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REDEFINING THE EUROPEAN CITY THROUGH SPORT

Social Impact Assessment

pacte+

PROMOTING ACTIVE CITIES
THROUGHOUT EUROPE

SUMMARY

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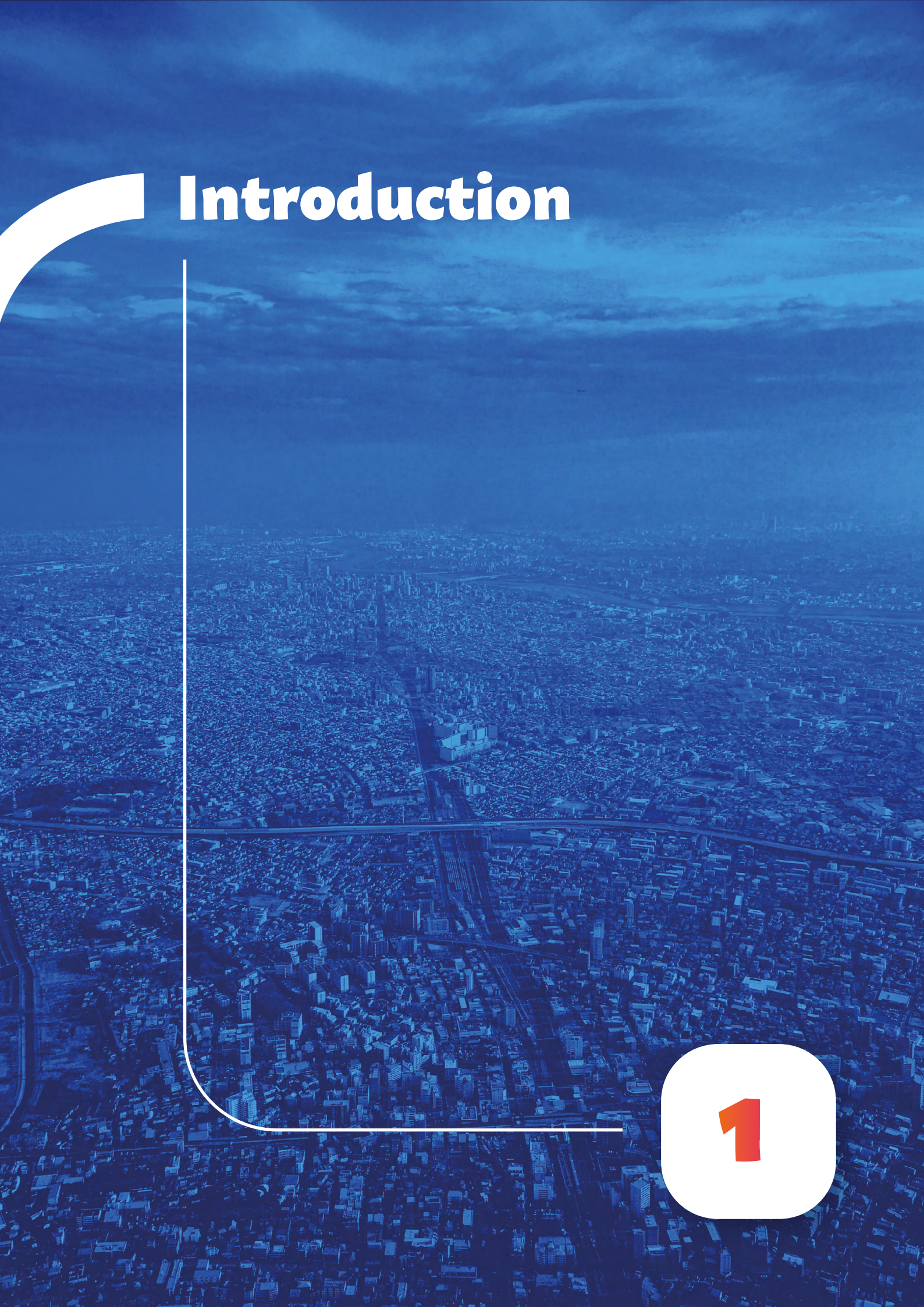
Introduction



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PACTE+ has been a three-year Erasmus+ Sport funded project (2022-2025). The aim was to promote active mobility and transform cities into spaces that foster health, sustainability, and quality of life, with the goal of creating a replicable framework at both European and global levels.

Running from 2022 to 2025, and supported by six partners and four pilot cities, the project has focused on implementing concrete local initiatives and policies to encourage physical activity and combat sedentary lifestyles. This is in alignment with the European Union's Work Plan for Sport (2021-2024), which emphasizes the importance of fostering health-enhancing physical activity (HEPA) and developing local and regional initiatives that support active living.

Beyond implementing activities, the project placed strong emphasis on measuring the impact and long-term effects of these initiatives to strengthen advocacy for physical activity and active city policies. PACTE+ has been a collaborative project, reflecting the spirit of the Erasmus+ programme, and was aimed at facilitating the exchange of knowledge and experiences among European local authorities.

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1.1 Objectives

The project was designed to encourage cities to take a proactive approach to the promotion of physical activity through innovations in mobility, education, workplace and governance, while also reducing carbon emissions and improving public health. PACTE+ focuses on raising awareness among governance bodies, promoting physical activities in schools, universities and workplaces and developing active mobility solutions.

The three main objectives through the PACTE+ project were:

- Take stock of cities' improvements and the overall context to improve the PACTE Matrix for change.
- Unlock cities' potential to champion physical activity through four pilot interventions conducted with tailored support.
- Measure the impact of the programs implemented to strengthen advocacy for Active city policies in favour of physical activity.

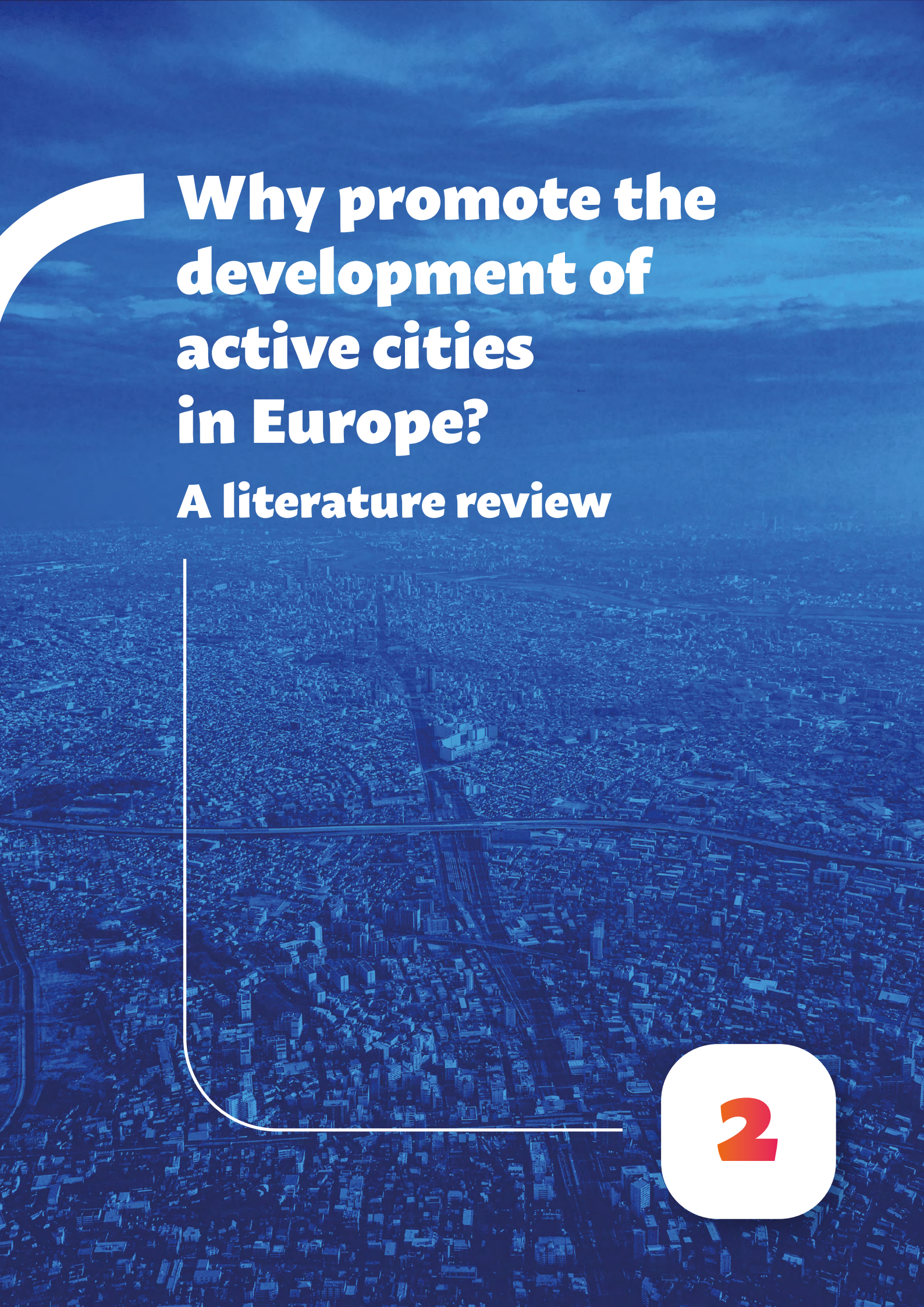
1.2 Long-term vision

The long-term vision of the PACTE+ project was also to develop a replicable model that can be implemented in other regions across the globe, providing a framework for promoting physical activity and fostering healthier communities. This model will be designed to adapt to the unique needs of different cities and regions while maintaining alignment with European sustainability goals. By ensuring that the approach is scalable and flexible, the model can be tailored to various cultural, environmental, and infrastructural contexts, helping to address global challenges related to public health and environmental sustainability. Ultimately, this initiative aims to inspire cities worldwide to embrace active living principles and contribute to a more sustainable and healthier future for all.

1.3 Partners

The PACTE+ project's consortium is composed of eleven partners: Sport and Citizenship (coordinator), TAFISA, The European Cyclists Federation (ECF), the European Federation for Company Sport (EFCS), Evaleo, the International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education (ICSSPE), the Technical University of Munich (TUM) and the cities of Angers (France), Limerick (Ireland), Graz (Austria) and Fredrikstad (Norway).

Each of the four pilot cities organised a workshop dedicated to one of the four pillars of the PACTE+ project (Active Mobility, Active Governance, Active Workplace, Active School). As a recognised consortium, the partners will be able to deliver a qualitative assessment to improve the Matrix for change, to measure the effect of the implemented programs within the pilot cities and at the end to strengthen the advocacy materials for "Active city" policies.



Why promote the development of active cities in Europe?

A literature review

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2.1 Definition of active cities

According to the UN, 55% of the world's population lives in cities. In 2050, this number is expected to have increased to 68%. In this context of increasing urbanisation, it is essential to rethink the management of public space, and it is against this backdrop, combined with the growing societal challenges posed by the twin threats of climate change and sedentary lifestyles and physical inactivity, that the concept of the active city has emerged.

According to the World Health Organisation, "Active cities prioritise the creation of safe and enabling environments that promote walking, cycling, and other forms of mobility, integrating physical activity into daily life while contributing to improved health, reduced inequalities, and sustainable urban development." WHO's Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018–2030

An active city promotes daily physical activity through infrastructure, public policies, and community initiatives. The concept of an active city is rooted in the promotion of physical activity as a fundamental aspect of urban living. Defined as environments that prioritise opportunities for walking, cycling, and other forms of physical movement, active cities integrate health-focused urban planning with sustainable infrastructure. This approach extends beyond recreational activities to include daily commutes, workplace initiatives, and community-based physical programmes. Emerging from global initiatives like the World Health Organisation's (WHO) Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018–2030, the active city framework responds to the increasing rates of physical inactivity worldwide. With 23% of adults and 81% of adolescents failing to meet recommended activity levels, the model emphasises a systems-based strategy. This involves policy changes, community engagement, and infrastructural adaptations designed to encourage regular movement across all demographics.

Active cities are particularly relevant in addressing contemporary health crises and climate challenges. Physical inactivity is linked to a host of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, heart disease, and obesity, which not only burden health systems but also reduce individual well-being. By fostering regular physical activity, active cities can mitigate these health risks while simultaneously addressing environmental concerns. For instance, the promotion of walking and cycling reduces reliance on fossil fuels, leading to lower greenhouse gas emissions, improved air quality, and decreased traffic congestion. Moreover, active cities contribute directly to the achievement of several United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These include SDG3 (good health and well-being), SDG11 (sustainable cities and communities), and SDG13 (climate action). By adopting compact urban designs that prioritise green spaces, active transportation, and equitable access to physical activity opportunities, cities can advance public health outcomes and environmental sustainability simultaneously. In a nutshell, the active city concept exemplifies the intersection of health, urban planning, and sustainability. As global priorities shift towards creating equitable and resilient urban environments, the adoption of active city principles becomes not only desirable but essential for tackling the dual crises of health and climate.

2.2 Objectives of the literature review

This literature review aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the concept of active cities in order to well understand the impact assessment, by focusing on two primary objectives. First, it aims to identify the multifaceted benefits and challenges associated with active cities. The benefits explored will include improvements in public health as well as environmental advantages. On the other hand, the review will also examine the barriers that hinder the adoption and expansion of active city initiatives, such as infrastructural limitations, societal resistance, and policy gaps.

Second, the literature review intends to highlight best practices for fostering active cities, drawing on scientific evidence and case studies from around the world. By analysing successful examples of urban planning and public policy, this section will underscore strategies that have proven effective in promoting physical activity, enhancing accessibility, and ensuring inclusivity. Particular attention will be given to innovative approaches that address common barriers, such as intersectoral collaboration, community engagement, and the integration of health and environmental goals.

Ultimately, this review aims to provide policymakers, urban planners, and researchers with actionable insights to support the development and implementation of active city principles. It seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on sustainable urban development and public health by offering evidence-based recommendations tailored to the challenges and opportunities of contemporary urban environments.

2.3 The benefits of active cities

2.3.1 Public health and well-being

- Reduction of chronic diseases

Active cities significantly contribute to reducing the prevalence of chronic diseases, such as obesity, type 2 diabetes, and cardiovascular conditions, by encouraging regular physical activity as a part of daily life. According to the WHO, physical inactivity is a leading risk factor for noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), which account for a substantial proportion of global mortality (WHO, 2021). Urban environments that prioritise active transportation, such as walking and cycling, and recreational physical activity help residents meet recommended activity levels. For instance, city planning initiatives that include safe cycling infrastructure, pedestrian-friendly zones, and accessible fitness facilities enable individuals to engage in movement naturally throughout their day.

An example highlighted in the WHO report is the integration of cycling lanes in urban areas, which has demonstrated success in increasing daily physical activity levels while simultaneously improving cardiovascular health outcomes. Programmes like Austria's "Masterplan Cycling" aim to increase the proportion of daily trips made by bike, directly linking such measures to reduced health and environmental costs (Ibid). These efforts not only mitigate the risks of developing chronic conditions but also alleviate the financial burdens on healthcare systems by reducing treatment needs.

- **Impact on mental health**

In addition to physical health, active cities play a crucial role in improving mental well-being. The incorporation of green spaces, such as parks and urban gardens, into city landscapes is associated with reduced stress, anxiety, and depression. These areas provide opportunities for physical activity in calming natural environments, which enhance mental health outcomes. Evidence from WHO studies shows that access to green spaces increases participation in physical activities and offers restorative benefits, particularly for individuals experiencing psychological distress. Active cities also encourage social connectivity through community-based programmes and public infrastructure designed for shared use. For example, initiatives such as Austria's "Bewegt im Park" program, which offers free exercise sessions in public parks, facilitate social interaction and physical activity simultaneously. These activities not only improve individual well-being but also strengthen social bonds within communities, helping to combat loneliness and isolation.

- **A potential game changer in combating the dual burden of chronic and mental health challenges**

The combined approach of addressing both physical and mental health challenges makes active cities particularly effective in enhancing overall population health. By promoting active commuting, cities reduce sedentary time and increase physical activity, while urban green spaces provide mental health benefits. In Europe, cities such as Copenhagen and Amsterdam, with their extensive cycling networks and abundant public parks, serve as leading examples of how active city principles can be successfully implemented. These cities demonstrate reduced levels of chronic diseases and better self-reported mental health outcomes among residents.

Thus, the benefits of active cities extend far beyond individual health, impacting societal well-being and economic stability. By reducing the burden of chronic diseases and addressing mental health issues through strategic urban planning and targeted programmes, active cities serve as a model for sustainable and inclusive urban development. As cities around the world strive to meet the challenges of modern living, the active city framework provides a holistic approach to fostering healthier, happier, and more resilient communities.

2.3.2 Environment

- **Contribution to CO2 emission reduction through active mobility**

Active cities also play a pivotal role in mitigating climate change by promoting active mobility, such as walking and cycling, as alternatives to motorised transport. According to the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), transportation accounts for a significant share of urban greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, primarily due to reliance on fossil fuels. By creating infrastructure that encourages active transportation, cities can significantly lower CO2 emissions. For instance, transitioning a portion of short car trips to cycling can reduce transport-related emissions by up to 10% in dense urban areas, highlighting the substantial environmental impact of such measures (IPCC, 2024). Cities like Amsterdam and Copenhagen

exemplify this shift. Copenhagen's comprehensive cycling infrastructure has led to a 40% reduction in transport emissions, demonstrating the effectiveness of active mobility in achieving climate goals. Moreover, active cities contribute to global efforts to meet net-zero emission targets by reducing dependency on private vehicles, a central strategy outlined in urban decarbonisation plans (Ibid).

