



# ***THE INFORMAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT SYSTEM IN NAIROBI***

PRESENTATION BY: JOHN MACHARIA  
GICHIGI

MATATUOWNERS ASSOCIATION  
NAIROBI COUNTY



# BACKGROUND.

- \* When Kenya attained independence in 1963, there was no immediate public transport problem.
- \* The then Government contracted the Overseas transport company to do public transport business within and outside the city.
- \* However due to growth in population OTC was overwhelmed by the public transport demand.
- \* Kenyan entrepreneurs then identified a vacuum in public transport.

# BACKGROUND.



- \* Kenyans who are by nature innovative then came up with a cheap and affordable transport system by converting pick ups into public transport vehicles.
- \* These vehicles charged 30 cents and thus the name matatu.
- \* The O.T.C. did not welcome the matatus, they mounted some resistance and demanded banning of Matatus by the Government but the then head of state mzee Jomo Kenyatta formally gazzetted matatus as a public transport mode in 1973.
- \* It is against this background that the Matatus as a public transport mode came into being

# IMPORTANCE OF THE INFORMAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The Matatus as an informal public transport mode are important or essential because;

They are easily available round the clock.

They offer employment to jobless youth; In Nairobi alone, Matatus have employed over 100 000 people

They offer affordable investment opportunities to entrepreneurs and SMEs

# IMPORTANCE OF THE INFORMAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT

They are pocket friendly, No fixed fares on most routes with peak and off peak fares

They connect to estates suburbs and even slums, they are not discriminative.

They have many dropping and picking bays (both legal and illegal)

There are many varieties to choose from depending on customer class and taste.



# Matatu evolution



# CHALLENGES.

The Matatu culture.....This is associated with chaos and indiscipline. This has a bearing on the history of the sector from the beginning

Corruption;  
This is the  
biggest  
enemy of the  
industry

Very poor enforcement methods mostly with strings attached and with several enforcement agents competing for space.



# CHALLENGES.

Poor city planning leading to inadequate space for public transport service providers thus congesting the city.

- >Poor infrastructure
- >Cartels who fight to control the industry
- >Absentee ownership

Poor collection of basic data by the operators. Owners and or the regulating saccos often do not have sufficient information and a holistic understanding of their systems

# CHALLENGES.

A suffered reputation due to all manner of negative news and publicity..

The concept of self regulation being inter feared with by the regulators. This often leads to duplication of saccos which results in cut throat competition and a breeding ground for cartels.

Over taxation. This is the only industry where taxes are paid in advance.

# CHALLENGES.

Internal  
wrangles in  
saccos and fight  
for leadership to  
control the  
millions involved.

>Lack of  
professional and  
reliable  
management  
structures.

>Lack of basic  
knowledge on  
laws regulating  
traffic, and  
environmental  
pollution.

Lack of  
employment for  
the youth leading  
to what we call  
Kamagira or squad  
drivers and  
conductors.

# CHALLENGES.

Poor legislation on training of drivers and conductors and licencing of the same.

Of late due to poor policy formulation by the NTSA, there is an influx of none Psv vehicles operating all over the country thus providing unfair competition

Last but not the least and the most offending are the police crackdowns coupled by their worthwhile competitor in terms of enforcement, the NTSA

