



Newcomer Bike Host Program Final Report

Prepared in partnership between HUB Cycling and the ISSofBC (Immigrant Services Society of BC)

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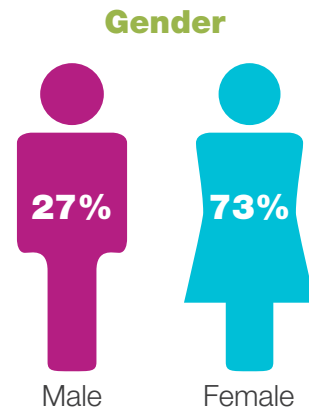
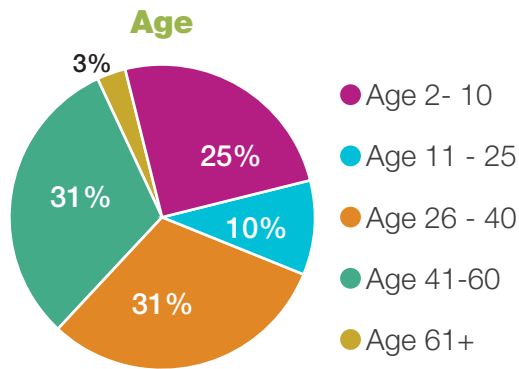
PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Vancouver Newcomer Bike Host Program is a collaborative program between HUB Cycling and the ISSo/BC (Immigrant Services Society of BC). The first of its kind in Western Canada, the program matches recently arrived immigrants and refugees with local “host” volunteers for companionship and cultural orientation to Vancouver’s cycling transportation lifestyle. Newcomers receive city cycling instruction, and meet weekly to spend time with their host volunteer and get oriented to Vancouver’s cycling routes, rules, and culture, practice English out of class, and have fun exploring the city by bike together. The program had two groups of matches in its first year: spring (May to July), and summer (July to September). This first year of the Newcomer Bike Host Program is generously funded by the City of Vancouver and TransLink, with in-kind contributions from Mobi By Shaw Go, the Bike Doctor, Urban Racks, REC for Kids, Ride On Bikes, Sahn Helmets, Bayshore Bike Rental, and Cycle City Tours.

Program highlights

- 39 individual and family matches took part in the program
 - » 23 newcomers and 16 volunteers participated in Spring
 - » 36 newcomers and 23 volunteers participated in Summer
- 32 out of 39 matches completed the full program period of 3 months
- Collectively, matches spent 1000+ hours cycling together from May to September
- 31 newcomers activated a free Mobi by Shaw Go membership during the program to use for their weekly meet-ups
- 3 cycle-themed group events were run to keep matches engaged
- 26 newcomers received a bike, lock and helmet upon graduating the program, enabling them to continue cycling in the city

Newcomer participant demographics



Country of origin

29% China
 24% Syria
 18% Iran
 29% Other countries including Morocco, Korea, Russia, India, Azerbaijan, Myanmar, Vietnam, Mongolia, Lebanon, Japan, Iraq, Ethiopia

Primary language spoken

34% Arabic	4% Russian
29% Mandarin	3% Other
18% Farsi	1% Japanese
5% Vietnamese	1% Mongolian
5% Korean	



Name: Zoreh

Country of Origin: Iran

Length of time in Canada: 4 years

Program highlight: For Zoreh, gaining confidence on and off the bike was a major success. “My self-confidence goes up” she says. “I thought I could not go up the Cambie Bridge, but now I know I can. I have learned to go through traffic and also not to fall.” Berni and Lucy, her two volunteers couldn’t be prouder. “From week to week, she pushed herself to go a bit farther or a bit more uphill. She borrowed Mobi bikes to practice between our rides. There have been harder weeks and easier ones, but she’s been determined to keep going.”

Bike Host program at a glance

- **Recruitment and orientation:** Newcomers and volunteers join the program and receive separate orientations
- **Newcomer cycling course:** Newcomer participants receive course from HUB Cycling instructors to build cycling skills and knowledge
- **Matching day:** Volunteers and newcomers meet for the first time
- **Weekly cycling rides:** Matches meet for 2.5 hours to explore different areas of Vancouver
- ○ **Group events:** Organized activities for all matches to take part in such as group rides, and visiting community events
- **Graduation:** Participants share stories and we celebrate newcomers' achievements. Some newcomers receive donated bikes.