- **Improved air quality and reduced urban heat island effect thanks to green spaces**

Active cities also enhance air quality, addressing one of the most pressing environmental challenges in urban areas. By reducing vehicular traffic, active cities decrease emissions of air pollutants such as nitrogen oxides (NOx) and particulate matter (PM), which are detrimental to both human health and ecosystems. The IPCC emphasises that improving air quality through reduced reliance on motorised transport not only mitigates climate change but also directly benefits public health, reducing respiratory and cardiovascular illnesses linked to pollution (IPCC, 2024). In addition, active cities combat the urban heat island (UHI) effect, a phenomenon where urban areas experience significantly higher temperatures than surrounding rural regions due to dense infrastructure and limited vegetation. The integration of green spaces, such as parks, urban forests, and green roofs, is a hallmark of active city design. These elements not only provide shade and cooling but also enhance carbon sequestration. For example, cities that prioritise green corridors and urban parks have observed temperature reductions of up to 2°C in UHI-prone zones, alongside improved air circulation and reduced energy consumption for cooling.

By fostering active mobility and integrating green infrastructure, active cities serve as crucial actors in the global fight against climate change. They provide scalable solutions to reduce CO2 emissions, enhance air quality, and mitigate urban heat, demonstrating the interconnectedness of sustainable urban development and environmental resilience. These measures not only benefit the planet but also improve the quality of life for urban populations, reinforcing the case for widespread adoption of active city principles.

2.3.3 Economy

- **Reduced public health costs due to a more active population**

Active cities generate substantial economic advantages by alleviating the financial burden of healthcare costs tied to physical inactivity. According to the WHO, physical inactivity is a major contributor to the global rise in noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, cardiovascular conditions, and obesity, which collectively strain healthcare systems. Without intervention, these diseases are projected to cost over USD 300 billion globally between 2020 and 2030 (WHO, 2022). By promoting active lifestyles through infrastructure that encourages walking, cycling, and recreation, active cities play a critical role in reversing these trends.

Encouraging regular physical activity helps residents stay healthier and reduces the frequency and severity of costly medical interventions. For example, studies have shown that people who engage in consistent physical activity are less likely to develop chronic conditions, leading to fewer hospital visits, lower medication needs, and reduced reliance on public health resources.

This preventive approach not only enhances the well-being of individuals but also delivers significant financial savings for governments and healthcare providers (Ibid).

- **Economic impact of infrastructures**

Investing in active city infrastructure yields a wide array of economic benefits. In the short term, these projects create jobs in construction, urban design, and maintenance, offering immediate economic boosts to local economies. Over the long term, the benefits multiply as the infrastructure attracts residents, businesses, and tourists seeking dynamic, health-oriented environments.

For example, cities like Amsterdam and Copenhagen, renowned for their cycling infrastructure, have seen their urban appeal grow significantly. These cities draw millions of visitors annually who are eager to experience the bike-friendly culture, and businesses increasingly choose to establish themselves in such vibrant urban centres. The economic ripple effects are clear: property values rise, retail thrives, and local businesses benefit from increased foot traffic in areas designed for active mobility. Active city initiatives also contribute to long-term cost savings by reducing the need for car-centric urban development. Less reliance on private vehicles translates to lower infrastructure maintenance costs, such as road repairs and parking facility expansions. Moreover, these cities align with global sustainability goals, making them attractive candidates for international funding and investment in green urban projects.

By blending health promotion with economic foresight, active cities deliver a compelling model for sustainable urban development. Reduced healthcare costs and increased economic activity reinforce each other, creating a virtuous cycle of public savings and private growth. As cities prioritize investments in active living infrastructure, they not only address immediate public health challenges but also future-proof their economies against the growing costs of inactivity and unsustainable urban practices. Ensuring the safety and inclusivity of these spaces is equally essential—well-lit areas, clear signage, and measures to prevent conflicts of use help create environments that are welcoming for all populations. However, active city planning remains a niche initiative and faces many challenges in its implementation.

- **Education: embedding active lifestyles from an early age**

Integrating physical activity into children's daily routines—whether at school, during extracurricular activities, or in after-school programs—plays a crucial role in fostering lifelong habits of movement and well-being. Educating children and teenagers about the importance of an active lifestyle not only benefits their physical health but also instils values of self-care, respect for others, and environmental awareness. However, current trends show a concerning gap in physical activity levels among youth. According to the World Health Organisation in 2018, more than 80% of adolescents worldwide fail to meet the recommended minimum of one hour of moderate to intense physical activity per day, with an even greater disparity among girls (85% of girls versus 78% of boys).

Addressing this issue requires systemic interventions, such as Finland's School on the Move program, which successfully integrates movement into the school day, transforming sedentary routines into dynamic learning environments that promote both cognitive and physical

development (Syväoja et al., 2013). By embedding active habits from an early age, cities can contribute to healthier, more engaged, and environmentally conscious future generations.

- **Fostering inclusion: building cities that move with everyone**

An active city is also an inclusive city—one that ensures equitable access to movement opportunities for all individuals, regardless of age, ability, or socio-economic background.

Implementing inclusive policies and programmes fosters improved living conditions, strengthens social cohesion through increased social interaction and a greater sense of belonging, and guarantees equal access to essential services.

For instance, initiatives supported by the city of Paris since 2022 such as Paris Sport Séniors and Paris Sport Santé illustrate how tailored programs can encourage physical activity among older adults and individuals with specific health needs, reinforcing their participation in urban life while combating isolation and sedentary lifestyles.

Moreover, fostering citizen participation in local decision-making—by involving residents in the design of public spaces and active mobility policies—ensures that these initiatives truly meet the needs of diverse populations. By prioritizing inclusivity alongside active urban planning, cities can create environments where movement is not just a privilege but a right accessible to all.

2.4 Barriers and challenges in developing active cities

2.4.1 Cultural and social factors

- **Resistance to change in car-dominated cities**

One of the biggest cultural challenges to developing active cities is the deeply rooted reliance on cars, especially in urban environments designed around automobile use. In many cities, the infrastructure heavily favours cars, with wide streets, sprawling highways, and limited safe pathways for pedestrians and cyclists. This dominance of car culture reinforces the idea that walking or cycling is inconvenient, unsafe, or even socially undesirable (Handy & Xing, 2011). Efforts to promote active transportation in car-centric cities often face resistance. For instance, initiatives like reallocating road lanes for bicycles or reducing parking spaces are sometimes met with public opposition, fuelled by fears of increased traffic congestion or reduced accessibility for drivers. These challenges highlight the importance of coupling infrastructure changes with public education campaigns to shift societal norms and demonstrate the benefits of active transportation. Without addressing these cultural perceptions, transitioning to active cities can remain a difficult uphill battle (Ibid).

- **Socio-economic disparities and unequal access to infrastructure**

Socio-economic inequalities also present a major obstacle to creating active cities. Access to infrastructure like bike lanes, parks, and pedestrian-friendly zones is often unevenly distributed, with low-income neighbourhoods frequently left underserved. These areas may lack safe pathways for walking or cycling and have limited proximity to green spaces, restricting residents' ability to engage in physical activity. This disparity perpetuates health inequities, as communities with fewer resources often face higher rates of chronic diseases associated with physical inactivity (Handy & Xing, 2011). Economic barriers further exacerbate the problem. The upfront costs of bicycles, safety equipment, or even gym memberships can be prohibitive for low-income individuals, making active lifestyles inaccessible to many. To address these challenges, cities must prioritise investments in underserved areas, such as subsidising equipment, offering free or low-cost programmes, and ensuring equitable access to high-quality infrastructure. These measures are essential to creating inclusive active cities that support all residents, regardless of income or background (Ibid).

2.4.2 Urban constraints

- **Lack of space in city centres for developing bike lanes or pedestrian areas**

One of the most significant challenges in transitioning to active cities is the limited availability of space in densely built urban centres. Historic city layouts and infrastructure often prioritise vehicular traffic, leaving little room for bike lanes or pedestrian zones. According to Tod Litman, expert member of the Victoria Transport Policy Institute, many city centres are dominated by roadways and parking facilities, which consume a substantial portion of public space (Litman, 2021).

This organisation of the public area leads to space conflicts between, on the one hand the need for active transport infrastructure and, on the other hand, the existing spatial constraints. Retrofitting city centres to accommodate cycling and walking often involves reallocating road space from cars, a process that can be both costly and politically contentious. For example, implementing dedicated bike lanes may require the removal of parking spaces or the narrowing of traffic lanes, leading to opposition from motorists and local businesses concerned about reduced accessibility. Despite these hurdles, cities such as Paris have demonstrated the potential of bold strategies, converting car lanes into protected bike lanes and pedestrian-friendly boulevards. However, replicating these initiatives in other cities remains challenging due to varying urban layouts and public resistance (Ibid).

- **Conflicts between cyclists, pedestrians, and motorists**

Another major obstacle is the potential for conflicts among road users. As active transportation increases, interactions between cyclists, pedestrians, and motorists can become contentious, particularly in cities with insufficient infrastructure to separate these modes of transport. According to the Victoria Transport Policy Institute, poorly designed shared spaces can exacerbate safety concerns and discourage walking or cycling due to fear of collisions (Litman, 2021).

For instance, where dedicated bike lanes are absent, cyclists may use sidewalks, creating tension with pedestrians. Similarly, motorists often perceive cyclists as obstacles in traffic flow, leading to dangerous driving behaviours such as close passing or aggressive overtaking. Addressing these conflicts requires not only improved infrastructure, such as segregated bike lanes and clear pedestrian pathways, but also public awareness campaigns to foster mutual respect among all road users. Successful examples include Copenhagen and Amsterdam, where extensive infrastructure and clear traffic regulations have minimised these conflicts and created a harmonious environment for active transport.

2.4.3 Institutional barriers

- **Absence of coordinated public policies**

The development of active cities often suffers from a lack of cohesive public policies that integrate urban planning, health, and environmental goals. As Jan Gehl discusses, city planning in many urban centres remains fragmented, with various sectors such as transportation, housing, and health working in silos rather than adopting a unified approach to promoting active mobility (Gehl, 2010). This absence of coordination leads to missed opportunities for synergies between infrastructure investments and public health initiatives.

For example, without clear alignment across governmental levels, efforts to expand bike lanes or pedestrian zones can conflict with other priorities, such as car-centric development projects. Furthermore, the lack of national frameworks or guidelines often leaves local governments without the necessary direction or resources to prioritise active mobility. In many cases, this results in piecemeal implementation that fails to achieve the broader systemic changes needed for active cities to thrive.

However, the challenge extends beyond mobility alone. What is needed is a dedicated coordination or steering body capable of bridging local sectoral policies—ensuring that urban planning, public health, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion are interconnected rather than treated as separate agendas. Establishing a clear system of governance, with mechanisms for cross-sector collaboration, is critical to overcoming these barriers. This would not only facilitate the development of essential infrastructure, such as protected bike lanes, safe pedestrian crossings, and public green spaces, but also create a more holistic approach to urban well-being and sustainability.

- **Insufficient funding for active mobility projects**

Another significant challenge is the inadequate allocation of financial resources to active mobility projects. As highlighted in Cities for People, investments in pedestrian and cycling infrastructure are often deprioritised in favour of projects aimed at improving road networks for vehicles (Gehl, 2010).

Moreover, the economic benefits of active mobility are frequently underestimated in budgeting decisions. Policymakers may overlook the long-term cost savings associated with reduced

healthcare expenditures and environmental benefits, focusing instead on immediate returns from car-oriented infrastructure.

To address funding gaps, active cities require innovative financing mechanisms, such as public-private partnerships, dedicated mobility taxes, or international grants for sustainability projects. These approaches can provide the necessary financial support to develop and maintain active mobility infrastructure, ensuring its long-term viability. Overcoming these obstacles requires a shift toward integrated governance frameworks and strategic investment in active mobility. By aligning public policies and securing adequate resources, cities can unlock the full potential of active living, benefitting both individuals and society as a whole as the success and best practices implemented in many cities attest.

2.5 Best practices and recommendations regarding the research

2.5.1 Inspiring models

- Analysis of strategies in cities like Copenhagen, Amsterdam, and Bogotá

Copenhagen, Amsterdam, and Bogotá are widely regarded as benchmarks for active city development, each offering unique strategies tailored to their urban contexts. Copenhagen exemplifies a city built for cyclists, with over 390 kilometres of dedicated bike lanes and an urban design philosophy that prioritizes pedestrian and cycling infrastructure. The city's investment in "super cycle highways" encourages long-distance cycling, connecting suburbs to the urban core and reducing car dependency. Copenhagen also incorporates public engagement in its planning, ensuring community buy-in for new mobility initiatives.

Similarly, Amsterdam has fostered a cycling culture through decades of policy alignment and infrastructure development. With nearly 60% of trips made by bike in the city centre, Amsterdam combines physical infrastructure, such as bike parking facilities and traffic-calming measures, with educational campaigns to promote cycling from a young age. The integration of cycling with public transportation systems further enhances its appeal, allowing seamless multimodal travel.

Bogotá offers an equally inspiring model but in a distinct socio-economic context. The Colombian capital's flagship initiative, Ciclovía, closes over 120 kilometres of streets to cars every Sunday, creating space for cycling, walking, and recreation. Bogotá's TransMilenio Bus Rapid Transit system complements this strategy by reducing car traffic and prioritising pedestrian access. The city's approach demonstrates how active mobility can flourish even in rapidly growing and economically diverse urban settings. The initiative also showcases how active city strategies can address health disparities by providing accessible opportunities for exercise (Sundling & Jakobsson, 2023).

- **Measurable outcomes: increased physical activity and reduced sedentary behaviour**

The strategies implemented in cities like Copenhagen, Amsterdam, and Bogotá have led to measurable improvements in physical activity levels and reduced sedentary behaviour. Research highlighted the importance of urban environments in shaping individual behaviour. For instance, in cities with well-designed cycling and pedestrian infrastructure, residents are more likely to engage in regular physical activity. The inclusion of green spaces and safe walking routes also encourages greater mobility and recreational use (Sundling & Jakobsson, 2023). The outcomes observed in these cities demonstrate that comprehensive urban planning and active mobility initiatives can substantially influence behaviour, reducing sedentary habits and fostering healthier lifestyles on a citywide scale. These results highlight the potential for replicating similar models in other urban contexts, with measurable health and social benefits.

2.5.2 Integrated strategies to overcome barriers

One of the most effective strategies for promoting active cities involves fostering cross-sectoral collaboration among key stakeholders, including the health, urban planning, and education sectors. The WHO emphasizes that addressing physical inactivity requires a "whole-of-system approach," where all relevant sectors work together to develop cohesive policies and interventions (WHO, 2022). For example, urban planners can prioritize the design of pedestrian-friendly streets and cycling infrastructure, while health professionals can promote the benefits of active mobility through public health campaigns. Similarly, education systems can integrate physical activity into school curricula, ensuring that children develop lifelong habits of active living.

This integrated approach not only maximises the impact of individual sectoral efforts but also creates synergies that amplify results. For instance, aligning transportation policies with health goals can lead to the development of safer and more accessible routes for walking and cycling, reducing the risks associated with road traffic. The creation of national or municipal coordination mechanisms can further streamline efforts, ensuring that resources are allocated efficiently and policies are implemented effectively (Ibid).

According to TAFISA, an expert member of the PACTE+ project consortium, five pillars are essential to overcoming barriers in active city development. First, a clear knowledge and understanding of the issues surrounding active living is necessary to build informed policies and mobilise stakeholders. Second, fostering cooperation and partnerships across different community departments ensures that policies are implemented holistically rather than in isolated silos. Third, the establishment of programmes and events creates regular opportunities for citizens to engage in active lifestyles, reinforcing behavioural change. Fourth, active cities require human-centred urban design, prioritising infrastructure that is accessible, safe, and inclusive for all populations. Lastly, a successful transformation depends on the definition of a long-term strategy, supported by concrete policies and a continuous evaluation process to measure progress and adjust interventions accordingly.

Engaging citizens is another crucial component of overcoming barriers to active city development. The WHO highlights the importance of community involvement in shaping policies and programmes to ensure they are relevant, inclusive, and sustainable (WHO, 2022). Public consultations and participatory planning processes can help identify the specific needs and preferences of diverse populations, including marginalized groups. This inclusivity not only fosters a sense of ownership among residents but also enhances the likelihood of policy adoption and adherence.

For example, cities that involve citizens in the design of parks, cycling lanes, or recreational programmes often see higher rates of participation and satisfaction. Community-led initiatives, such as walking clubs or neighbourhood clean-up campaigns, can further strengthen social ties and create a culture of active living. Educational campaigns targeting specific groups, such as women, the elderly, or children, can also address barriers like safety concerns or lack of confidence, encouraging more people to participate in physical activities (Ibid).

To ensure effective governance and cross-sectoral alignment, cities must also establish dedicated coordination bodies responsible for bridging the gap between local sectoral policies. A structured governance system can facilitate collaboration across transportation, health, education, and urban planning departments, ensuring that active living initiatives are fully integrated into broader urban strategies. Without such mechanisms, efforts risk being fragmented and less impactful.

This literature review highlights the significant benefits and challenges associated with developing active cities. On the one hand, active cities promote healthier lifestyles, can be a lever to improve environmental conditions, and boost economic growth through enhanced infrastructure and reduced healthcare costs. On the other hand, they face obstacles such as resistance to change, socio-economic disparities, and institutional constraints, which can hinder their progress.

To guide future policies and optimise the development of active cities, rigorous impact assessments are essential. Evidence-based evaluations provide critical insights into the effectiveness of interventions and their broader societal implications (Laverty et al., 2018). Quantitative tools, such as interrupted time series analyses or microsimulation models, allow policymakers to measure outcomes such as changes in physical activity levels, health improvements, or economic impacts. These assessments not only ensure accountability but also help identify best practices and tailor strategies to specific urban contexts.

