Zealand, Buenos Aires, Argentina, Quito, Ecuador, and the UK**. Most recently, **France** has become one of the countries leading the response to street harassment, with a new law passed in August 2018 that tackles gender-based street harassment: this crackdown on sexual harassment includes fines for "degrading or humiliating comments or hostile and offensive sexual or sexist behaviour towards a person in a public place".[30] The legislation is to be enforced by police officers issuing on-the-spot fines.[31, 32]

One of the main critiques of such legislation is always how enforceable is it? In France, 10,000 additional police have been recruited to enforce the law, and trained in identifying street harassment. Along with fines, offenders will be invited to complete courses – at their expense – against molestation and sexist and sexual violence. However, the biggest impact the French government is expecting is through the symbolic value of the law and its ability to act as a deterrent.

In addition, for any jurisdictions considering adopting such legislation, it is important to consider the consequences regarding civil liberties and the potential for any legislation to be used against already vulnerable groups.

IMPROVING REPORTING

Two initiatives working to increase rates of reporting are the 'OFF-LIMITS' 24-hour sexual harassment reporting hotline in **Los Angeles (LA), United States** and the 'Report it to Stop it' sexual harassment reporting campaign in **London, United Kingdom**.

The former was launched by transport authority LA Metro in January 2017. The hotline has a phone line as well as an app called 'Transit Watch', both of which can be used to report sexual harassment. Importantly, the hotline is staffed by counsellors from non-profit social justice group Peace Over Violence, who are trained to assist victims of sexual harassment in reporting the incident and speaking to police if they feel uncomfortable doing this alone.[33]

In London, a similar initiative aims to encourage women to report sexual harassment and to ensure public transport is safer for women and girls. 'Report it to Stop it' was created in 2015 to demonstrate to the public a 'policing partnership' in which incidents of unwanted sexual behaviour would not be tolerated and would be taken seriously. In this instance, the methods available for reporting sexual harassment include both a phone line and option to text the police.[34]

TACKLING TOXIC MASCULINITY

A number of public education campaigns that are designed to address the root causes of gender-based street harassment, call out toxic masculinity and tackle entrenched behaviour, have had some success.

In **Mexico**, the 'No Es De Hombres' Campaign (2017) is a partnership with UN Women and the Mexican Government. It employs social experiments in which men are exposed to situations commonly experienced by women on public transport. The aim of the campaign is to disrupt the normalisation of sexual harassment and to recognise it as a form of violence.

In the **UK**, the 'Know the Line' campaign (2017) against sexual harassment launched in Sheffield to tackle the sexual harassment of women and girls in South Yorkshire. Importantly, the campaign is working to classify misogyny as a hate crime. It encourages a focus on misogyny, on behaviour change and on the root causes of gender-based street harassment.

The campaign was the culmination of a year's work by a collaboration of local groups and individuals, in response to the experiences of women and girls being harassed by men and boys in the street and public places.[35]

There are also moments of mass mobilisation organised by non-profit organisations such as Stop Street Harassment. It organises 'Meet us on the Street', an annual week of collective action during **International Anti-Street Harassment Week** that raises awareness across 40 countries that street harassment happens and that it's not okay.[36]

TIME TO INTERVENE

The "Theung Wela Pheuk" [Time to Intervene] campaign in **Bangkok** (2017) is predicated on the belief that bystanders can prevent or deter gender-based street harassment if they make a timely intervention, particularly on public transport.[37] Similarly, the Tahadi Association in **Casablanca** launched a campaign in 2017 on both social media and in public spaces to prevent abuse, following research on the prevalence of verbal and sexual harassment of women and girls on the city's public transport and the shocking sexual assault on a bus of a female passenger living with a disability.[38] Both campaigns focus on encouraging bystanders to intervene, whether individually or collectively, to support the person being harassed.

