



D3.2: WalkingBus Implementation

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2	Beneficiary	TERO	Greece
3	Beneficiary	MVNGO	Italy
4	Beneficiary	KARGENC	Türkiye



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2.0	28/02/2025	Dimitrios Nalmpantis (AUPh)	Final editing and submission.



Abstract

This is the WalkingBus D3.2: WalkingBus Implementation. This deliverable is a public document summarising the implementation of the three (3) pilot rounds per country (Greece, Turkey, Italy) within the timeframe of the WalkingBus project. Each country has a designated partner responsible to plan, organise and implement the WalkingBus pilots at the local context. This deliverable summarises the actions implemented during the pilots.



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Acronyms

AUTH	Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
EACEA	European Education and Culture Executive Agency
KARGENC	Kargenc Environment Sport Club
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MVNGO	Mine Vaganti NGO



1 Introduction

The WalkingBus project aims to encourage safe, sustainable, and community-driven transport options for children traveling to school by organizing WalkingBus routes in collaboration with schools and local communities across Greece, Italy, and Türkiye. A key element of this project is the pilots' implementation of the concept of WalkingBus.

The consortium during the project's timeframe established designated WalkingBus routes that connect residential areas with schools and recreational centers that cooperated with the consortium and the local partners. Then through the development of training material and the realisation of the training seminars, the consortium trained volunteers (parents, teachers, or community members) to act as "walk leaders" ensuring the safety and organization of the walking groups. Through the three rounds of the pilot implementation of the WalkinBus in the three cases (Greece, Turkey, Italy), the project aims to attempt to evaluate the initiative's impact on children's physical activity levels, traffic reduction around schools, and community awareness of active travel benefits and gather feedback from participants and stakeholders to identify challenges, best practices, and areas for improvement for future rounds.

This document summarises the pilot rounds across each country including the objectives of each session, the processes in terms of planning and organisation as well as the overview and learning outcomes.





2 WalkingBus Pilots Implementation

2.1 Implementation of the WalkingBus Pilot Round

The WalkingBus pilot rounds are implemented across Greece, Italy, and Türkiye, marking a significant step in testing and refining the initiative. The pilots will allow participating schools, local authorities, and community members to assess the effectiveness of the WalkingBus methodology in real-world conditions, while also gathering valuable insights for future scaling.

2.2 Methodology for the Pilot Round Implementation

To ensure a smooth and impactful rollout, the pilot rounds will be structured around key training and operational phases. The **Train the Walkers Seminar** previously delivered, serves as the foundation, equipping volunteers, teachers, parents, and local partners with the necessary knowledge to conduct WalkingBus routes safely and effectively. The methodology has been designed to maintain consistency across all participating countries while allowing flexibility for local adaptations.

The training content has been developed collaboratively by **AUTH and Tero**, combining their respective expertise to cover both safety aspects and the environmental and promotional dimensions of the WalkingBus initiative.

- **Safety & Operational Focus (AUTH):** AUTH has designed comprehensive safety protocols, risk management guidelines, and operational best practices for managing child pedestrian groups. These materials include road safety principles, emergency response protocols, and group coordination strategies.
- **Environmental and Awareness Focus (Tero):** Tero has developed educational resources highlighting the environmental benefits of the WalkingBus, emphasizing reduced car dependency, lower emissions, and the promotion of active lifestyles. Additionally, promotional guidelines have been prepared to assist local organizers in advocating for the initiative.

To enhance accessibility, the training materials have been adapted to local contexts, translated into national languages, and designed to be user-friendly for non-specialist participants.



2.3 Participant Selection and Pilot Preparation

Each country has identified key participants, including teachers, parents, local volunteers, and municipal representatives, who will take an active role in the pilots' implementation. These stakeholders have been invited based on their interest in sustainable school transportation solutions and their potential to contribute to the long-term success of the WalkingBus in their communities.

Local partners under Tero's supervision have been responsible for organizing registration, scheduling sessions, and ensuring that all necessary resources are provided to participants before the pilot phase begins.

2.4 WalkingBus Pilot Implementation Process

The pilot rounds will test the WalkingBus methodology utilising the training delivered and ensuring that this is translated into in-field implementation. The selected WalkingBus routes are piloted in real conditions, with trained walkers and other volunteers guiding children along designated paths. This phase will include hands-on demonstrations, supervised trial runs, and community engagement activities to raise awareness. The local partners, as facilitators, will oversee the implementation, providing support and troubleshooting any challenges that arise during the pilot phase.

2.5 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Policy Insights

To assess the pilot round's effectiveness, a structured evaluation process will be conducted.

- **Participant Feedback:** Pre and post-pilot surveys will be distributed to gather insights on the training's impact, clarity, and practical application from the children participants as well as their parents and the volunteers.
- **Operational Observations:** Facilitators and participants will document key experiences, challenges, and successes observed during the WalkingBus operation. These are presented in this document in Section 3.



