

FINAL REPORT & RECOMMENDATIONS



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INTRODUCTION



Physical inactivity is recognised as a major public health concern. The Covid-19 health crisis has brought movement back into the heart of public and private discourses. Largely relegated to the background of a public sporting discourse, often reduced to competition and performance, physical activity seems to have gained momentum and become a central issue. At the core of the response, the emphasis must be on proximity with cities as the agents of change. Several cities have already put forward avenues for reflection.

Amid one of the most challenging crises worldwide, questioning our relationship to and vision of physical activity should be of everyone's concern. With the world population living increasingly in cities and urban environments, while also showing numerous signs of rampant sedentary behaviours, city leaders are key to the solution.

The last year has seen important restrictions on sport and physical activity (SPA). Gyms, parks, pools, and outdoor stadiums have been closed due to the sanitary crisis that has hit the European continent by storm in 2020. In addition, the adequacy of SPA (Sport and physical activity) must be considered in relation to social rather than economic needs. However, the latter have recently gained importance, interest and will represent a common thread of consultation and civic engagement. A society's ability to maintain control over its future is put to the test in times of crises: we believe it is by arranging and adapting public space that this can be achieved.

Beyond wishful thinking, reality binds us to recognise that our cities and municipalities will be left weakened by the current crisis. The delivery of basic public services should, therefore, become a main priority given they are a structuring element of our territories and of our local social lives. Sport cannot serve as a variable of adjustment.

Mayors have a central role when it comes to physical activity and decision-making at local level. Indeed, they are in the unique position to engage citizens in new ways of relating to their body, to physical activity, and to their direct environment.

While doubt lingers over our abilities and decisions to act today, one thing remains certain- **our bodies are designed to move, our cities should be too**. While some governments are still hesitating between encouraging and prohibiting forms of organised physical activity, the PACTE project puts forward several key ideas extracted from its 3-year reflection. The work brought forward by the PACTE consortium started well before the sanitary crisis: the latter has, however, underlined its relevance. Please note this report was written prior the crisis and has been adapted to the relevant behavioural and urban changes that have occurred throughout 2020.



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IDENTIFIED GAPS

The PACTE project intended to respond to several municipal needs. In terms of identified gaps, it has generally been found that:



Municipalities lack practical tools they can employ to help implement effective evidence-based policies



Municipalities lack partnerships and collaborative practices-agencies mainly work in silos



Poor top-down communication creates a lack of awareness and implementation at the municipal level



Approaches lack consistency





ACTIVE MOBILITY

- Few municipal projects or campaigns raise awareness about the importance of active mobility by directly targeting citizen behaviour
- Municipality departments largely operate in silos- successful cross-sectoral examples are plenty (public-private), however there are few examples of integration between different municipal departments, both horizontally and vertically
- Guidelines available on implementing active mobility on city level are abundant, but do not translate into tangible projects. There is a persistent gap between theory and practice
- The link between active mobility and physical activity is not made in most cases, when it comes to policy making or project implementation on municipal level



ACTIVE WORKPLACES

- Scientific study results are yet to be translated into easily understandable and accessible policy recommendations
- Workplace resources are scattered across general guides and do not connect with the sport sector
- Existing recommendations are often limited to physical activities before the “job gate” (cycle paths, promotion of public transport, etc.)
- Indicators of physical activity at the workplace, or sustainable results, and data relating to the use of cycle paths or public transport are missing
- Cross-sector collaboration is also generally missing in this setting
- Companies provide amenities without any supporting information

WAYS FORWARD

Understanding the importance of the setting approach:



Physical activity should be made available in the places where we live, learn, work and play on a daily basis



Physical activity is a daily routine that should be embedded as much as possible in the built environment



The places we spend the most time (school, work, transport) are where city leaders and planners must invest more energy on.





ACTIVE EDUCATION



Active Education incorporates physical education and a culture of movement, i.e. learning to move and moving to learn! Active Education aims to provide more, and better quality, opportunities to participate in physical activity before, during, and after education (kindergarten, school, college, university, etc.). Active Education also develops effective pathways between education and other participation settings (i.e. sport clubs, associations, etc.) in the local community.

Because a vast array of research and literature has proven that active kids and youth are more successful ! Physical activity not only helps citizens to stay healthy and strong, it further contributes to higher academic performances, improved attendance, better behaviour in class, ultimately leading to enhanced leadership skills, and a lifetime of healthy habits. With results like this, why wouldn't you want your municipality to promote Active Education?!



ACTIVE MOBILITY

Active Mobility is a mode of transportation for people (and goods) that relies on the physical activity of the human being for locomotion, i.e. walking and cycling as modes of transport. **Cycling produces global benefits of 150 billion euros per year'** – more than 90 billion euros are positive externalities for the environment, public health and mobility as opposed to 800 billion euros in negative externalities generated by motorised transport.



