



**Sarcoma
Patients
EuroNet**

*Together We Can Make A Difference
For Those Affected By Sarcomas!*



**Sarcoma
Advocacy In Action
Award 2018**

#cycle4sarcoma social media interface, cycling and fundraising for sarcoma

The project idea came from Ville Laakso, who is a sarcoma patient since 2009 and cycling enthusiast. The name #cycle4sarcoma describes the three elements of the project: social media interface, cycling and fundraising for sarcoma. The project initiated in June 2018, when Ville set a personal goal to cycle through three cities with University hospitals treating sarcoma patients in Finland: Turku, Helsinki and Tampere, 510 km in total, in three days. The aim of this campaign was to increase the awareness of sarcoma in Finland, share knowledge about and from the professionals behind the scenes (such as pathologist and hospital physicist), and raise money for sarcoma research for the University of Helsinki.

Ville got a team to back him up: his wife Annika Laakso to coordinate the project and his friend Toni Aallos to help in technical issues. The target groups were adults and young adults: common people, patients and research/healthcare professionals, who use social media platforms. We chose the main channels to be Instagram and Facebook as best for this kind of public awareness project. Ville established an Instagram account @cycle4sarcoma, where he updated the personal news about training and feelings. We set up a Facebook page with a unique logo, Cycle4sarcoma (@cycle4sarcoma), where we shared more general sarcoma information and more profound notes in addition to Ville's Instagram updates. We shared our personal story and updates, photos, videos and links to other websites. Annika also shared some content in Twitter under her personal profile. All social media was tagged with #cycle4sarcoma. In addition to the social media interface, Ville made yellow ribbons and shared them during the campaign to remind people that not all cancer is pink.

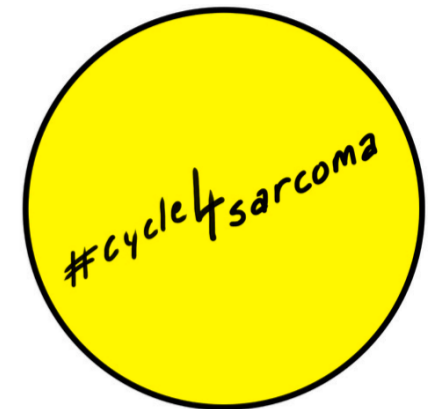
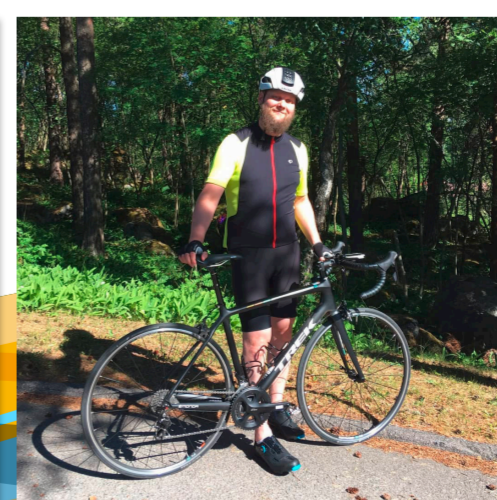
Our objective was to get public visibility and with that, at least 2.500€ of donations to be used as a travel grant for a researcher to attend a sarcoma conference. The first time-point was the road cycling tour Turku-Helsinki-Tampere (7.-9.9.2018). We were able to get enough companies involved to make most of the project happen without transferring any money. Until the cycling weekend, our Facebook site had 350 followers and 4.250€ was donated. Our first post with introduction of Ville and his personal cancer story has got over 9500 views. The short introductory video of sarcoma was published in July and shared over 70 times with 3500 views

and total coverage of 7700 (link: <https://www.facebook.com/cycle4sarcoma/videos/675596196117495/>). The report from our visit to Docrates Cancer Hospital explaining different aspects of radiation therapy has got over 3500 views. Even the latest video update after the campaign weekend (Sept 13) has got over 700 views in two weeks. The visibility via social media was better than expected, but unfortunately, we did not get our message through to printed media.

Our project showed that a private person can make a difference for the whole patient community, promote awareness and even live their mark in the history: this was the first sarcoma awareness campaign in Finland and the first sports campaign for University of Helsinki fundraising. The amount of donations exceeded our goal, and we agreed with the University to keep the campaign and donation possibility open for yet undefined time. The donated funds will be used for travel grants to promote international collaboration of Finnish sarcoma researchers. For now, #cycle4sarcoma is ongoing, Ville is sharing updates through his journey on cancer treatments, and we are planning for the next campaign happenings involving some other kind of cycling. In future, we see #cycle4sarcoma as a campaign involving the whole sarcoma patient community and offering more opportunities for individuals to participate – together we'll do even more!

Additional value of your project for the sarcoma population

#cycle4sarcoma was the first sarcoma awareness campaign in Finland. Sarcoma patients are treated in many hospitals around the country. They have no peers around, and they face unawareness among their friends, family and even the healthcare personnel. We were able to create content that was shared by the patients, their friends and researchers to increase the awareness of the disease. The University of Helsinki has shared information and news about our campaign in their social media channels, which hopefully increases the number of medical students, clinicians and researchers to be interested in sarcomas. It seems that we were able to establish a long-lasting (even though limited) funding for sarcoma efforts in the University of Helsinki, the biggest university in Finland.



#cycle4sarcoma / cycle4sarcoma