HiReach

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HELP DESIGN NEW INCLUSIVE MOBILITY SOLUTIONS FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND INFLUENCE THE FUTURE OF TRANSPORTATION

WWW.HIREACH-PROJECT.EU

INTRODUCING HIREACH

Good accessibility helps the European economy to thrive, promotes inclusion and fosters wellbeing.

HiReach assists the European Union in this endeavour by identifying and characterising transport poverty and evaluating transport policies and initiatives.

The goal is to develop new business-oriented mobility products, capable of improving accessibility in urban and rural areas and adapted to the needs of vulnerable citizens.

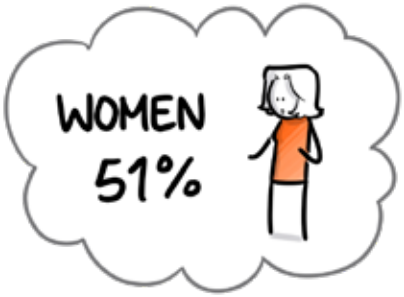
MAPPING SOCIAL EXCLUSION

You may have heard that behind social exclusion there often are transport related problems, such as the lack of adequate mobility services.

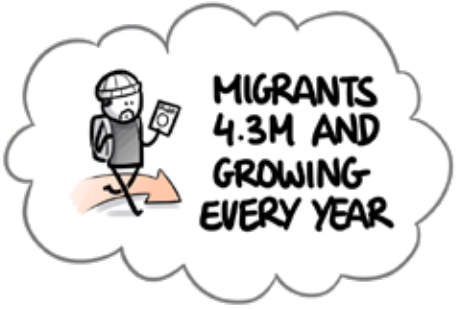
These problems are particularly felt by the most vulnerable members of society, such as those who experience material deprivation, the physically impaired, migrants or people from an ethnic minority background, and different socio-demographic characteristics such as being young, being old or just being women.

This lack of good transport services affects rural areas, but it is also true for cities and densely populated areas, where the number of people experiencing poor mobility capacity is increasing. This is not only a social problem, but also a market opportunity for new transport proposals, to reduce time and cost, or even trigger new mobility needs.

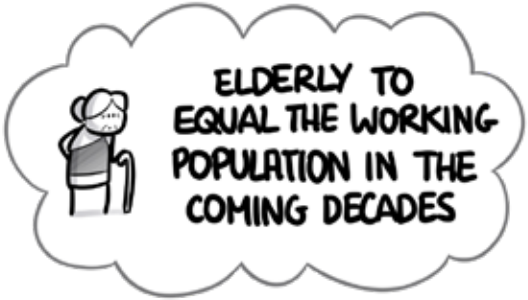

LOW INCOME
~25%


WOMEN
51%


CHILDREN
~15%


MIGRANTS
4.3M AND
GROWING
EVERY YEAR


PEOPLE LIVING IN
RURAL AREAS
~25%


ELDERLY TO
EQUAL THE WORKING
POPULATION IN THE
COMING DECADES


PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITIES
~14%

VULNERABLE GROUPS

At a first glance, this looks like a niche market, but it is not. Transport poverty is not only related to income, but also to geographical or personal circumstances and thus apply to any citizen and to thousands of locations around the EU. Indeed, the traditional offer of public transport and solutions prepared in “silo” does not match today´s mobility needs, thereby opening up new opportunities and new business prospects for innovative services.

People experiencing transport poverty might be ready to ride tailor-made transport solutions, whose technological background can make their lives much easier.

Get to know our personas better and together we can find the solutions that suit them best

