

## Reporting from the Rural Mobility Seminar on June 5th, Seinäjoki, Finland

### Responsibility - Rural mobility between public and business interests

#### Background

While intellectuals discuss about mobility as a basic human right, the reality in Europe is less progressive and rather diverse. In some countries, the state provides extensive – yet often decreasing – mobility services to its citizens, in other places vast parts of services are subject to market forces and the state shifts its duties on NGOs and businesses. Even though it is beyond MAMBA's scope to change such fundamental policies, it is indeed needed to develop local solutions that overcome these policies on a small scale.

#### Block 1: Introduction

**Taina Junttila**, dean of the School of Health Care and Social Work at Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences, welcomes the audience.

She emphasizes the need to focus more on the user driven services and design and comments on the importance of working together with the users and students for better results.

She points out the importance of public transport in Seinäjoki, considering it being the capital of space – above and around its citizens.

While mentioning Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences, she highlights the meaning of finding new solutions and developing projects.

A wonderful seminar has been wished.

Lead partner of MAMBA project, **Doris Scheer** representing Diaconie of Schleswig-Holstein, welcomes the audience and mentions being impressed by the number of guests.

She gives a short introduction about MAMBA project – its main aims and activities.

She invites everybody to check MAMBA project website regularly to stay updated and see how the project develops.

Doris Scheer comments on introducing the project to a wider audience and creating a forum to share and learn together as the project develops.

She invites the audience also to attend the fourth Rural Mobility Seminar, which is going to be organized in Poland. All the seminars touch the core elements of the MAMBA project.

Inspiring talks and exchanges have been wished.

## Block 2: Perspectives

### 1. Rural Mobility – European Policies and Perspectives

*Presented by Merja Kyllönen, MEP, Member of the Committee on Transport and Tourism (TRAN), Former Minister of Transportation, Member of Parliament of Finland*

European Union transport policy has always focused on overcoming obstacles between member states and creating a single European transport area with fair competition for and between the different forms of transport: road, rail, air and water. There are different challenges that people must deal with on day-to-day basis. In transport area, more people are being killed because of pollutions rather than the usage of basic transportation. Is it possible to change such things? It is not about basic transportation anymore. It is a completely new service system. People are connected in more ways than they think they are. The question is – whether it is a connection on regional, municipality or country level.

Transport is not only enabling the functioning of the common market area, it is also one of the key sectors of our economy as we're providing jobs for 11 million people on the EU level. Unfortunately, as well as positive, transport has also negative social effects, for example, its sector is responsible for almost 30% of greenhouse gas emissions in the EU and 72% of those is caused by road transport, meaning that a lot needs to be done in this area in order to achieve the 60% reduction.

Transport affects the everyday life for all EU citizens and companies. It has a strong territorial dimension, thus a transport policy has to address a broad range of economy, social and environmental aspects that may vary between both countries and regions. The social and economic differences between regions within a member states can be huge and without new innovative thinking, the gap will only grow. The EU transport policy of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century must address the challenges this sector is facing. It has to propose a solution that minimizes the negative effects while unlocking the potential for transport.

Today, while traveling through Finland's countryside, many abandoned houses can be seen. The distances that must be travelled to get to the hospital, work and other places, reach tens and sometimes-even hundreds of kilometers. In densely populated urban areas, on the other hand, there are more job opportunities, but there are also many different health problems caused, for example, by air pollution. Those, who can see further, are already saying that the technology will lead to the urbanization. Until now, the jobs have been plentiful in and around cities and those who appreciate the country life have been held back by the lack of job opportunities in rural areas. The good news is that the transition from urban to rural living is possible as the continuing improvements in communication technologies are making physical location less and less important in doing business.

When thinking about the basics of our living, we think food, energy, health, electricity and water. For us, there is always an option to go to the market, use the water and the electricity without thinking about it too much and that is what makes it hard to remember that each person's comfort is affected

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by the area that they live in. Public transport needs to be imported to create business opportunities through driving participation, offering an alternative, smart and reliable transport options for those parts, where it is not economically viable. There's a key for the EU finance – when you can find partners like it's done in MAMBA project, you can go over all the limitations, all the borders and find new solutions.