By combining a clear understanding of benefits with robust evaluations of challenges, activecities can continue to evolve into inclusive, sustainable, and health-promoting urban environments.

PACTE+ Impact Assessment

3

3.1 Methodology

In order to conduct the social impact study for the PACTE+ project, a mixed-method approach was adopted. In fact, the tools used in this work consist of:

- A 33-question questionnaire aimed at residents of the pilot cities, to assess not only their level of physical activity, but also the impact of the PACTE+ scheme on this, as well as on their general well-being and quality of life. This questionnaire is also part of a continuous improvement process for the cities, as it enables valuable data to be collected on both the feelings and needs expressed by the residents, thus providing avenues for improvement for the future of the cities' active policy. The limitation of this questionnaire is that it is based on a declarative method used by residents, and is therefore probably not representative of the overall sample of city residents, given that the most active citizens are the most likely to have responded to it. What's more, this survey can quickly turn into a kind of grievance book for the municipality, which means that the answers must be viewed with a certain amount of distance. The sample in each pilot city consists of: 389 respondents for Graz, 101 respondents for Limerick, 100 respondents for Fredrikstad, 55 respondents for Angers.

- An interview grid for stakeholders involved in the deployment of active city systems. This qualitative approach complemented the questionnaire and enabled us to identify the main facilitators, as well as the main obstacles, to the implementation of the schemes. This approach is essential in that it allows us to identify the gap in project management between theory and implementation in the field. The results of these interviews, in addition to identifying levers for improvement, also enable us to identify issues common to all municipalities, well beyond cultural specificities such as the silo structure of departments, which we will return to in detail when presenting the results. A full list of interviewees can be found in Appendix 2.

3.1.1 Research team

Sylvain Landa, Deputy director, Sport and Citizenship : Head of the study

Mona Cazin, Social Impact Officer, Sport and Citizenship : Research, creation of measurement tools and report writing.

Joachim Bachner, Technical University of Munich (TUM) School of Medicine and Health, Didactics in Sport and Health : co-creation of measurement tools and data analysis.

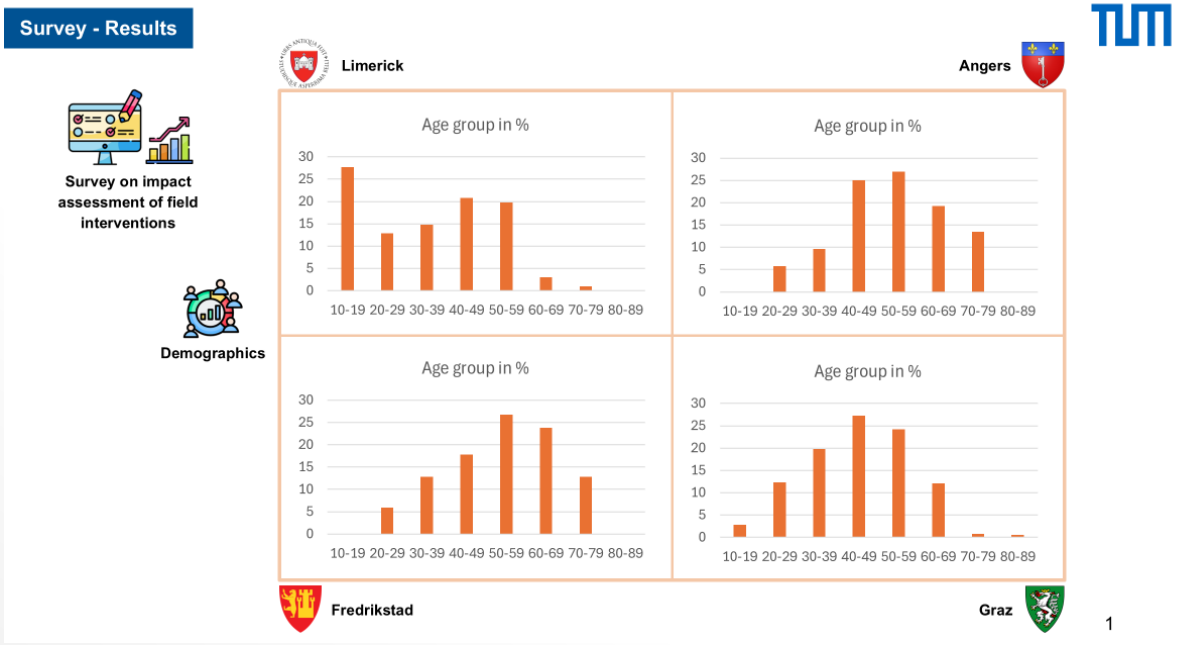
3.2 Presentation of research results

3.2.1 Quantitative: survey analysis per city

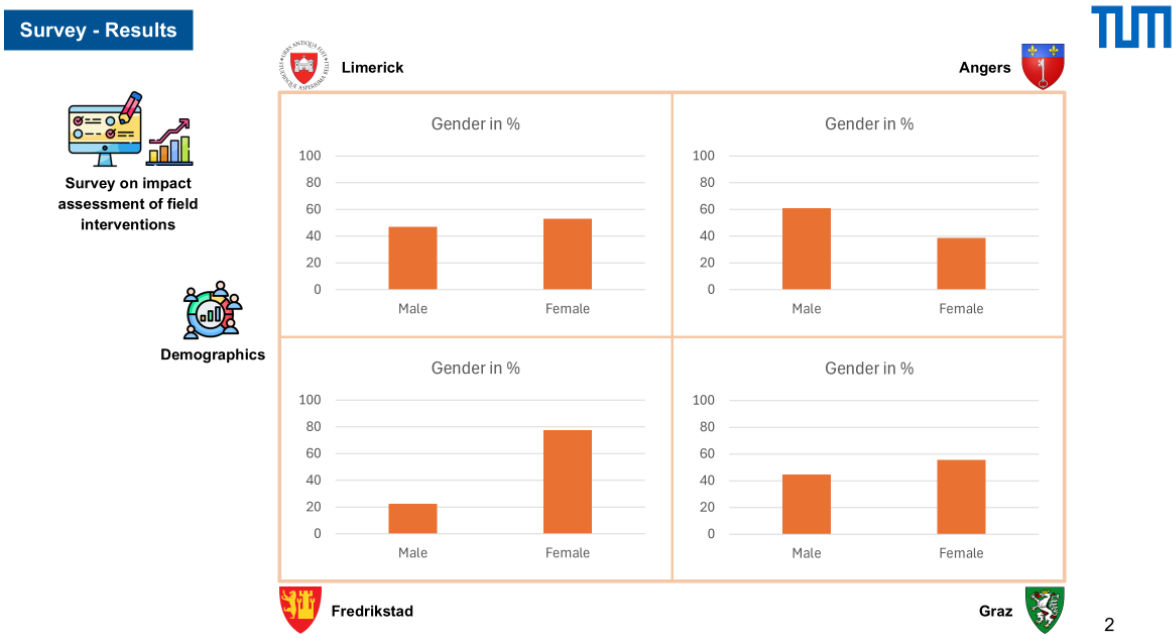
The survey was conducted across the four cities Angers, Limerick, Fredrikstad, and Graz with sample sizes ranging from 55 respondents in Angers to 389 in Graz, to assess the impact of interventions promoting physical activity (PA).

Before beginning to analyse the data, it should be pointed out that because of the different sample sizes in the different cities, the data should be interpreted with a certain amount of caution. In addition, it should be borne in mind that the people who responded to this survey are probably the most likely to have an active lifestyle, since not only did they have access to the survey via their sports club, for example, but also because they felt addressed by the survey. Thus, the responses are not necessarily representative of the inhabitants of each city.

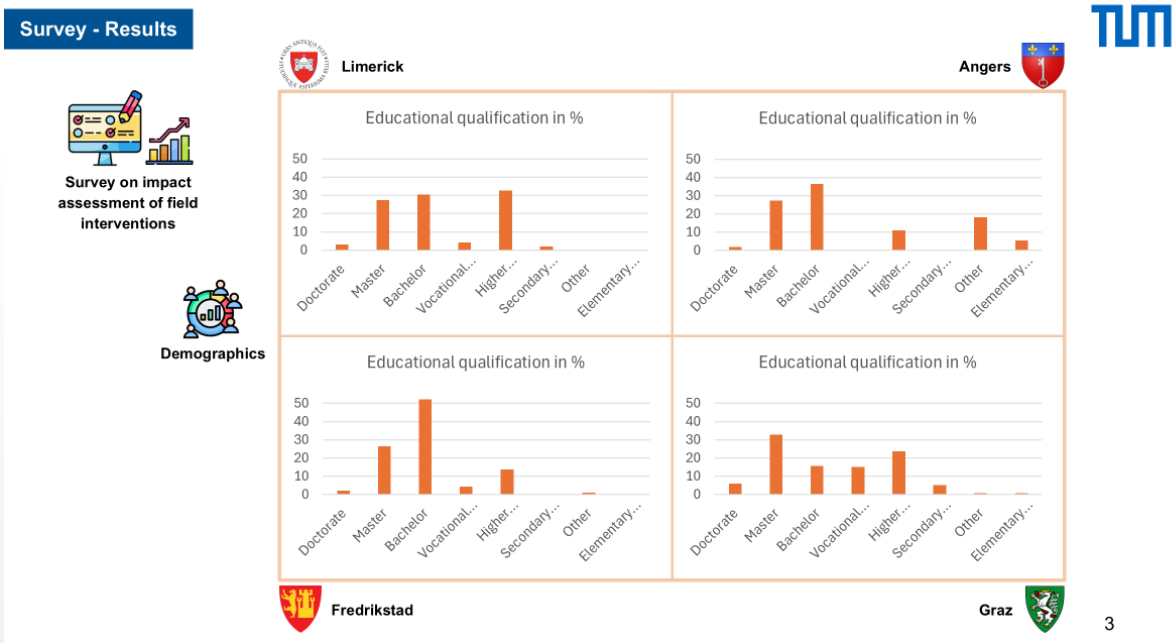
Demographic overview : The demographic distribution of participants provides insights into who participated in the survey.



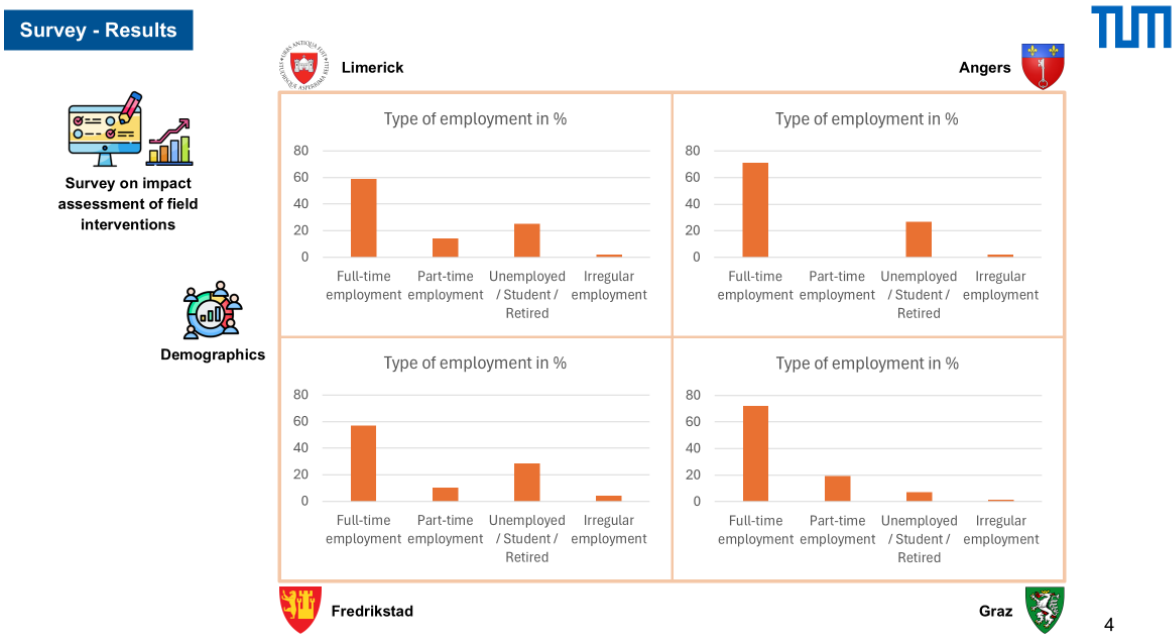
The data reveal a fairly varied sample in terms of age, with a very young audience in Limerick, with over 25% of respondents aged between 10 and 19.



In terms of gender, the majority of respondents were women, except in the city of Angers, where the trend was reversed. In Fredrikstad, there was a substantial imbalance regarding gender of the participants.

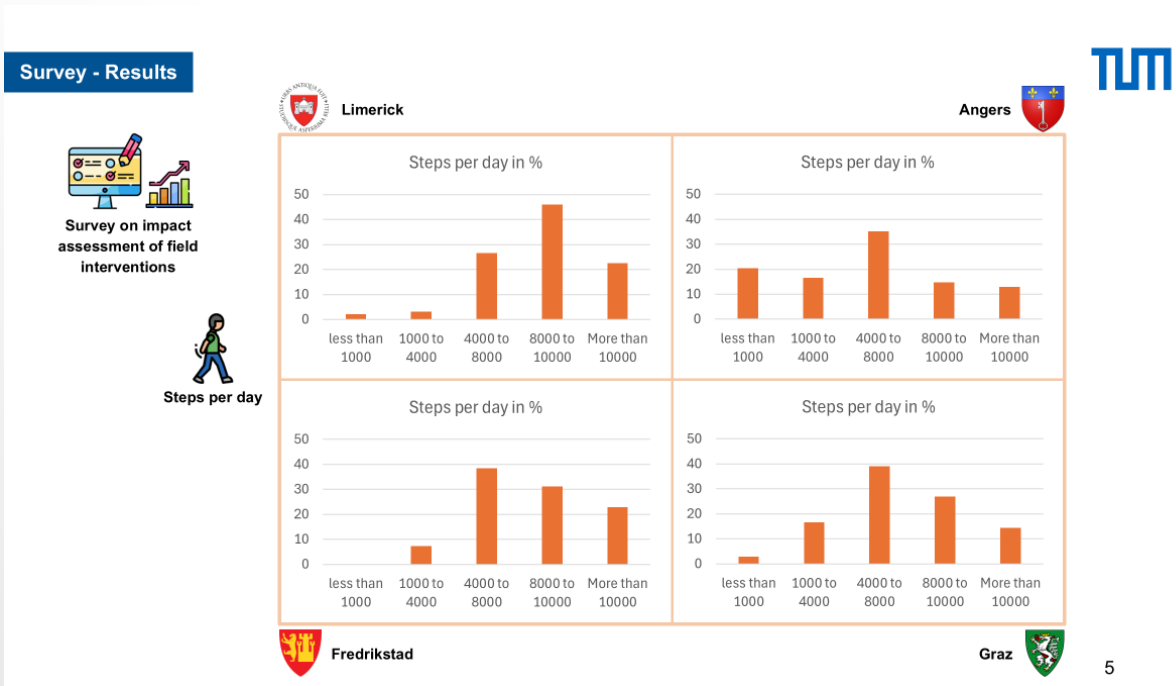


Moreover, in all cities, the results show that respondents have a high level of education, lower levels of education are slightly underrepresented.

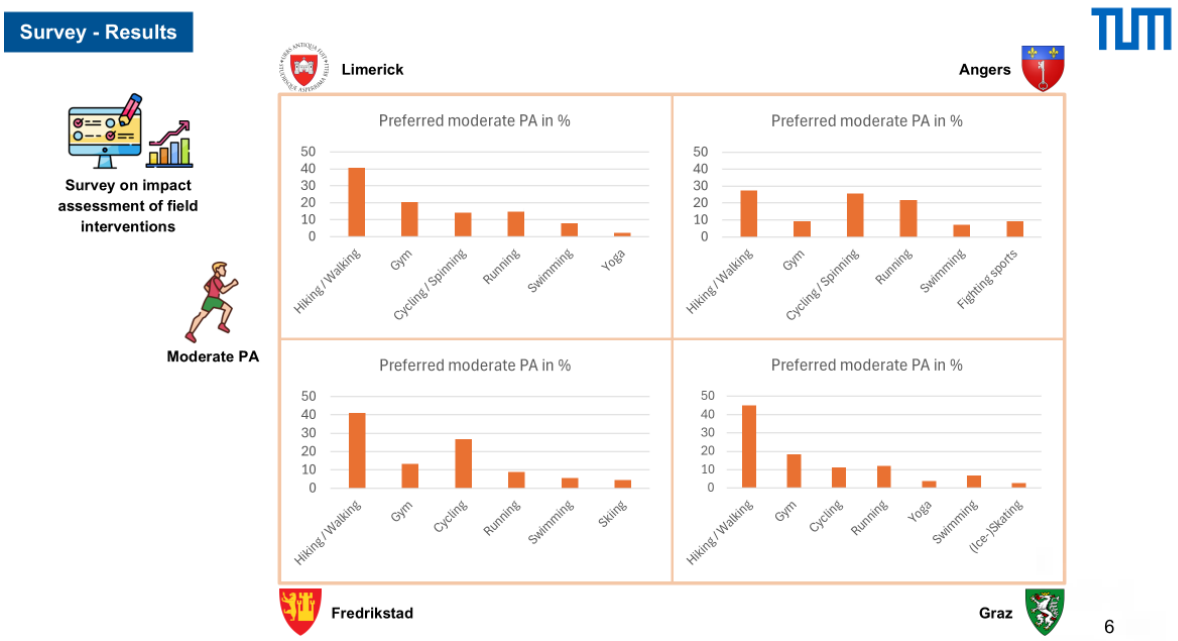


Although the majority of respondents are in full-time employment in all four of the cities studied, the relatively high rate of inactivity is cause for concern. This can probably be explained by the high proportion of young respondents, particularly in Limerick, who are in fact students. The same applies to retired people, who probably increase the inactivity rate.