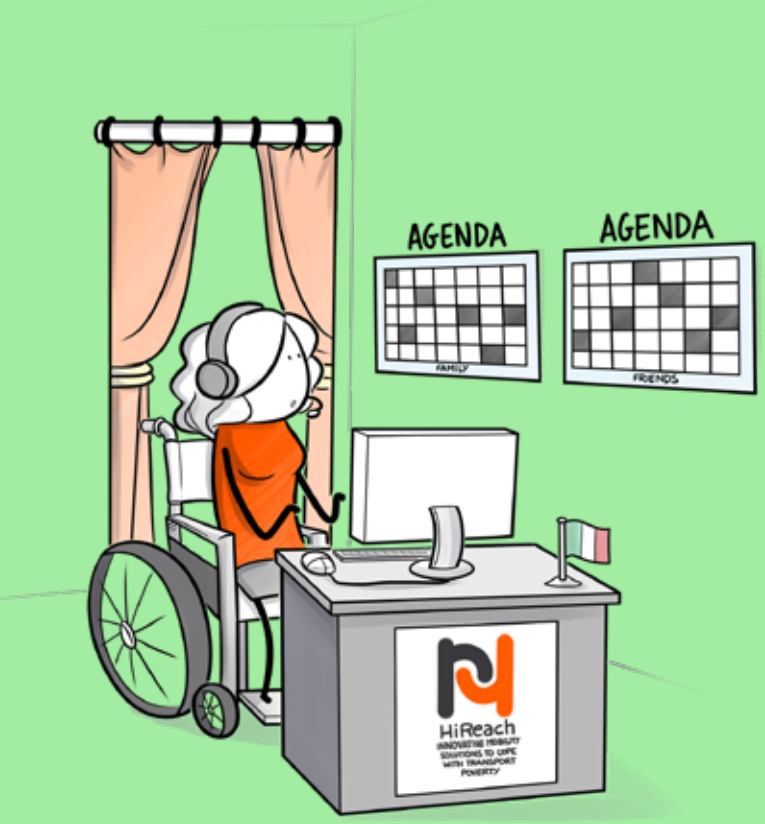
Thierry is a 45-year-old hi-tech employee. Despite working in one of the wealthiest countries in the world (Luxembourg), he was forced to rent a house in the city of Bastogne (Belgium), because living costs are too high in Luxembourg's city centre. The downside to his choice of where to live is a long commute to work, which takes him almost 2 hours by train each way if he relies on available public transport connections. Thierry and his wife own two cars. So he drives to Luxembourg's capital to save two hours per day on public transport, while she uses the second car to go from one place to another throughout the day, taking and picking up their son at school and for soccer practice and sometimes assisting her parents who live home in a small village nearby. Thierry would like to have an uber-like transport that would take him and/or his wife from their doorstep to their destination in an affordable manner. In fact, he dreams of becoming progressively car-free, by selling at least their second family car and using the money he has saved to improve his family's quality of life.

Maria, 70 years old, is from a small village near Guarda, in Portugal. Despite being retired, Maria is still very active and works as a farmer. She enjoys going to the main city every week, but travelling by public transport is not an option because there is only one bus in the early morning and another in the evening, so she must stay in the city for the whole day. She knows that it is possible to buy public transport tickets using the Internet, but she shows little aptitude for digital technology and is suspicious about buying online. She likes to use the bus, even if it takes more than one hour to reach the nearest town.

However, the lack of public transport is a major problem when she needs to attend medical appointments in town. She also likes to visit her grandchildren but there isn't any bus connection to where they live, so her daughter must collect her, because she cannot afford to take a taxi. Maria is worried about the prospect of losing her independence since she stopped driving due to a physical condition and because public transport is becoming scarcer. On top of this, she complains that bus stops are too far away and there are no pavements to walk on to get there safely.

Victor is 30 years old and lives in a small town in central Romania. Like most Roma people of his age, he is unemployed. There are few opportunities for employment in the town and the level of pay is lower than the country average. He lives in overcrowded accommodation and has already missed out on job opportunities because they are too far away and he doesn't own a car. Despite being unemployed, he has different transport needs that tend to vary as he does not have a steady job and involve different routes and forms of transport each day.

On the other hand, he also takes part in regular routine, which mainly involves taking his children to kindergarten and to school. When it rains, he and his children take the bus, even if this is a financial burden as public transport fares are considered to be quite high. Tickets can be bought at a lower price from some specific vendors, but for people living in areas such as the one where Victor lives, these options are not available, and they must pay more by buying the ticket from the driver.



Giulia is 28 and lives in a small village, Gemini, in the south Italian region of Salento. She uses a wheelchair and is heavily dependent on her parents and relatives to chauffeur her around by private car. She has learned to have a very precise agenda of daily activities, usually planning her trips at least one week in advance, but last-minute changes for non-basic trips may also occur due to changes in the availability of the persons she relies on. She works at home in customer service for a telemarketing company.
She feels that the absence of proper and dedicated public transport options is the main element affecting her autonomy and social life.

There are also no taxi services in the area that can accommodate a wheelchair. Public transport vehicles and services are not accessible to people with reduced mobility, because buses and trains are not equipped with lift platforms.

