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Kenya Climate Innovation Center

Coventry University

E-MOBILITY PROJECT POLICY BRIEF NO. 01

The Transformative Power of Electric Mobility Technology In Kenya: Understanding And Empowering Women Entrepreneurs

August 2026

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PROJECT BACKGROUND

Electric mobility (e-mobility) technology presents a significant opportunity for socio-economic transformation in Kenya, particularly given the country's reliance on renewable energy sources. However, the e-mobility sector is predominantly male-dominated, with women comprising only 1 in 25 employees globally. This underrepresentation hinders gender equality and economic empowerment for women, who face institutional, cultural, and technical barriers to entry. This project explored the business pathways for women entrepreneurs in the e-mobility sector by assessing their needs and generating evidence through quantitative and qualitative research, to enhance their skills. Key activities include conducting large-scale surveys and in-depth interviews with women and men in e-mobility for a comparative assessment. Ultimately, this initiative aspires to increase awareness of gender gaps in e-mobility entrepreneurship and contribute to a more inclusive socio-economic landscape, thereby enhancing individual empowerment and societal well-being across Kenya. By addressing systemic barriers and fostering an inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem, this project aspires to create lasting socio-economic benefits for women, aligning with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) such as Gender Equality (Goal 5) and Decent Work and Economic Growth (Goal 8) while contributing to Kenya's Vision 2030 objectives.

Over a 24-month period, this initiative generated:

1. Mapped the transformative pathway of electric mobility technology in Kenya for business opportunities through a gender and inclusivity lens (Report 1)
2. Identified individual and systemic factors that enhance or constrain high-growth e-mobility entrepreneurship activities related to women within Kenya's unique institutional and cultural context, by focusing on women's needs and challenges and collected quantitative and qualitative evidence (Reports 2 and 3)
3. Developed e-mobility focused entrepreneurship training programme for pre-startups and early startups for incubators, pilot trained 18 women entrepreneurs and assessed short-term impact of the training (Report 4)
4. Developed policy and industry focused report on e-mobility and women's entrepreneurship that outlines necessary support mechanisms and recommendations (Report5)

The project partners are Coventry University in the UK and the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS) in Kenya, along with the Kenya Climate Innovation Centre (KCIC) and Dr Eleanor Browne, consultant in incubation process. Project funders are gratefully acknowledged:

UKRI Economic and Social Research Council

BRITISH COUNCIL

Department for Science, Innovation & Technology

Report 5

Policy Brief

How can policy support a well-functioning, gender-inclusive e-mobility entrepreneurial ecosystem? Empirical evidence based on Women Entrepreneurs in Kenya

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Cite as: Kingiri, A., Yoruk, E., Kilelu, C. and Gitu, Y. (2026) How can policy support a well-functioning, gender-inclusive e-mobility entrepreneurial ecosystem? Empirical evidence based on Women Entrepreneurs in Kenya. 4th Report prepared for the British Council funded project 'The transformative power of electric mobility technology in Kenya: Understanding and empowering women entrepreneurs'. August 2026. Available at:

Acknowledgments. Funding from British Council, ISPF and Department for Science, Technology & Innovation; and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Impact Acceleration Fund is gratefully acknowledged.

KEY MESSAGES

- Kenya's energy is sourced mainly from renewables, which provides great potential to exploit the transformative power of e-mobility sector especially stimulating an entrepreneurial ecosystem that is currently in formation.

- The e-mobility sector is poised to grow; hence it provides multiple opportunities for jobs and enterprise development along the value chain. However, without the inclusivity of women, who currently are under-represented in the industry, in the design of emerging policy, it is likely to skew the positive socio-economic outcomes.

- E-mobility offers opportunities for women's inclusion considering that EV technology or sector is new and technical thereby presenting new areas of work. These include software development, wiring, and battery management as well as opportunities for entrepreneurship like owning charging stations, fleet management, and related services.

- Women in e-mobility face multiple systemic barriers at the macro, meso and micro levels that influence negatively their capacity to participate and optimally benefit from the sector.

