

Concept paper: Walking group

Walking groups are **walks with residents through the neighbourhood in order to examine problems and special features together**. Despite the name, walking groups can be also by bike if the aim is to examine problems with biking. The tour should mainly include people who do not have physical disabilities to the extent that they cannot go on even a short walk or ride or disabilities that prohibit them from expressing themselves. Otherwise, there are no limitations to who can participate.

The information and insights gathered during the walking group, e.g. feedback on safe cycling routes, will be later analyzed and forwarded to decision makers.

What methods/other tools/ techniques can be used while implementing the tool?	Main aims while using the tool
Observation (observing people during the tour), conversation, focus group (follow-up interviews and discussions), interviews, brainstorming, hand raising etc.	To get the user group's opinion about dangerous places, weaknesses of current public transport system, cycling routes, information stands, etc.
How can the tool be used in each phase of the process (when developing age-friendlier and green mobility solutions)?	
Walking groups can be used in all phases of the process of developing age-friendlier and greener mobility solutions as it is possible to set a certain focus for every walking group. E.g. it may be decided to collect pain-points to understand what needs to be improved or ideas to plan development. After implementing the interventions, the focus can be put on how people have accepted the changes and what is their feedback to these changes. Walking groups can also be used to show different places and situations to the user group and ask their feedback to find out problems.	
What is the aim of engagement with this tool?	
During walking groups, it is possible to inform participants about development plans, introduce current possibilities of public transport and consult with participants to get ideas for developments. In case the guide of the walking group is e.g. a decision-maker and is able to give feedback for ideas received and there is a discussion, the tool can be collaborative. Also, when people feel that their input is considered and something will be changed, the tool is also empowering.	
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?
The tool needs at least a few participants, but this number cannot be too high (e.g. not more than 10) – it would make it uncomfortable to navigate and some people may not have a chance to express their opinions.	Some effort is required as participants have to come to the concrete starting place of the tour and attend the whole tour. There is a need to walk the route, share opinions and contribute to the discussion.
Time needed to prepare using the tool and what influences the time needed?	Time needed to implement the tool and what influences the time needed?
Little to no preparation required as main preparation is to do with inviting participants and planning the route and preparing	As the target group is elderly people, it is not feasible to walk for too long, so the walking tour can take about 15-60 minutes , depending on the

questionnaires if needed.	activity level of the participants.
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
Notes and photos may be taken during the tour, which will be summarized and analyzed later. Time needed to summarize depends on the length of the tour and participants' activity to share their opinions.	There are no inherent fees to use this tool. However, working time of the guide or fees for him/her and potential transport costs may apply.
SWOT on using the tool	
STRENGTHS Users can evaluate the existing situation on the streets. Provides first-hand information on the needs of the user group and their thoughts and opinions. Valuable tool for collecting first-hand impressions and emotions that may be missed when using other formats of discussion/feedback.	WEAKNESSES The participants are too skeptical, thus not contributing much, and the gained information can be too subjective and not valuable to improve the system.
OPPORTUNITIES Same age group will get a realistic overview of the present situation on the streets, make their opinions heard and thus, can encourage other users of the same age later. May help form relationships within the walking group and contribute to experience sharing.	THREATS Weather can influence the course of the walking group and sway the opinions of the group. Risk of not involving the correct target group.
How to use the tool?	
How to prepare using the tool? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide on your target group and invite people to walking group If possible, map what kind of moving restrictions potential participants have and consider this information when preparing a route Prepare a route with enough objects of interest How to implement the tool? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instruct people (e.g. what objects will be discussed, where the stops will be) Walking about 1 hour (max) Take notes and pictures How to follow-up using the tool? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze the gathered information Post-interviews, if necessary Forward proposals to city government/decision-makers/other relevant stakeholders 	

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

- **Think of the needs of your target group** – if you are engaging with silver age people, the walking route cannot be too long and it would be good if there were resting points, e.g. benches on the way.
- **Make sure the objects of interest are relevant to your target group** – be mindful, for example, if you want to learn the opinions of regular users or new users (i.e. understand the barriers to them becoming a new user). In some cases it may be useful to have a mix of different users/people in a group, in others, a certain target group would be better.
- **Get creative with different tools**– if the walking group consists of people who are more reserved and soft-spoken, consider using other tools and techniques to spark the conversation, e.g. brainstorming or hand-raising.



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