

CYCLING WITHOUT AGE

“Building Better Lives”

CYCLING
WITHOUT
AGE



BACKGROUND

Denmark is experiencing a rise in the elderly population and this increase is expected to cause the percentage of elderly people in Denmark to grow to 25% by 2050. This is a large percentage of the population who are often times living away from their families in senior living apartments or facilities where engagement with the outside world can be difficult. Senior loneliness is on the rise as this growing population remains isolated from the rest of the Danish community. As life expectancy continues to grow and more Danes experience this, it is important to work to reduce the loneliness and isolation these individuals face by fostering relationships with community members and ensuring these people can have a form of mobility outside the places they live.

CYCLING WITHOUT AGE

Cycling Without Age is a movement founded in 2012 that works to increase mobility for senior citizens through bike rides around Copenhagen and cities internationally. One key aspect of CWA is that it is a grassroots organization and this allows volunteers to easily get involved and help grow CWA in the long run while focusing on their people-driven mission. Through CWA, volunteers can do bike rides with the elderly to allow them to leave nursing homes and see the city. This is unique as CWA allows volunteers to take charge of doing these bike rides on trishaws and helps foster intergenerational friendships and relationships. CWA's guiding principles are generosity, slowness, storytelling, relationships, and without age. They are truly passionate about improving life for the elderly around the world and this is reflected in the 3,050 chapter locations with over 3 million rides and 650,000 people served since they were founded in 2012 in Copenhagen.

WHY SHARMILA?

Throughout high school and during the pandemic, I worked to create a nonprofit that did grocery deliveries for senior citizens and other at-risk individuals to ensure they got access to necessities without having to pay for high delivery fees. I have experience working with senior citizens and older people through volunteering at soup kitchens in high school. I was excited to work with CWA this summer to learn more about senior isolation and how we can work to alleviate the loneliness these individuals feel, especially in the US where there is a larger industry for senior living homes and centers.

ISSUE AT A GLANCE

25% of Denmark's population will be 65+ by 2050

81.3 life expectancy

2.2% of GDP spent on elderly

7,000 senior housing apartments in Denmark

ABOUT CWA

3,500 active chapters

4,900 trishaws

3 MILLION rides

39 countries

39,000 trained cycle pilots

WHY CWA?

CWA's passion for working with the elderly comes through with the care and thought that goes into each bike ride and the organization as a whole. With any changes made to the structure or new ideas that come up, the founders work closely with the elderly to figure out what works best for them and how CWA can best serve their needs. CWA's work in Copenhagen is extremely important as Denmark has a rapidly increasing elderly population with an expected 25% of the population to be 65 years or older by 2050. CWA is working to create structures to assist this growing population and increase the quality of life for seniors in Denmark and around the world.

THE PROJECT

1. Creating a marketing plan to promote CWA

During my summer project, CWA was filming for a new docuseries as a part of Brief but Spectacular on the bike rides done around the world with one episode focused on the Danish chapter. In addition, there was a short film that was filmed in Santa Barbara that featured CWA's work and this was premiered during the summit. I worked with the Danish and International teams to create a social media and outreach plan to maximize the spread of the upcoming series and short film. I also worked with local partners in the city like Novo Nordisk and DIS to secure support for screenings of the short film.

2. Prepare for an influx of site visits

CWA being the spotlight of a new PBS docuseries and a short film led the team to prioritize strengthening existing systems and creating new processes to ensure successful onboarding of new interested site users upon the series' release. I worked with the Danish and International teams to create a plan to update the website with a chat box and pop-ups to capture user data directly for a newsletter. I also worked to update the US site with more details on the Copenhagen Cycles program and update the map with chapter information.

3. Bike Rides

I was trained within the first two weeks of my summer project on how to drive a trishaw safely in the city of Copenhagen. I did bike rides with senior citizens a few times a week and was able to directly interact with the target demographic of CWA's work. I also participated in a couple of longer bike rides out to Dyrehaven and Dragør, nearby towns in Denmark!

4. International Summit

I assisted in planning the International Summit for 150+ CWA members, volunteers, and leaders in June. The summit is a yearly meeting for all CWA involved people to unite and learn more about the organization and future growth plans.

SCHOLAR IMPACT

Working on a stronger marketing plan helped CWA better reach out to the local Copenhagen community as well as new interested volunteers worldwide to increase their scope and spread their mission further. This marketing plan can be used to increase engagement on social media platforms and gain new teen volunteers to do bike rides. The modifications to existing processes and the website allowed for easier capturing of site user data to better target marketing emails and newsletter content. It also allowed allow site users to find information easily and connect with existing chapters first. Participating in regular bike rides with seniors allowed me to engage with more members of this growing demographic, and learn more about the community CWA works to serve. Planning the International Summit allowed me to help structure volunteering programming and meet more members of CWA's global team. I was able to meet incredible people from all around the world and it inspired me to want to start a chapter in Nashville.



PROJECT TIMELINE

May 6th - June 28th

International Summit: June 7th-9th

1. "Building Better Lives - Cycling without Age." Cycling Without Age, 15 Jan. 2024, cyclingwithoutage.org/.
2. Denmark's National Follow-up to The ..., unece.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/mipaa20-report-denmark.pdf. Accessed 18 Feb. 2024.
3. Russell, Helen. "For Pensioners, Something Is Spot-on in the State of Denmark." The Guardian, Guardian News and Media, 2 Feb. 2016, theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/02/for-pensioners-something-is-spot-on-in-the-state-of-denmark.
4. "View from the Nordics: Senior Living Is at a Turning Point." Real Asset Insight, 24 May 2022, realassetinsight.com/feature/view-from-the-nordics-senior-living-is-at-a-turning-point/.