ACTIVE WORKPLACES

Employers that offer sport and physical activity opportunities to their employees contribute to the well-being of citizens and communities. The City of Liverpool (UK) noted that there was a 45% reduction in absenteeism when they implemented an active workplace scheme in companies and their offices. This has huge benefits for the municipality, ranging from reduced health costs, increased attractiveness of the city, as well as active and happy citizens!



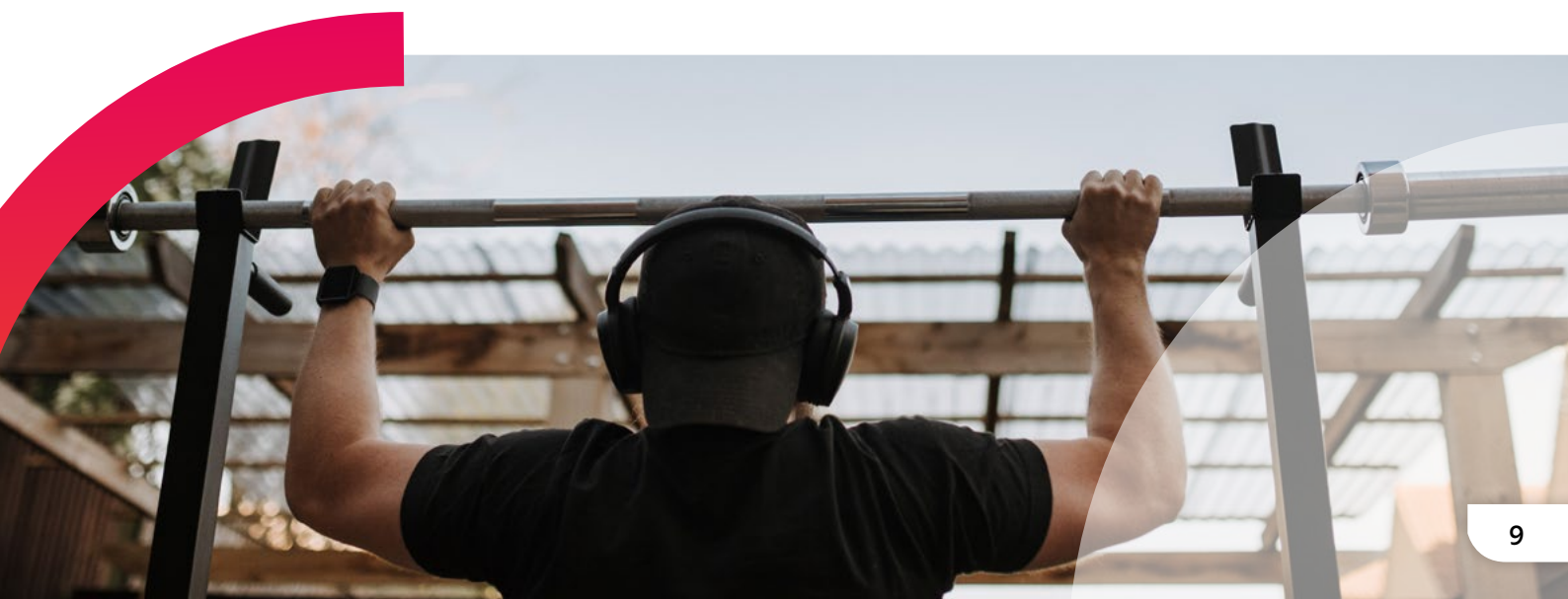
RECOMMENDATIONS



ACTIVE EDUCATION



- 1 Adopt a **long-term Active Education strategic development plan**, enabling all citizens to practice their human right to move!
- 2 **Create sustainable partnerships** between schools, local communities and sport providers to increase physical activity and improve the health and well-being of all citizens.
- 3 **Invest in teacher** education and professional training.
- 4 Ensure quality physical education is a core and compulsory part of school curricula.
- 5 Local community actions within the municipality might be more effective if there is:
 - **A designated** coordinator,
 - **A shared** strategic vision,
 - **A defined** target group.
- 6 Consider the following 7 steps when implementing an Active Education project:
 - **Create** a vision,
 - **Build** commitment,
 - **Form** a cross-sectoral leadership group,
 - **Profile** the city, neighbourhoods, and target population groups,
 - **Consult** with residents and stakeholders,
 - **Identify** opportunities and constraints,
 - **Identify** funds and resource.
- 7 Utilise existing opportunities within your municipality. For example, target children in the school setting to instil a lifelong interest for physical activity.
- 8 Set goals and objectives and monitor these to ensure an effective legacy!





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Establish awareness-raising campaigns designed for long-term results.

