



Municipality of Cento

“EMPOWERING EQUALITY

How a small municipality made a big difference”

European Projects Department -
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Women and Public Space, Ljubljana,
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A SNAPSHOT OF CENTO

- **COUNTRY:** ITALY
- **REGION:** EMILIA ROMAGNA
- **PROVINCE:** FERRARA
- **CITIZENS:** 35.716
- **URBAN FUNCTIONAL AREA:** 1 main town (Cento) and 8 hamlets
- **FOREIGN CITIZENS:** 5245 (15,1%)

STRATEGICAL POSITION AMONG THREE IMPORTANT CITIES: BOLOGNA, MODENA, FERRARA.



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The Challenge: mobility as a key to inclusion

Territorial fragmentation:
hamlets far from the city center
up to 18 km

Only the 49% of the population
living in the main urban area

Lack of an effective public
transport service, especially in
the hamlets

Hamlets often inhabited by
vulnerable groups of citizens

High car-dependency

Massive presence of commuters



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URBACT PUMA NETWORK (2023 – 2025)

Partners: Dienvidkurzeme (LV) · Taurage (LT) · Larissa (GR) · Zagreb (HR) · Gdańsk (PL) · Cento (IT) · Viladecans (ES) · Nova Gorica (SI);

DURATION:  01.06.2023 – 31.12.2025;

Goal:  Climate-neutral & sustainable mobility;

Actions:  Promote safe, accessible alternatives to cars;

Method:  Inclusive, active citizen participation;



URBACT



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Listening First: The Cento Mobility Survey

Public questionnaire to understand daily mobility patterns (562 responses – $\approx 1.6\%$ of residents).

Key findings:

💡 “No single solution fits all — gender differences clearly emerged.”

👤 Respondents are mainly familiar with digital tools and mobility topics.

👤 More men than women participated.

🏙️ Majority from the city center, fewer from suburban areas.

🚗 Higher education levels and private car ownership prevailed.





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From Insights to Action:

➔ Focus shifted towards gender-sensitive mobility and the needs of vulnerable groups.

However, we soon realized some key obstacles:

LACK OF
INTERNAL
EXPERTISE

NO CLEAR
OPERATIONAL
STRATEGY

LIMITED
INTERNAL
COLLABORATION





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Learning from Umeå: European Urban Initiative – City-to-City Exchange

Description: 🤝 Partnership with **Umeå (Sweden)** — one of the most advanced European cities in promoting gender equality — to learn about gender-sensitive governance and inclusive urban policies.

Context: 🌍 **The European Urban Initiative – City-to-City Exchange** supports peer learning between European cities, allowing those with less experience to be guided by pioneers on specific urban development challenges.





What We Learned from Umeå

 COLLECT GENDER- DISAGGREGATED DATA	 USE DATA TO BUILD CROSS- DEPARTMENT COLLABORATION	 BUILD A LOCAL GENDER EQUALITY NETWORK	 LISTEN THE CITIZENS' VOICES
In every municipal department to understand different needs and behaviors.	Encourage joint planning and shared responsibility across sectors.	Involving universities, NGOs, and local community groups.	Through regular surveys and focus groups to shape inclusive policies.



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Using Gender-Segregated Data to Improve Local Services

Data collection across services

-  Access data by gender
-  Qualitative surveys in municipal services
-  Library & Cultural Services
-  38% of women would join activities if held during school hours
-  Action: Adjusted schedules & opening hours

Mobility & Public Space

-  56% of women feel street design in favor of cars over pedestrians
-  Action: Shift toward slow & safe mobility
-  Why it matters: Data reveals gender-specific needs and drives inclusive policies



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Listening to Women's Voices: Focus Groups

Purpose:

- 🔍 Understand specific mobility needs and everyday barriers of women;
- 📝 Go beyond data: capture lived experiences and perspectives;
- 🎯 Identify concrete ideas to make urban services more inclusive;

Groups involved:

- 👩🏿👩🏻 Women with migrant background;
- 👩🏿 Women 65+;
- 👧 Girls under 25;

Expected outcome:

- 🔧 concrete actions for a more inclusive mobility strategy in Cento



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Women with migrant background:

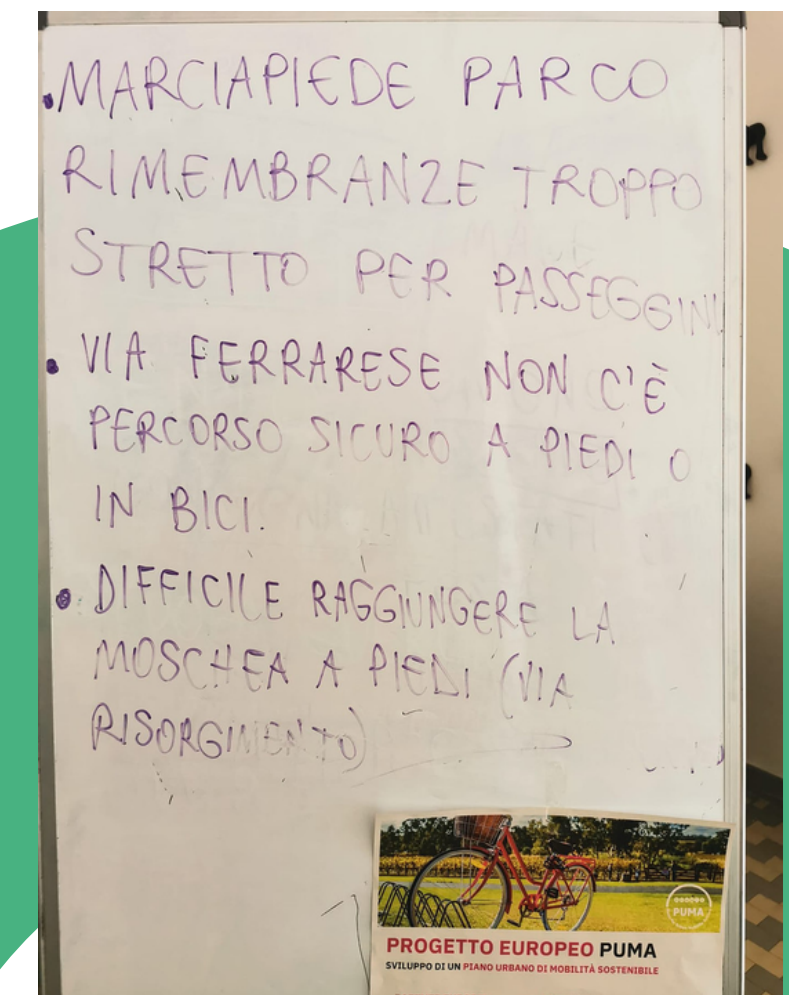
Nr. 3 focus groups -45 participants;

Key Needs:

- Language and cultural barriers;
- Limited public transport access / social/economic exclusion
- Child-friendly mobility;

Planned Action:

- Municipal transport info point;
- Street-for-kids community space;





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Women <25 y.o.

Nr. 2 focus groups - 24 participants;

Key Needs:

- Public space safety
- Youth-friendly communal spaces
- Pedestrian & cyclist safety (slow mobility)
- Flexible public transport schedules

Planned Action:

- Co-design of park regeneration
- Road safety & slow mobility training in schools



MOBILITÀ SOSTENIBILE: COSA NE PENSANO I GIOVANI?

Workshop sulla mobilità sostenibile rivolto a giovan* fino ai 34 anni.

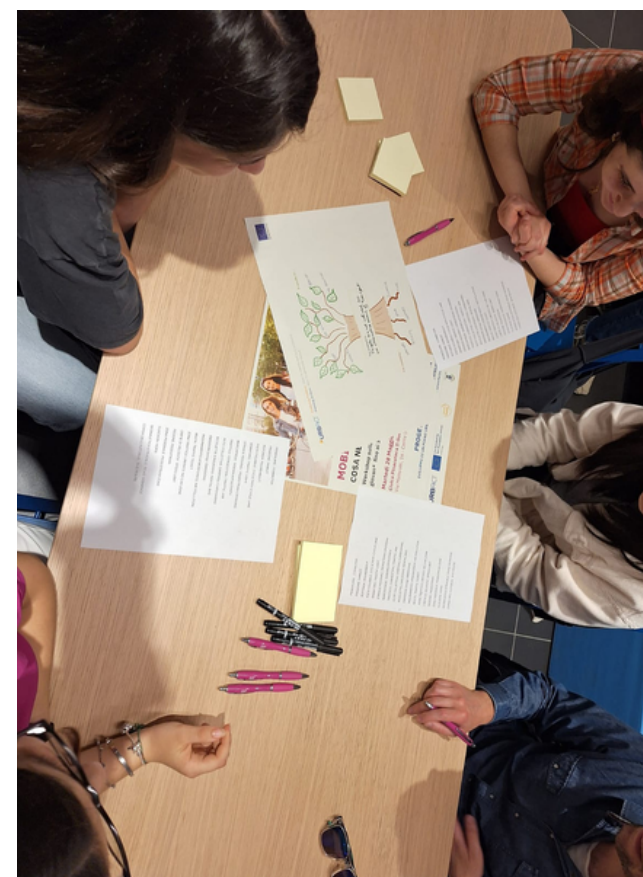
Martedì 28 Maggio 2024, ore 14.30
Civica Pinacoteca Il Guercino
Via Matteotti, 16 - Cento (FE)

PROGETTO EUROPEO PUMA
SVILUPPO DI UN PIANO URBANO DI MOBILITÀ SOSTENIBILE
www.urbact.eu/networks/puma

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Women >65 y.o.

Nr. 2 focus groups - 40 participants;

Key Needs:

- Limited autonomy
- Distrust/fear of public transport

Planned Action:

- Feasibility study for on-demand transport linking elderly women to key services (e.g., municipal offices, hospital)





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Key takeaways:

-  Data reveal inequalities
-  Listening builds trust
-  Collaboration creates change
-  Small steps, big impacts



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Thank you!

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