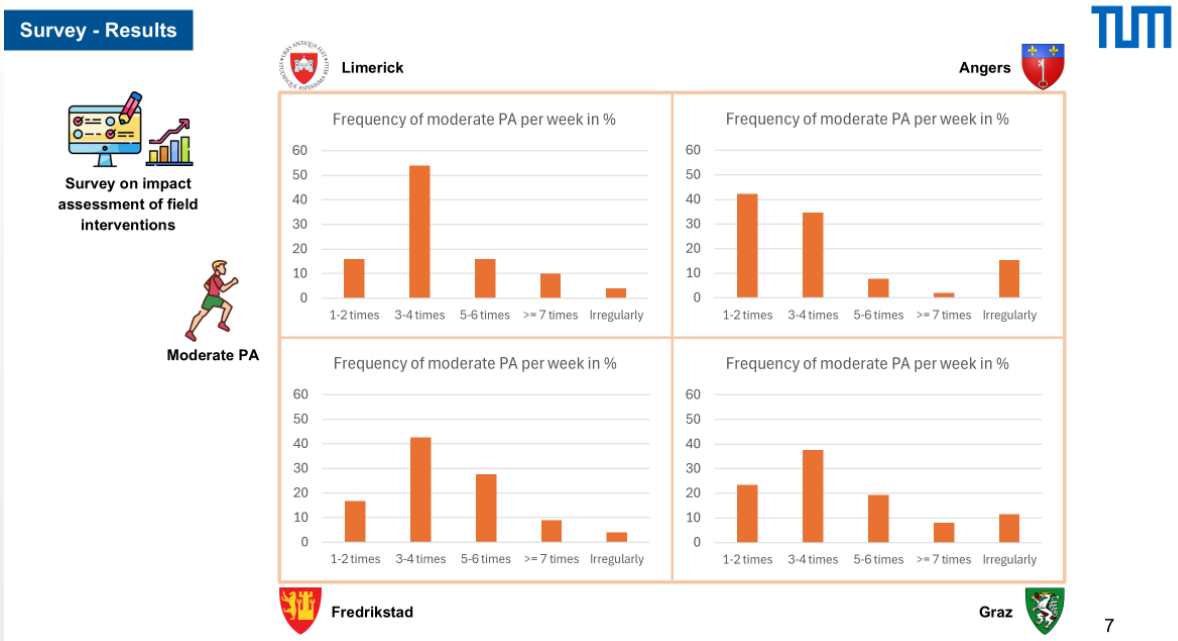
Steps per day: The number of daily steps reported by respondents highlights certain cultural differences. Today, according to the figures collected, only a minority take more than 10,000 steps a day although more than 20% of respondents in Limerick and Fredrikstad claim to exceed this threshold. In contrast, 20% of respondents in Angers said they took fewer than 1,000 steps a day.



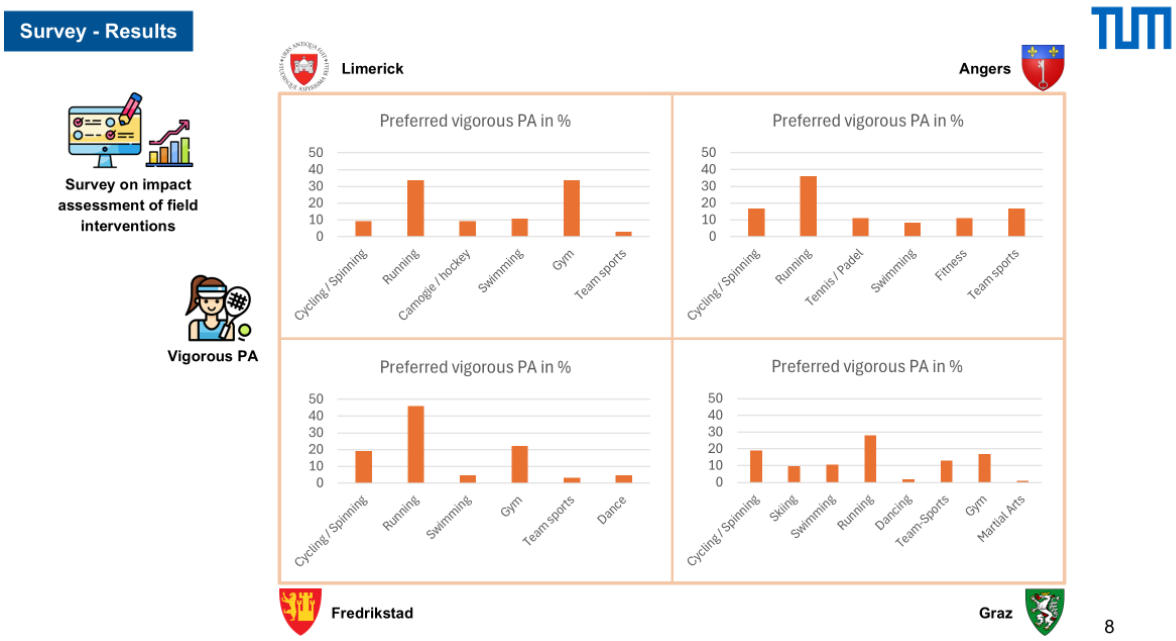
Moderate physical activity: The results highlight the fact that walking/hiking is the most popular moderate-intensity activity among respondents. Cycling, slow running, fitness and swimming complete the podium, with some minor differences depending on the city. Finally, some sports that reflect the region's sporting culture and specific geographical features complete the list, such as skiing in Fredrikstad.



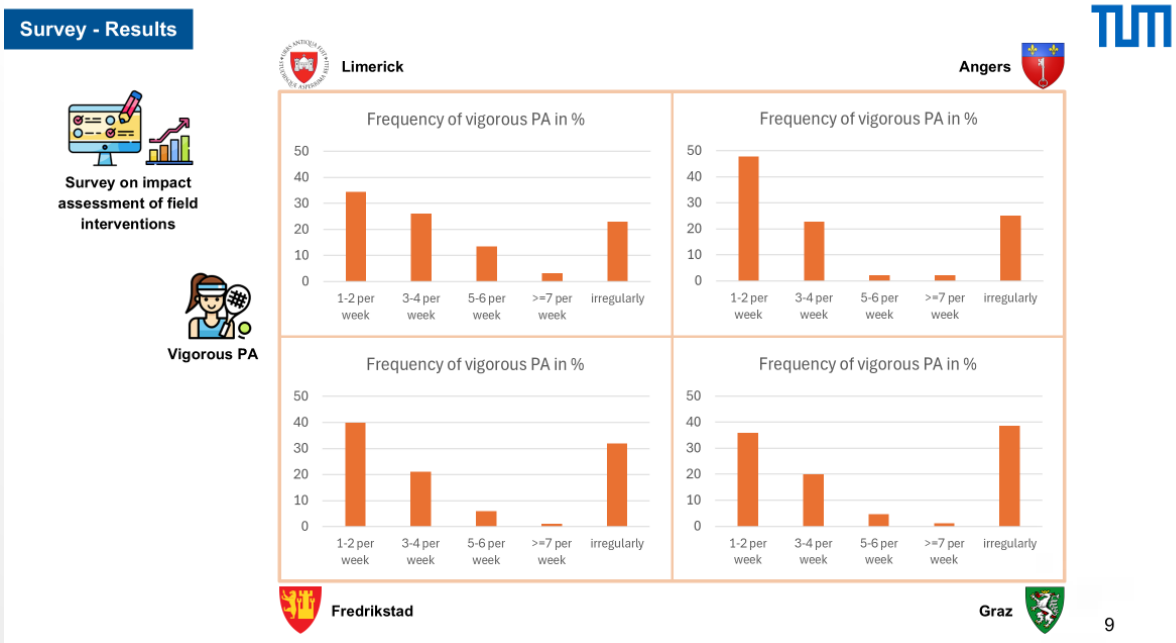
Over 40% of respondents in Limerick and Fredrikstad said they practised moderate intensity activity at least three or four times a week, compared with just under 40% in Graz and just over 30% in Angers. Across the four cities as a whole, only 7.5% of respondents said they engaged in moderate-intensity activity every day.



Vigorous physical activity: Certain disciplines are recurrent in all four cities, such as running, cycling, swimming and team sports, with a few variations depending on the country's specific sporting culture. The most popular discipline in all four cities remains running, which is probably the most accessible activity, both financially and in terms of infrastructure and physical fitness.

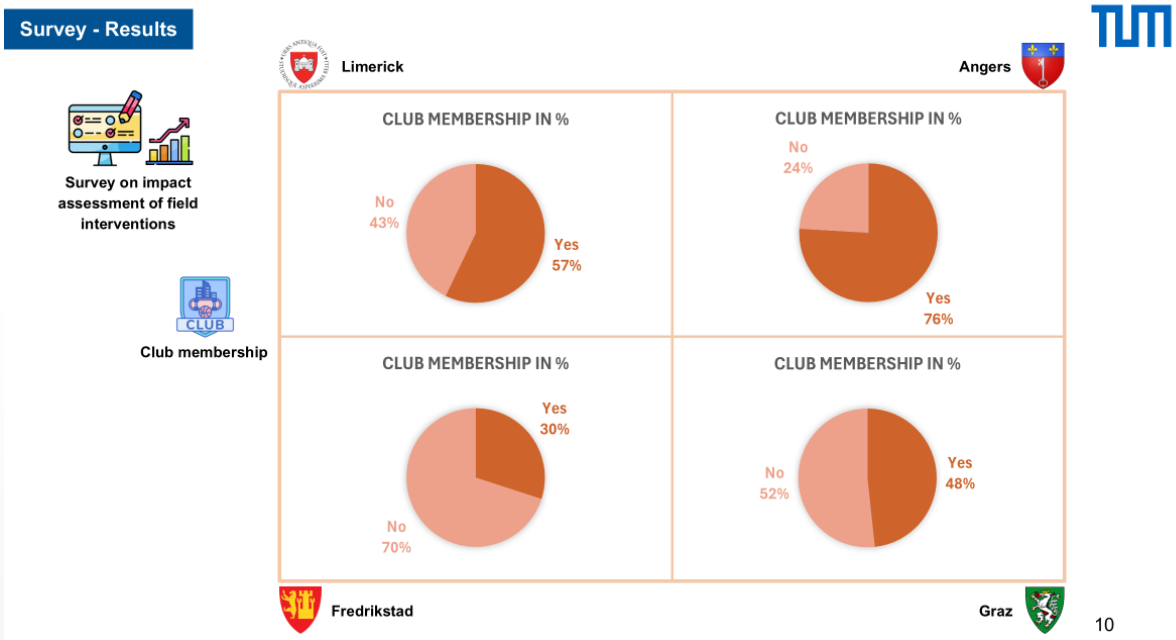


Most respondents say they take part in a vigorous intensity activity once or twice a week. However, an average of almost 30% of respondents in the four cities were unable to state the number of sessions they did each week, as the frequency was irregular.

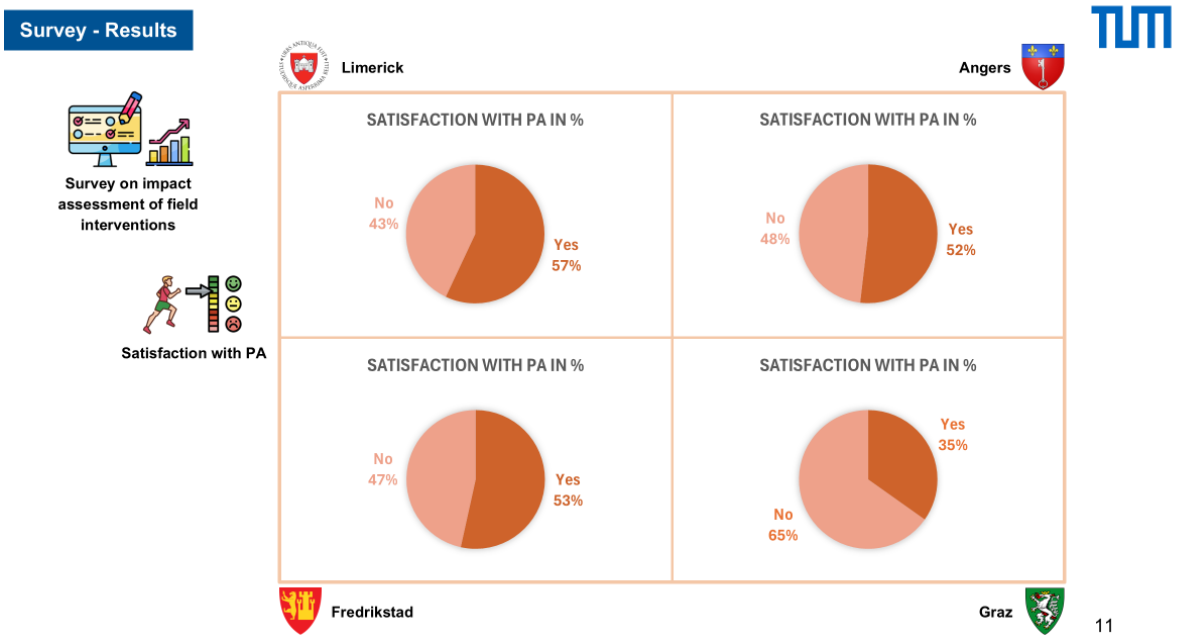


Club membership: The question of sports club membership highlights significant cultural differences.

While 73% of respondents from Angers are members of a club, only 30% of respondents from Fredrikstad are members. This statistic underlines the diversification of physical activity and sport, which does not necessarily involve the club, and increasingly leaves room for independent practice, highlighting the importance of developing initiatives that make the city a playground. Nevertheless, studies have showed that sport clubs promote physical fitness, teamwork, and discipline while strengthening social and cultural bonds. They serve as key hubs for interaction, bridging generational and social divides, and fostering community integration. Additionally, they support public health by encouraging active lifestyles and countering sedentary habits. Across Europe, millions engage in sports clubs, benefiting from structured training and organized events. In fact, with their extensive networks, sport clubs facilitate the organization of sporting events for both recreational and competitive athletes, enhancing engagement and participation. Closely linked to active schools, sport clubs ensure long-term engagement in sports. Schools introduce children to various activities, while clubs provide continuity and specialization. Many schools and clubs collaborate on discovery days and after-school programs, creating a smooth transition from initiation to sustained participation in sports

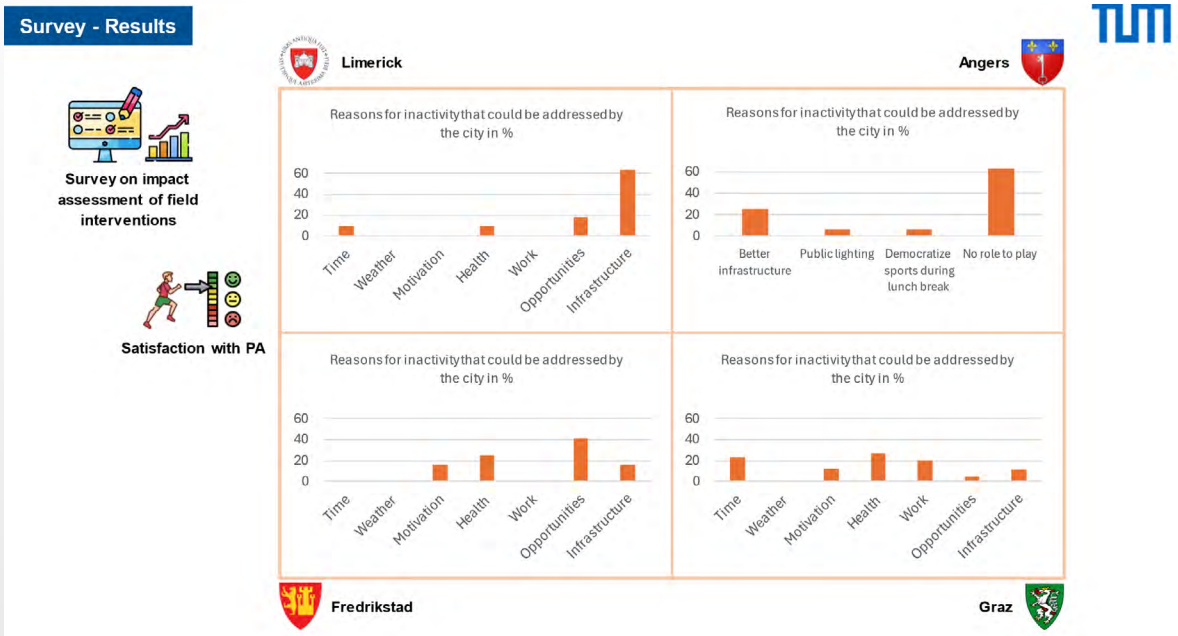


Satisfaction with physical activity: Over 50% of respondents in Limerick, Angers and Fredrikstad said they were satisfied with their level of physical activity. In Graz, on the other hand, the figure was only 35%.