# CONGESTION

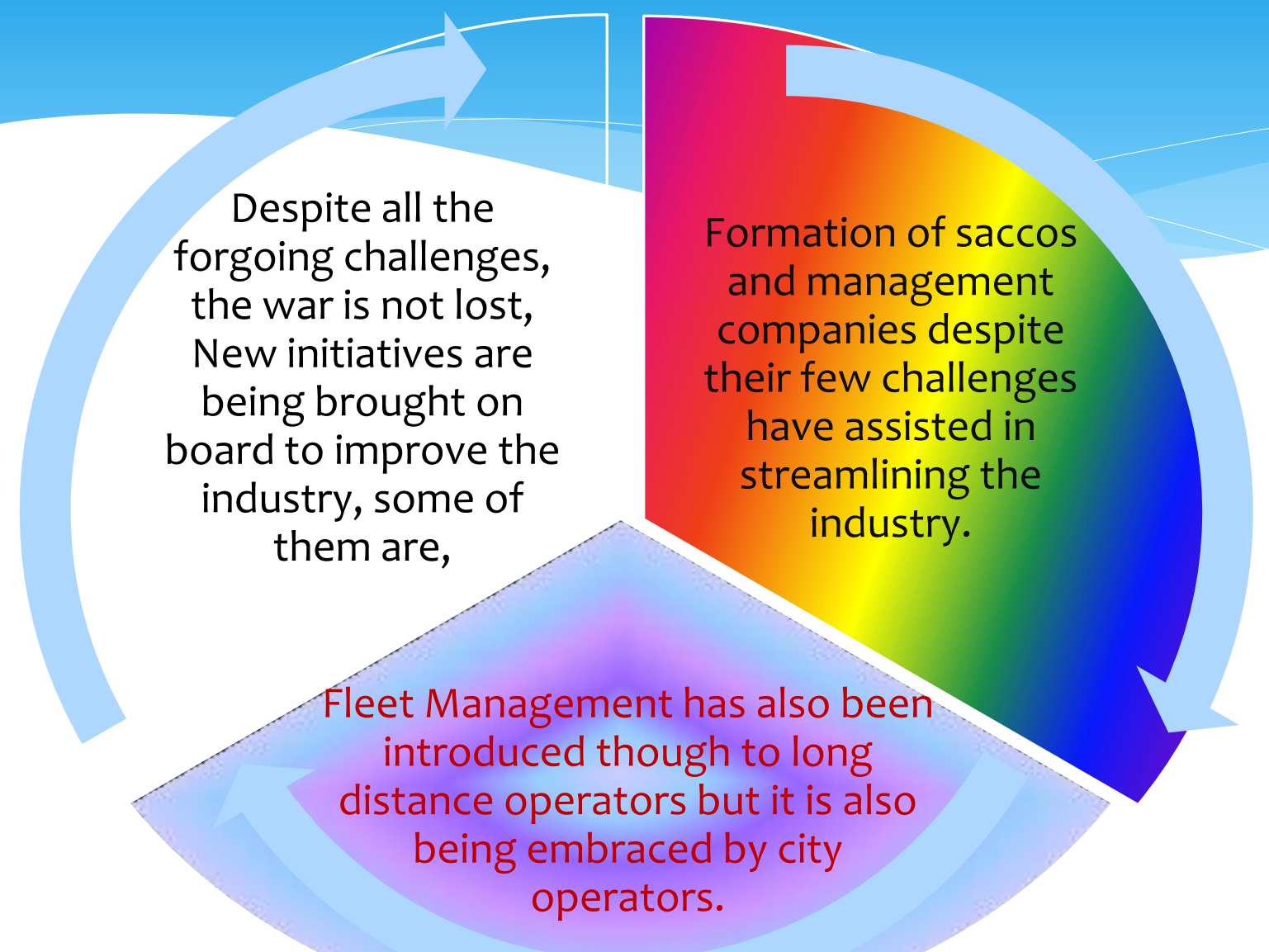




# REGULATION



# NEW INITIATIVES.




Despite all the forgoing challenges, the war is not lost, New initiatives are being brought on board to improve the industry, some of them are,

Formation of saccos and management companies despite their few challenges have assisted in streamlining the industry.

Fleet Management has also been introduced though to long distance operators but it is also being embraced by city operators.



