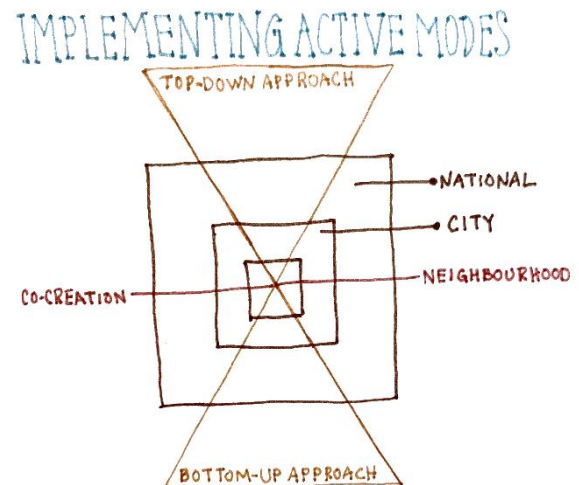


SUNRISE Cluster: Active Modes

What are “active modes”?

Active modes of transport include non-motorised forms of mobility that rely on human muscle power for propulsion. Most often, this means walking and cycling, and—to a lesser extent—kick scooters or skateboards. Active modes are associated with numerous environmental and health benefits, and when proper infrastructure and design is in place, they are also an enjoyable, safe, fast and convenient means of getting around; especially at neighbourhood-typical distances.



Why are active modes important?

Travel by active modes benefits cities by reducing car congestion, energy consumption and pollution emissions, as well as helping create more compact “people-focussed” urban environments. Active modes also benefit people directly; travel by active modes is associated with multiple health benefits including improved physical fitness, reduced risk of diabetes, reduced cardiovascular complications, and improved mental well-being.

The neighbourhood context presents a chance to increase travel by active modes since distances within a neighbourhood can typically be covered on foot, or by bike or kick scooter. Commutes to school and trips running errands often take place within a neighbourhood. Ensuring that such trips can comfortably be made via active modes would be highly advantageous for a neighbourhood and its residents. Advantages include a reduction in car traffic for trips within the neighbourhood, reduced noise pollution, increased road safety, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, more people-friendly public spaces, opportunities for recreational exercise, improved social well-being, pleasant opportunities for social interaction and a strengthened sense of community.

Co-creating an active neighbourhood

The intersection of co-creation and the neighbourhood scale enables a degree of meticulousness that would not easily be achieved at another level. Co-creation brings a variety of perspectives and the neighbourhood scale focuses those views on a specific, defined area.

Applying the co-creation perspective to a focus on active modes allows small, but important nitty gritty problems to be taken into consideration. **Attention to detail** is especially important for active modes because seemingly minor issues (e.g. a dangerous intersection, a pothole,



insufficient streetlighting) can easily go unnoticed by planners or policy makers who work at the city-wide level and who do not personally experience this specific problem.

Similarly, honing in on a smaller area of a city (that is, a neighbourhood) as a focus for urban mobility measures allows attention to extremely detailed issues and taking a co-creative approach **benefits from detailed knowledge** about the neighbourhood, about informal short-cuts, from tacit knowledge about the subjective quality of certain streets and spaces, about cultural preferences and taboos of its residents, etc.

Lack of **resources** is often cited as a major challenge when it comes to implementing mobility measures. Even relatively simple and low-tech solutions, such as those often associated with active modes, require time and money, both of which many local authorities might be in short supply. Expanding the number of actors (co-creation) and narrowing the focus of the area (neighbourhood approach) is in this sense a very practical way to get things done.

Furthermore, **building and strengthening a sense of community**, an oft-cited benefit of active modes, is also an outcome of co-creation and engagement at the neighbourhood level. The motivation and incentives to become active at the neighbourhood level are naturally high, as results of projects are more easily visible and directly tangible. Co-creation furthers this cause by engaging the actors who will usually be directly affected by the co-creation project.