Not only the rural areas, but the cities as well need to be challenged based on how many people are traveling around the country. When asked, most of them agree that they are ready to give more to receive more services. The issue is in finding the supporters from the governmental point of view.

### 2. Rural Mobility – Transport poverty

*Presented by Heikki Liimatainen, VERNE Transport Research Centre*

The presentation is about the meaning and findings on transport poverty as a phenomenon, the presentation discussed also how mobility services enable people to fight transport poverty.

**Transport poverty** is a state in which an individual does not have the possibility to fulfill their everyday mobility needs with reasonable effort, reasonable course and in reasonable time.

Accessibility poverty is the most concerning in rural areas, which means that there is almost no public transport available, so people are forced to own a car or take a taxi in order to get around and that is costly. Transport poverty is not a phenomenon that is very well defined in absolute terms. It is a partly subjective issue.

Last year a survey on mobility services in Finland was made. When asked if the transport costs are low enough for people to fill their daily mobility needs, on every level of income there were some participants who said they had suffered from transport poverty, but the answers were mostly positive by the ones who had the lowest income. There is **the necessity mobility** (basic everyday needs) and **the luxury mobility**, (foreign trips and vacations, which include the cost of the transportation). People with the lowest income use 12% of their expenses on transport whereas the highest earning individuals spend around 20%.

The survey on the effects of income on passenger kilometers traveled is conducted every five years. When comparing the number of everyday trips that people make, it is the same for all income levels, but there is a huge difference in the number of foreign trips and long domestic trips made. The difference on car mileage between highest incomes and lowest incomes earning people increases by thousands a year, based on the increased airplane trips when it comes to highest income citizens, though, the share of bus and rail transportation is highest compared to lower income people.

When looking at the effect of urban structure on passenger kilometers travelled, it is seen that the highest reliance on the car travel is in rural areas, though, whether it is a city or a rural area, the domestic trips make an equally large number of kilometers everywhere. Interest in **MaaS** (*Mobility as*

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a Service) is related to income. Most people admit that it is desirable to turn from a personal car to different services, which include sharing a vehicle with more people.

Based on the statistics, people on the lowest income group are willing to pay almost 100% of what they are currently paying for transport for a service that would fulfill their everyday mobility needs, although, people living in rural areas are more skeptical towards such services, which is partly because of the age differences.

### 3. Mobility Centre – Case South Ostrobothnia

*Presented by Mikko Tanhuamäki, City of Seinäjoki*

The presentation covers the geographical perspective, background and aims, plans for tomorrow and an insight on the Mobility Centre's job.

Consisting of 18 municipalities, from which eight are towns, South Ostrobothnia has some very good connections all over the country and although it should be a positive thing, it brings some problems as well. For example, there are just few bigger roads, which connect people. In addition, there are only some areas where the population density on one km<sup>2</sup> it is more than 100 residents. Most of the South Ostrobothnia contains forests, fields and swamps and that is one of the key aspects when looking at the transportation issue.

#### Changes on national level in 2019 that are affecting many of the transportation services

1. The effects of the new Act on Transport Services are about to be realized:
  - problems with the local taxi center;
  - new licenses for taxis in the area;
  - Problems with monitoring the changes.
2. Discontinuing means that there is no common goal or resources -> *Seinäjoki* takes the lead so far.
3. Preparations for the implementation of the regional government, health and social services reform were discontinued on March 8, 2019.

#### What has been done already?

1. MAMBA-project 2018.
2. Traffic transportation services in South Ostrobothnia, final report 2017.
3. The results of the implementation of the regional government, health and social services.
4. Current activity models.
5. Tight co-operation since 2018.

The important aspects that are taken into consideration:

- the model of cooperation;

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- the effects of deepening areal cooperation;
- clarifying the rules of municipalities, districts and government;
- public officer responsibilities;
- economical boundaries.