- Addressing these barriers requires multi-dimensional solutions, and an explicit incubator-to-accelerator pathway, along with stronger connections to investors and financing partners, are recommended.

BACKGROUND

Electric mobility technology is transformative, not only for its environmental benefits, but also for its socio-economic effects on individuals and society in Kenya. Indeed, the sector can be a catalyst for Kenya's Vision 2030 targets across macroeconomic and social pillars, since most of Kenya's energy is sourced from renewables.

The e-mobility sector is growing exponentially due to increased government support, with data pointing to a 2700% growth in EVs from 2022 to 2025 (EMAK, 2025). However, the sector is almost wholly male-dominated, with only 1 in 25 employees being a woman, compared to the global 1 in 5 ratio.

This suggests that a large proportion of the female workforce that can add value through production and use of e-mobility, including as entrepreneurs, remains untapped, increasing gender inequality; and hindering poverty alleviation. However, women entrepreneurs in Kenya often lack adequate support, facing institutional, cultural and technical barriers that hamper their success.

Arguably, without an inclusive design of emerging e-mobility policy and related regulatory instruments, this is likely to skew the intended positive socio-economic outcomes that can be unlocked through the sector.

In view of the above background, this policy brief aims to provide evidence-informed perspectives about the e-mobility value chain and entrepreneurial ecosystem, through a gendered lens. It is informed by survey data of 280 entrepreneurs and employees in the sector, which assessed skill levels, perspectives on opportunities, and the needs of actors and perceptions of the e-mobility ecosystem. It is further complemented by qualitative insights from women entrepreneurs, e-mobility experts, and stakeholders. It proposes key policy and practical implications for inclusive e-mobility value chain and entrepreneurial ecosystem in Kenya.

A young entrepreneur in an electric motorcycle yard. © Zizina Pendo/KCIC

1. KEY FINDINGS

- Women in the sector are more highly educated but confined to arguably non-ambitious roles or positions with better renumeration (administrative, human resource, marketing, sales, customer service, and some fleet management roles) and largely absent from entrepreneurial technical roles (EV repair, manufacturing, assembly, and battery technology) as shown in Figure 1.

