



Lessons learned from Vienna's bike-sharing system to get migrant women to cycle

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Introduction:

Many migrant women interested in cycling do not have their own bike. Migrant families often buy a bike first for the husband or the children and seldom for the women. As our research shows this is true also for many women who finished a cycling course and want to cycle. This gap between gaining cycling skills and owning a bike is a massive obstacle for migrant women's cycling practice. Therefore this target group needs innovative support.

Research questions:

1. Can (public bike sharing systems) PBS bridge this gap between the practices of '(re-)starting cycling' and 'buying an own bike'?
2. Can PBS therefore foster migrant women's cycling and if so, under what circumstances?

Research methods

We used qualitative and quantitative methods of empirical social research linked within an experimental and participative setting.

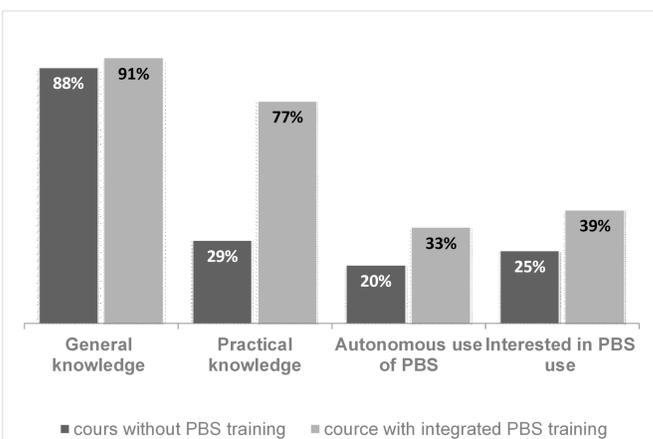
In focus groups with migrant women interested in cycling and with migrant experts we discussed the mobility problems and wishes of migrant women.

The results were used to draft questions for a survey with migrant women interested in cycling. We started with the hypothesis that easy access to a usable bike, whether owned or rented, increases the frequency of cycling.

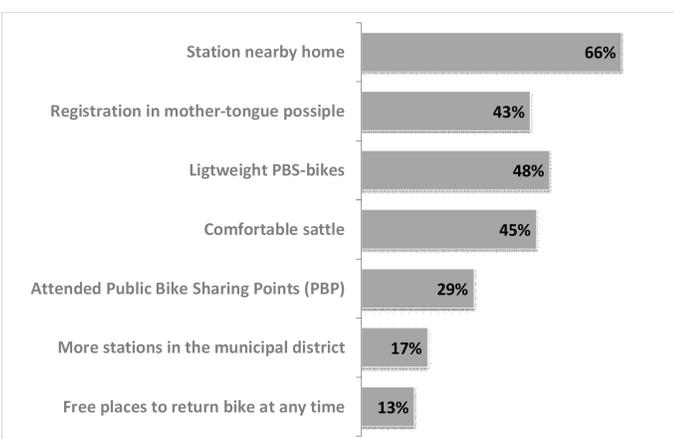
Therefore, since 2016 a module to train the use of PBS has been tested in cycling courses. The emerging problems were analysed, the module optimised.

All the course participants from 2012 to 2017 were surveyed. In total 119 respondents filled out the questionnaire.

Results of the survey I: General and practical knowledge about PBS, use of PBS and interest in usage — before and after a PBS training



Results of the survey II: Requests for starter-friendly PBS and for attended Public Bike Sharing Points [multiple answers]



Results of the survey III: Migrant women's ideas for attended Public Bike Sharing Points (PBP) for (re-)starters

The additional PBP should particularly address the needs of (re-)starters. That means:

- As with the usual PBS, an attended PBP should be free for the usual training time (one hour).
- It should include human advisers offering support.
- The PBP bikes should be more ergonomically adaptable to (re-)starters and come in different sizes.

Conclusions:

- Bike-interested migrant women can be seen as a potential target group for bike sharing services: for usual PBSs as well as for attended PBPs.
- The usual Public Bike Schemes (PBS) can help to bridge the gap between '(re-)starting cycling' and 'buying an own bike' under the condition that interested women without their own bike get practical knowledge how to handle PBS and get help to train using it.
- Bike courses are a good place to combine bike-training with PBS-training. This works especially for women who participate in an advanced course.
- Most of those who finished the beginners' course need more practice preferably with bikes that are easier to handle. They would prefer an additional Public Bike Point (PBP) adapted to beginners' needs.
- However, most of cycling migrant women wish to buy their own bike. Therefore they appreciate information and assistance on the purchase of a (second-hand) bike. Cycling Courses can offer this and connect the women with the 'right addresses'.

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