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Then the evaluation and monitoring findings will be compiled into a report outlining key lessons learned, necessary adjustments to the methodology, and policy recommendations for further development of the WalkingBus initiative. These pilot rounds will play a crucial role in shaping future iterations and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the WalkingBus as an active mobility solution for schoolchildren.





3 Realization of the WalkingBus Pilots

In this Chapter, the implementation of the three (3) pilot rounds on each country site will be presented and described.

3.1 Greece

3.1.1 Pilot round one (1)

Responsible organization:	Tero
Date:	10/02/2025
Time:	13:15 PM
Location:	Peraia, Thessaloniki (Greece)
Number of Participants	21
Objective of the pilot round: The first pilot round of the WalkingBus project aimed to test and evaluate the implementation of the WalkingBus initiative in a real-world setting. The primary objective was to encourage active mobility among children by promoting walking as a safe, sustainable, and enjoyable mode of transport for school commutes. This phase focused on assessing the feasibility, effectiveness, and engagement levels of students, parents, and local stakeholders in adopting the WalkingBus concept.	
Event Description: The first pilot round of the WalkingBus project took place in Peraia, Greece, bringing together children, parents, and volunteers in a coordinated walking journey. The event commenced at the entrance of the 4th Elementary School of Peraia, where participants gathered at 13:00 pm to begin the organized walk. A total of 13 children participated in the walk, accompanied by five (5) parents and four (4) dedicated volunteers/guides who ensured the safety and smooth facilitation of the	



route. The group followed a designated WalkingBus path leading to the Recreational Center for Children (KDAP Kids Athletics), allowing children to experience a structured, enjoyable, and safe walking commute.

Implementation Process:

The implementation process for the first pilot round in Greece, involved several carefully planned steps to ensure effective training delivery and participant engagement. A breakdown of the process follows:

1. Planning and Coordination

- a. Route Selection:** Identify and map safe WalkingBus routes, including start and end points, as well as any necessary stops as well as collaborate with local authorities to ensure route safety and secure necessary approvals. For the first pilot, Tero decided to utilize routes as defined in previous activities (D2.2) and planned the route from the 4th Elementary School to the Recreational Center KDAP Kids Athletics.
- b. Stakeholder Engagement:** Initially we secured commitment from local schools and parents for their participation and then identified and confirmed the walkers (teachers, parents, or volunteers). Then, while obtaining consent, we then defined the date and time for the 1st pilot round while ensuring alignment with local school hours.

2. Preparation and Logistics

- a. Walker Readiness:** We then ensured that all walkers had attended the "Train the Walker" seminar or else we informed them about the basic parameters they should be aware of.
- b. Safety Protocols:** We initially had a meeting with other walkers and especially the guides from the Recreational Center in order to establish safety instructions while also ensuring that we include emergency contact numbers and a list of participants. Finally, we also created a Viber chat group to make sure we are able to contact directly among the team members.



- c. Equipment:** Tero then designed and digitally printed high-visibility vests available for all participants. Additionally, we conducted a safety walkthrough to ensure route signage were in place throughout the designated routes.

Overview:

The first pilot round implementation successfully engaged 22 participants (13 children, 5 parents, 4 volunteers). The pilot was organised and implemented by Tero in cooperation with the recreational center KDAP Kids Athletics. Despite the fact being the first pilot out of a series of three rounds, the pilot achieved its primary goal of familiarising the children with the WalkingBus concept in practice. Furthermore, we implemented the WalkingBus as planned, while ensuring that all safety protocols were followed. Finally, using the translated questionnaire forms previously developed by Kargenc Club and translated by the local partners, we proceeded with the completion of the four (4) questionnaires: 1) Pre-trip for students, 2) Post-trip for students, 3) For walkers/volunteers, 4) For family/parents. This allowed us to collect feedback from all the involved groups, identify challenges and areas for improvement.

Challenges and Issues Encountered:

Challenges that we encountered during the realisation of the first round of the WalkingBus in Greece were the period of time to gather all children from the school entrance, provide vests and organise them into pairs to initiate the WalkingBusses. This was mainly due to overcrowdiness since the WalkingBus was planned to start at the end of the school time and there were numerous kids in the location.

Observations/Learning Outcomes:

The implementation of the first pilot round provided valuable insights into the practical application of the WalkingBus model, informing adjustments for wider adoption and scaling in subsequent phases of the project. The success of this first pilot round demonstrated the potential of the WalkingBus initiative to promote active mobility,





enhance community engagement, and create a safer, more sustainable school commute experience. Insights gained from this implementation will be used to improve future pilot rounds and expand the initiative's reach.

Next Steps and Actions:

The following steps are to utilise the acquired knowledge of this first round to improve and enhance the following two rounds to be implemented. Aspects to improve are: a) safety awareness, b) promotional and organisational skills, c) execution and realisation.