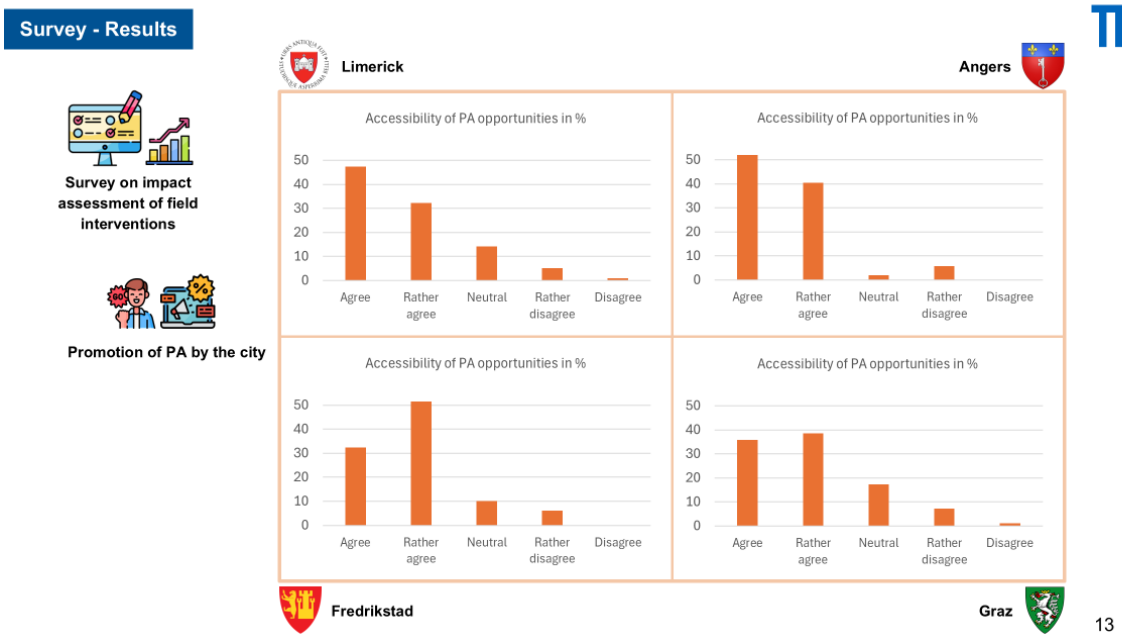


The most common reasons given for the discrepancy between the amount of physical activity desired and the amount actually done are lack of time, a lack of diversity in the range of sports on offer, lack of motivation and lack or absence of infrastructure to enable the desired activities to be carried out.

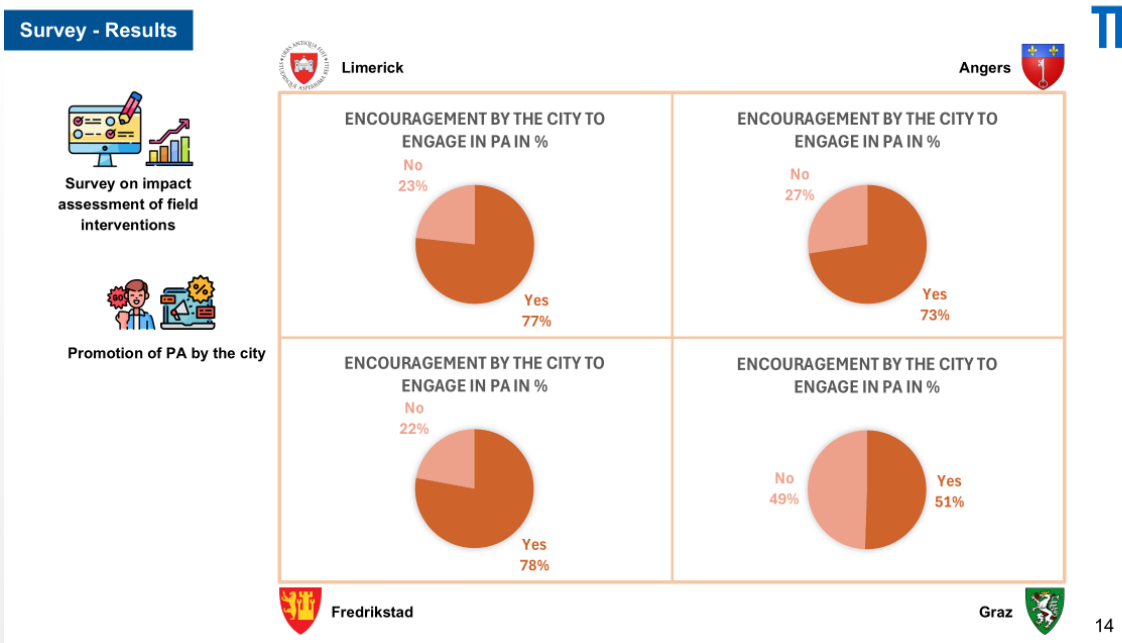
While most of the respondents from Limerick, Graz and Fredrikstad considered that the municipality could overcome these obstacles, particularly through public policies, whether sporting (infrastructure, subsidies, etc.) or public health, most of the respondents from Angers considered that the city could not particularly play a role in increasing physical activity and that it was primarily a matter of personal initiative.



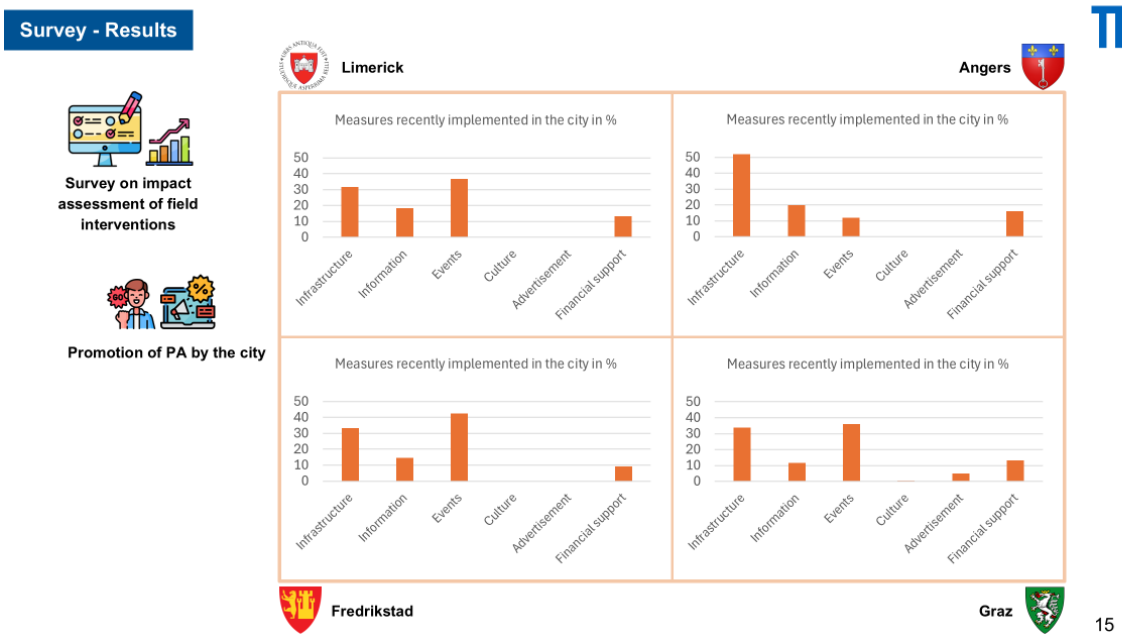
Promotion of PA by the city: These figures highlight that the vast majority of respondents seem to agree that their respective municipality provides opportunities for residents to engage in physical and/or sports activities.



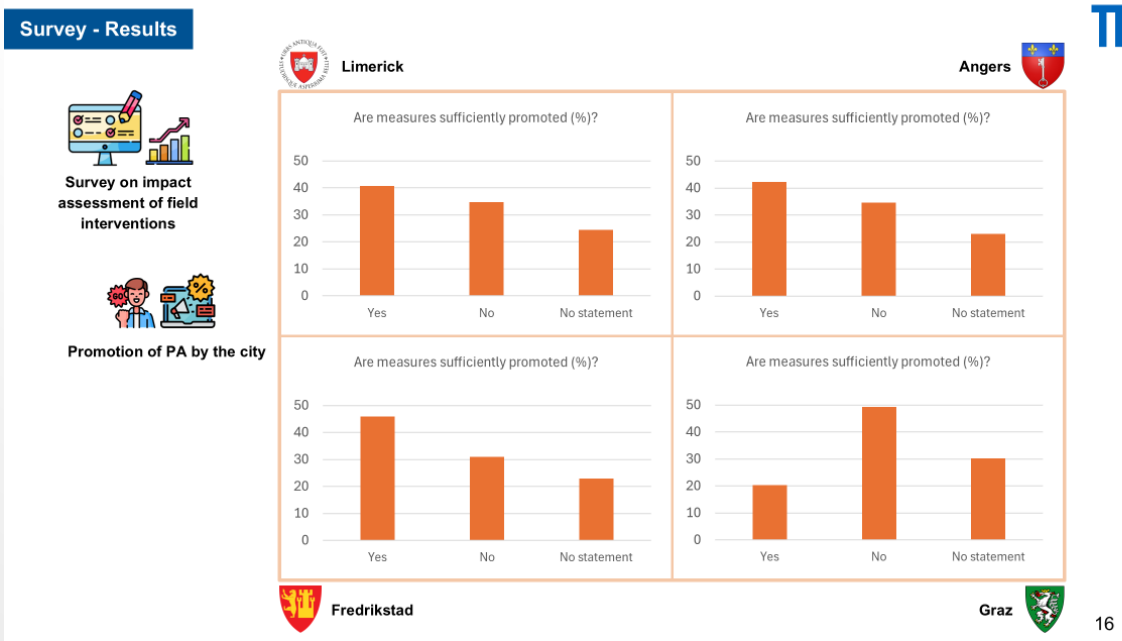
The same applies to the municipalities' ability to support physical and sports activities, as the vast majority of respondents state that their municipality encourages them to engage in physical and/or sports activities, whether through urban planning, service offerings, or the promotion of sports or health policies.



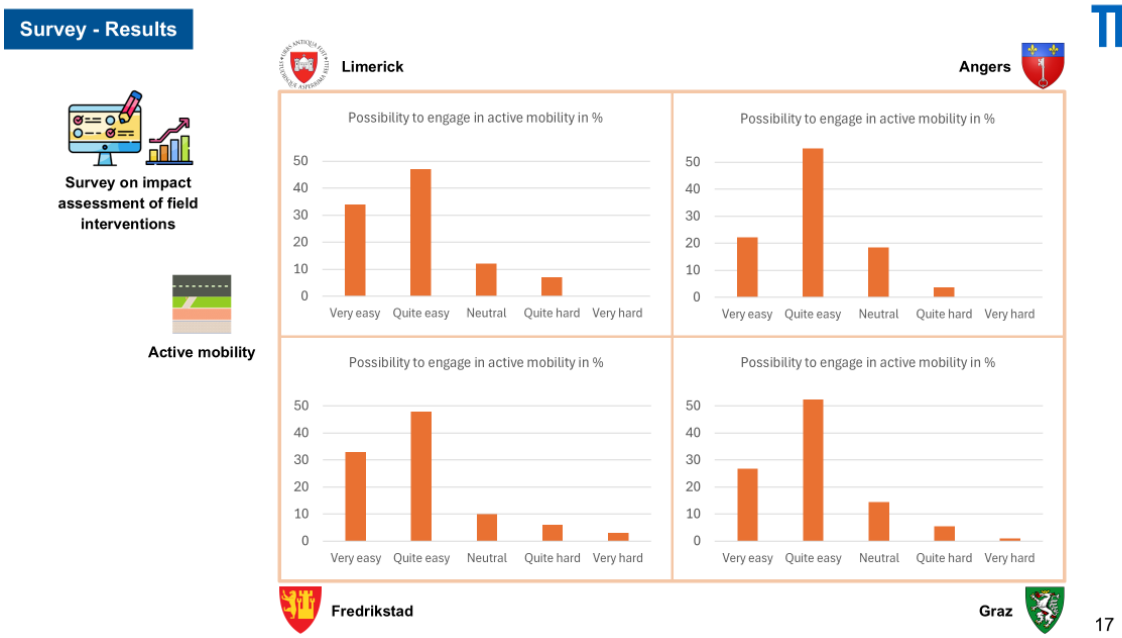
When asked about the initiatives led by the municipality that most encourage respondents to engage in physical activity, the construction of infrastructure comes first, followed by the organization of sporting events or health promotion initiatives, and finally, financial incentives to encourage participation.



Opinions are more divided regarding whether the measures implemented by the municipalities are sufficiently promoted, particularly in the city of Graz, where nearly 50% of respondents believe that the municipality is not taking enough action to advertise the measures that aim to encourage residents to engage in physical activity.



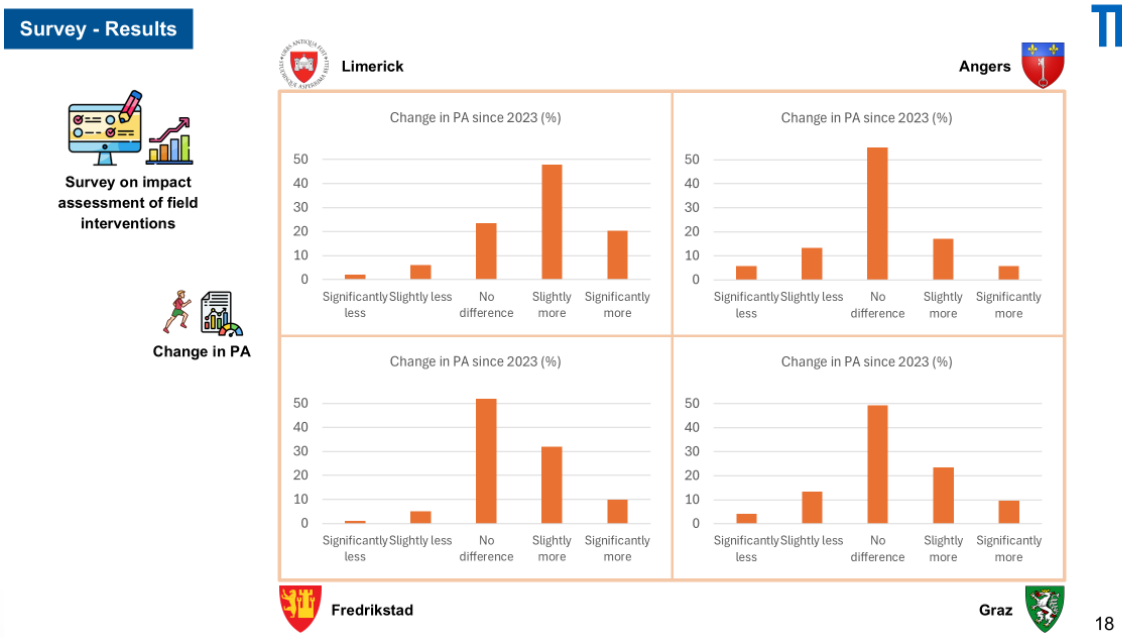
Active mobility: The figures here are rather reassuring regarding the effectiveness of municipal public policies on active cities, as the majority of respondents state that it is easy or fairly easy to participate in active mobility in their city of residence.



Change in physical activity: Here, only in Limerick, a majority of the residents feel that their level of physical activity has relatively increased since 2023, the year the PACTE+ project was launched. In the other cities, the majority of respondents did not perceive any significant difference.

This could be explained by several factors, such as the existence of well-developed public policies promoting physical activity.

These data may also reflect the common confusion between sport and physical activity—meaning that respondents who reported no change may not have more dedicated sports sessions in their weekly routine but may have increased their overall physical activity through active mobility or NEAT (Non-Exercise Activity Thermogenesis).



