

Mobility as an Inclusive Service

DIGNITY becomes an exceptional opportunity to break the digital barriers for vulnerable people

SENIGALLIA, Italy – Since the middle of the last century, the world has lived a digital revolution that has affected all the areas of the society. Urban transport is not an exception, new services and new players have appeared building up new mobility markets. Some years ago, the use of paper tickets was really a common way to access to the transport services, nowadays they may belong to antique collectors as paper was displaced by digital tickets.

Nonetheless, the benefits of this revolution have not arrived at all the society levels, even more, in some cases it has increased the digital gap between different classes of users. For instance, a blind person may find more complicated paying the bus using an account-based method rather than paying directly to the bus drivers with the assistance they may give. But the digital wheel cannot be stopped, and it becomes a duty for transport services providers to adapt the systems and connect all users, even those who the modernity strives to leave aside.

The Project DIGNITY, financed by the European Commission, has taken these issues seriously and will explore the digital transport ecosystem in three different phases: framing and bridging the digital gap, finally the impact assessment of the solutions proposed.

Italy is represented in this interesting project by the city of Ancona, one of the most important Italian hubs in the Adriatic Sea. In the last years the city has turned to an inclusive development, either for its elderly population as for disabled people and immigrants, providing multiple social services. myCicero, the company partner in this project, has taken into



consideration this development and has decided to support it thanks to its expertise and hundreds running projects on mobility and MaaS (Mobility-as-a-Service).

myCicero, along with Conerobus, the local bus company and the municipality of Ancona, plans to boost the inclusive development, upgrading the current app for public transport. It will be improved with new features that are focused on breaking the actual digital barriers, involving all the users who may see in the App an ally for their daily activities.

The company myCicero will mainly work on two actions; the **first one** can be summarized as follows: have you ever closed yours eyes and travelled from home to work? Have you ever tried to get on a bus not lifting your legs up? If you have ever done that at least once in your life you will figure out that the number of barriers along the way are shocking, this is the daily life of visually impaired and mobility disabled people. For this first, the project will include the following functionalities in the current app:

Multimodal trip planning: the lack of equipment for aiding disabled people either at bus stops as inside the buses is a real fact. To deal with this, the project is providing a simple but powerful new component to the travel solution indicating the accessibility (or not) of

vehicles and bus stops. Such component



allows the users to know if the next bus or bus stop is suitable for their needs.

Beacons communication: these small devices have revolutionized the communication industry, allowing a perfect wireless communication. These and other features are perfectly fitting in DIGNITY project, being incorporated either at the bus stops and inside the buses. Their main function will be

to collect information about the next bus stop or the next bus arriving. By transmitting this information through a push notification via APP, this notification may be read aloud to the user



without the need of any interaction with the smartphone.

Integrated ticketing for public transport and single payment: thinking that it is already really complicated to get a ticket just for a single transport in weak physical conditions, you can easily imagine repeating the operation as many times as the number of transport modes you need. It becomes a struggle and it could end by turning the trip into a tiring operation when not even the journey has begun. The Italian pilot partner plans to merge different operators into a single payment avoiding the effort and making simpler the trip planning.

APP with voice access: smartphones are a magnificent ally in people daily life. In this sense, current technology trends point to a higher level of human-machine interaction, not only pressing buttons and waiting for answers, but talking and listening. The idea is to include this feature, enabling the current APP to receive voice commands and give answers related to, for example, the arrival time of a specific bus.



The **second action** is addressed to other groups of vulnerable-to-exclusion users: low-income users and migrants. Understanding that the needs of these groups are not necessarily linked to physical disabilities, the Italian pilot plans the definition of good advices for new business



schema and feasibility assessments and also new measures to include the largest communities and their challenge in integration in public transport, all under a large and extended research whose outcomes will be the backbone of this strategy line to be adopted at local level.

Both action lines have been planned along a strong cooperation from Conerobus and the municipality of Ancona, providing direct assistance to vulnerable users, with training and protocols to bus drivers and a close relation with sensitive people associations, listen their demands and creating agreements that seek to satisfy their needs, providing safe access to public transport and making their life barrierless.