#### Timetable (draft)

**6/19** -> a precise development plan and proposal for further activities

**9/19** -> parties' decisions for establishment of the mobility centre

**10/19** -> precise development plan and foundation

**1/20** -> operations start

The mobility centre should be an organization with 3 – 4 people working full-time. Those professionals should be responsible for the communication with clients; traffic planning; cooperation with other areas.

#### 4. From dreams to reality - procuring innovativeness to rural mobility

*Presented by Antti Savola, Novice Oy*

When doing something innovating and wanting the public's participation, it should always be a **dialogue** and not a monologue.

There are several different methods for procuring innovativeness, one of which includes a market **dialogue** before the tendering process even starts. It opens new negotiation possibilities, which helps in the process of making connections.

The method called "**Social Impact Bond model**" is a contract with the public sector in which a commitment is made to pay for improved social outcomes that result in public sector savings. In developing countries, a Development impact bond (DIB) is a variation of the SIB model that would provide new sources of financing to achieve improved social outcomes in developing country contexts.

**The Alliance model** reflects a shift from more traditional procurement methods that focus on strict risk allocations, to a **collaborative** approach. It applies perfectly for ICT, social and healthcare procurements. The most important method in this model is the **open dialogue** and **negotiation** processes between all the participants.

From dreams to reality – make the decision; make a plan; start the work; be prepared to put lots of hours to follow the plan; do not be afraid to fail.

## Block 3: Experiences

### 5. Fölix – Feeder Transport Service

*Presented by Topias Pihlava, City of Turku*

**Fölix** = Föli + Taxi. It was piloted 2016 and it is still a running service. Fölix combines the flexibility of a taxi with the affordability of Föli's rates. You may call a taxi to your home door from which it will take you to a Föli bus stop or call a taxi to a bus stop for a ride home. For now, the Fölix service is available in the Raisio region, in which there are only two bus stops.

It mostly operates as an alternative for busses during the nighttime and weekends, when it is not quite economical to run the regular bus traffic. When there are more people, the taxis usually collect the passengers during one ride and take them to the desired bus stop.

The cost consists of **the bus ticket price + five EUR for the taxi**, which does not exceed an **eight EUR** price point.

The individual can order a taxi by calling to the taxi service centre and providing the information on their address and the bus stop, at which they would need to be dropped off.

Up until now there have been several lessons learned:

- it's important to consider the area, which is going to provide the service when extending, considering that the current experience has taken place in a very small territory, which simplifies the job of the service provider;
- it's important to consider the taxi stands on duty to make it more cost efficient and comfortable for everyone;
- more flexible timetables are needed;
- digital channels to order the taxis need to be improved, more possibilities of communication need to be established;
- an understandable product needs to be created, so people could spend less time on learning about the service and more on using it.

### 6. Open Arctic MaaS - project: co-creating rural transport information services to improve accessibility of travel destinations

*Presented by Tea Koskela, Ylläs Travel Association*

A presentation on mobility as a service in Northern part of Finland, mobility challenges and the future.

Rural mobility challenges in Lapland include:

- tourism destinations and attractions distributed sparsely;
- supply and demand vary;

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- limited availability of local transport services;
- taxis rarely available;
- tourists have varying needs and interests;
- small businesses, low level of digitalization.

Open Arctic Maas is about making mobility easy and sustainable. In this case, it would not only help the tourism, but also make more opportunities for the locals. It would provide an extensive stakeholders' collaboration with mutual aim and an internal accessibility. There is currently a new service called "trip planner" being developed. Different routes and bus stops in Lapland are being digitalized to make it more convenient for tourists to travel around the area.

A simplified service architecture has been presented to introduce with the system and different kinds of data used to make it work more precisely. The data includes infrastructure, ticket information, routes and different real time data, meaning that it is possible to follow the transport as it goes through the country.

Steps during the project:

1. Testing real time functions (bus on map, alerts).
2. Co-operation and communication with different stakeholders.
3. Digitalizing routes, schedules.
4. Service design assignments.

The main goal is to get the service level of HSL (Helsinki Regional Transport) in rural areas.