Conclusions:

The first pilot serves as a practical application of the knowledge acquired throughout the project (identification of good practices, co-design of routes, training material and seminars) and allow all participants to gain hands-on experience in real WalkingBus operations. The pilots will also provide valuable insights for refining the WalkingBus model and assessing its effectiveness in the selected community of Peraia, Thessaloniki.

Photos: Photos from the first Pilot Round in Greece are presented herein.

Figure 1: Photos from the first round of the pilot implementation in Peraia, Greece





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3.1.2 Pilot round two (2)

Responsible organization:	Tero
Date:	19/02/2025
Time:	17:30 PM
Location:	Peraia, Thessaloniki (Greece)
Number of Participants	27
Objective of the pilot round: The second pilot round of the WalkingBus project aimed to re-evaluate and enhance the implementation of the initiative in a real-world setting. Building on the insights gained from the first pilot, the goal was to improve the overall experience while incorporating feedback received during that phase. By engaging with children, volunteers, and parents during co-design sessions, seminars, and the initial pilot round, we are now reaching out to more children, promoting the project locally, and implementing the WalkingBus in a meaningful way.	
Event Description: The second pilot round of the WalkingBus project took place in Peraia, Greece, bringing together children, parents, and volunteers for a coordinated walking journey. The event began at the KDAP Kids Athletics facility, where children had already arrived for recreational activities. The WalkingBus was scheduled to start at 5:30 PM. A total of 23 children participated in the walk, accompanied by four WalkingBus guides who worked collaboratively to ensure that safety was the top priority. The group followed a designated WalkingBus path leading to the Recreational Center for Children (KDAP Kids Athletics), allowing the children to enjoy a structured and safe walking commute.	
Implementation Process:	



Similar to the first round of the WalkingBus pilot, we carefully planned steps to ensure effective training delivery and participant engagement. More specifically:

1. Planning and Coordination

- a. **Route Selection:** We design and chose a different route compared to the first one in order to engage more children as participants in the walking busses. The route selected was from the premises of KDAP Kids Athletics to a Road Safety Park located in the city of Peraia.
- b. **Stakeholder Engagement:** For proper implementation we organised in cooperation with KDAP Kids athletics and prepared consent forms to be signed by parents, before the pilot round implementation. The interest was significantly high and thus we had to limit the number to children to 23 in order to allow the bus to be facilitated by 4 guides/volunteers.

2. Preparation and Logistics

- a. **Walker Readiness:** We chose guides/volunteers that had attended the Train the Walker seminar and have been aware of the safety guidelines.
- b. **Safety Protocols:** Similarly to the first round, we initially had a meeting with the selected walkers/volunteers from the Recreational Center and Tero in order to establish safety instructions while also making sure we have printed the names of the participants along with emergency contacts. Finally, the same Viber chat group has been maintained to ensure proper communication among the team members.
- c. **Equipment:** The safety vests previously designed were used to provide high visibility to other traffic users.

Overview:

The second pilot round implementation successfully engaged 27 participants (23 children, 4 guides/volunteers). The pilot was organised and implemented by Tero in cooperation with the recreational center KDAP Kids Athletics. The second pilot round of the Walking Bus achieved the goal of testing the concept, its feasibility, cope with challenges and eventually disseminate the project's methods. All safety protocols were maintained while additionally the evaluation of the busses was initiated by having completed numerous



questionnaires by the children that participated, the volunteers as well as the children's parents.

Challenges and Issues Encountered:

During the second round of the Walking Bus, we encountered several challenges and issues, particularly in coordinating a large group of children aged 5 to 12 years. One of the main difficulties was maintaining a consistent pace and distance throughout the Walking Bus. If these aspects are not managed properly, they can pose safety risks. Therefore, the guides must ensure they maintain an appropriate pace for all participants. Organizing the Walking Buses with groups of children of similar ages may help address these challenges more effectively.

Observations/Learning Outcomes:

The second pilot round, like the first, provided valuable insights into the practical application of the WalkingBus. These insights will help us evaluate and enhance the process for the third and final pilot. This series of pilots will also enable us to inform and develop learning outcomes, as well as evaluate and monitor progress, allowing us to make necessary adjustments for wider adoption and scaling in subsequent phases of the project. The success of the first two pilot rounds demonstrated the potential of the WalkingBus initiative to promote active mobility, enhance community engagement, and create a safer, more sustainable school commute experience. Finally, the insights gained from this implementation will be used to improve the third pilot round and to further communicate the project's objectives.

Next Steps and Actions:

The following steps outline how to use the knowledge gained from this second round in combination with the first round to improve and enhance the final pilot round. Areas for improvement include: a) safety awareness, b) promotional and organizational skills, and c) execution.