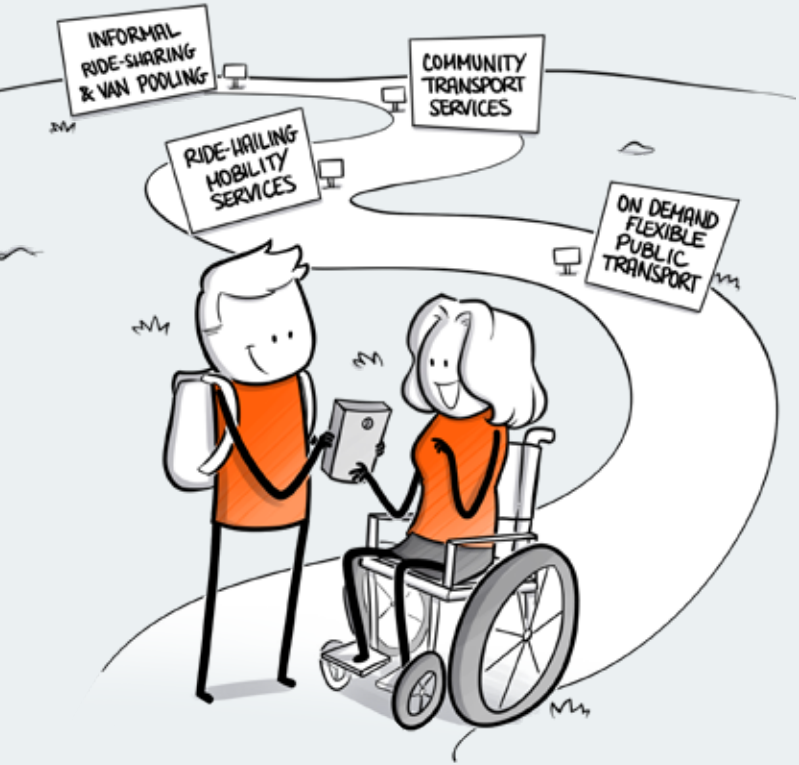
The absence of direct links can create additional accessibility problems for the wheelchair users. Public Transport personnel are neither adequately trained for assisting her nor for providing travel information. She browses the Internet and doesn't find this information either.

Konstantina is a 15-year-old girl living in Keramoti, a small village nestled in the mountains of Naxos, one of the Cyclades islands in Greece. Her family owns a car (as every family does in these islands, she argues), but no school nor after-school activities are organised in her village. Therefore, to go to school she needs to travel long distances by bus over mountain roads and to be driven even longer distances by her parents to attend after-school activities. She loses a lot of time through travelling and feels tired. In the long-run, this might affect her grades. Even if she uses the Internet extensively, she would still like to meet with her friends more often and spend more time on leisure activities.

To become more independent, her young friends and relatives begin riding motorbikes at a very young age. The main problem for these children is that opportunities for after-school activities and for socialising with their peers are very limited. Public transport services are inadequate in remote mountain areas, taxis are expensive, and cycling is not an option due to the local topography, insufficient infrastructure and increased risk of road accidents. Apart from travelling to school, which is covered by school buses, it is up to her parents or through informal carpooling to cover all other transport needs.

Sami is a 43-year-old immigrant in Esslingen, Germany, where he arrived two years ago. He is originally from Syria. When he arrived, he did not speak German at all and could hardly understand English. After learning how to move around within the transport system with the help of some volunteers, he started to heavily rely on public transport for commuting to his job as cleaner at a city mall. He feels a lack of accessibility because refugees are housed in the more remote and scattered settlements and main job opportunities are in the city centre. Although he used to drive in his home town, he can't do that in Germany, because he can't afford it.

Sami works late night, early morning and weekend shifts so there are no buses that suit his needs and he must take the bicycle to the train station and then take the train. It's very hard for him to cycle at night in temperatures below freezing. On top of this, he feels that train ticket inspectors are suspicious and check him more often than other passengers. He has several friends who are caught without a valid ticket and had to pay high fines only because the ticket was wrong or no longer valid and they were not aware of it. He also feels discriminated when his wife travels by train with his son and a stroller and nobody offers to help her get in and out of the train.



