



Walking and Cycling to School



Children love walking to school! They love being active, being with friends, learning to cross the road and arriving at school more alert and able to focus on lessons.

Key Findings

- School children want to walk and cycle to school. By raising awareness of walking and cycling to school, parents were also changing their travel choices and choosing to walk and cycle at other times.
- It's important to empower schools to continue beyond Active Access with resources, maps, plans and annual events to participate in.
- Traffic education for children gives them the confidence to walk or cycle to school and their parents the courage to let them.

Our Activities

In the Active Access project a range of schemes encouraged children to walk and cycle to school:

- The Traffic Snake Game was played in: Koprivnica, HR; Bucharest, Alba Iulia & Harghita County, RO; Pomurje Region, SI; Nicosia, CY.
- Walking School Buses operated in: Haute-Savoie, FR; Murska Sobota, SI; Nicosia, CY; L'Alcudia, ES.
- Films: a competition for high school students in Nicosia, CY and a community film in Murska Sobota, SI.
- Inter-school mobility challenge in Haute-Savoie, FR
- School travel plans in Koprivnica, HR
- Safety routes to school in L'Alcudia, ES
- Bicycle school for 10-15 year olds in Tartu, EE
- Drawing and photo competition in Harghita County, RO



Traffic Snake Game

During game week, every time a child walks or cycles to school they receive a sticker. These stickers are collected and put on a snake banner until the snake is covered completely. Kids love this reward system and feel proud of what they are doing for themselves and the environment.

Walking School Buses

Children meet at 'bus stops' along a route and join a group walking to school. The walking buses are led by two adults, usually parents or community volunteers. The success and continuity of the buses depends on the motivation of these volunteers. Walking buses are effective at introducing people to walking to school, at testing routes and raising enthusiasm.

Steps to Success

Tap into the talents and enthusiasm of children

Asking children to map their walking routes, draw pictures of their journey to school, take photographs or make a film about active travel is a strong positive way to engage with them directly. They feel part of the project, have a strong sense of ownership, pride and sense of achievement.

In Nicosia, Cyprus, the secondary school film makers became keen advocates of walking to school and creating resources for others to use in their campaigns.

The Traffic Snake Game is a cost effective and easy way to inspire and reward children for walking and cycling to school. It establishes habits that are sustained after the game finishes and provides positive images for promoting the game to parents and local media.

Address parents' fears and concerns

Involve local traffic police and the municipality to calm down traffic near schools, provide patrols and supervised crossings. Older students can also act as traffic wardens in the vicinity of the school and in some cases, lead walking buses.

Build confidence about walking to school, with walking school buses and the traffic snake game, so parents can see that it is safe and enjoyable for their children. Mayors and councillors can also see how it improves traffic in the town.

Showing parents footage of the chaos they create outside the school gate with their cars, can prompt them to rethink their choices. Encourage those parents that 'must' drive to park further away and walk some of the way.

Engaging teachers and headteachers

Take time to inform and build confidence in the proposals, presenting experiences from elsewhere and listening to concerns and local opportunities or issues. It can help to have a key contact amongst school staff to lead on the project.

Convene a workshop to present the project to teachers from several schools in an area. This is an effective way to be taken seriously, share best practice ideas and give them the opportunity to discuss issues with each other and build a sense of camaraderie and competition between schools.

Provide resources to build active travel into lessons

With enough time to plan and supportive materials, teachers can create mobility topics and exercises for their classes in the lead up to active travel activities. Children get a better comprehension of what mobility is and why it is important for them and the environment to walk or cycle to school.



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