Conclusions:

The second pilot complemented the first one to both serve as practical applications of the knowledge gained throughout the initiative. This allows all participants to gain hands-on experience with real WalkingBus operations. Additionally, it will provide valuable insights for refining the WalkingBus model and evaluating its effectiveness in the selected community of Peraia, Thessaloniki and beyond.

Photos: Photos from the second pilot round in Peraia, Greece are presented herein.

Figure 2: Photos from the second round of the pilot implementation in Peraia, Greece





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3.1.3 Pilot round three (3)

Responsible organization:	Tero
Date:	26/02/2025
Time:	17:15 PM
Location:	Peraia, Thessaloniki (Greece)
Number of Participants	18
Objective of the pilot round: xxx Upon the completion of the first two rounds, the third round aims to integrate new changes and adapt to the challenges identified up until now. Similarly safety both in terms of organisation and implementation of the WalkingBus as well as of providing useful safety tips and instructions to the students, were the main objectives. Event Description: The third and final pilot round of the WalkingBus project in the Greek case of Peraia, took place and brought a large group of children together along with the guides and volunteers. The event began at the KDAP Kids Athletics facility, where children were already participating in fitness activities. The WalkingBus was scheduled to start at 5:00 PM with a total of 18 children participating along with 4 guides/volunteers. The group followed a designated WalkingBus path leading to the local Road Safety Park and eventually ending the route to the Recreational Center for Children (KDAP Kids Athletics). Implementation Process: Similar to the first two rounds of the WalkingBus pilot, the following steps were planned and executed: <u>1. Planning and Coordination</u> c. Route Selection: Selected the route from the Recreational Center to the local Road Safety Park in Peraia.	



- d. **Stakeholder Engagement:** Through consent forms signed by the parents we gathered 18 children of various ages to participate in the final round, along with four (4) guides/volunteers.

2. Preparation and Logistics

- d. **Walker Readiness:** We chose guides/volunteers that had attended the Train the Walker seminar and have been aware of the safety guidelines.
- e. **Safety Protocols:** We again had a meeting with the guides/volunteers to ensure that everyone is aware of safety instructions along with other critical information. Finally, the same Viber chat group has been maintained to ensure proper communication among the team members.
- f. **Equipment:** The safety vests previously designed were again used to provide high visibility to other traffic users.

Overview:

The third and final pilot round implementation successfully engage 22 participants (18 children and 4 guides/volunteers). The pilot was organised and implemented by Tero in cooperation with the recreational center KDAP Kids Athletics. The pilot achieved the established objectives while maintaining safety at a high level throughout the execution. Finally, the evaluation forms were completed by all children, their parents as well as the volunteers that participated as guides.

Challenges and Issues Encountered:

The third and final round of the Walking Bus has been recognized as the smoothest regarding organization and operation, building on the challenges identified and the lessons learned from previous rounds. While the pace of the group remained a challenge, it was less significant than before, largely due to the guides' experience.

Observations/Learning Outcomes:

The final round has provided valuable insights into the practical application of the WalkingBus. These insights, along with the evaluation and monitoring results, will help



the consortium develop useful recommendations for any stakeholders or organizations interested in adopting the WalkingBus approach.

Next Steps and Actions:

The following steps outline how to utilize the knowledge gained from the third round, in combination with insights from the first two rounds, to improve and enhance the recommendations and lessons learnt. Conclusively the areas for improvement are: a) safety awareness, b) promotional and organizational skills, and c) execution.

Conclusions:

The third and final pilot served as a practical application of the knowledge gained from the initiative, complementing the first two pilots. This allows all participants to gain hands-on experience with actual WalkingBus operations. Additionally, it will offer valuable insights for refining the WalkingBus model and assessing its effectiveness in the selected community of Peraia, Thessaloniki, and beyond.

Photos: Photos from the third pilot round in Peraia, Greece are presented herein.

Figure 3: Photos from the third round of the pilot implementation in Peraia, Greece





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3.2 Italy

3.2.1 Pilot round one (1)

Responsible organization:	MVNGO
Date:	15/12/2024
Time:	9.30 am
Location:	Sassari, (Italy)
Number of Participants	20
Objective of the pilot round: The inaugural pilot session of the WalkingBus project was designed to test and assess the feasibility of introducing the WalkingBus concept in a real-life environment. This phase aimed to measure the practicality, efficiency and engagement levels of kids, volunteers and community members in adopting the initiative. Event Description: The first trial of the WalkingBus project was conducted in Sassari, Italy, involving children, parents, and volunteers in a well-organized walking experience. A total of 20 children took part in the walk with a pre-planned WalkingBus route, offering children an engaging and structured alternative to conventional transport. Implementation Process: The execution of the pilot phase in Sassari was carefully structured to facilitate participant engagement and ensure a seamless trial. The following steps were taken: Safe pedestrian paths were identified and planned. Authorities were consulted to validate route safety and obtain necessary approvals. Schools and parents were approached to secure their commitment. Key participants, including teachers, parents and volunteers, were selected and briefed. Consent was obtained and scheduling was aligned with school hours. The safety measures and operational procedures were prior defined ensuring a smooth implementation of the activity.	