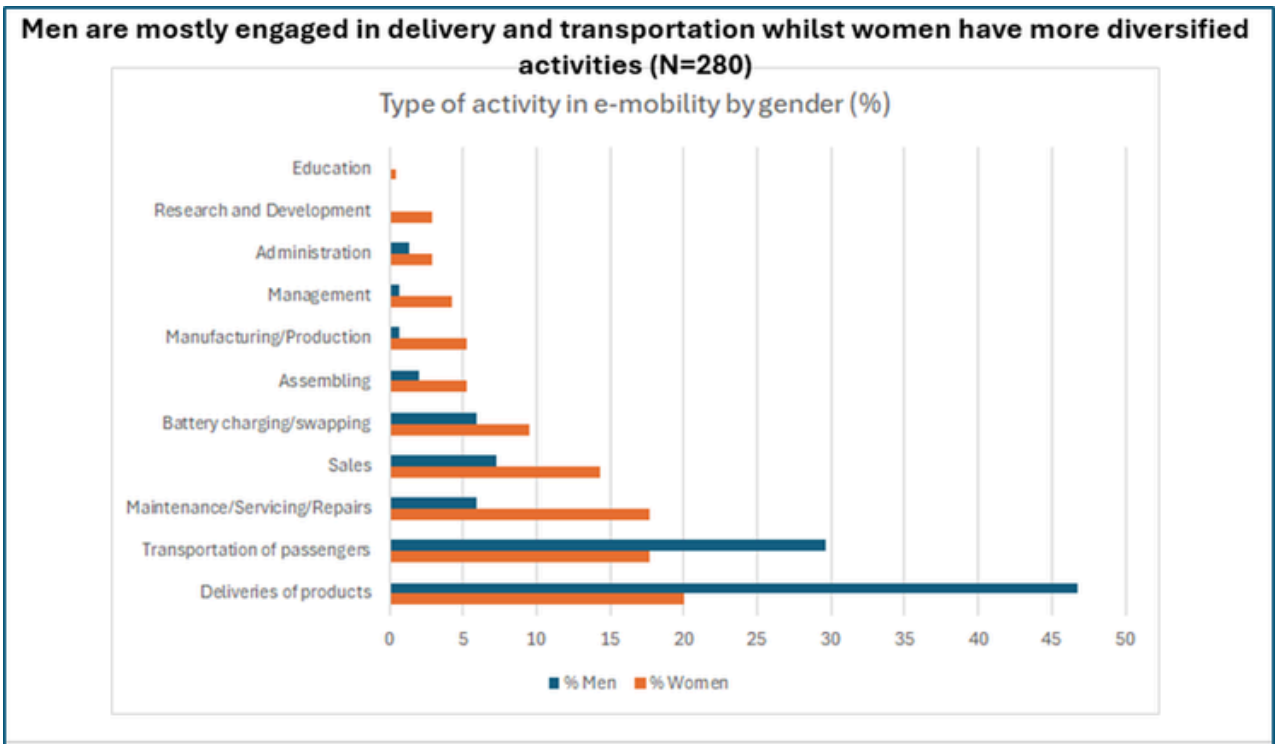

Figure 1: Women's role and positioning in the e-mobility value chain (Emobility Survey data 2025)

- Women entrepreneurs are as autonomous, competitive, innovative, risk-taking and proactive as men entrepreneurs.
- Even if policy is driving the growth of the sector through support for acquisition of EVs, women entrepreneurs perceive this support to be inadequate since micro and small firms where majority are domiciled largely sit outside the domain of National E-mobility Policy.
- Contrary to experiences from other developing economies, Kenyan women are driven by market opportunities rather than necessity when it comes to e-mobility entrepreneurship (Figure 2).

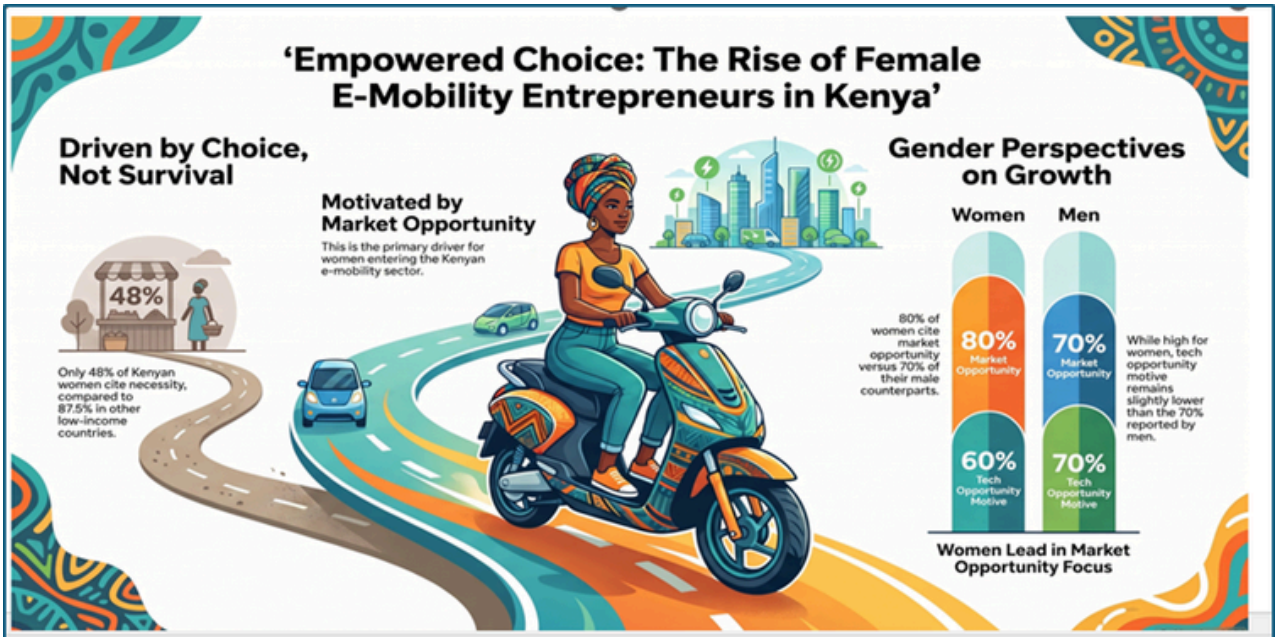

Figure 2: Economic opportunities as the driver of e-mobility entrepreneurship for women.

