

## *Moving closer to age-friendly green mobility ...*

### The case of Turku, Finland – age-friendly public transport

#### **Before the GreenSAM project:**

Turku was the first city of CIVITAS ECCENTRIC project in Finland and that has led to the kick-start and development of new mobility modes and solutions, as the project aimed to promote sustainable and smart urban traffic in the city. However, the silver age perspective was not much highlighted in the project, even though over 21 % of the city's population is over 65 years old. In 2019, Turku joined the WHO's Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities. Turku city had used participative processes in planning, but not specifically in traffic and public transport (PT) for silver age people.

#### **What was done?**

1. Carrying out workshops (incl. [world café](#)), [mentoring and peer coaching](#) trials with PT buses and city bikes. The trials were [observed](#) and the participants gave feedback on their experiences and PT services. [Questionnaires](#), [conversations](#), [panel discussion](#) and [online events](#) were conducted to learn about the needs of people in silver age, to get ideas to develop PT and to support silver age people in using PT. PT digital training was also provided for the participants.
2. Developing the model for mentoring and how to use it as a participation tool.
3. Communication campaign together with Turku Region Public Transport provider Föli and a marketing agency. The campaign included a webpage and infographics in Föli (buses, service center etc.) and social media, as well as posters and other information for elderly organizations, volunteers, and PT users. The aim of the campaign was to spread the message of age-friendly public transport and create the atmosphere of mentoring and helping each other in using PT.
4. Establishment of "Föli friends" PT peer support group.
5. Communication included discussions and presentations to different groups, e.g. NGOs dealing with the elderly, volunteer groups, Turku Region Public Transport Committee, bus operators.
6. A survey was carried out for bus drivers to hear their views on age-friendly PT. The results were presented to the bus drivers, bus operators and seniors and discussed with Föli PT.
7. Compiling an assessment paper to summarize all findings from the coaching sessions and results from the pilot.
8. Compiling recommendations for improving the age-friendliness of the current PT system, including hints for the city bike system and using city bikes from senior perspective.



#### **Results?**

- Many more events were held, and participants involved than originally planned: over 10 events and at least 200 participants (over 80 seniors, 79 bus drivers from 10 different operators, 15 decision-makers and traffic planners, 10 senior NGOs, 13 youth participants).



The communication campaign and Föli mentors continued to reach many people in summer 2021. 100 bus tickets were given to PT-non-users with help and guidance of PT-users.

- Senior participants felt encouraged and motivated to use PT after mentoring and they were willing to change their mobility behaviour.
- Senior participants felt that they have been heard and there has been dialogue between PT planning and the user group.
- Age-friendliness in PT has been promoted in local media during the project.
- Mentoring and peer support have a strong social inclusion. Seniors who participated in the pilot became friends and planned to continue bus trips together. Many wanted to become “Föli friends” and continue mentoring.
- Seniors felt more confident and understood with peer coaching than youth coaching them.
- “Föli friends” as an on-going mentoring scheme was established by Föli, Valonia and an elderly NGO.
- Föli’s knowledge of senior needs, age-friendliness and participatory methods have improved.

**Read more:**

[Success story video of the pilot in Turku](#)

[Pilots’ section in GreenSAM homepage](#)

**Recommendations to city planners?**

- Offer mentoring and trials of PT services to user groups – this will encourage them to use PT, including city bikes.
- Find and train the group of mentors first, when you want to use mentoring as a tool. The mentors might need incentives (e.g. travel card) to volunteer. They also need support and they are not professionals.
- Quality communication is important. Plan how and in which ways to reach the user groups.
- Collect feedback from the user groups during and after mentoring and trials.
- Do not underestimate the digital skills of people in silver age. Many silver age people are willing to use PT digital services after they have received hands-on training. Be ready to support them, carry out trainings, compile info materials, etc. Contact other organizations who give digital support to elderly people.
- Create opportunities and activities in a comfortable environment so that participants feel free to discuss and give feedback.
- Go where the silver age people are, e.g. hobbies, day centres and meeting points.
- Cooperate with elderly organizations and networks. They are often key in involving the user groups. The youth volunteer organizations can be also good way to find youth volunteers.