**Overview:**

The first pilot session successfully engaged 20 kids. The initiative was coordinated by MVNGO in collaboration with IIS N. Pellegrini. This trial was successful in introducing children to the WalkingBus concept. The plan was executed as designed, with all safety protocols followed. Feedback from families/parents were collected to help in identifying potential improvements for future rounds.

Challenges and Issues Encountered:

A small challenge was to stay within the set times as gathering the children, keeping their attention during the walk and following them on the route can lead to slightly longer times.

Observations/Learning Outcomes:

The first pilot session provided insights into the practical implementation of the WalkingBus model, highlighting necessary adjustments for upcoming rounds. This trial reinforced the potential of the WalkingBus initiative, enhance school commute safety and the lessons learned from this experience will inform improvements in future implementations.

Next Steps and Actions:

Based on this initial experience, the next phases will incorporate improvements to optimize the process.

Conclusions:

The first pilot session served as a practical test of the project's core concepts. Participants gained hands-on experience with WalkingBus operations, contributing to the refinement of the model and assessing its impact. The insights from this phase will play a crucial role in the ongoing development and scaling of the initiative.

Photos: Photos from the first Pilot Round in Italy are presented herein.



Figure 4: Photos from the first round of the pilot implementation in Sassari, Italy





3.2.2 Pilot round two (2)

Responsible organization:	MVNGO
Date:	22/02/2025
Time:	10.00 AM
Location:	Sassari, Italy
Number of Participants	20
Objective of the pilot round: The second phase of the WalkingBus initiative aimed to build on previous experiences by testing the adaptability of the project in a new community. This round focused on evaluating participation levels, enhancing the efficiency of the walking route and strengthening engagement among children, parents and volunteers. By implementing the second activity, organizers sought to identify potential improvements and refine logistical aspects. Event Description: The second pilot round took place in Sassari, Italy, where participants collaborated in an organized and enjoyable walking experience. A group of 20 children participated in the WalkingBus and the designated route provide an opportunity for children to experience an alternative and interactive commuting method. Implementation Process: To ensure a smooth execution of the second round, several steps were taken: • Route Optimization: Local traffic patterns and pedestrian pathways were analyzed to determine the safest and most practical walking route. Adjustments were made based on insights from the first pilot. • Engagement and Awareness: Benefits of the WalkingBus were discussed, emphasizing safety and the positive impact on children's well-being.	



- **Safety Enhancements:** volunteers were equipped with whistles to maintain group cohesion and ensure smooth walking.

Overview:

The second pilot round engaged a total of 20 participants and successfully demonstrated the adaptability of the WalkingBus concept to an urban environment. The children responded positively to the structured nature of the walk and parents expressed appreciation for the initiative's focus on safety and community engagement. Surveys conducted after the activity revealed that most participants enjoyed the experience, with children particularly highlighting the social aspect of walking together.

Challenges and Issues Encountered:

One notable challenge was maintaining the children's attention and ensuring they stayed within the designated walking lanes. Some participants were naturally eager to walk at their own pace, requiring volunteers to implement simple visual cues and occasional stops to regroup.

Observations/Learning Outcomes:

Building on the insights gained, future adjustments could include:

- Introducing a rotating role system where children take turns as "route leaders" to enhance engagement and responsibility.
- Strengthening collaboration with local businesses to provide safe meeting points or refreshment stops along the route.

Next Steps and Actions:

Similar to activity 1, the next steps are to process the feedback received and observations gathered in order to apply them to the third pilot round and further improve the activity.

Conclusions:





The second pilot round of the WalkingBus initiative proved to be a valuable learning experience, reinforcing the project's potential for replication in different communities. The enthusiasm from participants and positive feedback from parents and volunteers demonstrated that structured walking groups can be a viable and enjoyable alternative to motorized school commutes. The lessons learned will inform the next phases, ensuring a continuously improved and more impactful WalkingBus model.

Photos: Photos from the first Pilot Round in Italy are presented herein.

Figure 5: Photos from the second round of the pilot implementation in Sassari, Italy





3.2.3 Pilot round three (3)

Responsible organization:	MVNGO
Date:	23/02/2025
Time:	10.00 AM
Location:	Sassari, Italy
Number of Participants	20
Objective of the pilot round: The final phase of the WalkingBus initiative aimed to consolidate the insights gained from the previous rounds and refine the implementation process. This session focused on increasing efficiency, strengthening community involvement and evaluating long-term sustainability. The goal was to make walking a consistent and attractive alternative to motorized school commutes. Event Description: The third and final pilot round took place in Sassari, Italy, where children and volunteers once again participated in a structured group walk to school. A total of 20 children participated. The route was selected for its safe pedestrian pathways and scenic surroundings, ensuring a pleasant and secure journey to school. Implementation Process: Several new strategies were introduced in this round to improve engagement and streamline logistics: • Dynamic Route Planning: Adjustments were made based on previous feedback to optimize the route, minimizing street crossings and integrating more green spaces for an enjoyable walk. • Interactive Walking Experience: Volunteers introduced storytelling and educational games along the route to keep children engaged and reinforce the benefits of walking.	



