



Become an Active City! *Unveiling the PACTE project's Matrix for Change*

*Conference Report
26 November 2020*



This report compiles the discussions that took place during the final event of the [PACTE](#) project *Become an Active City! Unveiling the PACTE project's Matrix for Change* on November 26, 2020 (virtual format). The conference was organised by the project manager, [Sport and Citizenship Think tank](#), in the framework of the PACTE project, funded under the Sport Chapter of the Erasmus+ Programme.

BACKGROUND

Promoting Active Cities Throughout Europe (PACTE) was launched in January 2018 for a period of 36 months. The [project consortium](#) focuses on physical activity rates across Europe from a municipal perspective and on the creation of Active Cities. Europeans are living through an invisible pandemic, one that has steadily taken hold of our modern lifestyles, notably translating into the following figures:

- 210 million European are physically inactive;
- This amounts to a minimal annual cost of EUR 80 billion across the EU28;
- And 66% of local European decision-makers are unaware of this situation.

These findings have therefore unveiled physical activity policies at the municipal level as an area deserving much closer consideration since it remains overlooked by physical activity researchers when it remains a crucial level of government.

PACTE undertook a [European-wide representative survey and analysis of municipalities' physical activity policies and practices](#), which is the first mapping focused on municipalities of the likes. Throughout the project's lifespan, PACTE continuously rose-awareness about the extent of sedentarism, the role municipalities must endorse to help invert the curve, and about the relevance of the Active City concept. PACTE equally held 4 topical workshops across the continent to focus on specific settings: Active Leisure (Liverpool, UK), Active Education (Berlin, DE), Active Workplaces (Brussels, BE), and Active Mobility (Brussels, BE).

This final PACTE event launched its ultimate and main deliverable, the so-called [Matrix for Change for Active Cities](#). The Matrix aims to **develop and offer cities and municipalities an easily understandable and adaptable digital toolkit for increasing physical activity**. A transversal and user-friendly tool created specifically for local authorities, the latter addresses real issues and bridges existing gaps. The Matrix provides holistic solutions to decrease sedentariness levels and guides municipalities to further develop, or start, their Active City Action Plans through four settings: Active City, Active School, Active Mobility, and Active Workplace.



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AGENDA

Webinar - Zoom ([replay available here](#))

- 14:00 - 14.35** **Opening and Introduction**
The PACTE project, **Laurent THIEULE**, *Sport and Citizenship Think tank*
PACTE survey and findings, **Detlef DUMON**, *International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education*
The Matrix for Change, **Laurent THIEULE**
- 14:35-15.55** **Panel Discussion- The need for a cross-sectoral promotion of SPA at local level**
Froso CHRISTOFIDES, *European Cyclists' Federation*
Michael GROSS, *Evaleo*
Jean-François LAURENT, *TAFISA*
Paula NOGUEIRA, *Guimaraes municipality*
Nicky YATES, *Liverpool City Council*
Moderator: Laurent Thieule
- 15:55-16:15** **SHARE initiative- Raising the profile of sport in policy agendas from European to local level**
Roland FARKAS, *Sport Unit (DG EAC), European Commission*
- 16:15-16:30** **Keynote**
Will NORMAN, *Mayor's Walking & Cycling Commissioner, Transport for London*
- 16.30** **Closing**
Sport and Citizenship Think tank

CONFERENCE MINUTES

‘Physical Activity Policies at Municipal Level in Europe’, PACTE’s survey

The **PASSPORT** survey was diffused in 7 languages (English, French, Spanish, Italian, Dutch, German, Portuguese), the results were therefore categorised by language. It is the first European-wide survey and analysis of municipal physical activity policies. Main findings include:

- **PASSPORT** survey received **663 exploitable responses**, mostly from Italy (331) due to ANCI’s network of municipalities- highlighting the **strength of networks** as platforms of dissemination.
- **Most of the municipalities surveyed reported:**
 - **70% have a physical activity policy,**
 - **63% have local recommendations,**
 - **58% target the population to be physically active,**
 - **34% reported that their physical activity policy was part of a national programme.**
- **Monitoring and evaluation of the policy implementation:** **50%** of respondents declared they did not have any specific plan or authority in charge of monitoring and evaluation. Moreover, it is also interesting to notice that **universities and workplaces remain absent** from physical activity action plan settings.
- **Leadership of physical activity promotion:** **74% of municipalities** worked with a political leader/ designated department for physical activity to take charge for the task. This is particularly true for **95% of Belgium**, while only for **48% of Italy**.
- **Established communication campaigns or mass media strategies aimed at raising awareness and promoting the benefits of physical activity:** only Portuguese respondents revealed a majority of cities engaged in such campaigns (**59%**). Overall, **41%** of local level governments have implemented communication strategies for promoting physical activity.
- **Importance of increasing physical activity levels across municipalities, compared to other areas of work:** **70%** of respondents strongly agreed with this objective.

You may find the full study’s analysis and compilation of findings on [the PACTE project’s website](#):

[Full analysis](#)

[Executive Summary](#)

The Matrix for Change

The background context to the PACTE project further confirmed by the PASSPORT survey, consolidated the consortium’s understanding of municipalities’ perception and approach physical activity at local level. With this in head, PACTE dedicated 3 years’ worth of work to conceptualise, structure, and deliver its most ambitious deliverable yet- [the Matrix for Change](#).

The **Matrix for Change** can assist and guide local authorities who are curious to start their journey to becoming an Active City, but who are not sure how get started.

To this end, the Matrix for Change is a **user-friendly** and **interactive tool**, based on a **check-box system**. Users are free to go through all 4 settings (Active City, Active School, Active Mobility, and Active Workplace) in one sitting, or to concentrate on as many settings as they wish. Each setting includes many

resources like quick wins, good practices, cases studies, etc. The Matrix will help users map ready-existing stakeholders and initiatives.

Results will immediately be concentrated into a **mind-map**, which is a **tailored Action Plan** ready to be implemented! If using the same computer, it is possible to complete the Matrix in several sittings, the information will be saved.

Ultimately, the Matrix will help municipalities realise their potential as providers of sport and physical activity, and of a healthy way of living

[Access the Matrix for Change now!](#)

Panel discussion, ‘The need for a cross-sectoral promotion of Sport and Physical Activity at local level’

Moderated by **Laurent Thieule** the panel included five esteemed speakers providing different perceptions and experiences of the Active City concept, and complementary understandings of the need for a cross-sectoral promotion of sport and physical activity (SPA) at local level. Panellists included project partners **Froso CHRISTOFIDES** ([European Cyclists’ Federation](#)), **Jean-François LAURENT** ([TAFISA](#)), and **Nicky YATES** ([Liverpool City Council](#)); alongside two external representatives **Michael GROSS** ([Evaleo Association](#)) and **Paula NOGUEIRA** ([Guimaraes municipality](#)).

Discussions have been summarised into four overarching themes: the Active City concept and its implementation, the effects and consequences of Covid-19, cross-sector collaboration, and the added-value of the Matrix for Change.

Active City concept and implementation

The discussion was steered onto the definition of the Active City concept, and on how municipalities are crucial to enable concrete actions in the field of physical activity.

Jean-François Laurent argued it is useful to rethink how to mobilise citizens to reverse the ongoing negative trend of physical inactivity, which is why **cities are essential as the most direct level of governance on individuals**. He defined Active Cities as “*possessing a concrete strategy to enhance SPA level, where all the stakeholders are aware of the benefits and challenges of SPA, and where municipality departments work together with citizens to invest in events and infrastructures that are designed for active mobility*”.

Nicky Yates agreed a clear strategy is essential to bring stakeholders together and to **articulate long-term priorities**. A clear example is the first [Liverpool Active City strategy](#) launched in 2005, which brought sport and physical activity under the spotlight, for the first time. In 2014 the second [Liverpool Active City strategy](#) focused on behaviour changes and a renewed system approach that was able to reach **50% of Liverpool’s population**.

After presenting [Tempolivire](#) and Guimaraes’ municipal strategy, **Paula Nogueira** further emphasised the importance of **including tailored activities for specific groups** (children, seniors, people with disabilities) and of running a smooth process- both providing added value to the municipality. Guimaraes has been recognised as a European pole for sport and physical activity and was the first Portuguese City to be awarded the title European City of Sport in 2013.

