

Scandinavian Hub – Denmark

PLANNING BICYCLE TRAINING FOR ETHNIC MINORITIES

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To include gender and diversity in transport policy and planning is central in creating equal opportunities for all people. While cycling is common in Denmark, there are a number of ethnic minorities who have never learned to ride a bicycle. Also, many immigrants from non-western countries come from cultures where cycling is neither widespread nor socially accepted, especially for women.

Bicycle courses are a good way to enhance the mobility of ethnic minority women and this policy brief provides support for those who wish to start up a training course.

Background

The policy brief is an outcome of a collaboration between the European research project TinnGO and the Danish Red Cross bicycle training for immigrants.

The policy brief is based in research on biking and ethnic minorities.

The aim of the policy brief is to strengthen actions that can improve the mobility of ethnic minorities. It especially targets NGOs as well as policy makers and planners, who are looking for instruments to enhance the integration of ethnic minority women.

For more information see:

<https://www.tinngo.eu/>

<http://transportgenderobservatory.eu/>

https://koensforskning.soc.ku.dk/projekter/tinngo_nordic/

"I want to learn how to bike. It gives me freedom from my family. If my husband doesn't have the time, I can bike myself."

Quote from an interview with a participant from a bicycle course, 2020.

The benefits of bicycle courses for ethnic minority women

- Cycling provides ethnic minority women with a more free and independent everyday mobility.
- Cycling can strengthen the social activities of minority women.
- Cycling might help to increase ethnic minority women's opportunities on the Danish labour market.

Yet,

- Cycling may be difficult to learn as an adult and especially if people have no access to a bicycle or an instructor.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Studies show that transport-related social exclusion is related to gender, ethnicity as well as low income. Culture and norms appear as the most important factors for mobility practices of ethnic minorities (Uteng 2009). Furthermore, there is a connection between increased cycling and less urban segregation among the group of ethnic minority women. To be able to cycle gives ethnic minority women a more free and independent everyday mobility, which is otherwise characterized by the use of public transport or with the help of family members, most often their husbands (Rask, Poulsen & Delica 2017).



“In the past, I dreamed about it, but now it became reality. I am biking. I always bike, every day.”

Quote from an interview with a participant from a bicycle course, 2020.



PAYING ATTENTION TO THE FOLLOWING FIVE DIMENSIONS CAN HELP WHEN SETTING UP A GENDER AND DIVERSITY INCLUSIVE BICYCLE COURSE

AFFORDABLE Participants can be informed about how to buy an affordable bicycle and might also receive help with repairing their bicycles.

EFFECTIVE To ensure participation throughout the course, pay attention to certain obstacles for the group, e.g. set up parallel childcare for women with children.

ATTRACTIVE Explicitly highlighting the benefits of cycling, e.g. a cheap and healthy form of mobility, might attract people from non-cycling cultures.

SUSTAINABLE Cycling is only sustainable to the degree to which it is carried out. Course instructors might ensure that participants maintain their new biking habits by arranging post-course cycling groups.

INCLUSIVE For every course, do an assesment of the participants in terms of gender, ethnicity, age, work place, and living area. Did the course include everyone in the target group?

For more information on gender and diversity approaches to transport and mobility, see <https://transportgenderobservatory.eu/>

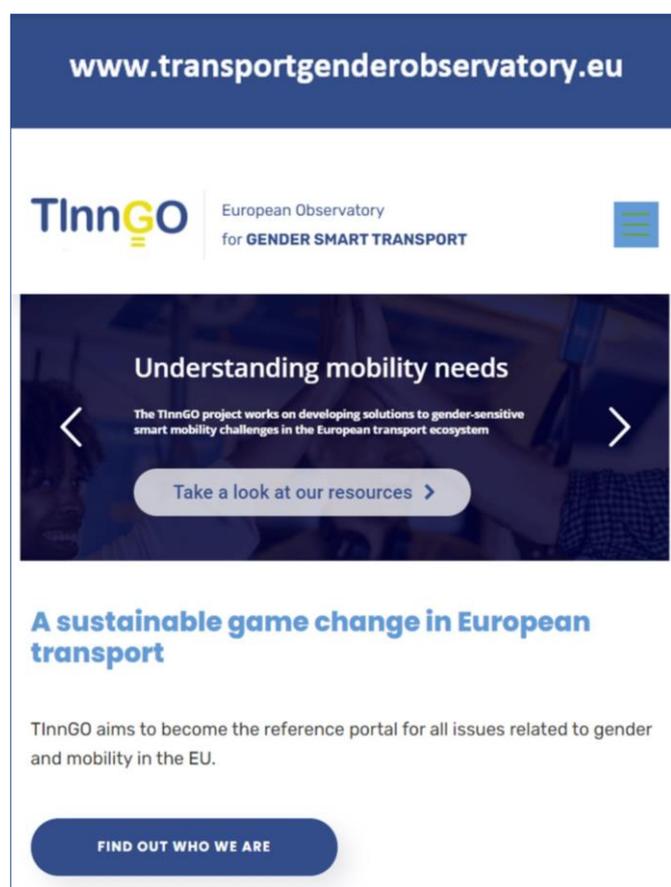
RECOMMENDATIONS

Try to promote a balanced representation among the participants at the bicycle course, measured by age, ethnicity, type of work, and place of residence. If the participants are all from the same work place or age group, it probably means that the course missed other potential participants.

A way to recruit more participants is to advertise the course in different languages as well as to make sure that course information is put up in different areas of the city.

It might be a good idea to include time for a social activity during the course, such as the possibility to have a cup of coffee and a chat. This can benefit the motivation to attend and complete the entire course.

It is important to encourage participants to maintain their new cycling habits after the end of the course. The help to find an affordable and eventually second-hand bicycle is a good first step.



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This project received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement N° 824349

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