Concept paper: Mentoring/coaching

Mentoring is usually a face-to-face act or process of helping, **giving advice and support** to a younger or less experienced or knowledgeable person (e.g. expert teaching someone, young person teaching an older person, etc.). The method is used commonly in career guidance. **In peer coaching, the group or pairs are in the same age group.** The time and type of mentoring/coaching activities can vary, it can be done for example in regular sessions or a certain period of time, or it can be done when needed on a specific challenge. One form is **speed mentoring**, where the mentoring sessions are very short with either mentors or participants switching tables after a fixed amount of time.

Information and findings received from mentoring sessions can be used to solve the challenges and problems which the user group have faced. There is a strong social inclusion in this tool and mentoring seems to be rather social event among the user group.

What methods/other tools/ techniques can be used while implementing the tool?	Main aims while using the tool
Video, Workshop, Trainings, Picnic, Community Walks.	The aim is to lower the threshold of seniors to try and use public transportation and new services, such as city bikes and digital applications. The focus is on finding the key points and challenges with which the mentors can help. At the same time, the findings from coaching sessions will contribute to development of better PT services for seniors – these results will be compiled in an assessment paper with proposals for PT improvements.

How can the tool be used in each phase of the process (when developing age-friendlier and green mobility solutions)?

Planning stage: When planning new solutions, this tool can be useful in finding existing challenges, and solutions the user group needs. It can also give insight into the attitudes and limitations of the user group regarding, for example, city bikes or digital services.

Development stage: In developing these solutions, this tool can give information on the challenges, situations and solutions from the user group's point of view.

Implementation stage: When implementing new solutions, this tool can be used, for example, by forming a test group of mentors and mentees.

Evaluation stage: Some solutions can be evaluated by the mentoring group.

Feedback: This tool is useful when feedback is wanted from the user group. The mentor/mentee pair can give feedback in any experience they have faced during their coaching sessions. Also, it is possible to carry out observations and interviews during the mentoring process to collect feedback from persons mentored.

What is the aim of engagement with this tool?

Collaborate and empower: This tool is mainly for collaborating as it is used to involve the user group to give their experience and ideas how to make the PT better for the silver age people.

For how many people and how is the tool suitable (for one-time use)?	How much effort is required from the participant and what influences that?
2 – **in most cases the mentoring/peer coaching is done in pairs**. 3-5 – in this scenario there's one or two coaches and few mentees. For a larger group, the mentoring/peer coaching could be suitable, if the group is splitted in pairs or 3-5 people and there are enough mentors for giving personal advice to everyone.	**Some effort** required: The mentors have to be ready to coach and help their mentees. In most cases, the mentors also need to be trained and given instructions. The mentors can be active PT-users and willing to mentor others but still need confidence and instructions on how to coach others and share their knowledge. They can have regular meetings and trainings together to update their knowledge.
Time needed to <u>prepare</u> using the tool and what influences the time needed?	**Time needed to <u>implement</u> the tool and what influences the time needed?**
Considerable preparation required: It takes time to find, form and train the mentor group (if the mentors are trained and are not provided by the organizer) and find mentees. Quality communication and cooperation with silver age stakeholders is key.	**Some set-up** required: The mentoring sessions may last just 10 minutes per person or be an on-going process, for example, during one month. If the duration is longer, additional instructions, travelling and scheduling of sessions will be required.
Time needed to <u>summarize</u> using the tool and what influences the time needed?	**Price for the user of the tool and what influences the price**
Considerable effort to summarize required: Feedback and information from the mentoring sessions will be collected and the findings summarized.	The tool is **inherently free**, but possible costs come from for example travel passes, training the mentors, campaigning or advertising, smartphones for the volunteers if they are mentoring on digital services, and running the voluntary network.
SWOT on using the tool	
STRENGHTS People-oriented, participatory approach, engages user group: reveals the actual specific challenges and points where seniors face while using PT; Few people's experience can present a bigger user group, can include many different user groups and ages (youth, seniors etc.); User groups' thoughts and feedback are heard.	**WEAKNESSES** Not enough resources to establish or maintain the voluntary network; Administration or organisation behind the mentor/coach network is needed; sometimes the mentoring can go on and continue on its own but to sustain the network some organisational structure is needed.
OPPORTUNITIES Increases communication between the user group and decision-makers; The number of voluntary coaches can get high and the idea of helping each other in PT can spread to all user groups; Opportunities to educate and launch new PT services via the user group; Opportunities to get feedback on new PT services from the user group.	**THREATS** The method depends on an active and motivated user group; finding and engaging the mentors and mentees can be challenging; The message from the user group does not reach the decision-makers or is not taken seriously; Mentors can be active a certain time and quit; Voluntary mentor network requires time from volunteers.

2

How to use the tool?
How to prepare using the tool? • Before implementing, the interested group of mentors-to-be has to be found and the group formed. Stakeholders, such as senior organisations and PT office are important to involve in the process. • The mentors should be active PT-users who are willing to mentor and help others. • The mentors have to be trained or given instructions. • A plan to campaign and find ways to reach the non-users/mentees. • PT office should define any (new) services for which the user group feedback is needed. • Quality communications is important: a plan for spreading the message of PT mentoring.   **How to implement the tool?** • A kick-off event should be organised for the mentors or the pairs. In this event, the idea and practicalities of mentoring sessions are discussed and defined. • Trainings or support on e.g. PT applications and route searches should be organised for the mentors or pairs. • During and after mentoring, the feedback and experiences should be collected and documented, e.g. by interviews, questionnaires, observation.   **How to follow-up using the tool?** • All collected feedback and results can be presented to PT office and for the decision-makers in order to develop age-friendly PT services. • Mentoring can continue on its own or it might need some structure to call regular meetings. • Mentoring model can be an on-going service by PT office or senior organisations, depending on the resources. • Collected data from PT can show if the senior ticket sales have increased due to mentoring scheme if it is going on regularly. • If data from a user group's travel passes can be followed, it can show whether the non-users have become regular PT-users.
Tips and hints for using the tool with people in silver age
• **Mentors may not be specialists**, but ordinary people who want to volunteer and help peers. They may need training as well. • **Mentoring is a mutual learning process –** oftentimes, seniors have much to teach to the youth as well. • **Mentoring should be fun and exciting!**
More experiences from GreenSAM partners
Read here how Valonia used mentoring to familiarize seniors with new services in public transport and to assess their needs and challenges. Tartu's experiences can be read from here.

Peer coaching and mentoring. *Photo credits: Heta Laiho (top row), Institute of Baltic Studies (bottom left), Valonia / Regional Council of Southwest Finland (bottom right)*