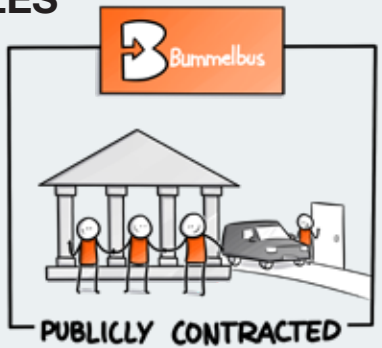
USERS' CENTRIC SERVICES

Nowadays, there is already a wide number of transport services to supply scarcely populated and/or deprived areas. Current running transport services can be basically grouped under:

i) publicly contracted,
ii) market-based or
iii) community-based, depending on the respective frameworks by which they are regulated and funded.

The main novelty is that transport is facing unprecedented challenges and technologies are changing the way people relate to transport services. Technology, allied to high levels of customer service, is set to offer flexible public transport options as near as possible to our doorstep. This type of services can eventually link up to transport hubs, where passengers can seamlessly change onto more traditional public transport to continue their journey. In short, technology can have a real impact in offering tailored transport solutions that reduce our reliance on a private car to complete all or part of our journey. What is fundamental, is to pursue user-oriented approaches, which can link technology with customers' needs.

RUNNING EXAMPLES



The **Bummelbus** scheme in the rural north-areas of Luxembourg is an example of an existing operational service which is publicly contracted. It is the combination of a social project and a mobility service, offering door-to-door trips by means of on demand minibuses, driven by previously unemployed people. The Bummelbus service contributes to the restoration of full employment. It is an opportunity to coach, support and engage long-term unemployed people as drivers. Yet, the service needs support from public funding schemes and integration with employment strategies. The operation of this kind of service could be facilitated using a smartphone app.

Relevant market- based initiatives include for instance **PickMeApp** in Italy, which offers an algorithm-based door-to-door collective transport service tailored for children, the elderly, and disabled people that makes the service very competitive, personalised and suitable for all. Users are constantly in contact with the service through a smartphone application, the website and a call centre. Parents and guardians know in real time when to check-in and check-out their children or relatives thanks to a GPS bracelet.

In several rural areas, a community transport service with the support of the public authority or even the local bus operator proves to be a viable replacement for the previous non-profitable commercial bus services. At community level there are several informal rideshare schemes to address those transport needs that are not well covered by existing public transport services, most of which do not make use of technology. They might be organised by local volunteers, associations or municipalities to cater for situations where demand is low, like the **Bürgerbusse** in Germany for senior citizens.

An example of a **demand-responsive transport (DRT)** service can be seen in the Region of Catalonian Spain, where the local and regional authorities are launching on demand bus services that make use of innovative platforms developed by local startups.

This solution has been supported by a favourable regulatory framework with a clear regional transport strategy that enabled the integration of other mobility services like school transport, special needs transport and market-based services provided by transportation network, taxi or car sharing companies.

OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE AN IMPACT

Our Personas expressed widespread disappointment over the lack of alternatives to their current mobility options. This is sometimes due to poor customer services and the result of users' own legitimate high expectations.
Startups involved in creative environments such as the ones that can be found in acceleration programmes can make a real difference in the wellbeing of European citizens. This is an opportunity for entrepreneurs to make a positive social impact, while profiting from it.

INGREDIENTS FOR SUCCESS

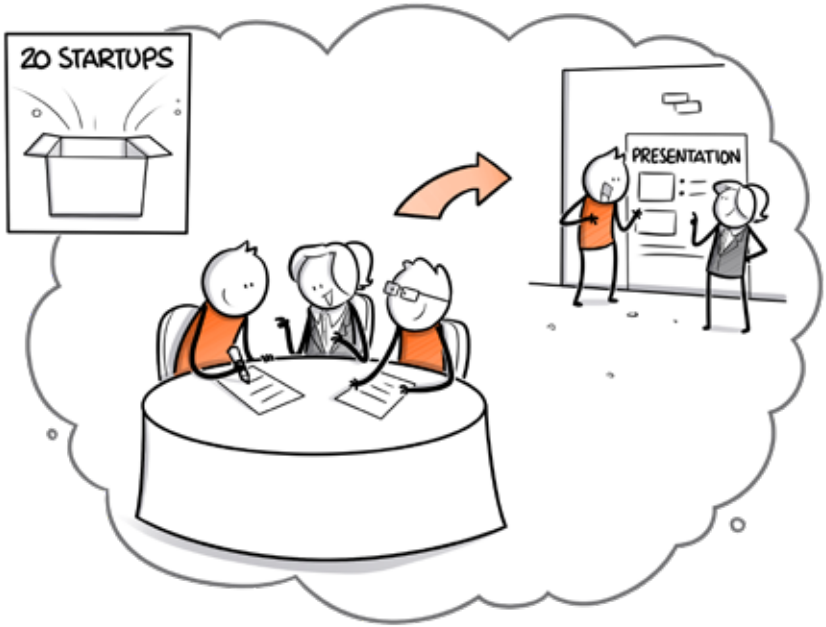
The trick is to build on flexible and integrated schemes, combining all forms of collective passenger transport.

