

MESsAGE

Mobility and the Elderly: Successful Ageing in a Sustainable Transport System

DURATION OF THE PROJECT
01/01/2007 – 31/01/2009

BUDGET
317.030 €

KEYWORDS

Ageing society, local transport policy, accessibility, mobility needs, transport behaviour

CONTEXT

In the year 2000 one out of six Belgians was aged 65 years or older. In 2050 this will be one out of three. Life expectancy increases, healthy life expectancy increases less.

For the elderly, mobility is a precondition for a qualitative life. Pursuing transportation autonomy among elderly has become an important task for local policy makers. Traffic safety, accessibility and availability of transport means, the design of the public space are important features. Next to the social aspects the economic aspects also play an important role: e.g. the additional costs of a tailor made transportation system for elderly persons versus savings on home services and health care costs.

From an environmental point of view, the substantial car use of older people is a concern. And this trend is likely to increase due to the higher part of people with a driving licence among the future generation of elderly.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Objectives

MESsAGE aims to contribute to the extension of the transportation autonomy of older people and to increase the use of sustainable transport modes within this target group.

Therefore, young senior citizens need to be made more aware of the possibilities to organise their lives in a way to lengthen their transportation autonomy.

Local policy makers must be addressed to raise awareness about specific mobility needs of elderly persons. These needs have to be translated into concrete mobility measures on the field.

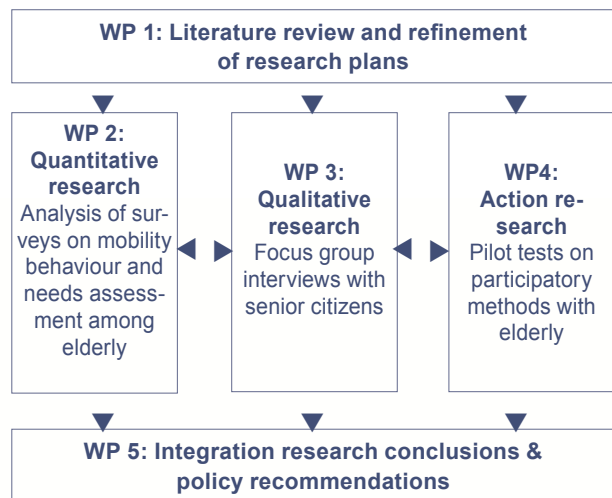
The specific objectives of this research project are to

- gain insight into the current mobility patterns of older people in Belgium, future trends and the determinants of their mobility behaviour;
- gain insight into the mobility needs of senior citizens, into the perceptions of the elderly about the problems of sustainable mobility, their own responsibility and possibilities for action;

- estimate the impact of the mobility behaviour of older people in terms of sustainability (socio-economic, environmental and traffic safety);
- test and assess new methods to successfully enhance the participation of older people into the local mobility policy.

Methodology

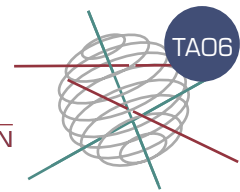
The following scheme describes the different steps and work packages (WP) in the project.



The project starts with a screening of international literature on the topic of elderly and mobility (WP 1). Topics of interest are: determinants of transport autonomy / dependence of elderly and their relative importance, mobility patterns of elderly (recent trends and issues), the policy context and involvement of senior citizens in local (mobility) policy.

In the next step, three research activities will run more or less in parallel: a quantitative, a qualitative and an action field research. The three parallel research parts will exchange insights at regular points in time. All research partners are involved in the different parts of the research. There is however, always one partner coordinating the work (based on expertise).





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The aim of the quantitative analysis (WP 2) is to gain insight into the current mobility patterns of older people in Belgium and its determinants (socio-demographic profiles, living environment, individual conditions, etc.). A second aim is to assess mobility needs of elderly in cities and communities. For both purposes, statistical analyses will be conducted on existing and new survey databases and population statistics regarding mobility and demography. Information from recurrent surveys on the customer satisfaction of the different PT-operators will be looked upon. This work package is lead by VUB, department AGOG.

The qualitative research (WP 3) will be conducted to gain more insight into perceptions and expectations of older people concerning their mobility behaviours and needs. The aim is to identify the subjective or cognitive dimension of older people's mobility. What contributes to successful ageing in the area of mobility? Are the elderly perceptions and exceptions compatible with sustainable development goals? The proposed method is the focus group interview. ULB, Centre the Recherche Urbaine, will take the lead of this work package.

The action field research (WP 4) applies research under 'real life conditions'. In a selection of cities and

municipalities in Flanders (Dutch speaking region) and the Walloon (French speaking) region, small demonstrations will be set up. At that time we will test new ways to raise awareness among elderly towards sustainable mobility behaviour, and test new participatory techniques to involve senior citizens in the design of the local mobility policy. This work package is lead by Mobiel 21.

Finally in WP 5, the results of the three main research parts are integrated, conclusions are compared, discussed and reported. Policy recommendations will be formulated.

EXPECTED RESULTS AND/OR PRODUCTS

A final report, integrating the findings of the three research parts will be published at the end of 2008.

Targeted towards local policy makers (on senior's well being and mobility) and senior organisations, a manual will be published with guidelines on how to successfully involve older people into the local mobility policy.

At the end of the research project, a workshop will be organised targeted at a broad audience of researchers and policy makers in the fields of (social) gerontology and mobility.

PARTNERS - ACTIVITIES

In order to guarantee tailor made solutions for the elderly concerning their mobility, this research project combines insights from two fields of expertise: gerontology and transport/mobility. The department of Agogics of the VUB has extensive expertise on social gerontology. Prof. Dr. Dominique Verté has built up a large expertise in the past 15 years on scientific research on the group of older people and their needs assessment using both quali-

tative and quantitative research techniques.

ULB, Centre de Recherche Urbaine and Prof. Dr. Pierre Lannoy have broad expertise on qualitative research techniques related to sustainable mobility.

Mobiel 21 has built up comprehensive expertise in the practice of mobility management and awareness raising activities towards sustainable mobility focused on different target groups.

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Follow-up Committee

For the complete and most up-to-date composition of the Follow-up Committee, please consult our Federal Research Actions Database (FEDRA) by visiting <http://www.belspo.be/fedra> or <http://www.belspo.be/ssd>