PROGRAM IMPACT

Participant highlights

Matches chose what activities and bike rides they wanted to do during their weekly meet-ups, depending on newcomers' riding skills, interests, and goals for the program. Some of the destinations people rode to, bike routes they enjoyed and activities they took part in include:

- Cycling on shared-use paths - the seawall, Arbutus Greenway and Central Valley Greenway were all popular rides
- Visiting Vancouver's many parks and beaches such as Trout Lake, English Bay and Queen Elizabeth Park
- Practicing taking bikes on transit (bus, skytrain and seabus)
- Stopping by a local bike shop to learn how to fix bikes
- Visiting community gardens
- Picking blackberries along the bike paths
- Cycling to Granville Island and Olympic Village
- Visiting different bike-friendly community events - Vancouver Mural Festival, Bike to Work Week, Car Free Day, Bike the Night
- Going for coffee in different areas of the city to connect and practice English language skills
- Cycling through Vancouver to adjacent municipalities, including Burnaby and the North Shore



Newcomers share their stories:

"Vitalii is really nice and friendly, we meet every week. My cycling has a great progress right now, and getting lots of confidence from it." – Amber

"Thanks to the bike you lent me, I bike around the city even when Jenna is not available. Thus I have a better understanding of the city and practices. And I love the Bike the Night event and thank you for your great organization!" – Vanessa

"We learned how to take bike on skytrain and seabus." – Trang

"I like Bike the Night. It was a super fun summer!" – Trang's daughter

"At first my riding skills is not very well, I'm a little bit scared. When we get to up road I walk my bike. After I gain some experience, I can ride up hill. Three months ago I can't talk English." – Puja



Name: Abd Alrazak (father), Boudor (daughter) and 7 other children in the family took turns participating

Country of Origin: Syria

Length of time in Canada: Less than a year

Program highlight: With volunteers James and Rebekah, the family biked to many community gardens as Abd Alrazak is an avid gardener. He was so happy explaining things to his kids and showing them the different veggies. The family spent 4 years in Lebanon before coming to Canada, and there was nowhere to grow food. Now Abd Alrazak is more comfortable riding on the road and his daughter Boudor is excited to continue cycling with her newly donated bike from the program.

Volunteers highlight memorable experiences:

"The biggest highlight has been watching my newcomer (match) go from fear to joy. She was really apprehensive about riding, and in the first days she spoke negatively about herself and her abilities. Now she's happier and more confident, not just on the bike, but overall." – Lucy

"We spend lots of time talking. My goal is to make Alina feel welcome in Vancouver and have Cycling be a metaphor for healthy living and respect for the environment. Cycling facilitates deeper conversations and has been a great experience for both of us." – Joe

"Seeing the excitement/concentration on Yasin's face when practicing hand signalling. Yasin exclaiming 'That was so scary, but so good!' after first cycling on Main St, the first busy road we went on." – Libby

"Being a tourist in my own town! Looking at the city through the eyes of a newcomer. Being able to share that beauty and see someone else be awakened to that beauty." – Charlotte

"10 year-old Jennifer commenting, 'Riding on the road is so exciting! Much better than the lake.' during our first road riding adventure." – Alex





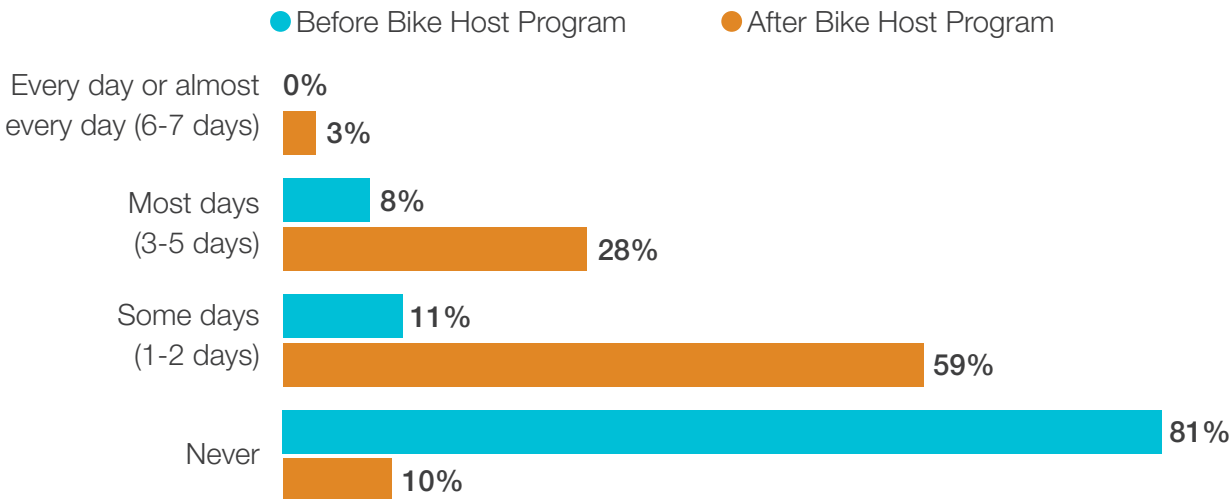
Newcomer participants were asked to complete a baseline survey at the start of the program, and an exit survey upon graduating. 33 participants completed baseline surveys and 30 completed exit surveys, reporting the following outcomes.