Highly customer-driven services usually offer a strong product design, underpinned by a low-cost technological background. In addition to the above, new services should be properly equipped to accommodate different needs.

The EU public transport regulation is undergoing a major reform (Regulation 1370/2007), which provides an opportunity to support more inclusive and integrated passenger transport schemes in remote or deprived areas, with adequate public funding and cost-covering.

Are you capable of designing solutions for our Personas and giving them cost proposals according to their real needs? Do you feel that you can build on our recommendations? Then, this opportunity is for you!

PHASE 1: STARTUP BOOTCAMP

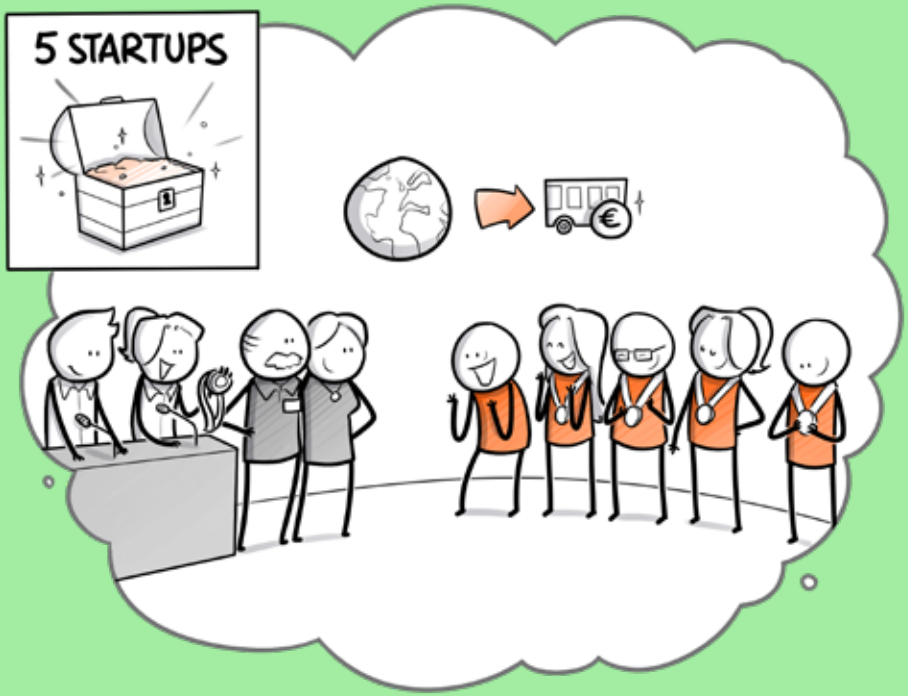


The HiReach project foresees an open innovation programme connecting 20 talented startups with key players in the mobility sector, which will create a pioneering ecosystem of innovation for inclusive mobility. To this end, the project welcomes EU-based startups with a product or prototype, with established founding teams or wishing to become engaged in product field-testing. A selection of top 20 startups will be involved in a one-week bootcamp, where they will learn about business model innovation, startup methodologies and tools, get additional product validation, define the value proposition and prepare a business case which will be pitched to project representatives.

Business ideas and prototypes will be evaluated on the basis of the market potential of the product and its contribution to eradicate transport poverty of vulnerable groups of people.

The bootcamp is a competitive arena where only the most brilliant and creative ideas will survive and move to the second stage.

PHASE 2: STARTUP ACCELERATION



The best 5 startups, selected from Phase 1, will be invited to a highly intensive 3-month follow-up acceleration programme to detail the technical solutions and business model that will make their transport poverty solution viable.

During this period, entrepreneurs will be offered the chance to use an open toolbox developed by HiReach and gain a competitive advantage for accelerating novel mobility products. Furthermore, entrepreneurs will meet and network with decision-makers, consultants, customers, investors and industry operators, who will enable startups to test-bed their ideas under real-life conditions, providing unprecedented international recognition and a fast-track to entering a huge untapped market.

HiReach

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