

## Cycling Without Age Regeneration Program

In forests, biodiversity ensures regeneration and balance in the circle of life. In biology, monoculture is the antonym to sustainability. A healthy ecosystem circulates all the available resources and renews them, it regenerates. Humans thrive in healthy ecosystems too. In cities, social differentiation ensures healthy, flourishing environments. Diversity in our built environment creates balance of the community. Communities are not as robust as they should be in order to be sustainable. The Surgeon General speaks of an epidemic of [loneliness and isolation](#). The symptoms of our social ills become most visible in vulnerable people and their caregivers, as marginalized people are hit disproportionately hard. Luckily, the civil sector is composed of organizations taking it upon themselves to each contribute to the balance of the social ecosystem.

Cycling Without Age's tool to help regenerate communities is a three-wheeled adaptive bike – a trishaw. As you will see below, communities become more resilient thanks to partnerships within the civil sector, the trishaw and Cycling Without Age's 5 guiding principles: Storytelling, Relationships, Slowness, Without Age, Relationships, and Generosity.

### Storytelling

As we age, we lose the witnesses to our life, and with limited mobility it is increasingly hard to form new relationships. By sharing stories on the regenerative rides, we create a space for stories and identity to grow. An example of the power of stories is Gertrude. She was telling her life story to pilot rider Ray on a trishaw ride, and she had an abundance of anecdotes to share about what the redeveloped waterfront used to look like: ships loaded with coal and cryolite, and passenger ships transporting migrant workers. She remembered the smells and sounds, and made everyone feel like they were time travelers. When Ray later realized that Gertrude had not spoken for months he had difficulty understanding that this was the same woman who had entertained him for the entirety of the trishaw ride. The opportunity to tell her story meant that Gertrude regained her voice and she now had new witnesses to her life.

## Relationships

We know from Susan Pinker's research that it's the quality and quantity of our relationships that will keep us living longer and happier lives. One example of lost opportunity for encounters: having groceries delivered anonymously to your doorstep. Wouldn't you prefer to venture into a farmer's market on a trishaw with a trusted pilot rider by your side? In Cycling Without Age, we see how people react to enjoying a meal in a different place than usual. The instinct of stopping (or being stopped by) strangers and chatting with them almost always happens when we're out. The trishaw is a safe space; when you're not alone, you are able to reach out to others and form new relationships.

## Slowness

Rides bring you where you want to go: shops, parks, landmarks, a community center, the library. Cycling Without Age offers what riding a bicycle does: mobility and freedom. It also adds a sense of adventure, playfulness and excitement, and the feeling that anything can happen at any moment. It makes us dream of all the things that are possible and that we have yet to experience. The rides also make members of the community visible to one another, making it easier to relate to them and have empathy. Being slow means you have the ability to interact with your surroundings; you can stop when you want and go where you want to go. Regenerative rides stimulate your senses and make you feel alive.



Cycling Without Age community ride in Lakewood Colorado

## Without Age

Some trishaw passengers are wheelchair bound. Cycling Without Age works to help everyone enjoy a bike ride again, regardless of age and ability. Trishaw passenger John said that this way the city became accessible to him in a way it wasn't usually. When others see him as the passenger, they forget to think of the ailments causing him to lose his mobility, rather they see the person who enjoys feeling the wind in his hair. Riding the trishaw is easy, which means anybody can be a passenger and a pilot.

## Generosity

Communities need to be careful with the resources they need in order to be sustainable. Caregivers are an example of those who are often drained by a huge amount of pressure and who are not being sufficiently replenished, yet without them, the ecosystem would collapse. Regenerative rides circulate the restorative assets of the community. The generous act of taking care of the communities' most vulnerable people enhances the impact of the act itself. One such example is when passengers return from Cycling Without Age's rides – they bring new and

positive energy into the home, and they are often able to be more resourceful and confident than without the rides.

## Who we are

Cycling Without Age is an association that started in Copenhagen in 2012 and we're now active in 39 countries. 257 chapters in the US are offering rides every day. We take inspiration from a host of people and organizations, to name a few: 8-80 cities, Ashoka and Susan Pinker. Our motto is "The Right to Wind in Your Hair" and it was coined by an early passenger, Ebba, who was visually impaired, and who said about the trishaw rides: "I may not be able to see, but I can smell the flowers, I can hear the birds, and I can feel the wind in my hair". In 2020 we launched our campaign "[The Right to Relate](#)", because we believe that relationships should be a human right.

Affiliates of Cycling Without Age offer rides all over the world at no cost to the beneficiaries. This is of major importance and stated in our articles of association. One of our guiding principles is "Without Age" this means that anyone can benefit, regardless of age and ability.

## Cycling Without Age's Regeneration Program

The Cycling Without Age Community Program is based on partnerships with local organizations. We support their cause with our tools. Our Regeneration Program targets people aging in place, their caregivers and neighbors.