Effective campaigns coupled with incremental changes, and measures managing demand for motorised transport have maximal impact in the long-run.

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Walking and Cycling to School:

○ **Include cycling training in school curriculums- education** and safe mobility training at primary schools are essential in building a culture of active mobility.

“**School Trains**” go by the safety in numbers principles - parents and children walk or cycle to school together.

Implement measures to encourage uptake among parents for their children to walk and cycle to school.

○ “**School Streets**” are a concept of turning streets around schools into car-free zones at the beginning and end of the school day. This concept has successfully spread around Europe, and in 2018 it was included in the Belgian Highway code.

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Walking and Cycling to Work:

○ **Launch a Bike2Work campaign which targets both employees and employers.** Employees are encouraged to cycle to work, for example, through competitions or fiscal incentives, and employers and workplaces become more cycle-friendly through measures such as bike parking, changing rooms and showers.

○ **Become a Cycle-Friendly City.** A variety of measures facilitate cycling promotion and enable intermodal mobility (see Recommendation 16*)





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Participate in the European Mobility Week (EMW)- use this opportunity to pilot active mobility measures, assess current transport challenges, and progress towards sustainable mobility.

EMW is the annual highlight campaigning for more walking, cycling and use of public transport. In 2019, 3,135 cities across 50 countries participated².

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Implement Car-free days and measure their impact. Close-off parts of your city to motorised traffic and give citizens the chance to experience their city without cars. Including further measures such as free public transportation, cycling training for adults and children, and bike repair workshops enhance the experience. Record your pollution levels before and during the car-free day!

World car-free day [22nd September] usually coincides with EMW. The Brussels' Capital Region bans all motorised traffic from 9 am to 7 pm across the entire capital for one Sunday in September. Hundreds of thousands of people participate and noise levels and air pollution are significantly reduced³.



2 - <https://mobilityweek.eu/home/>

3 - <http://www.irceline.be/fr/Nouvelles>



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Design and implement quality walking and cycling infrastructure – a city designed for pedestrians and cyclists makes it more inclusive and liveable.

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Re-think your public space allocation. Redistribute space away from motorised transport towards active mobility modes.

○ **Convert on-street car parking spaces into active mobility infrastructure** (pavement, bike lanes, bike parking).

○ **Regulate your public space**, public space should be properly managed and priced (parking fees, meters, etc.). Use these collected funds to invest in active mobility interventions.

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Design and build quality cycling infrastructure:

○ **Ensure low-stress connectivity-** provide walking and cycling networks so that routes between origin and destination do not inflict high traffic stress or require large detours.

○ **Bike Parking Facilities** should be provided so that they can cope with demand, are accessible, and sufficiently protected.

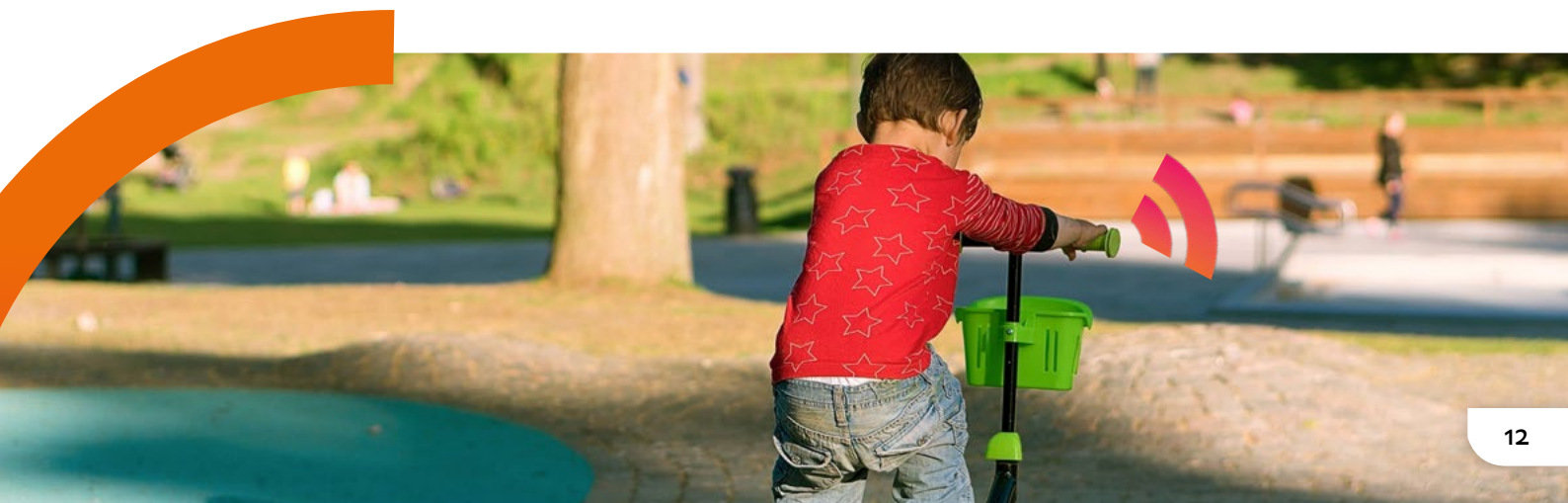
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Encourage Multi-/Inter-modality mobility, make connections between active mobility and public transport.