- **Safety Measures:** Volunteers were equipped with small handheld stop signs to manage the walking efficiently.

Overview:

This third session solidified the WalkingBus as a viable and engaging initiative. Children were enthusiastic about the interactive elements and parents appreciated the improvements in organization and communication.

Challenges and Issues Encountered:

A minor challenge was ensuring that all children remained actively engaged throughout the walk, as some lost focus. The introduction of storytelling and interactive elements helped address this, but further refinements could be made to maintain attention spans. Additionally, timing coordination remained a key aspect to improve.

Observations/Learning Outcomes:

Based on the outcomes of the final pilot round, potential improvements include:

- Developing a structured weekly WalkingBus schedule to establish consistency.
- Introducing a buddy system where older children mentor younger ones.
- Enhancing partnerships with local businesses and municipalities for long-term support and funding.

Conclusions:

The third and final pilot round of the WalkingBus initiative marked a significant step toward making the program a sustainable mobility solution for school communities. The innovative engagement strategies and refined logistics showcased the initiative's potential for broader adoption. The lessons learned from this phase will contribute to shaping a long-term WalkingBus model that is safe, enjoyable and widely accessible.

Photos: Photos from the first Pilot Round in Italy are presented herein.

Figure 6: Photos from the third round of the pilot implementation in Sassari, Italy



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3.3 Türkiye

3.3.1 Pilot round one (1)

Responsible organization:	Kargenc Club
Date:	14/02/2025
Time:	12:30 PM
Location:	Karasu, Sakarya (Türkiye)
Number of Participants	18
Objective of the pilot round: The first pilot round of the WalkingBus project aimed to test and evaluate the implementation of the WalkingBus initiative in a real-world setting. The primary objective was to encourage active mobility among children by promoting walking as a safe, sustainable, and enjoyable mode of transport for school commutes. This phase focused on assessing the feasibility, effectiveness, and engagement levels of students, parents, and local stakeholders in adopting the WalkingBus concept.	
Event Description: The first round of the Walking Bus event was organized by Kargenc Club in Kuyumculu Village, bringing together children, parents, teachers, and volunteers to promote active mobility and community engagement. The event aimed to encourage children to walk to school in a structured and safe manner, fostering healthier habits and stronger community bonds. The event started at a designated meeting point in Kuyumculu Village with 15 students and ended at Kuyumculu Primary School, accompanied by 3 parents, 2 volunteers, and 1 teacher who ensured the safety and smooth facilitation of the route.	
Implementation Process:	



The implementation process for the first pilot round in Türkiye, involved several carefully planned steps to ensure effective training delivery and participant engagement. A breakdown of the process follows:

1. Planning and Coordination:

- a) **Route Selection:** A safe WalkingBus route was identified and mapped, including start and end points, as well as necessary stops. Collaboration with local authorities was conducted to ensure route safety and obtain required approvals.
- b) **Stakeholder Engagement:** Commitment was secured from local schools and parents for participation. Walkers (teachers, parents, or volunteers) were identified and confirmed. Parental consent was obtained, and the date and time of the pilot round were aligned with local school hours.
- c) **Role Assignment:** Volunteers and parents were designated specific roles to assist during the event.
- d) **Scheduling:** A structured timetable was developed for rotating adult supervision.

2. Preparation and Logistics

- a. **Walker Readiness:** Walkers were briefed on safety measures and event protocols.
- b. **Safety Protocols:** Children were instructed on pedestrian safety rules, and high-visibility gear was provided.

Overview:

Kargenc Club successfully organized a **Walking Bus** event in **Kuyumculu Village**, bringing together **15 children**, their parents, teachers, and volunteers to promote **active mobility and community engagement**. The event aimed to encourage children to adopt an **active lifestyle** by walking to school, foster **community involvement** in children's daily routines, and enhance **road safety awareness** and social interaction among participants. A **rotation system** was developed where volunteers, parents, and teachers took turns accompanying the children. The children followed a **designated route**, picking up fellow students along the way, mimicking a school bus structure—but on foot! The event emphasized **punctuality, teamwork, and environmental awareness** by reducing car dependency.



Challenges and Issues Encountered:

Adjusting schedules to accommodate school hours and participant availability. Ensuring all children followed safety instructions and adhered to the walking route. Engaging additional volunteers for future scalability.