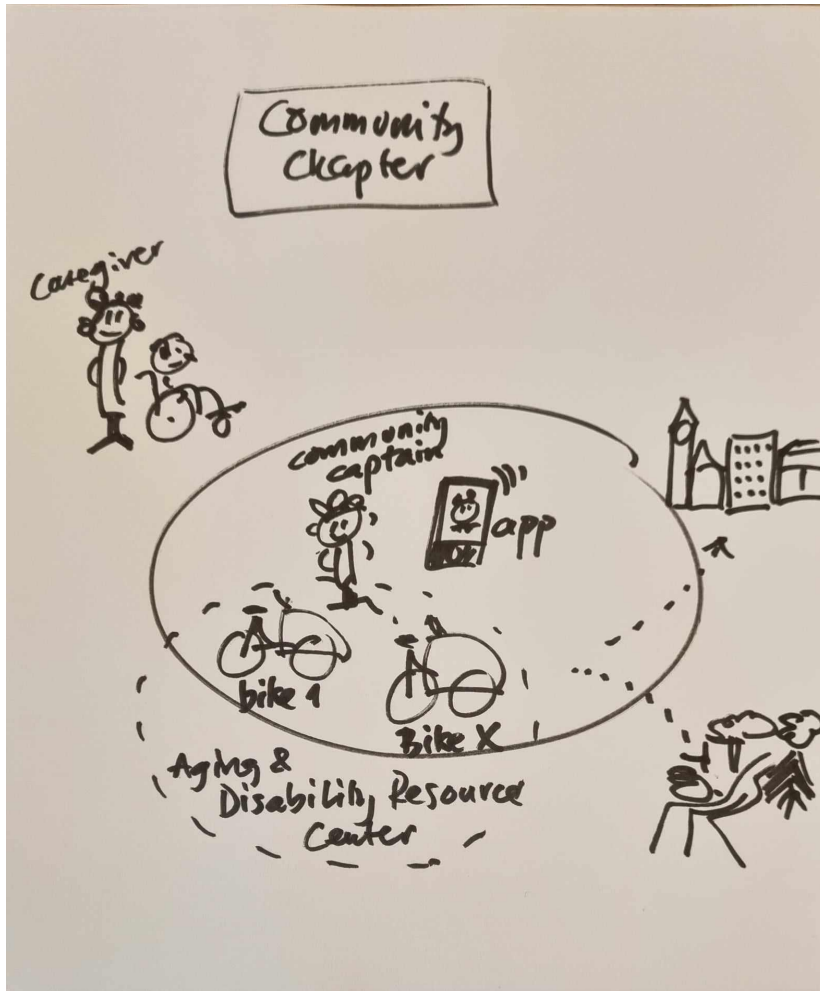
---

### The program includes:

- 2 trishaws per community
- 1 Community Captain per community

### Shared services:

- Mechanics
- Cycling Without Age scheduling app
- Trishaw container
- Partnerships with local nonprofits



## Community Captain

The Community Captain makes the experience run smoothly. They train new volunteer riders, such as neighbors or caregivers. They make sure the trishaws are being maintained, they help improve the experience by listening to feedback from the community. Embedded in the community they serve, Community Captains are the eyes and ears of the program. They come up with new ideas for routes and keep an eye out for things to experience in the community. Crucial to the Community Captain role, is to support the local nonprofits with carrying out their mission. This is our contribution to building a strong ecosystem. The Community Captain plays an indispensable role in starting the Regeneration Program, and will be recruited from or in cooperation with one of the partnering local nonprofits. After the 24 month implementation, the project continues as it has put down its roots in the local ecosystem.

## Caregivers

Two trishaws are placed at the heart of the community. The Cycling Without Age scheduling app means that caregivers can see when the trishaw is available and have easy access to book it. They can choose between riding themselves or asking for a volunteer pilot rider. If the caregiver wants fresh air and exercise, they can go on a trip with their loved one and will get the benefit of being the pilot. If the caregiver lives far away, or if they need a break from caregiving, they will enjoy the benefits of leaving their loved one in the care of a friendly Cycling Without Age neighbor pilot. The caregiver can also choose to be a passenger with the person they're caring for and experience something new and exciting together – and make new friends.

All affiliates of Cycling Without Age are motivated by helping their community. Many of them have personal reasons to start a chapter: they have a parent, a partner, a neighbor or a child in need of this exact activity. They often take it upon themselves to build community support and fundraise for a trishaw, while still being caregivers. They know the local nonprofits, because they depend on them to carry out their role. Once in a while, the person they care for never gets a chance to enjoy the fruit of their labor, because their health deteriorates or because they die. This community-minded caregiver is who we want to reach and support.

## Aging in place

Cycling Without Age operates in affluent and low-income communities. On a global scale we are present in the global north and the global south. We're aware of the need to balance out the resources, so that extra support is directed towards the most vulnerable communities. 2.3% of the aging population in the US lives in a nursing home, and of those only a small proportion is of mixed ethnic origin. There's a lot of work to be done for the remaining people, who age in place, who don't have access to moving into a nursing home, and who would benefit from having community support. We work with local organizations to reach out to these individuals and their caregivers to make them stronger and more connected to their community. This results in aging with purpose and designing communities for aging; two out of five intended categories in the Enterprise call for innovative approaches to aging in place. In addition, Cycling Without Age is aligned with the UNs Sustainable Development Goals aiming at good health and well-being, reduced inequalities and sustainable cities and communities.

## Call to action

Are you a local organization in Michigan and/or Maryland, working with low income communities aging in place? Cycling Without Age wants to help further your mission and support your cause with the Regeneration Program. In order to do so, we're applying for this grant ([Enterprise. Aging in Place in MI and MD](#)). Would you like to be included in the project? As an applicant, Cycling Without Age would take on the bulk of work associated with the project, meaning that your organization's workload is minimal, but your members will be supported. If your organization is interested in endorsing the Regeneration Program, all we need at present, is a letter of interest from your organization. Our deadline is the end of November,

I hope to hear from you soon at [ole@cyclingwithoutage.org](mailto:ole@cyclingwithoutage.org).

Best regards

Ole Kassow



Founder, Cycling Without Age  
Ashoka Fellow