- Women in e-mobility face multiple systemic barriers at the macro and meso levels (society, policy, economy) and the micro level (individual skills, confidence). These interact with a) the perception and culture associated with the transport sector being historically male dominated; b) gendered credibility gap; c) socio-cultural norms (women's caregiving role in a sector requiring long hours or non-traditional positions); and d) risks associated with harassment and security, among others.
    - Government support and the policy framework for e-mobility are not favourable for e-mobility businesses.
    - Women entrepreneurs are disproportionately affected from unfavourable regulations.
    - E-mobility regulations in Kenya are not inclusive enough as they don't factor in the macro- to micro-level systemic barriers that women must confront.
    - Women need concrete support in family-work-life balance, childcare, workplace safety and discrimination, and labour- and tax-related legislation.
- To stimulate women in e-mobility entrepreneurship, they need support through incubation, laws & regulations. The incubator-driven support to women entrepreneurs is a good opportunity for targeted and optimised holistic yet modular training specifically on finance, digitalisation and e-mobility skills. However, the e-mobility incubation in Kenya needs to be developed and supported in order to function for an inclusive and transformative outcome.

Woman inspecting an electric motorcycle prototype. © Zizina Pendo/KCIC

2.POLICY AND PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the empirical evidence emerging from our project work, we propose the following recommendations for policy and practice, towards a well-functioning, gender-inclusive e-mobility entrepreneurial ecosystem in Kenya. The systemic barriers affecting women in e-mobility sector requires solutions and actions that are multi-level and multi-dimensional (see Figure 3).

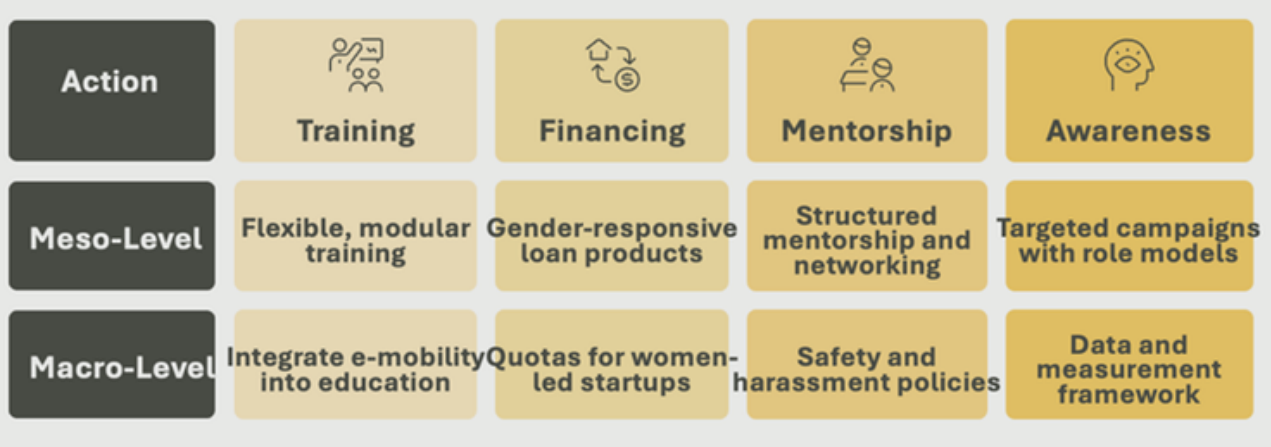

Figure 3: Systemic barriers and solutions that are multi-level and multi-dimensional

Infrastructure

1.Strengthen electricity reliability and affordability: Investments in grid stability, localised renewable energy systems, and targeted subsidies for electricity-intensive industries can reduce operational disruptions for e-mobility businesses.

