

Liliana Magalhães, Portugal

Lisbon paves the way towards a more gender inclusive cycling community



Specialist in Mobility Policy – Innovation and Mobility Solutions Department at EMEL

EMEL has been working with citizens to better understand and help reduce the gender gap in cycling within the scope of the TInnGO project. We started with user research to better understand women's perceptions and barriers through a survey and in-depth interviews with female bicycle users and non-users. The following phase consisted of co-creating an action plan to identify solutions for more equal bike access for women and to reduce the current gender gap. This encompassed workshops in which female bicycle users and non-users were invited to co-design and validate solutions, giving them an active voice in the development of policies and measures.

Could you briefly tell us something about your background, and your area of expertise in the field of transport with gender and diversity? What field are you currently working in?

I'm currently working as a Mobility Policy Specialist in the Innovation and Mobility Solutions Department at EMEL. In our department, we work to develop new mobility solutions and to improve existing ones in order to offer citizens the best possible mobility service. Our team is quite diverse in terms of background and experience in the field of mobility as we believe that this is a key aspect to produce the best possible outputs. In my particular case, I have a PhD in Transportation Systems and more than 10 years' experience in transportation research and consultancy. I have authored several articles in peer-review journals, conferences, and have been an invited lecturer. Over the years, I have had the pleasure to work in several fields within the transportation and mobility areas, for instance, in citizen engagement activities as a part of the co-creation process of solutions for mobility issues in the city of Lisbon. Gender and socio-economic

backgrounds were two of the main aspects we addressed, particularly regarding cycling.

In your area of expertise, what have been the greatest breakthroughs with regard to increasing gender and diversity in mobility?

There have been major developments concerning gender and diversity in mobility in the last few years that are worth mentioning. The most important one is the awareness raised recently about gender and diversity in mobility that led to several research projects and studies related to equity. These pioneering works paved the way to understanding the problems and barriers and helped define future solutions which are currently being improved. I do believe that awareness has been one of the greatest breakthroughs since our society became conscious of issues which were ignored and often denied not so long ago. Awareness is an enabler of different individual behaviours which per se encourage small attitudes that lead to major changes. The other

major breakthrough is the fact that gender and diversity in mobility is now being addressed by those involved in planning citizen engagement initiatives. Citizen engagement is gaining pace and the involvement of gender and diversity representativeness ensures that the solutions developed (policies and measures) are more suited to those who need them and are better accepted when implemented as they assume co-responsibility for design.

Based on your experience, what are the biggest challenges that need to be addressed with a view to increasing gender and diversity in mobility?

One of the biggest challenges I foresee is the fact that one size might not fit all in terms of solutions (policies and measures) adopted in different cities. This means that according to the level of maturity of the mobility systems, for instance, depending on how well-developed bike-sharing systems are, the solutions needed to address gender and diversity might be different. Transferability assessment is fundamental.

What road maps need to be set out to increase gender and diversity in mobility at national and EU level?

A national action plan to address gender and diversity in mobility is essential to support the planning process. Moreover, EU guidelines on how to address gender and diversity in mobility are very useful as they give Member States which are not as familiar with these aspects a reference on where to start.

What have we understood so far from interacting with women to help us understand the gender gap, particularly in cycling?

In Lisbon, we are working closely with citizens to gather gender-disaggregated data so we can better understand the challenges and help to reduce the gender gap in cycling, specifically in GIRA (bike-sharing system). We began with qualitative and quantitative user research aiming at better understanding women’s perceptions, barriers and fears when using different modes of transport. This work included an online survey and in-depth interviews with female bicycle users and non-users from different socio-economic backgrounds. The insights gathered uncovered several aspects which can help to explain the gender gap in cycling, namely, women tend to worry about safety due to a lack of appropriate infrastructure, a reduced sense of personal security at certain times of the day or in certain parts of the city, and the preconceived idea that only unconventional or eccentric women use bicycles in their daily routines, to name but a few.



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

Disclaimer: This document reflects only the author's view. Responsibility for the information and views expressed therein lies entirely with the authors. The Innovation and Networks Executive Agency (INEA) and the European Commission are not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.