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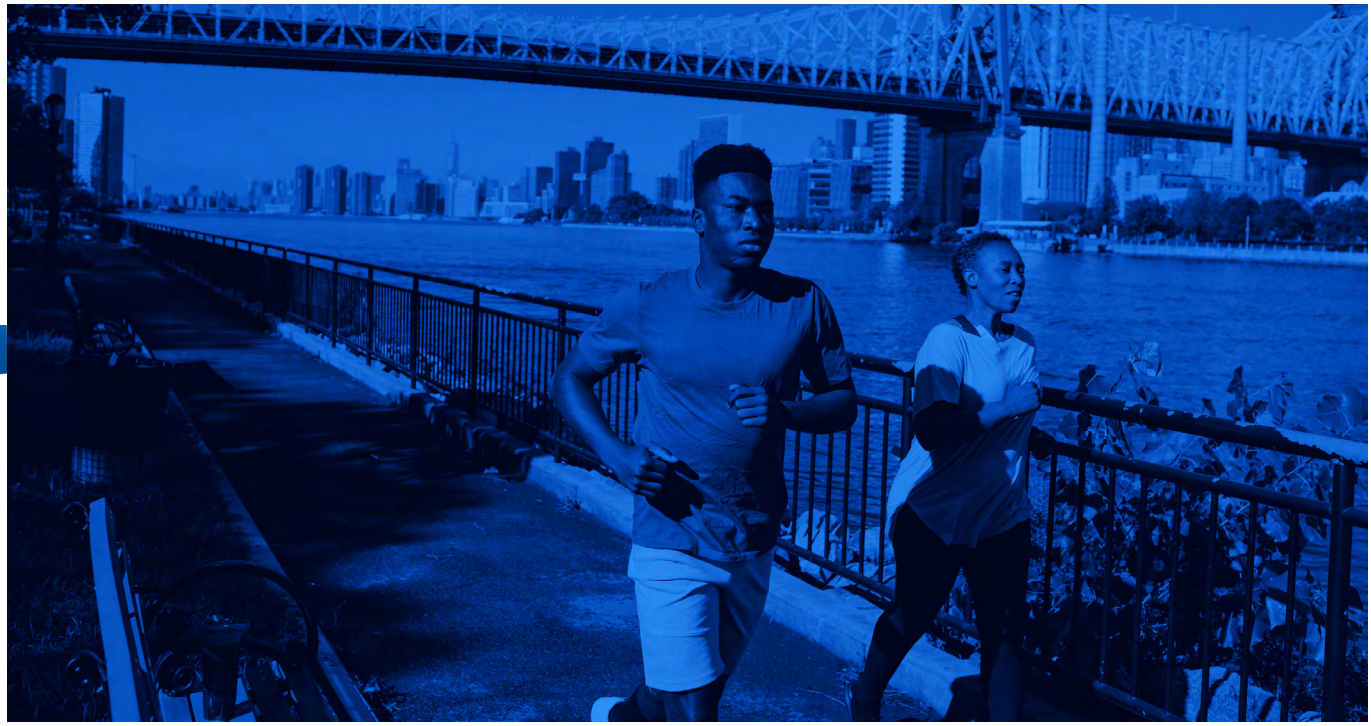
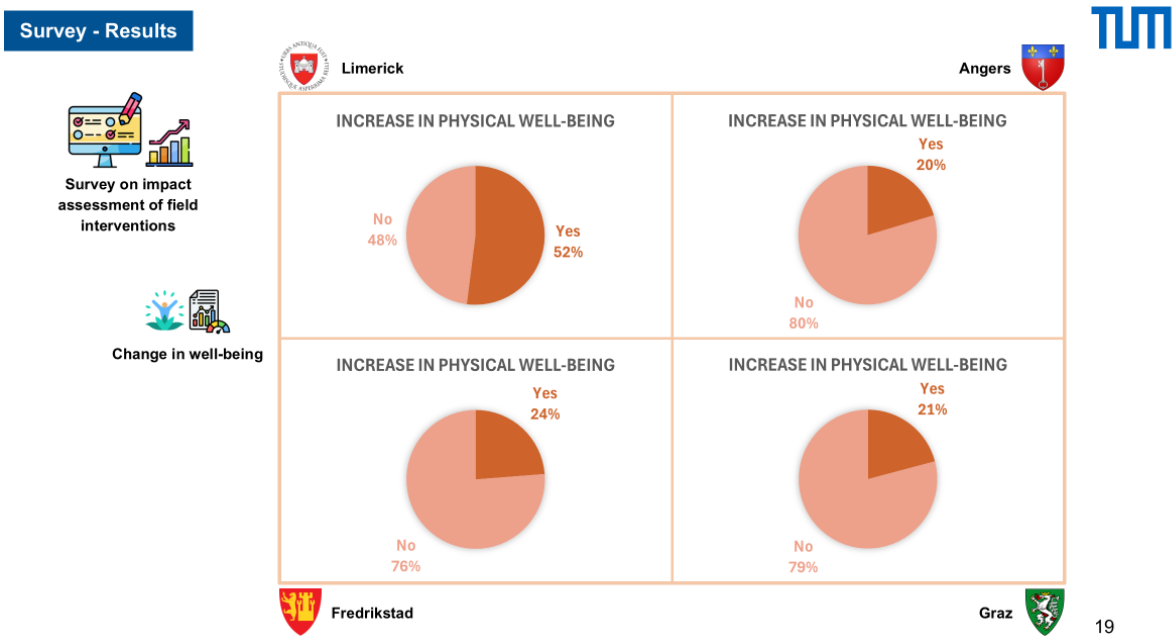
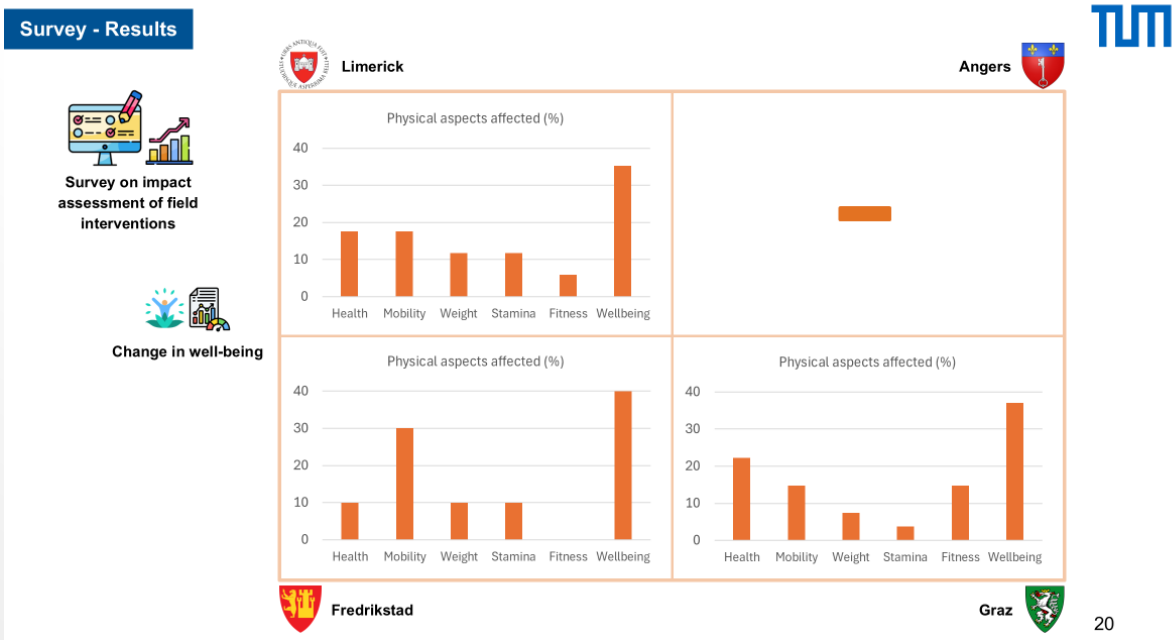


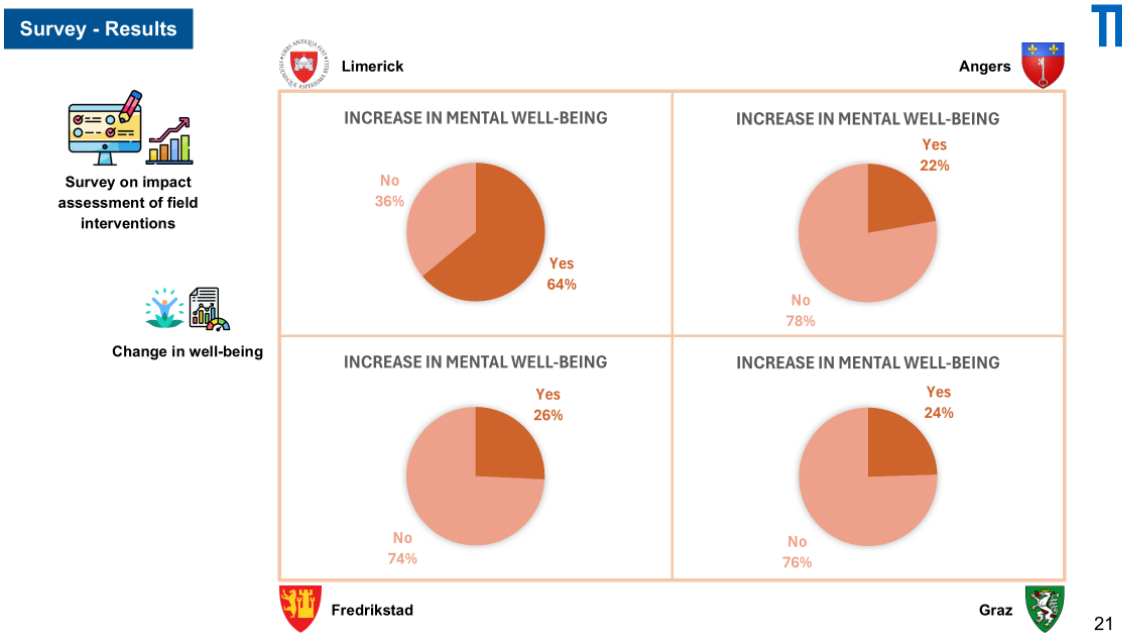
Change in well-being: The previously mentioned results are reflected here, as only in the city of Limerick, a majority of the respondents report having noticed a significant improvement in their physical well-being.



Among the notable changes, overall physical well-being is by far the most significant improvement.



In terms of mental health, the results explained in the "Change in PA" section are also reflected here, as 64% of respondents in Limerick report that their mental health has improved - alongside the reported increase in physical activity.



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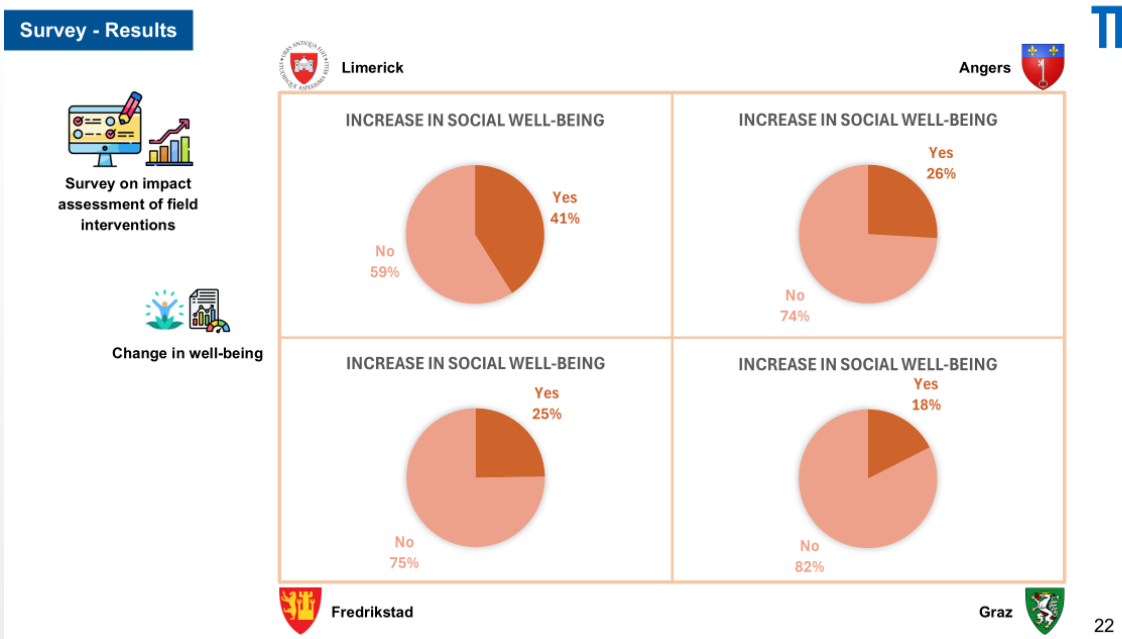
The same applies to social well-being, where compared with the other cities, in Limerick, a greater proportion of residents report having expanded both the quantity and quality of their networks and strengthened their social ties, particularly through physical activity as a means of interaction and connection.



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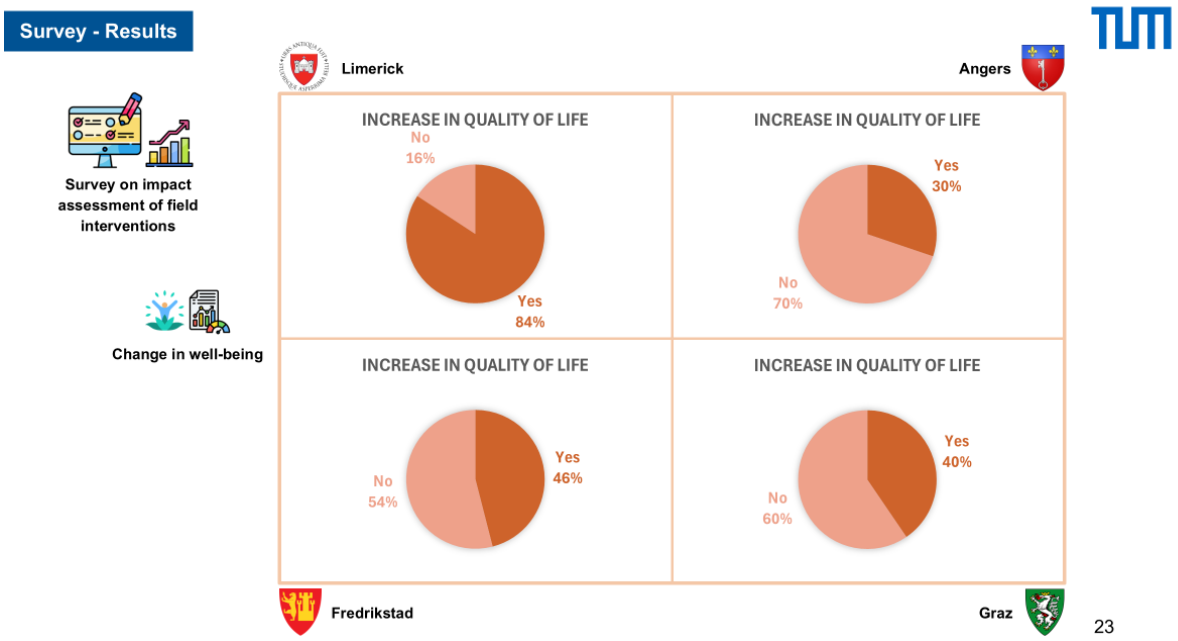
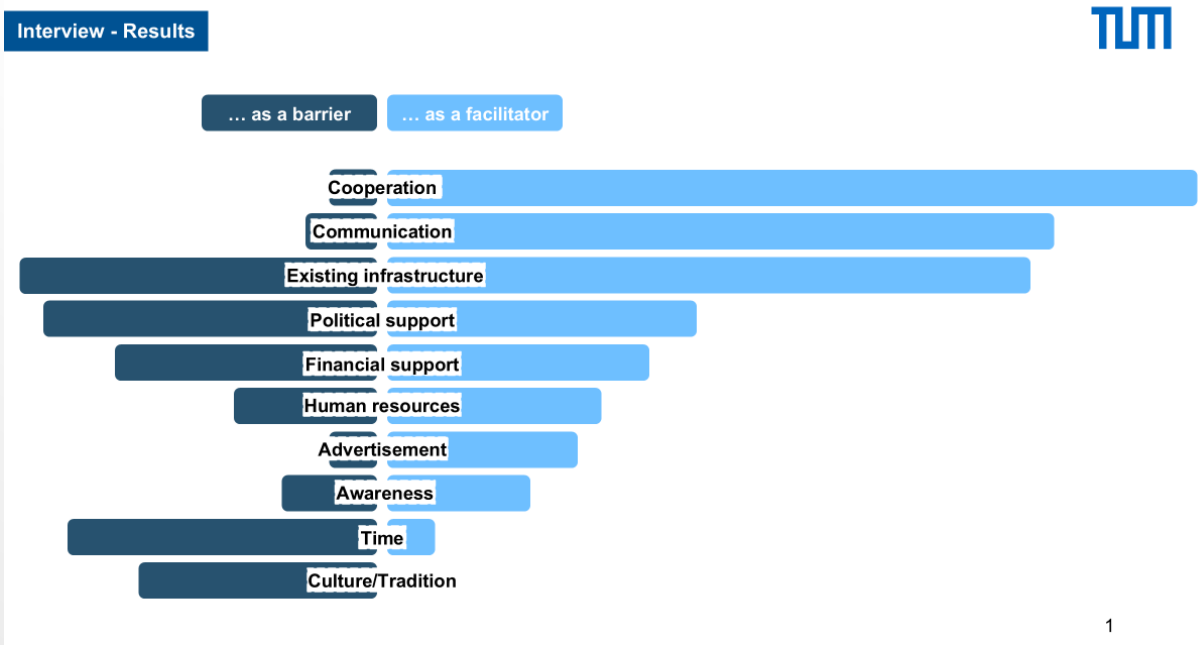
Finally, the increase in physical activity and the assumedly associated increase in physical, mental and social well-being appear to be correlated with a sense of improved quality of life, as 84% of respondents from Limerick believe their standard of living has increased since 2023, compared to 30% in Angers, 46% in Fredrikstad, and 40% in Graz.



