Concept paper: Conversation

Conversation as a methodological tool that, unlike any verbal exchange, requires an exchange of views, which makes it more of a dialogue than an interview. This makes listening an essential part of the tool - both for the participant and for the user of the tool. As the instigator of the conversation, you will be far less the leader of it than led by it, as as a methodological tool, it is an activity done by people together, i.e. a collective behaviour.

Conversation can also work as a method for decision making or to gain understanding. It is an unstructured process that functions as an efficient way to either actualize or defeat a concrete challenge.

What methods/other tools/ techniques can be used while implementing the tool?	Main aims while using the tool
While conversation is a stand-alone tool, community mapping can be a tool to facilitate the conversation. "Sharing knowledge" (a way to make conversations successful by encouraging sharing); "Picnic", "Walk and Talk", etc.	By sharing knowledge, this tool should contribute information about mobility problems. Also, it is a way for the user to inform citizens in relation to their problems and hereby provide them with information, which they can use to overcome some of their mobility problems.

How can the tool be used in each phase of the process (when developing age-friendlier and green mobility solutions)?
Planning stage – planning for concrete interventions in the community. By sharing knowledge, it is possible to identify where and how the residents experience mobility problems by having a conversation that allows the user group to describe their experience and any barrier they may have. **Development stage** – conversations can be used for gathering information for analysing mobility demands. **Implementation stage** – can help gauge the progress of the intervention implementation. **Evaluation stage** – can help gauge if the interventions implemented have had the intended effect(s). **Feedback** – conversation results can be used as feedback to the municipality and the public transport authority for future planning purposes.

What is the aim of engagement with this tool?
Inform – Conversation will help address questions in relation to everyday mobility with the instigator informing the user group of possible options/solutions to their mobility problems. **Consult** – Can ask for feedback on a list of destinations and how to reach them (or barriers for reaching them). **Collaborate** – Based on conversations, various possible interventions may occur, some of which the citizens can implement themselves or as key stakeholders. **Empower** – Based on the conversations, various possible interventions may occur, some of which the citizens can implement themselves or as key stakeholders.

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?
Conversation is best in **groups of a small size** (1-5 people). This is because you need to ensure	**Some effort** may be required as participants need to engage and share their opinions. If conversations are held a designated place, snacks

that all the participants feel heard and comfortable being honest.	and drinks may also be required and travel time to reach the venue may also be a factor in terms of effort spent.
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?**
In order to facilitate the conversations, you need to prepare some questions but also prepare yourself to be guided by the answers (it is not an interview!). In order to participate well in the conversation and be able to provide the citizens with information/answers to their questions, **some preparation** is required, in terms of research about the area and mobility options.	Depending on the amount of people, questions and length of answers, conversations can range **from a few minutes to even 45 minutes**.
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**
The quasi-qualitative data gathred will require analysis. The amount of time needed for this process will be very individual and **depend on e.g. the amount of data and former experience of the analyser**.	The tool itself only requires time. Other additional costs may include recording equipment or travel expenses, if the conversation location is elsewhere.

SWOT on using the tool	
STRENGTHS • Applicability: Verbal exchanges of views are easy to instigate • Informative and collaborative: An effective way to produce and gain new local understandings and insights while being able to inform the participants • Comparability: The data from multiple conversations is comparable and serves as a useful way of understanding the scope of expressed problems or opinions	**WEAKNESSES** • Small groups and dataset: It requires an intimate space and small groups which generates a small dataset • Data processing/analyzing: Analyzing is required because the generated data is qualitative
OPPORTUNITIES • Allows to engage silver age people, who are a source of knowledge • Interest in well-being: The need for knowledge about subjective well-being gives a personal touch to the tool	**THREATS** • Gives quick results rather than mapping the situation over a long period of time • Willingness: Success is dependent on the willingness of participants to have a conversation in an active and constructive matter

How to use the tool?
How to prepare using the tool?   • Make contact with the people you want to talk to.   • Arrange a time, place and date for the conversation if the conversation is not spontaneous.   • Consider which questions you can use to start the dialogical process.

- Do research about mobility possibilities in the specific area and make yourself able to answer questions from the residents.

How to implement the tool?

- Explain the purpose of the conversation and how the gathered information is used: A dialogical process with no specific intentions besides a sharing of knowledge which should help the citizens and you as a researcher.
- Pay attention to each resident: What are their needs and desires, what challenges do they face.
- Make room for questions: Make sure each resident can ask you specific mobility questions.

How to follow-up using the tool?

- Let the conversation be the guideline for interventions: Where, when and how do mobility problems occur – is there a pattern?
- Reflect on the questions asked by the residents: Is it the same kind of questions asked – if so, use this as a guideline for interventions.
- Replicate with the same people after interventions and compare knowledge and answers with the first conversations.
- Compare your data and experience with the participants and evaluate how you plan on using the tool in the future.

Tips and hints for using the tool with people in silver age

- Alissa Schwartz (2016; https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/ev.20182) provides some excellent frameworks for how to evaluate Participatory Facilitated Conversations.

Conversation. *Photo credits: Institute of Baltic Studies (left), Timo Sommer (right)*