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## The YOUMOBIL project – Relaunching youth mobility in rural areas in a time of pandemic



The INTERREG Central Europe "YOUMOBIL" project has been fulfilled at the end of March 2022. It started in April 2019 and T BRIDGE - ordinary member of TTS Italia - is one of the eight project partners located in six different European countries. Poor and inefficient mobility options in rural and decentralized areas are the most frequent reasons why young people choose to leave their area of origin and migrate to the larger cities in their region or even beyond, intensifying the population decline that concerns most of the rural areas of Europe. The YOUMOBIL project, therefore, aims to reverse this trend.



Collaborating directly with young people, T Bridge coordinated the experimentation activities of five pilot projects from as many European locations. The proposed solutions range from on-call or DRT / taxi services at low demand times, to the improvement and creation of apps to promote local public transport, to innovative loyalty program services and even night transport, addressing primarily young inhabitants of the rural realities but also aiming at the creation of benefits for the whole community.



In addition to this, further six investment actions have also been tested and they are highlighting the potential of the active co-participation of young people in the revitalization and enhancement of public buildings and dismissed or abandoned spaces on the railway, creating functional solutions for the well-being of the whole local community.

The solutions and trials were promptly adapted to the new mobility needs that emerged in consideration of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As this is a mobility-based project, the impact of the pandemic has been very significant. The restrictions have in fact affected the mobility of everyone and in particular those of young people.



Through an international online questionnaire and Big Data analysis on mobility, the project had the opportunity to analyse the change occurred in the European context. Understanding how the people's needs and habits evolve, allows us to identify innovative, tailor-made and, above all, effective solutions for the communities. In the metropolitan area of Modena, with the collaboration of the partner aMo - Modena Mobility Agency - and using Floating Car Data (FCD), it was performed a cross-analysis of the data collected from the online survey and the data from the private vehicle fleet circulating in the town. It was focused on the mobility to the main High schools of the town.

Briefly, according to both the COVID-19 survey and the FCD analysis, indeed, the significant impact of the pandemic is characterized primarily by a generalized decline in mobility and an increase in the frequency of use of cars.

Furthermore, comparing the FCD mobility variation between 2019 and 2021 towards Modenas' high schools and towards Modena in general, the analysis suggests three types of trends:

- A similar decrease;
- A slight increase compared to city mobility. This suggests that car has captured the demand from public transport;
- A much more noticeable decrease. In this case, it should be noted that it took place in areas where a new cycle path has been inaugurated. Therefore, it is possible to assume that, if adequate transport alternatives (e.g. cycle paths) are available to the public, car users are inclined to a different modal choice in favour of more sustainable modes.

The analyses were shared among the stakeholders and with young people in summer schools, at conferences and these were promoted in the form of "toolbox" and operative guidelines, in order to capitalize on the solutions studied and applied. The entire detailed documentation and contact details of the partners are available on the [project website](#).