○ **Make sure connections and transitions among different modes are easy and affordable**, i.e. prioritise walking and cycling infrastructure investments around public transportation hubs, bike parking facilities at train and underground stations, allow bicycles on trains, integrated route planning, public bike-share as an integral part of first and last mile connectivity for commuters.

○ **Promote cycle logistics-** cargo bikes used for delivery purposes, especially in city centres, are gaining both popularity and support. They can improve levels of cycling, replace over 50 % of urban transport-related trips, as well as enhance air quality, safety levels, and liveability of urban areas⁴.

⁴ - <http://cyclelogistics.eu/>



ACTIVE COOPERATION & PARTNERSHIPS



- 18 **Make walking and cycling promotion** a shared vision, across departments, sectors and levels of governance.
- 19 **Appoint a Walking and Cycling officer** to coordinate active mobility policies across departments and to be the contact person for the wider public. Creating such a position within local administration has proven to be successful in starter cities.
- 20 **Prioritise cross-departmental coordination**- collaboration among local administration departments working on environment, health, sport, leisure, education and other topics is crucial. Active mobility is a means to more active and more liveable cities for people.
- 21 **Partner with stakeholders from civil society and the private sector :**
 - **Participative processes for redesigning neighbourhoods** encourage ownership and uptake by locals for changes. Local authorities should systematically work with civil society organisations (e.g. cycling advocacy groups), as well as private sector businesses and residents.
 - **Cycle tourism in regions** with significant touristic activity are usually an entryway to commuter cycling. Find the EuroVelo (long-distance cycle route network in Europe) coordinator in your country and explore connections between cycle tourism infrastructure and services with your mobility strategies⁵.

ACTIVE MONITORING & IMPROVEMENT



- 22 **Manage demand for individual motorised transport**- congestion charges, parking fees, low-emission zones are all measures to level the playing field between private cars and different modes of transport, as well as to improve environmental sustainability in a city.
- 23 **Collect data about active mobility modal share on a regular basis, necessary for planning, implementing and evaluating interventions.**
 - Data on preferred routes, number of cyclists, waiting times at crossroads etc. serve as proof of implementation, source of feedback on policies and enable calculation of impact. Various methods exist for cycling data collection and many cities develop apps to calculate bicycle use.



- 24 **Adopt a long-term Active Workplace strategic development plan.** The action plan should enable all citizens to practice their human right to move!
- 25 **Identify a working group:** create a working group to lead and activate your Active Workplace plans.
- 26 **Identify your target group:** identify the needs of your municipality by speaking to relevant parties and mapping existing tools and resources.
- 27 **Raise awareness:** create and communicate a specific toolkit for your municipality to promote the benefits of physical activity in and around the workplace.
- 28 **Gather relevant stakeholders:** to inform, share and create alliances to promote physical activity within the workplace. To start promoting an Active Workplace, you should target companies and employer networks, health specialists and doctors, sports associations and federations, municipality representatives, chambers of commerce and media to work closely on the needs and levers to promote physical activity in the workplace.
- 29 **Encourage companies:** promote physical activity to companies through incentives, schemes, programmes, easy access to facilities etc.
- 30 **Develop the city:** promote green transport and more importantly active transport (walking, cycling) by creating safe infrastructure. Promote physical activity in the city and for companies by making easily accessible infrastructures (walking paths, multi activities pitches near companies).
- 31 **Host and facilitate events:** promote the benefits of physical activity, specifically at the workplace, through events.
- 32 **Monitor:** monitor actions to leave an effective legacy for your municipality!



ABOUT THE PACTE PROJECT

The Promoting Active Cities Throughout Europe (PACTE) project is a 3-year initiative led by the Sport and Citizenship Think Tank and funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union. It is supported by 7 European partners.

Cities and municipalities are both important settings of physical activity and crucial mediators of public health messaging. Unfortunately, physical activity at local level has been largely under-researched although they represent a level of administration which is closer to citizens than the national one. Cities are gradually recognising the importance of physical activity for their attractiveness and competitiveness, and for providing well-being to their citizens. The PACTE project provides local administrations with resources and tools to kickstart physical activity action plans and help them find the path to become Active Cities, most notably the **Matrix for Change**.

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