Finally, **Michael Gross** presented [EVALEO](#) and highlighted thinking outside the box to reshape our habits in SPA practice has never been as important as presently, with the ongoing crisis. In his experience, the **Active City process must start with people and clear communication** among stakeholders, which lead to partnerships. Political leaders are central since their political will and commitment are essential to implement grassroot initiatives.

Effects and consequences of COVID-19

The discussion then considered the impact of COVID-19 on SPA levels and perceptions at municipal level.

Nicky Yates explained COVID-19 has had a twofold effect on Liverpool: first by **decreasing by 5% local SPA levels**, second by raising political awareness among leaders around the role of physical activity for individual wellbeing. Furthermore, various groups have been created to investigate embedding SPA in the recovery plans of the crisis ([We Are Undefeatable campaign](#)).

Paula Nogueira noticed that despite the lasting effects the sanitary crisis has enforced on TempoLivre, the organisation took this moment to reshape their programmes and try to reconnect with users.

Froso Christofides detected important changes in cycling and active mobility since the **pandemic served as a catalyst** for decision-makers and individuals. Many new projects have been implemented across Europe to increase cycling levels. Data further confirms the “**cycling boom**” in many cities, with some cities witnessing a **90% cycling increase** compared to last year.

Since the start of the pandemic, municipalities have invested **over EUR 1 billion** in cycling measures, notably translating into **2 300 kilometres of new cycling infrastructures** (over 1 000 kilometres have already been implemented). This past year has proven the European continent is willing to change and that local leaders are committed to a Green recovery.

Cross-sector collaboration

Panellists were then invited to expand on the role of cross-sectoral cooperation to enhance SPA levels and to implement Active City strategies at municipal level.

Froso Christofides emphasised cross-sectoral and inter-departmental cooperation are paramount to achieve results. Active mobility strategies must imperatively be part of a larger holistic strategy for a **greener, more active, and healthier society**. Municipal departments of transport, education, and health must cooperate and propose common actions to achieve an effective active mobility strategy. Private companies must join forces with NGOs and members of civil society to boost active mobility.

Michael Gross stressed anew **creating stakeholder alliances** enables to work towards common goals under a comprehensive strategy. Alliances and multi-stakeholder partnerships, based on mutual trust, are essential to collect and sharing resources (infrastructures, data, human resources).

To corroborate the importance of alliances, **Paula Nogueira** highlighted the essential role played by **grassroot partnerships** such as schools, teachers or local sport clubs; who are essential in the implementation of programmes.

Added value of the Matrix for Change

*Given their experience, speakers were finally invited to share their perspective on the relevance of the **Matrix for Change**.*

Jean-François Laurent explained the rationale behind the Matrix for Change and its structure- the tool covers **4 settings (Active City, Active Education, Active Workplaces, Active Mobility)**, conceptualised as enabling municipalities to reach out and offer tangible changes to most of the population.

Paula Nogueira confirmed the Matrix provides municipalities with real added value, as it will support their organisation and structure the strategic work to be taken on. She further underlined the key elements towards for real social change: education, urban planning, and political decision. **Education** should be enhanced with more physical education at school but also through expert support. Most pressing, **urban planning** is set to have great impact on future lives, since cities will become the preferred environment in which to live. **Political decisions** will hence be crucial for the future.

Nick Yates defined the Matrix as a **framework and an evidence-based system** that would have been useful for Liverpool in 2005, specifically to understand citizen needs and behaviours. The Matrix for Change, the knowledge section in particular, would have helped bridge the gap with citizens. Forming small alliances was also detected as one of the Matrix’s main innovations, by permitting stakeholders to build collective leadership and speak in a collective voice.

Froso Christofides added that it is also fundamental that the Matrix includes and raises awareness on a **variety of topics**, such as Active Mobility, that otherwise would not be considered as important as

others. Additionally, it is useful for cities to have a view over the whole design enlarging their spectrum of competences.

Finally, **Michael Gross** reiterated the importance of identifying key intervention areas and specific stakeholders willing to cooperate in the Active City process. Equipped with guidelines and shared good practices allows the Matrix to offer both **theoretical and practical added value**.

SHARE initiative- Raising the profile of sport in policy agendas from European to local level

On behalf of the Directorate General for Education Youth, Sport and Culture of the European Commission, an institutional insight was provided on behalf of [the SHARE initiative](#). Launched by the Commission in 2018, SHARE strives to raise awareness around the role of SPA in the context of regional and local development. SHARE seeks to safeguard SPA's role when policy and investment decision-making takes place at European, national and regional levels.