Observations/Learning Outcomes:

- Children actively engaged and enjoyed the Walking Bus experience.
- Increased awareness of road safety measures among participants.
- Positive feedback from parents and teachers on the initiative's benefits.
- Strengthened sense of community through collaborative participation.

Next Steps and Actions:

- Expanding the initiative to additional schools and villages.
- Developing educational materials to reinforce pedestrian safety.

Conclusions:

The Walking Bus event in Kuyumculu Village was a successful initiative that highlighted the importance of active mobility and community collaboration. The event demonstrated the benefits of encouraging children to walk to school in a safe, structured manner, reinforcing healthy habits and strengthening social connections. Moving forward, further efforts will be made to sustain and expand the initiative, ensuring long-term engagement and impact.

Photos: Photos from the first Pilot Round in Türkiye are presented herein.

Figure 7: Photos from the first round of the pilot implementation in Kuyumculu, Türkiye



WalkingBus D3.2: WalkingBus Implementation





3.3.2 Pilot round two (2)

Responsible organization:	Kargenc
Date:	18/02/2025
Time:	12:30 PM
Location:	Karasu, Sakarya (Türkiye)
Number of Participants	24
Objective of the pilot round: Following the success of the first pilot round, the second round of the Walking Bus project aimed to refine the implementation process, enhance participant engagement, and strengthen community involvement. This phase sought to reinforce walking as a safe, sustainable, and enjoyable mode of transport for school commutes while improving operational efficiency and addressing challenges encountered in the first round.	
Event Description: The second round of the Walking Bus event was again organized in Kuyumculu Village by Kargenc Club, with the participation of 20 children, 2 parents and 2 volunteers. This round focused on optimizing the structure and logistics of the Walking Bus initiative. The event commenced at the designated starting point in Kuyumculu Village, with participants following an improved route based on feedback from the first round. The walk concluded at Kuyumculu Primary School under the supervision of parents, volunteers, and who ensured safety and organization throughout the journey.	
Implementation Process: The implementation process for the second pilot round in Türkiye, involved several carefully planned steps to ensure effective training delivery and participant engagement. A breakdown of the process follows:	



2. Planning and Coordination:

- a) **Route Selection:** Adjustments were made to the route to enhance safety and convenience. Coordination with local authorities was reinforced to secure additional approvals and implement minor infrastructural improvements.
- b) **Stakeholder Engagement:** Stakeholder engagement efforts were expanded, with additional outreach to local schools and parents to encourage broader participation. A clear timetable and rotation system were established to ensure a balanced distribution of responsibilities among volunteers and supervisors.

3. Preparation and Logistics

All walkers, including parents and volunteers, underwent a refresher briefing on safety measures and event protocols. Children were reminded of pedestrian safety guidelines, and new high-visibility gear was distributed where necessary. The event was supported with additional equipment such as safety signs, communication devices, and route markers to ensure a smooth and efficient implementation.

Overview:

The second round of the Walking Bus event in Kuyumculu Village, organized by Kargenc Club, aimed to build upon the successes and lessons learned from the initial pilot round. The event focused on refining logistical and safety measures, increasing community involvement, and promoting sustainable mobility among school children. Through improved planning and execution, the event provided a more seamless and engaging experience for participants. The initiative demonstrated significant progress in fostering active lifestyles, enhancing pedestrian safety awareness, and strengthening social bonds within the community. With expanded participation and refined processes, this round further reinforced the effectiveness and sustainability of the Walking Bus model as a viable transportation alternative for schoolchildren.

Challenges and Issues Encountered:



Despite improvements, some challenges persisted. Managing larger participant numbers required enhanced supervision and coordination. Ensuring consistent adherence to safety rules remained a key focus area, particularly with increased participation. Recruiting and maintaining a sufficient number of volunteers was an ongoing challenge, highlighting the need for further community engagement.

Observations/Learning Outcomes:

The second round provided further insights into optimizing the Walking Bus initiative. Children demonstrated increased enthusiasm and familiarity with the process, showing a greater understanding of road safety principles. The refined planning and route adjustments led to a smoother execution with fewer logistical issues. Parents and teachers continued to express strong support for the initiative, emphasizing its positive impact on children's health, discipline, and social engagement.

Next Steps and Actions:

To ensure continuous improvement, future actions include extending the Walking Bus initiative to additional schools and neighborhoods. Further enhancements in safety training and equipment distribution will be prioritized. Strengthening volunteer recruitment efforts and establishing a more structured coordination framework will help sustain the initiative in the long term. Collaborations with local authorities and stakeholders will continue to facilitate necessary improvements and policy support for active mobility programs.

Conclusions:

The second round of the Walking Bus event reinforced the effectiveness and value of the initiative in promoting active mobility and community engagement. The refinements made based on prior experiences contributed to a more seamless execution, benefiting



both children and the community. Moving forward, continued enhancements and expanded outreach efforts will be pursued to maximize the initiative's long-term impact.