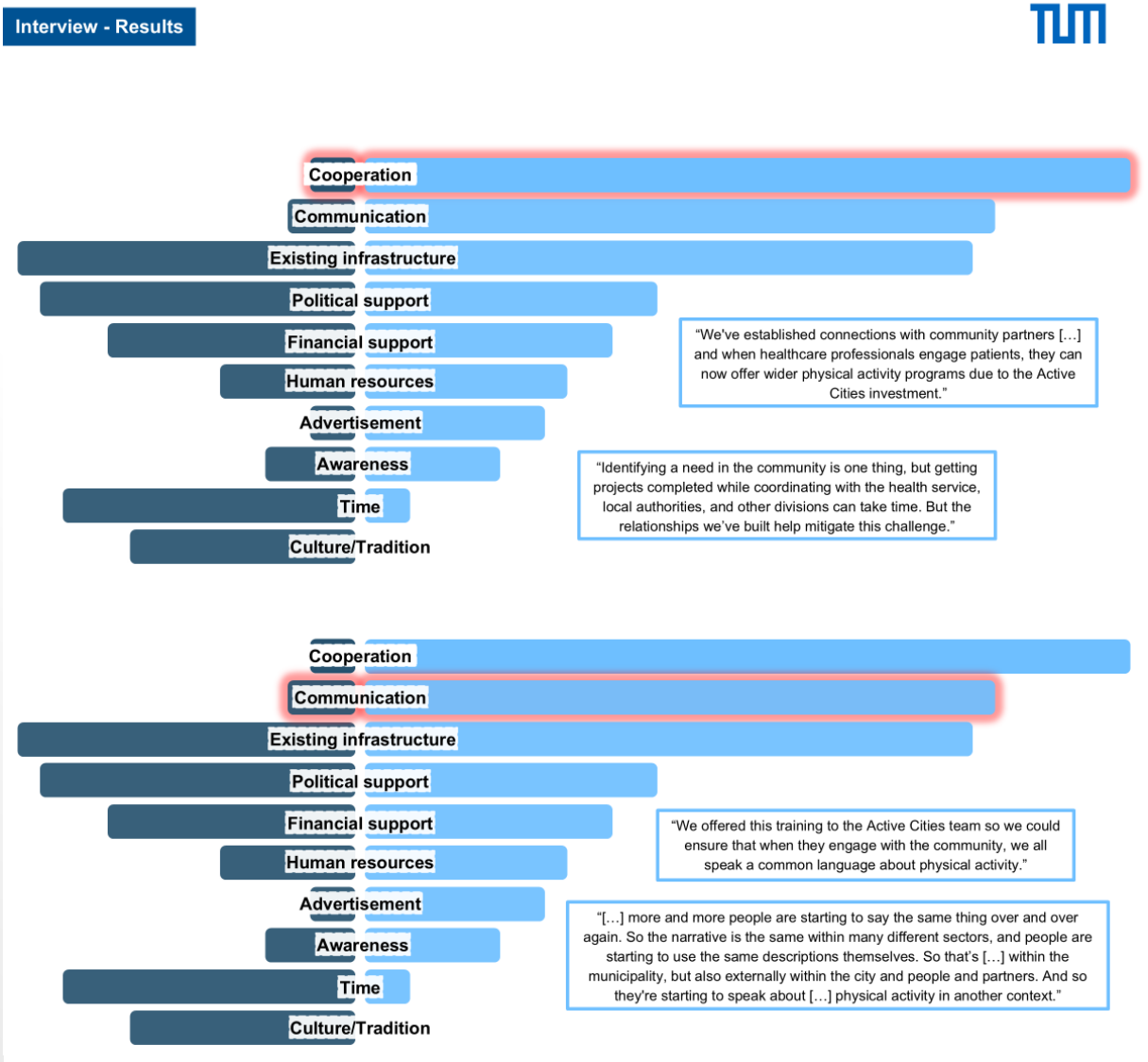
3.2.2 Qualitative: interview analysis focusing on main facilitators and barriers



a - Facilitators in developing Active Cities

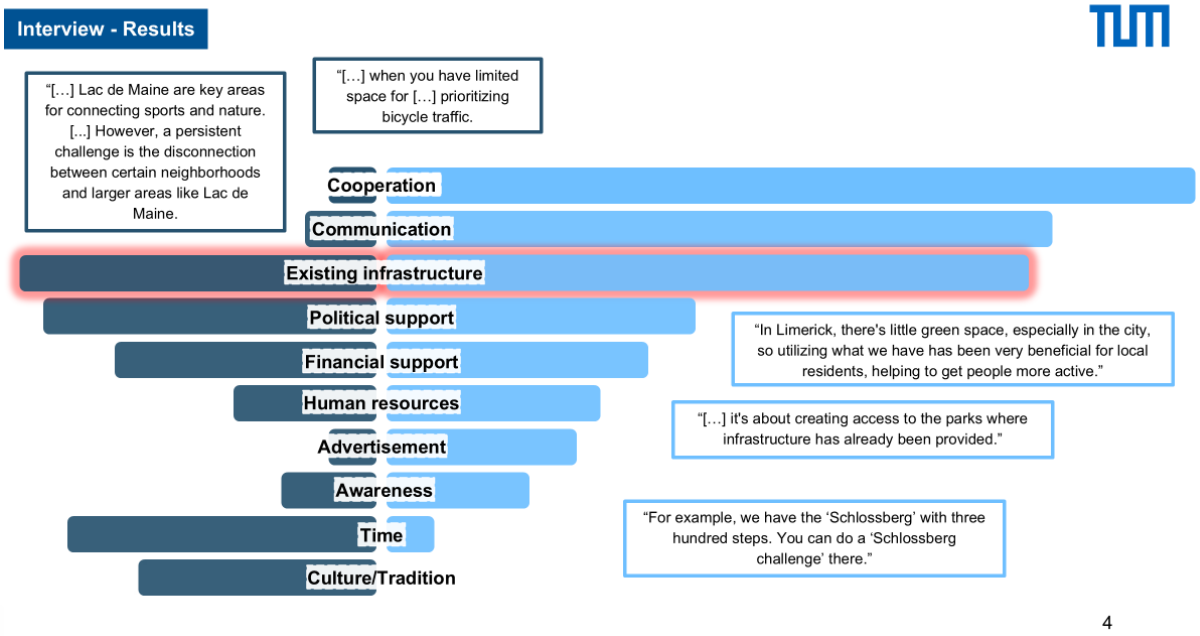
Cooperation and communication as key enablers: The interview results are relevant to underline that development of active cities relies heavily on strong cooperation between stakeholders. As a matter of fact, it seems that the establishment of partnerships between community organisations, healthcare professionals, and local authorities has facilitated the expansion of physical activity programmes. One respondent highlighted the impact of these collaborations, noting that healthcare professionals are now better equipped to integrate physical activity into patient care due to the support of Active Cities initiatives. This shared understanding is reinforced by targeted training sessions, ensuring that all involved actors use a common language when engaging with the community.

Additionally, communication across different sectors has fostered a cohesive narrative around physical activity. As one interviewee observed, "more and more people are starting to say the same thing over and over again," illustrating how a unified discourse is taking shape within municipalities and their broader networks.



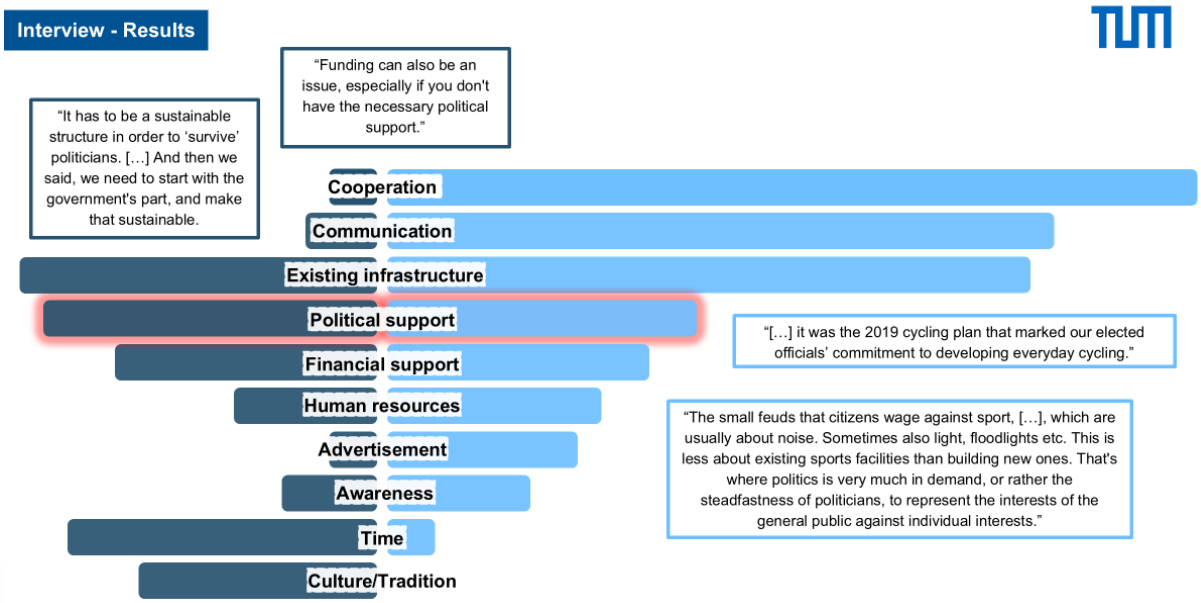
Infrastructure utilisation and optimisation: Despite spatial limitations, the pilot cities have successfully leveraged existing infrastructure to promote physical activity. In Limerick, for example, the strategic use of available green spaces has proven highly beneficial for residents, enhancing accessibility and participation in outdoor activities. Similarly, innovative approaches such as the 'Schlossberg challenge' in Graz—where individuals are encouraged to climb 300 steps—demonstrate how urban landscapes can be repurposed to encourage movement.

Nevertheless, while existing spaces are being optimised, connectivity remains a challenge. In some areas, certain neighbourhoods remain disconnected from larger recreational hubs, such as Lac de Maine in Angers, limiting accessibility and reducing participation rates.



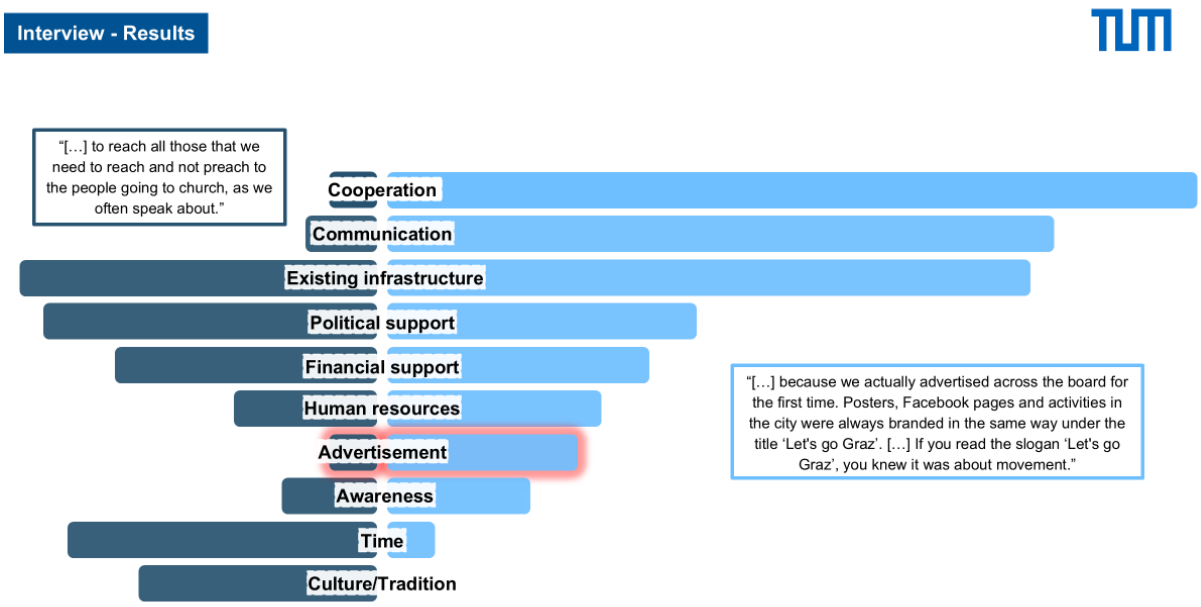
Political and financial commitment: Sustained political will and financial investment play a crucial role in the success of active city policies. The adoption of the 2019 cycling plan, for instance, marked a significant shift in political commitment to everyday cycling in Angers. Moreover, some governments have secured long-term funding streams to support mobility transitions. One policymaker noted that current governmental structures have allocated funds for the next ten years to facilitate the transition from car use to walking, cycling, and public transportation.

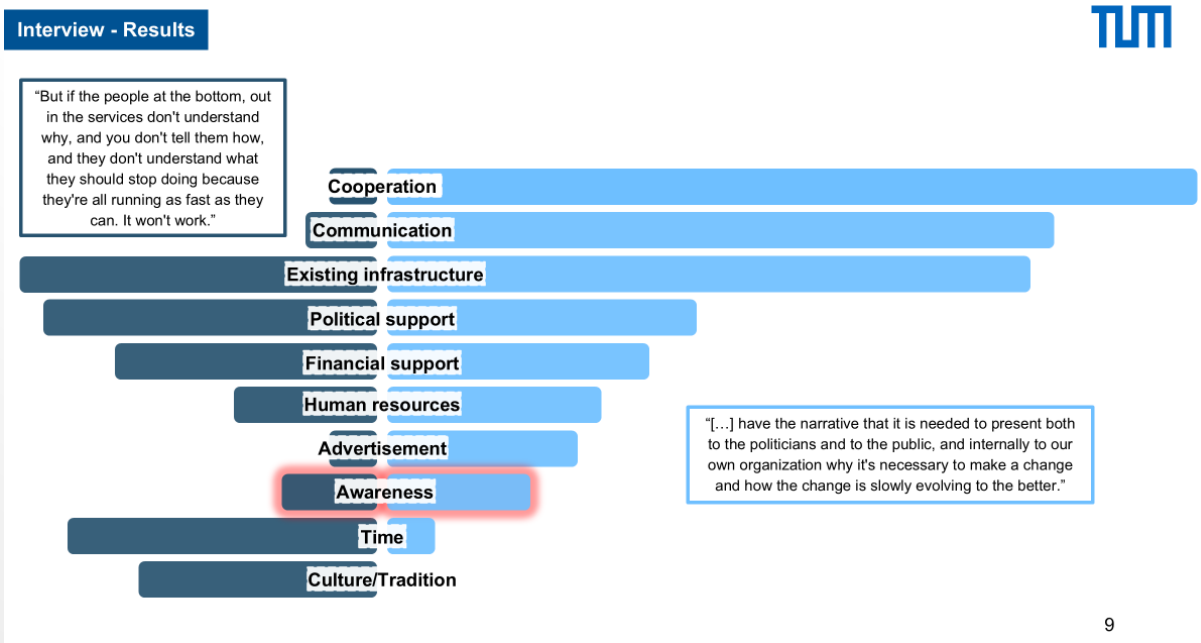
However, financial sustainability remains a pressing issue, with many projects facing uncertainty due to fluctuating political support. The need for structural longevity is evident, as one respondent emphasized: “It has to be a sustainable structure in order to ‘survive’ politicians.”



Awareness and public engagement: Efforts to raise public awareness have played a crucial role in fostering a culture of active living in the four pilot cities. In Graz, a city-wide campaign branded under the slogan “Let’s go Graz” successfully unified various promotional efforts, making movement and physical activity highly visible and easily recognisable to residents.

Despite these efforts, outreach strategies must be carefully designed to ensure inclusivity, as one interviewee pointed out: “To reach all those that we need to reach and not preach to the people going to church, as we often speak about.”





b.Barriers in developing Active Cities

Administrative and logistical constraints: The complexity of projects requiring coordination among multiple stakeholders delays progress, all the more so when it involves players who are not used to working with each other, since all the connections have to be built. For example, in Fredrikstad, projects like "Active School" encountered delays due to lengthy administrative processes, including approvals and coordination with local authorities.

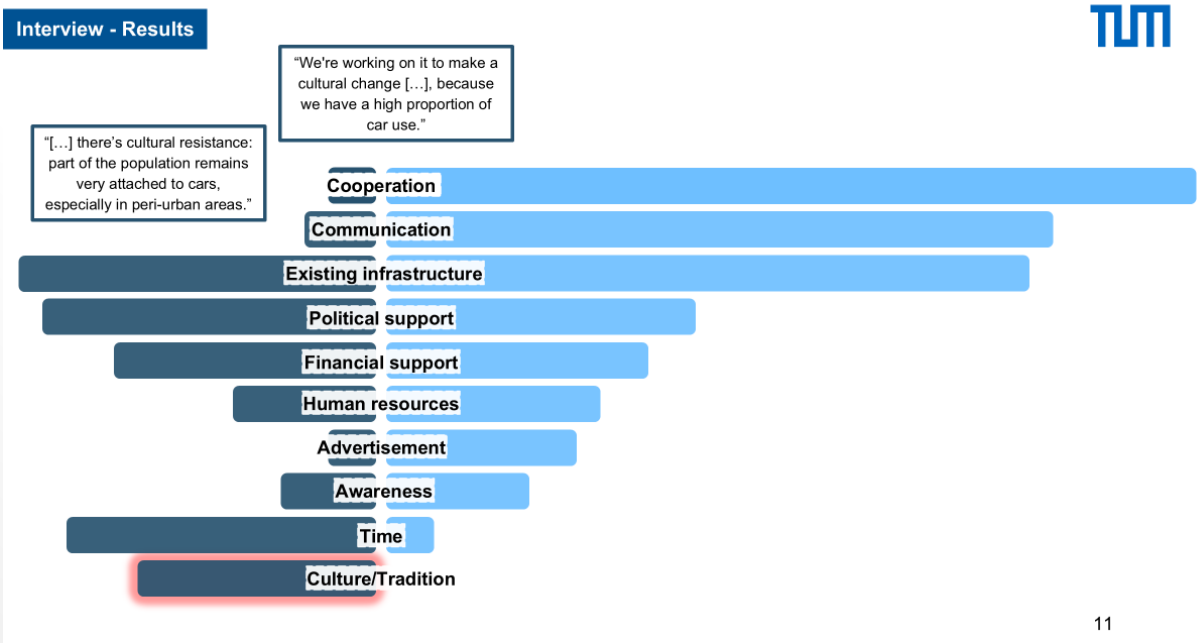
Indeed, given that active city policies essentially involve public administrations and funds, the decision-making processes involved can sometimes seem long and perilous. While the fact of facilitating certain steps that are not of major importance to the legal conduct of the project seems to be a point to be defended, it should not be forgotten that these developments are largely financed with public funds, which seems to legitimise the procedure to some extent.

Bureaucratic hurdles often delay or complicate the implementation of active city policies. Obtaining building permits, for example, can be a lengthy and complex process. One expert detailed how creating bicycle lanes requires extensive administrative coordination, often involving land acquisition and regulatory adjustments, which can take up to four years, before physical construction even begins. These drawn-out processes slow momentum and reduce the feasibility of timely interventions.