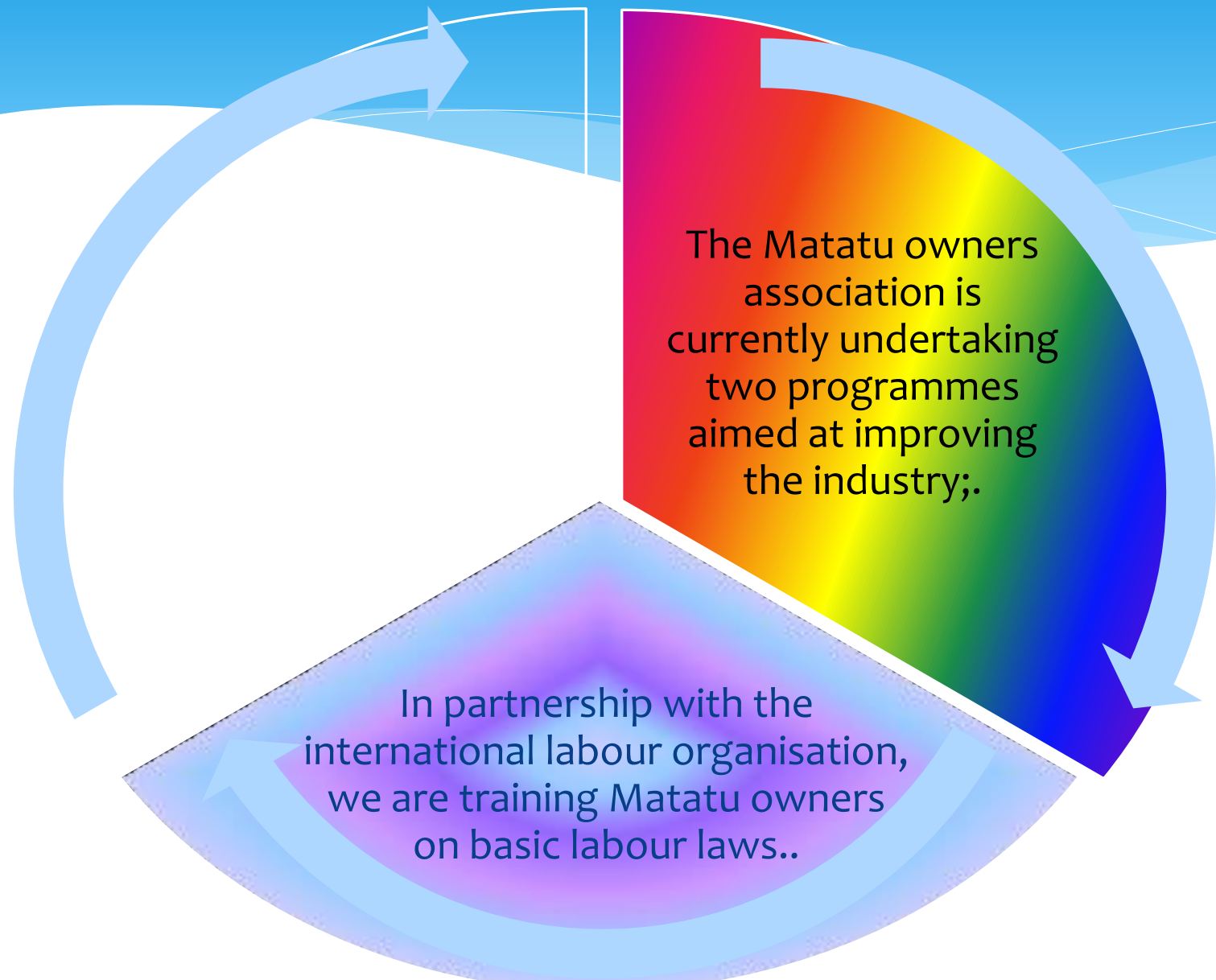
# NEW INITIATIVES.



Introduction of high capacity buses including bus rapid transit although the common operator is not privy to much information about the BRT and the light Rail.

The Matatu owners have introduced city decongestion as a self regulation but seems not to achieve its objective due to resistance from the law enforcers and cartels who would like to thrive in chaos in order to reap more

# NEW INITIATIVES.





- \* In partnership with the FIA, The Automobile association of Kenya and the St Johns Ambulance, We are training Psv drivers on defensive driving, first Aid, Drug and substance abuse. We are yet to identify a partner to assist us train our conductors on customer care which we have identified as a training need.



*Thank  
You!*