



Lahti's Pilot City Activity: Systemic Change Towards Sustainable Commuting in Lahti

Promoting Inclusive Well-being: A Collaborative Approach to Sustainable Mobility Initiatives

A practical case example

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SUMMARY

The Sycla project prioritises social equity and citizen participation in the request of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting health and well-being in the city of Lahti by engaging long-term unemployed citizens in Timeout-discussions. Insights highlight that life circumstances, road maintenance, weather conditions, and safety impact participants' mobility choices.

Keywords: citizen engagement, sustainable mobility, climate change, innovative collaboration, health and wellbeing

Objectives

Climate change impacts and responses to the impacts intensify the divide between the privileged and the underprivileged citizens in urban areas. The Sycla project promotes inclusion, social equity, and empowerment by facilitating eight Timeout-dialogue method-based discussion sessions for less privileged Lahti citizens during 2024. The aim is to enhance citizen engagement in climate initiatives and foster behavioural change towards more sustainable and healthier lifestyles for all city residents.

Activities

The purpose of the Sycla project is to investigate and innovate approaches to rapidly decarbonise commuting. The project takes place in the city of Lahti over a two-year period in a co-creation process with local case organisations and their employees, and relevant stakeholders. The project is part of the 100 climate-neutral and smart cities by 2030 EU mission. The Sycla project also supports the goals of the Lahti Regional Health and Environmental Programme for 2022-2032 by promoting active mobility and physical activity.

Beyond the workforce, the project engages Lahti citizens through Timeout discussion sessions. Participants, including those involved in work try-outs, rehabilitative work experience, and pay-subsidised work, are invited to share their perspectives on urban mobility habits, environmental impacts, and health effects related to mobility.

The Timeout-dialogue method can be used to facilitate constructive discussions and equal encounters to deepen understanding of a specific topic and of different perspectives. In Lahti, the method is widely adopted in citizen engagement efforts over various topics.

The discussions facilitated by the Sycla project focus on the habits and opinions relating to everyday urban mobility, and on the environmental, and health impacts of mobility. Weather related topics are also discussed to find insights to climate work of the city of Lahti. Additionally, a short survey is held to the discussion participants on urban mobility habits and views on mobility for supportive information.

Results

Insights reveal that road maintenance especially during winter, weather conditions, and issues relating to safety significantly influence participants' mobility choices. While health and well-being considerations strongly encourage sustainable mobility, environmental issues have a lesser impact on mobility choices. It is acknowledged that some participants already lead sustainable lifestyles due to their current life circumstances, such as personal finances.

Conclusions

In the quest of advancing sustainable and healthier mobility choices equally to Lahti citizens, poor road conditions and safety concerns ought to be addressed. The promotion of personal health advantages can be effective and vital perspectives can be gained with a collaborative approach between stakeholders, while considering individual contexts.

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More information on
the Sycla project on website.



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