Cycling skills, knowledge and behaviour change

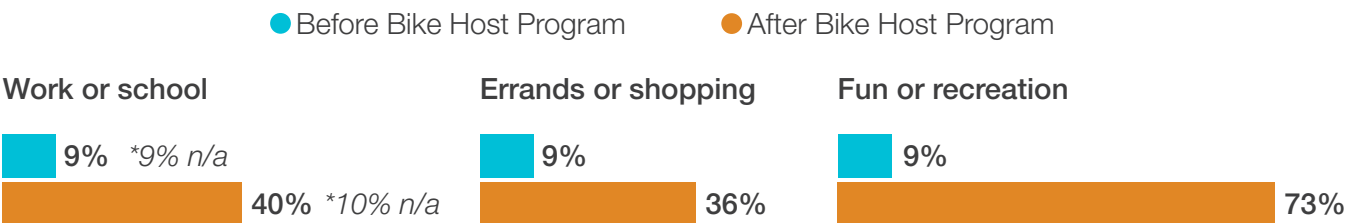
Participants reported confidence in the following areas of cycling safety and knowledge after completing their 3-month Bike Host match:

- **90%** I can ride a bicycle safely on a path away from traffic
- **67%** I can ride a bicycle safely on a street with cars
- **87%** I feel confident that I know the rules of the road when I bicycle in Canada
- **80%** I feel confident that I can find a good bicycle route for me to cycle in Vancouver
- **60%** I know where to go to get my bicycle repaired

Q: “In a typical week how many days per week do you cycle?”



% of participants that, in the last month, have ridden at least once a week for...



Other participant benefits

The top 3 benefits participants reported receiving in the program were:

1. Meeting new people
 2. Health and exercise
 3. Safe Cycling Skills
- 97% agree the program has improved their **knowledge of Vancouver**
 - 100% of participants responded positively to the statement “**I feel welcome in Vancouver and feel like I belong here**”
 - 90% agreed that the program **improved their health and wellbeing**
 - 65% said as a result of the Bike Host program they are more likely to **encourage their children to bike to school**
 - On average, participants reported making **3.6 new friends** or social connections while participating in the Bike Host program.

In addition, participants noted the following financial benefits they have received as a result of cycling more often:

- 60% saved money on transit fare
- 52% saved money on gasoline costs
- 44% were able to access a wider variety of shops to get lower prices on goods





MEDIA COVERAGE

The Bike Host program received great media coverage. Below are a selection of articles and interviews that highlight the program.

- **CBC:** ‘New Canadians learn to cycle the city in Vancouver bike host program’ (<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/bike-host-issobc-hub-cycling-newcomers-1.4237269>)
- **Metro News:** ‘Newcomers jump into cycling culture with bike orientation program’ (<http://www.metronews.ca/news/vancouver/2017/08/07/newcomers-jump-into-cycling-culture-with-vancouver-bike-program.html>)
- **Roundhouse Radio:** ‘Sense of place with Minelle Mahtani’ (<http://cirh2.streamon.fm/listen-pl-11573?smc=9>)
- **Breakfast Television:** Coverage starts at 3:45 (<http://www.btvancouver.ca/videos/bt-news-continued-aug-4th/>)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Vancouver Newcomer Bike Host Program is the first full partnership between HUB Cycling and the ISSo/BC. Staff and volunteers from both organizations worked collaboratively together to develop all aspects of this new program so it would work in the Vancouver context. Based on this first success, both organizations look forward to future collaboration on this and other projects.

HUB Cycling and the ISSo/BC thank all of the bike host volunteers for the energy and work they put into making the program a success this year. Their commitment to help newcomers become more confident on a bike, improve their cycling skills, and feel welcome in our city has been extraordinary. The program would not have been possible without their commitment.

We also thank all ISSo/BC volunteers who supported ongoing programming needs and Bike Host events, especially Anastasia and Janne who dedicated many hours to the program.

We thank Mohamed Touahria for his translation of the Newcomer Cycling Handbook into Arabic.

We would also like to thank all individuals who donated their personal bikes to participants in the program: Cathy Acuna, Patrick Conroy, Elmir Ismayilov, Lulu Leathley, Kate Pattisson, Robyn Rankin, Alan Rudrum, Diane Scovell, and Tim Welsh.

Importantly, HUB Cycling and the ISSo/BC extend big thanks to our funding and in-kind contributors. The capacities they provided to the Vancouver Newcomer Bike Host Program were indispensable to all the positive outcomes described in this report.

Project Funders:



In-Kind Contributors:



Photos in this report were taken by Michael Caswell, Ken Ohrn, Tim Aeberli and program participants.