2.Improve digital infrastructure and connectivity: Expanding broadband coverage, improving network reliability, and reducing connectivity costs especially in peri-urban and rural contexts? would directly enhance the efficiency of digital platforms used for payments, fleet management, and customer communication.

3.Reduce the cost of maintenance services: Governments and industry associations should support technician training, promote local supply chains for e-mobility components, and incentivise maintenance service centres to lower costs.

4.Implement different business models for charging and battery swapping stations. This may include a) expanding public charging infrastructure and interoperability b) support home-charging accessibility c) move towards interoperability in battery swapping within public-private partnerships.

5.Upgrade service amenities, strengthen safety and security at charging and swapping sites.

6.Target support for women-led enterprises: Tailored support may include energy cost relief, infrastructure grants, and improved access to technical assistance.

7.Enhance coordinated approaches between policymakers, operators, and businesses. Areas of focus may include standards for service quality and safety.

8.Account explicitly for women's safety and travel patterns, including trip-chained journeys around caregiving and errands, in infrastructure planning decisions, including the siting and lighting of charging points.

Policy and Institutions

1.Strengthen gender-sensitive policy design that include specific policy instruments to address the gendered barriers and biases.

2.E-mobility policy should have an entrepreneurship dimension and employ the 'incubator' tool to unlock more enterprise development, including for women. This means supporting the existing innovation hubs to progressively move into incubator status and setting up new incubators that will deliver dedicated e-mobility entrepreneurship training to nascent and established entrepreneurs.

3.Improve dissemination of disaggregated research and evidence to the full range of relevant government actors, including the Ministry of Gender, the Presidency's advisor on women's affairs, and county-level departments, so that policy decisions across ministries are informed by the same evidence base.

Networks

1.Government should prioritise interventions that can strengthen equity considerations that enlarge **inclusive spaces in e-mobility networks**, especially for women entrepreneurs who appear disproportionately excluded or unsupported.

2.Practitioners and network organisers should take proactive steps to recognise that women entrepreneurs face distinct barriers to network involvement and address them.

3.Strengthen coordination between industry associations (such as the Electric Mobility Association of Kenya) and the Women in E-Mobility Network and ensure women's representation on the governance structures shaping e-mobility policy.

4.Incorporate incubators into the policy design to help support and facilitate women entrepreneurs' engagement into networks.

Inclusive Human capital and Skills development

1.Integrate e-mobility subjects into university and further education curricula to build a stronger pipeline of women engineers, and into vocational and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes, delivered in collaboration with large e-mobility companies, to build a pipeline of women technicians, supported by Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) quotas for women.

2.Prioritise strengthening the talent pipeline in the e-mobility sector by investing in targeted skills programmes that benefit underrepresented groups, particularly women.

3.Private organisations and private universities should take initiative and adopt more proactive strategies to strengthen support for individuals entering or operating in the e-mobility sector.

4.Training programmes in e-vehicle repair and maintenance, and continuous learning in e-mobility technologies are needed widely across Kenya.

5.There is need for targeted capacity-building interventions for women entrepreneurs on advanced e-mobility technical skills, financial and digital finance skills.

6.There is need for intermediate-to-advanced skill-building interventions rather than basic awareness programmes related to marketing skills capacity formation in e-mobility.

7.There is need for targeted interventions to elevate networking, digital engagement, and mentor-connectedness capabilities across the workforce.

Finance availability and accessibility

1. Strengthen targeted financial support mechanisms.
2. Address gendered disparities in access to finance.
3. Expand venture capital (VC) and private-sector involvement.
4. Improve visibility and communication of existing funding opportunities.
5. Encourage ecosystem-level support for early-stage ventures.
6. Build trust and credibility in financial institutions.

Motivation

1. Encourage and support opportunity-driven entrepreneurship in e-mobility.
2. Implement policies that improve education and upskilling in e-mobility to reduce necessity-driven entrepreneurship at the early phases of sector development.
3. Encourage and support sustainability-led entrepreneurship in e-mobility through higher rates of women participation to generate impact.

Female electric bus driver. ©CleanTechnica.

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