Cultural and social resistance: The data show that changing people's habits is no mean feat. For instance, the players in the city of Angers emphasized that a significant portion of peri-urban residents remains attached to cars, reflecting broader cultural resistance to adopting cycling as a primary mode of transportation. This finding is in line with research into the reluctance to change as one of the main barriers to the development of active cities. Meanwhile, the city of Graz illustrates this resistance by prioritising car use in public spaces, making it challenging to create wide and safe cycling lanes without compromising other traffic needs.

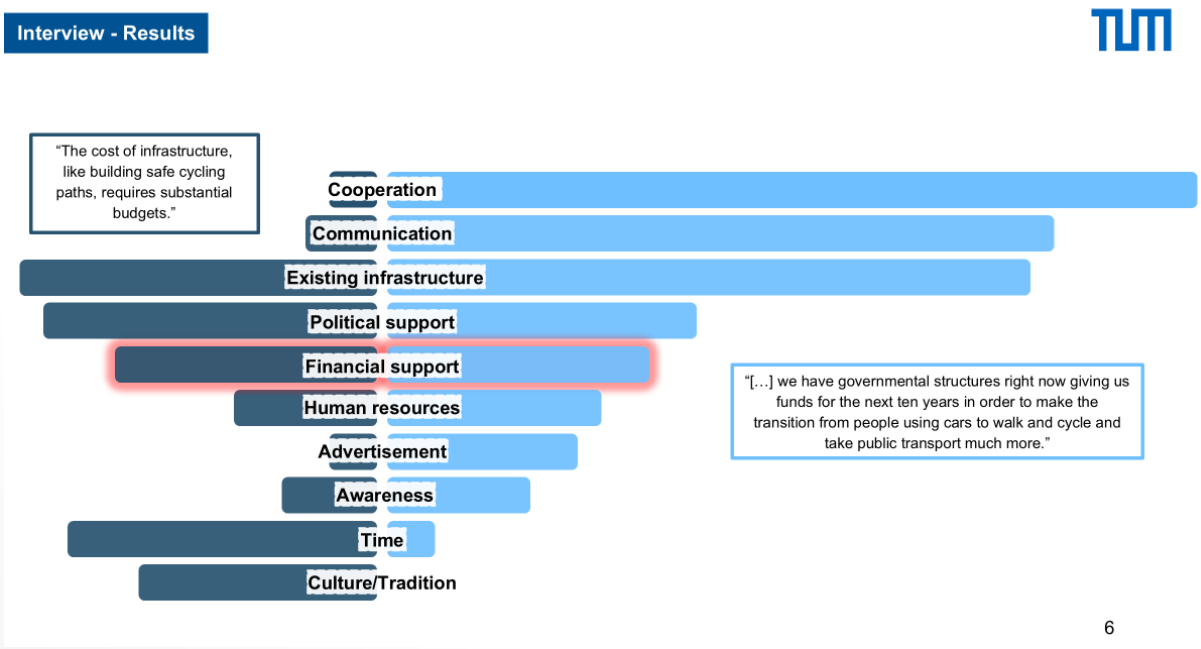
Despite the growing emphasis on active mobility, deep-seated cultural preferences for car usage continue to present challenges, particularly in peri-urban areas. "There's cultural resistance: part of the population remains very attached to cars," observed one respondent, highlighting the difficulty of shifting behaviours. Changing mobility habits requires long-term engagement, and while progress is being made, the transition remains gradual.

As the research points out, the results of the study show that conflicts between road users, particularly cyclists and motorists, create insecurity. For example, in Angers, tensions can arise due to unclear road-sharing rules and what users consider as insufficient cycling infrastructure. In Fredrikstad, tension is also seen between different administrative levels, such as school directors and municipal authorities, which slows down the implementation of active mobility initiatives. These data show that it is difficult to favour users of all means of locomotion unless a dedicated and safe space is provided for each of them. This also requires a major effort in terms of education and individual and collective responsibility in terms of respect for the rules governing the sharing of public space and priority.



Financial constraints and political uncertainty: Although some cities benefit from long-term financial commitments, funding remains a critical barrier for many active mobility initiatives. One respondent noted that even with dedicated support, "funding can also be an issue, especially if you don't have the necessary political support." Political transitions often impact the continuity of active city programs, making it essential to embed these initiatives within resilient and independent structures.

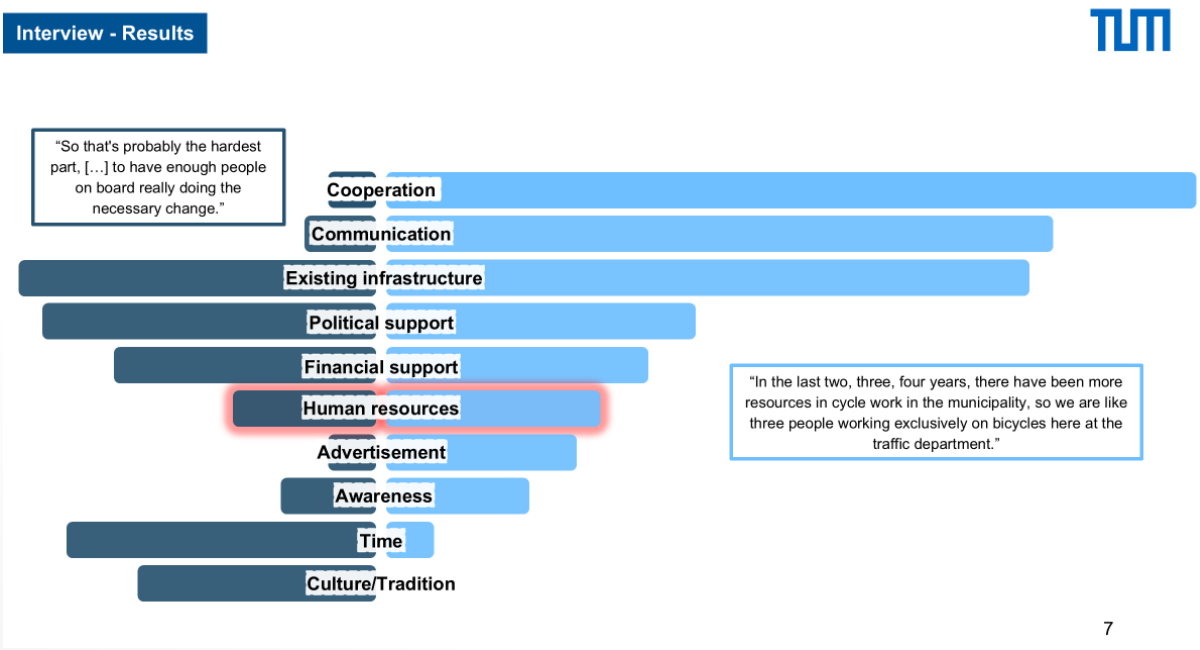
Budgetary constraints are a universal barrier, all the more so in times of economic difficulty, when budgets are often squeezed around the state missions of public authorities. Thus, in Graz, the ambitious goals set by a previous administration were scaled back due to limited funding under the new government. Similarly, Fredrikstad faces high costs for building infrastructure, as projects often involve acquiring land from neighbouring properties, significantly delaying timelines. These data clearly show that financing is the lifeblood of any active city project. In principle, funds are allocated by the public authorities as part of a mission of general interest, but that doesn't mean that private financiers don't have their part to play. Indeed, thinking in terms of the active city requires the involvement of all the city's constituent players. In fact, companies are an integral part of this process, particularly when it comes to developing corporate sports policies or encouraging active mobility.



Human resource limitations: The successful implementation of active city policies depends on the availability of dedicated personnel. Some municipalities have made progress in this regard, with increased investment in cycling infrastructure leading to the appointment of specialized staff. However, in many cases, human resources remain insufficient. “In the last two, three, four years, there have been more resources in cycle work in the municipality,” one interviewee shared, “but we are still just three people working exclusively on bicycles.”

This constraint underscores the challenge of scaling initiatives effectively. As another respondent noted, “That’s probably the hardest part—to have enough people on board really doing the necessary change.”

As a conclusion, the interviews have highlighted both the key facilitators and significant barriers in the journey toward developing active cities. While strong cooperation, infrastructure optimisation, and political commitment provide a solid foundation for progress, bureaucratic delays, cultural resistance, financial instability, and human resource shortages remain obstacles to widespread implementation. Addressing these challenges through strategic policy frameworks and sustained multi-sector collaboration will be crucial in fostering long-term behavioural and infrastructural change towards more active and healthier cities.



Recommendations

4

In light of the research findings, the following recommendations should facilitate the development of active cities in Europe:

4.1 Establish a cross-sectoral governance model

Active cities require a holistic approach that integrates urban planning, transportation, public health, education, and environmental sustainability. A major challenge identified in the PACTE+ project is the lack of coordination between departments, which slows down the implementation of effective policies.

As mentioned before, for example, in Fredrikstad, the "Active School" initiative faced delays due to administrative barriers and misalignment between school leadership and municipal authorities.

Therefore, creating interdepartmental task forces or active mobility committees can help streamline decision-making and improve efficiency.

4.2. Develop inclusive and equitable infrastructure

Physical activity opportunities must be accessible to all residents, regardless of income or neighbourhood.

The report highlights that socio-economic disparities impact participation rates, with lower-income areas often lacking quality pedestrian and cycling infrastructure. Graz, for instance, received feedback from residents who felt their neighbourhoods were not well-connected to active mobility routes.

Investing in infrastructure improvements in underserved areas—such as safe pedestrian paths, bike-sharing programs, and community fitness areas—ensures that active mobility benefits everyone, not just affluent districts.

4.3 Secure long-term political and financial commitments

One of the key barriers to developing active cities is the financial and political uncertainty that affects long-term planning.

The report emphasises how changing political priorities in Graz scaled back ambitious active mobility projects. On the other hand, cities like Limerick have benefitted from stable government funding for cycling infrastructure, allowing them to build a more resilient active transport network.

Cities should establish multi-year funding plans and integrate active mobility investments into broader urban development strategies to ensure continuity beyond electoral cycles.

4.4 Promote behavioural change through public awareness campaigns

Cultural resistance to active mobility is a significant challenge, particularly in car-dominated cities like Angers, where many peri-urban residents remain attached to cars.

The PACTE+ study found that cities with strong public awareness initiatives, such as Graz's "Let's Go Graz" campaign, were more successful in shifting public attitudes towards physical activity.

Implementing city-wide campaigns that highlight the health, economic, and environmental benefits of active living can help overcome resistance and encourage long-term behavioural change.

4.5 Facilitate multi-modal transportation integration

Ensuring seamless transitions between active mobility and public transportation increases accessibility and usability. The report points out that some cities, like Angers, still impose restrictions on carrying bicycles in public transport, which limits intermodal connectivity.

Cities should prioritise measures such as:

- Expanding secure bike parking near transit hubs
- Allowing bicycles on public transport at all times
- Developing mobility apps that integrate cycling, walking, and transit options Such policies have been highly successful in cities like Copenhagen, where an integrated bike-train system has significantly increased bicycle commuting rates.

4.6. Engage citizens in decision-making processes

The effectiveness of active city policies depends on public buy-in, yet the report notes that many municipalities struggle to reach beyond already engaged populations. One interviewee from Graz expressed concern about "preaching to the converted" rather than engaging residents who are currently inactive. To ensure inclusivity, cities should implement :

- Public consultations and participatory planning workshops
- Co-design initiatives where residents contribute to infrastructure decisions
- Targeted outreach to communities that are underrepresented in active mobility efforts. For instance, Bogotá's "Ciclovía" program, which closes streets to cars every Sunday, is an example of how engaging citizens in active city initiatives can create long-term cultural shifts.

4.7. Leverage existing urban spaces for physical activity

Space constraints often prevent cities from developing large-scale new infrastructure, but innovative approaches can maximise existing urban areas.

The report highlights how Limerick successfully transformed green spaces into physical activity hubs, and how Graz launched the "Schlossberg challenge," encouraging residents to use public staircases as fitness resources. Cities should :

- Convert underused parking lots into temporary or permanent recreation spaces
- Introduce "tactical urbanism" initiatives, such as pop-up bike lanes or pedestrian plazas
- Promote existing trails, stairs, and open spaces for physical activity through signage and digital tools

4.8. Implement evidence-based policy making

Many cities lack robust data collection mechanisms to track the impact of active city policies. This highlights the need for better monitoring tools, such as:

- Pedestrian and cyclist counters to measure usage trends
- Surveys and qualitative feedback from diverse population groups
- Health impact assessments to evaluate changes in physical and mental well-being By adopting data-driven decision-making, cities can refine and adjust their strategies more effectively.

4.9. Address road safety and conflict between users

The report highlights that one of the biggest deterrents to active mobility is the perceived (and real) danger of conflicts between motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians. In Angers, for instance, cyclists feel unsafe due to insufficient infrastructure, while conflicts between different user groups in Fredrikstad have slowed down project implementation. Best practices to improve safety include :

- Expanding segregated bike lanes and pedestrian-only areas
- Implementing clear traffic regulations that protect vulnerable road users
- Running educational campaigns on road-sharing etiquette Cities like Amsterdam have demonstrated that prioritising protected cycling lanes can dramatically reduce conflicts and encourage more residents to switch to active mobility.

4.10. Foster private sector involvement and workplace initiatives

Employers play a crucial role in promoting active lifestyles. The report points out that workplace physical activity remains an underdeveloped pillar in some pilot cities. Encouraging businesses to integrate active mobility incentives can make a significant difference. Effective strategies include :

- Providing subsidies for employees to purchase bicycles or public transport passes
- Implementing workplace fitness programs, such as standing desks or activity breaks
- Developing infrastructure like showers and bike storage to support active commuting Companies in cities like Copenhagen and Amsterdam have successfully integrated these measures, leading to higher employee well-being and productivity.

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Appendice 1: Interview guideline

Introduction

- … of how the measures have been designed and implemented…
- What is meant by "to assess the impact of the system"? Which system?

Start: Do you agree with the visual and auditory recording of this meeting?

1: What exactly is your function/duty in the process of PACTE+?

2: In which aspect (e.g. active mobility, workplace, active schools etc.) do you see the highest physical activity-related demand for change in your city?

2a: (If not already answered) Which target group has the highest demand in your opinion? (And why?)

3: Before the beginning of PACTE+, what have you already done to promote the inhabitants' physical activity?

3a: (If not already answered:) Do you know what other initiatives or authorities have done to promote physical activity in your city?

4: Before you decided to engage in PACTE+, which benefits did you see in the project?

4a: What changes did you expect?

5: Since the beginning of PACTE+, what physical activity-promoting measures have you added?

6: Who are the players you work with to implement the measures?

7: Who supports you (and in which manner) in implementing the measures?

7a: Do you wish for more support?

7b: If so, in which regard and who could maybe support you?

8: Now I would like to talk about the main facilitators and barriers in implementing the measures.

8a: If you think about the aspects that have worked well so far, what have been the main facilitators / success factors here?

8b: Could you name the main barriers that have made it difficult to implement the measures?

9: How are you promoting the measures you are implementing?

10: Do you see any positive changes that were caused by your participation in PACTE+?

10a: If so: Which positive changes do you see? / Can you describe these changes?

11: Did you collect or receive any feedback from the inhabitants on the impact of the physical activity-promoting measures?

11a: Which feedback did you receive?

11b: Did you use the feedback to change the way you promote physical activity in your city?

12: What are the next steps planned in your city to promote the inhabitants' physical activity?

Appendice 2: List of interviewees

The following people were interviewed:

- Stéphanie Meyzie, Director of Sports and Leisure, City of Angers
- Virginie Caballe, Director of Transportation, City of Angers
- Karine Engel, Deputy Mayor in Charge of Sports and Citizenship, City of Angers
- Dan Slavin, Civil Engineer, Limerick City Council
- Sinead Killeen, Health Promotion and Improvement Officer, City of Limerick
- Jorgen Nielsen, Motio Helse, Fredrikstad
- Rasmus Leiro, Traffic Department, City of Fredrikstad
- Anders Farholm, Ostfold University College
- Andre Flatner, Agency Manager Active Lives, City of Fredrikstad
- Thomas Rajakovics, Head of Sports Department, City of Graz

If you would like more information on this subject, please contact us by e-mail at :

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PROMOTING ACTIVE CITIES THROUGHOUT EUROPE

Overview of the impact assesment "Redefining the european city through sport" made by the PACTE+ project :

Number of respondents — **645**

Limerick	Graz	Fredrikstad	Angers
101	389	100	55
Irland	Austria	Norway	France

Moderate physical activity podium

Across the four cities only

of respondents said they engaged in **moderate-intensity** activity every day.

BUT

They consider practised at least **3** or **4** times a **week** for :

- +50% • Limerick
- +40% • Fredrikstad
- +35% • Graz
- +30% • Angers

Most respondents exercise vigorously 1-2 times a week, but nearly 30% report irregular frequency.

What are the 5 pillars of an active city?

- Active **Governance**
- Active **Workplaces**
- Active **Mobility**
- Active **Schools**
- Active **Clubs**

10 priorities for becoming an active city

- Establish a cross-sectoral governance model
- Develop inclusive and equitable infrastructure
- Address road safety and conflict between users
- Promote behavioural change through public awareness
- Facilitate multi-modal transportation integration
- Engage citizens in decision-making processes
- Leverage existing urban spaces for physical activity
- Implement evidence-based policy making
- Secure long-term political and financial commitments
- Foster private sector involvement and workplace initiatives

Over **50%** of respondents in Limerick, Angers, and Fredrikstad are satisfied 😊 with their activity level, but only **35%** in Graz.

Reasons why people are dissatisfied :

- Lack of time
- Lack of motivation
- Lack or absence of infrastructure
- Lack of diversity in the sports offer

Improved well-being seems to be the first direct **benefit** of physical activity reported by respondents.

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