SAFER SPACES

In 2016, the **United Kingdom** introduced an initiative for all Lincolnshire bars and venues called "Ask For Angela", in an attempt to reduce sexual vulnerability for female customers. It has since been expanded across a number of cities and towns, including in London in partnership with the Metropolitan Police. When a large number of licensed venues are congregated in a particular area, emerging evidence suggests it is highly effective if they all sign up to the campaign, since there is then nowhere potential perpetrators feel able to commit an offence.[39]

Several other countries are now piloting the programme, including the suburb of Newtown in Sydney, **Australia**.

ON THE MOVE

In **Canada** a number of public transport authorities have introduced apps for travellers to report sexual harassment as well as racist and homophobic behaviour. The apps are complemented by behaviour change campaigns to demonstrate zero tolerance for such behaviour. For instance, 'Project Global Guardian' by Metro Vancouver transit police assists passengers in reporting incidents of sexual harassment on Sky Trains, buses and stations. The app allows passengers to text police and public transport officers directly, as well as having access to reports on crime hot spots and summaries of crimes around particular stations.

In **Melbourne, Australia** young women activists from Plan Australia's **Free to Be** project worked with transport group Metro to suggest key measures to improve safety for girls. The key recommendations included training for Metro's authorised officers to strengthen the understanding of gender-based violence and harassment, establishment of a safety app to report incidences in real time and a state-wide public awareness campaign to challenge harassment and encourage reporting. The app is currently in the design phase with the young women involved in its development, and a Girls' Walk, designed to enhance frontline staff's understanding of girls' safety issues, will take place this year.

In addition to making public transport safer, several European cities – **Geneva (Switzerland), Paris (France), Stockholm (Sweden), London (UK)** and **Melbourne (Australia)** – are demonstrating the importance of tackling the root causes of gender-based harassment in public transport and spaces by banning sexist advertising, recognising that demeaning and degrading images of women, or adverts that reinforce negative gender stereotypes, have serious and harmful effects and can lead to violence against women.

THE SAFER CITIES PROGRAMME FOR GIRLS

The Safer Cities for Girls programme is a joint programme developed in partnership between Plan International, UN-HABITAT, and Women in Cities International. The programme goal is to build safe, accountable, and inclusive cities with and for adolescent girls (aged 13-18). The expected outcomes of the programme include (i) increased safety and access to public spaces; (ii) increased active and meaningful participation in urban development and governance; and (iii) increased autonomous mobility in the city.

Safer Cities for Girls is a long-term gender transformative programme, working to tackle unequal power relations and challenge harmful social norms that perpetuate insecurity and exclusion of girls in cities. The programme works across three levels: (1) with governments and institutions to influence municipal and national actors and policy makers to make laws and city services more receptive and inclusive to girls' safety; (2) with families and communities to promote a supportive social environment that promotes girls' safety and inclusion in cities; and (3) with girls and boys themselves to engage them as active citizens and agents of change by building capacities, strengthening assets, and creating opportunities for meaningful participation. Confronting the social and cultural norms that underpin discrimination and inequality, across these three levels, will transform the lives of girls and women in cities.

The programme is currently being implemented in ten cities: Delhi, India; Hanoi, Vietnam; Cairo, Alexandria, and Assiut, Egypt; Kampala, Uganda; Nairobi, Kenya; Lima, Peru; Asuncion, Paraguay, and Honiara, Solomon Islands.

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Plan International Australia: the Free to Be digital mapping project was developed by Plan International Australia in 2016. Initially launched in Melbourne, the project continues to expand to cities worldwide. Bringing together youth activists, decision makers and other partners, Plan International Australia has enabled thousands of girls and young women to map their experiences of street harassment and violence in the city, share their stories and create change.

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About Plan International

We strive to advance children's rights and equality for girls all over the world. We recognise the power and potential of every single child. But this is often suppressed by poverty, violence, exclusion and discrimination. And it's girls who are most affected. As an independent development and humanitarian organisation, we work alongside children, young people, our supporters and partners to tackle the root causes of the challenges facing girls and all vulnerable children. We support children's rights from birth until they reach adulthood, and enable children to prepare for and respond to crises and adversity. We drive changes in practice and policy at local, national and global levels using our reach, experience and knowledge. For over 80 years we have been building powerful partnerships for children, and we are active in over 75 countries.

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