

RESPONSE BRIEF | 2021

Demand-responsive transport among vulnerable travellers: the needs, behavior and interaction



**The insights presented in this brief are based on
Karlstad University handbook.**

Echeverri, P., & Salomonson, N., (2020). Experiences of demand responsive transport among vulnerable travellers - a handbook on need, demeanour, and interaction.



See the report here / download the report here:
<http://response-project.eu/library/handbook-on-traveller-experiences>



Karlstad University.



As part of the RESPONSE project, Karlstad University has conducted a study on vulnerable travellers' experiences of demand-responsive transport (DRT). The handbook provides a guide for how public authorities can improve users' travel experiences. It pays particular attention to the following:



How to reach a more in-depth understanding of the **needs** of vulnerable travellers.



How to **interact** with them so that they will experience high-value service.



Vulnerable travellers' **experiences** on using different forms of DRT.





DRT taxi - Photo by Thomas Harrysson

MAIN FINDINGS

- Transport providers need to **go beyond being simply “service-minded”** and pay greater attention to the **embodied and behavioral aspects of experiences** during training and education since these are an important part of traveller and employee well-being.
- Transport providers should be aware of the **principal vulnerabilities** – such as i.e., physical discomfort, commodification and disorientation – which travellers may experience during traveller-driver interactions.
- **Knowledge of travellers’ real-time perceptions** of crucial interactive situations that occur during journeys, such as interactions between themselves and drivers, their behavior, their use of equipment, information exchange etc. can help transport operators to increase their ability to design more user-friendly services.
- **Training more service staff in interactional techniques** can be beneficial. The training could include discussions about general practices in services for functionally limited travellers and achieving the delicate balance of assisting the traveller and letting the traveller decide how much assistance is needed.
- Each DRT-trip should be recognized as part of not only a specific transport system but also as **part of a larger network of other systems**; for example, healthcare. This recognition enables more precise decision making when it comes to issues such as responsibility, information and security.
- When travellers are using the regular public transport service, there might be several aspects – such as physical attributes, spatial factors, self-service machines, guiding sounds, communication signs (or the lack thereof), and transport noise etc. – which (if being inappropriate) might cause the travellers to perceive the travel process as difficult, less accessible, and somewhat insecure. Because of these problems, vulnerable travellers often hesitate to use public transport – resulting in social segregation and high community cost. **Considering travellers’ real-time perceptions** could help service operators to design effective DRT services.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR METHODOLOGIES

The handbook provides some recommendations on how to develop methods for a better understanding of vulnerable travellers and how more specifically to conduct group sessions where participants may analyze and develop co-designed future transport solutions.

- **Shadowing: a method for better understanding travellers**

Shadowing is a method where travellers are followed during their trips. By using this approach, it is possible to grasp travellers' experiences while they are highly involved in using the transportation services and aware of the specific travel conditions, so it is easier to recall their perceptions. The methodology increases the possibility for the traveller to give a more accurate response and makes it easier for them to point to specific details and elements. Such details provide the developer with managerial information which can be used to change or develop the service operation. Ideally, this method is used as a complementary approach to surveys, traditional interviews, or focus groups.

- **Experience-based co-design (EBCD): a method for service innovation**

According to EBCD, service design is co-design and may involve all actors that collaborate in the design process., – such as service providers (management, communication, drivers and call center workers), service users (different traveller groups) and design experts – throughout the design process. Emphasis is placed not on the physical resources used in the process, but rather on the skills and knowledge of participating actors. The focus of the service co-design process is on users' experiences and the advantages users see in using a service. The idea of co-design means that the travellers need to not only be active partners and “have a say” about their travel, but also directly contribute to the design of that travel.



Read more about the RESPONSE project here:

response-project.eu

See the report here/ download the report here:

<http://response-project.eu/library/handbook-on-traveller-experiences>