Photos: Photos from the second Pilot Round in Turkiye are presented herein.

Figure 8: Photos from the second round of the pilot implementation in Kuyumculu, Turkiye





3.3.3. Pilot round three (3)

Responsible organization:	Kargenc
Date:	19/02/2025
Time:	13:00 PM
Location:	Erenler, Sakarya (Türkiye)
Number of Participants	28

Objective of the pilot round:

Building on the previous rounds, the third round aimed to evaluate the feasibility of implementing the Walking Bus concept in an urban setting. The key objectives were to ensure children's safe return home from school, increase awareness of pedestrian safety, promote active mobility, and engage parents and community members in sustainable transportation solutions.

Event Description:

The event started at Erenler School in Sakarya, where 20 children, accompanied by 5 parents, 2 volunteers, and 1 teacher, gathered to form the Walking Bus. Unlike previous rounds, this event focused on the journey back home rather than commuting to school. Participants followed a predetermined route through urban streets, adhering to traffic signals and designated pedestrian crossings. Parents and volunteers played an active role in guiding the children, ensuring that all safety protocols were followed.

Implementation Process:

1. Planning and Coordination:

Given the urban setting, meticulous planning was required to map out a safe and accessible route. Collaboration with local authorities was essential to assess traffic patterns, identify secure crossings, and establish designated stopping points for children along the way. Parents and volunteers were briefed on their roles and responsibilities to ensure seamless supervision.



2. Preparation and Logistics

Before the event, all participants were instructed on pedestrian safety, traffic awareness, and group walking etiquette. High-visibility vests were distributed to children and supervising adults to enhance visibility. Communication tools such as whistles were used to maintain coordination throughout the journey.

Overview:

The third round of the Walking Bus event was conducted in an urban area of Sakarya, marking a significant adaptation of the initiative to a more complex and busier environment. This round aimed to facilitate safe and structured walking routes for children returning home from school, fostering independent mobility while ensuring safety through adult supervision. The event strengthened the role of active transportation in an urban setting, emphasizing pedestrian safety and environmental sustainability.

Challenges and Issues Encountered:

Navigating an urban setting presented new challenges compared to previous rounds. Ensuring children's focus and adherence to safety guidelines amid busy roads required constant supervision. Managing traffic flow and interactions with other pedestrians also required a higher level of coordination. Additionally, adjusting the schedule to accommodate different home locations of participants proved to be a logistical challenge.

Observations/Learning Outcomes:

The urban implementation of the Walking Bus initiative demonstrated the adaptability of the concept to different environments. Children showed increased confidence in navigating pedestrian pathways safely. Parents and volunteers highlighted the importance of structured guidance in urban mobility. The event successfully fostered community engagement and provided valuable insights into refining the initiative for future urban applications.



Next Steps and Actions:

To further develop the initiative, future plans include expanding participation to more schools within the city, enhancing safety training for children and supervisors, and working closely with local authorities to implement infrastructure improvements that support pedestrian-friendly routes. Engaging additional volunteers and refining route optimization strategies will also be prioritized to improve efficiency and safety.

Conclusions:

The third round of the Walking Bus event in Sakarya's urban area successfully demonstrated the feasibility of structured walking routes for children returning home from school. With its emphasis on safety, community collaboration, and sustainable mobility, the initiative continues to evolve as a promising alternative to motorized school transportation. The lessons learned from this round will guide further improvements, ensuring long-term success and broader impact.

Photos: Photos from the third Pilot Round in Türkiye are presented herein.

Figure 9: Photos from the third round of the pilot implementation in Enerler, Türkiye.





WalkingBus D3.2: WalkingBus Implementation



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4 Conclusions

WP3 of the WalkingBus project is about Pilot Implementation and Evaluation. The pilot rounds implementation are based on the “Train the Walkers Seminar” which was successfully implemented to equip key stakeholders—parents, teachers, and volunteers—with the essential skills and knowledge needed to initiate and manage WalkingBus routes effectively. Following this, the next phase of the project was structured around the pilot implementation of three rounds of WalkingBus conducted by local partners in Greece, Italy, and Turkey. This equipped participants with practical, hands-on experience to reinforce their training while also contributing to the communication and dissemination of the project’s scope and overall activities. Finally, these pilots also served as valuable evaluation tools to refine the WalkingBus model and support its replication in other regions.

In conclusion, the WalkingBus project through the delivery of the training seminar and the pilot rounds implementation has established a strong foundation for the WalkingBus initiative, empowering local communities to adopt a safe, sustainable, and community-driven approach to school transportation. The knowledge gained will inform future adaptations and potential expansions of the WalkingBus concept, supporting a scalable model for eco-friendly children commuting across diverse regions.



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