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Women's Safety Engagement Plan

[Background](#)

[Tactics](#)

[Summary of activities](#)

[Appendix](#)

Background

In many places around the world, our opponents often cite singular incidents involving women as a reason why Uber is not safe. The perception that Uber is unsafe for women has been a significant issue for policy and PR in places including:

- [Texas](#): a women's shelter vocally [supported taxi](#) in Austin, which helped our opponents significantly during the Prop 1 fight
- [London](#): taxi has launched a [public campaign](#) about sexual assaults in Uber
- [India](#): a high-profile [assault](#) in 2014 still resonates in people's memories and is frequently cited in policy meetings and press

The critique of our safety standard, particular with regards to women, is exacerbated by the emergence of women-only ridesharing services in [Boston](#) and [LA](#) as well as [women-only taxi](#) in India. We are increasingly asked if Uber will offer women riders the option to ride with only women drivers.

To turn this narrative around, we need to activate thought leaders on women's safety who can a) contextualise violence against women as a systemic issue that extends beyond Uber in every region (see [appendix](#)); b) challenge the notion that 'separate-but-equal' transit equates safety for women; and c) validate that Uber takes this problem seriously and that our technology is part of the solution.

Doing so will make it harder for opponents to build alliances with women's groups and argue that Uber is dangerous in comparison to other transportation options. This will help us push back on opponents who say that fingerprinting and/or women-only services make women safer.

Tactics

- Initiate and build relationships with women's advocacy groups to:
 - Educate them on Uber's safety practices and demonstrate our commitment to women's safety
 - Identify potential validators for local teams to engage further
 - Neutralise potential detractors by making it harder for them to come after us after we've met face-to-face
- Meet with potential Safety Advisory Board candidates to encourage them to join our local boards
- Develop internal relationships between HQ and local teams on the issue of women's safety so that HQ can create more effective arguments and initiatives that are relevant for non-US countries

Summary of activities

- HQ representatives will include:
 - Jena Wuu, Safety Policy
 - Cindy Southworth, Safety Advisory Board member
- The following places have been identified as priority for H2 2016:
 - India - Nov/Dec 2016
 - London - Nov 2016
 - LatAm (tbc)
 - Johannesburg (tbc)
 - Potential US markets (tbc): Washington, DC; Seattle; Portland; Atlanta; Miami
- Each visit will comprise different elements but will include some combination of the following:
 - Individual meetings or hosting a roundtable event with women's groups, including:
 - Domestic violence shelters, e.g. Global Network of Women's Shelters
 - Anti-harassment organisations, e.g. HarassMap, Hollaback
 - Economic empowerment organisations, e.g. Cherie Blair Foundation
 - Reporters for women's issues
 - Meetings with potential Safety Advisory Board candidates
 - Internal meetings with local Ops and P/C to better understand how HQ can provide more effective support

APPENDIX

LOS ANGELES

- County Metropolitan Transportation Authority said nearly 1 in 5 riders (19%) has experienced some form of harassment in 2015; 7% have been fondled or groped and 8% have been subject to indecent exposure. [\[source\]](#)
- LA riders under the age of 18 reported the highest rates of unwanted touching [\[source\]](#)
- In 2014, about 17% of bus riders and 13% of train riders said they felt unsafe while waiting at bus stops or train stations. [\[source\]](#)
- 22 percent of respondents said they had experienced sexual harassment. Despite that high percentage, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) Transit Policing Division (TPD), which patrols the Metro system, received only 99 official reports of unwanted sexual conduct involving exposure, touching or inappropriate comments in 2014. [\[source\]](#)

NEW YORK CITY

- There has been a 6% rise in reports of rape in NYC taxis in 2015 over 2014, an increase to 1,439 from 1,354. Reports of rapes by a stranger increased to 166 in 2015 from 117 in 2014, police said, with 14 rapes in cabs in 2015, up from 10 in 2014. This is in addition to attempted rape, touching and other lewd acts. [\[source\]](#)
- 343 sex offenses in subways from January to July 2015. The crimes against subway riders range from sex assaults and gropings to public lewdness. [\[source\]](#)
- Overall, 738 sex crimes on the subway in 2015, more than half of these cases ended in arrests. The city ended 2015 with 130 sex abuse cases on the subway. [\[source\]](#)

WASHINGTON DC

- 23% of public transport riders report having experienced sexual harassment [[source](#)]

SAN FRANCISCO

- Underreporting of sex crimes is a big problem in Bay Area transit [[source](#)]

NATIONAL

- 11 out of every 10k people sexually assaulted in 2014 [[source](#)]
- 293,066 victims (age 12 or older) of rape and sexual assault each year; every 107 seconds an American is sexually assaulted [[source](#)]

LONDON

- In July 2016, the Mayor of London [stated](#) on the record that sexual assault is an issue in black cabs and minicabs in general, and it is not just an Uber problem.
- A report from the British Transport Police found that there were 1,399 sexual offences on trains and platforms in 2014-15 in England, Scotland and Wales [[source](#)]
- According to the TfL, 90% of unwanted sexual behavior on London transport goes unreported. [[source](#)]

FRANCE

- 100% of women in France have said they have experienced sexual harassment or sexual assault in public transport [[source](#), [source](#), [source](#)]

MEXICO CITY

- The government reported that 65% of women have experienced some type of gender violence on public transportation or at mass transport stops, terminals or platforms. [[source](#)]

BRASIL

- 44% of women said that they have experienced sexual harassment on public transportation. [[source](#)]

INDIA

- Every 51 minutes, a woman faces harassment or assault in India's public spaces. [[source](#)]

GLOBAL

- [Stats on sexual harassment in public spaces](#)
- [Most dangerous cities for women in public transport](#)