SHARE was launched to contribute to reversing the physical inactivity crisis across Europe- where **46%** of Europeans never exercise or play sport ([2018 Eurobarometer on sport and physical activity](#)), and **1 million deaths annually** in Europe are attributed to physical inactivity. Until present, SHARE initiative activities primarily include:

- Support evidence-based policymaking through studies, data, and statistics
 - A mapping on sport statistics and data in the EU will be published spring 2021
- Capacity-building programmes addressed to national, regional, and local stakeholders to support them in shaping sport-driven development strategies and in unlocking EU funding streams for sport
- Awareness-raising through the dissemination of knowledge and good practices at national, regional, and local levels, through:
 - SHARE Policy Papers
 - [SHARE database of projects](#)
 - Organisation of high-level events
 - Communication activities (website, newsletter, etc)

Late 2020 is witnessing a special momentum around sport and physical activity in Europe, most notably due to the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework, and the new post-2020 European programmes and policies such as the upcoming 2021-2027 Cohesion Policy, the 2021-2024 EU Work Plan for Sport, the new EU Health for All programme.

Will Norman, keynote

PACTE is honoured that no other than London's first Walking and Cycling Commissioner, Dr William Norman, gave the event's keynote speech focusing on how cities benefit from long-term and active strategies to boost physical activity levels among their citizens. Will Norman delivers the Mayor of London's pledge to make walking and cycling safer and easier in the British capital.

Dr Norman opened by acknowledging that several ongoing crises are affecting the city of London: air pollution (**over 9.000 people in London die annually due to the consequences of air pollution**) and road congestion notably. The Mayor of London's aim to redesign the city for citizens rather than cars brought numerous challenges, and the ambition is to plan an active city that fosters physical activity rather than inactivity. The first step was to embed this philosophy into the transport strategy, namely streets designed for people walking and cycling. The strategy strives to increase the number of London's journeys done by foot, by bicycle and through public transportation **from 60% to 80% over the next 25 years**. Furthermore, the physical activity target within the transport strategy intends to **encourage**

Londoners to either walk or cycling for at least 25 minutes per day. To reach the goal it is paramount to reflect on the structure of the city, in addition to establishing new cycling routes.

Will Norman emphasised the importance of collecting data, which will serve as proof for projecting long-term strategies. Data, indeed, helps to prioritise and identify areas where investments are required. Covid-19 has brought about additional challenges and the necessity to adapt faster than before through temporary cycle routes, the creation of more than 90 low-traffic neighbourhoods, school areas have been closed to traffic to safely allow an increase in the number of children walking to school (an **increase of 70% in the last months**). Moreover, **90 kilometres** of cycle routes have been built in the last four months.

To overcome difficulties that inevitably occur, the PACTE project offers possible solutions, by gathering different sectors (such as health, education, sport, transport) that together can contribute to reduce mortality caused by inactivity, making cities and citizens more active. It is equally important to include everybody in such large transformation: children, people with disabilities, or cannot be excluded. Therefore, a comprehensive approach is central to sustainably implement such large-scale changes.

Dr. Norman ended his keynote by stressing essential elements to successfully transform a city in terms of active travel:

- **Political leadership** is essential to get behind the cause. As providers of funding and as the active political environment, their support is essential to support the change,
- **Technical skills** are required, bringing individuals such as engineers into the team allow to drive the change,
- **Community** must also be included to help support the change, be it campaigners, grassroots organisations, or civil society at large.

William Norman pointed out that ultimately the biggest challenge is political, making the community even more essential since it can drive the change by raising-awareness and by expressing the will of the population. Within this framework, the PACTE project represents a unicum in the European panorama: in addition to the coordination of different areas, concrete actions are crucial. Practical examples, case studies, quick wins are the ingredients of success should one want to “sell” the Active City concept to politicians. The latter need both quick wins and long-term strategies to support such plans. The PACTE project is, therefore, the perfect combination that leads to real changes towards the Active City’s concept. Finally, he emphasised the crucial role of city networks as platforms for sharing and disseminating, as they foster a sense of competition among stakeholders that can lead to change.



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