Recommendations & experiences of SUNRISE neighbourhoods

Improve perceived and objective safety increase the attractiveness of active modes.



Malmö's focus on a park that residents described as appearing unsafe showed how **measures to improve perceived safety increase the attractiveness of active modes** as the main pedestrian and bike lane in the neighbourhood go through the park. When digging deeper with the citizens two things stood out as contributing to the perceived unsafety; illegal car driving on pedestrian and bike lanes and low use of the space for recreational use leaving the park empty. The first measure was therefore to hinder car drivers from entering the park, reclaiming the urban space for active modes. Then the main focus was on activating the space for recreational use together with citizens.

Park facilities in need of improvements - such as lighting, outdoor furniture and maintenance - were co-identified and addressed with a view of making active modes in and through the park more enjoyable. The co-development of these measures required locally specific information and understanding the concerns and needs of the citizens at a high level of detail. At the same time SUNRISE supported and facilitated community events to co-boost the recreational activity in the park, show-casing the potentials of the urban space. All measures were intentionally small in scale as experiencing tangible results was expressed as a crucial aspect of the co-creation process in Lindängen.



Photo: Co-identification of areas to focus on in Malmö's Lindängen neighbourhood ©Malmö Stad

Prioritise practical, people-friendly urban design to attract active modes.

The Green Path in Jerusalem's neighbourhood of Baka provides much-needed infrastructure for active modes. An old rail line into the city, which was previously an obstacle to local transportation, was transformed into a "Rail Line Park" and pedestrian/cycle way linking the neighbourhood on one side to an industrial commercial area and on the other side to the central business district. In SUNRISE, the neighbourhood mapped the green path's strengths and weaknesses, with a particular focus on urban design features (street furniture, shading, lighting, etc.). The reception from residents and the uptake of travel using active modes indicates that sometimes **simply providing the infrastructure** is enough to incite a modal shift.



Baka's Green Path provides infrastructure for active modes. ©Jerusalem

Examples of concrete ways to prioritise active modes through design:

- **Elevate sidewalks at crossings** so that pedestrians have one level (instead of stepping down at the curb) and cars have to cross the sidewalk, rather than people needing to cross the street. This flipping of the traditional street crossing concept indicates that it is the cars who are crossing the space of people, rather than the other way around.
- **Provide attractive, adequate lighting** for a pleasant, inviting atmosphere even in darkness.
- **Ensure ample, well-placed bicycle parking** to improve the convenience of cycling.
- **Provide attractive, comfortable street furniture** including shelters to protect from inclement weather.
- **Widen sidewalks and bicycle lanes** to prioritise space for these modes. This can be done by reducing or eliminating street parking. The amount of public/street space devoted to each mode is an indicator of how highly it is prioritised.

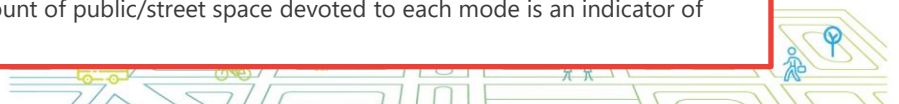


Photo: A street in Zuglo with temporary infrastructural additions (furniture, traffic calming) catering to pedestrians. Due to the positive feedback, the municipality is considering permanent street closure. ©Zuglo

Consider the potential of cargo bikes to reduce car-based transport of goods and/or children.



As project partners in Bremen put it, “If the bike is too small for a transport and the car is actually too big, the Fietje cargo bike fits exactly.” From a SUNRISE initiative, a rental cargo bike was made available for all citizens. It was suggested for transporting children, bulk shopping, or crates of drinks by bicycle. It can be borrowed and tried out free of charge and easily reserved online for one to three days. The Fietje cargo bike is an alternative to a car with a wide range of offers and an aim to relieve the pressure on the roads in the Hulsberg

area. It allows people to use active mobility for errands and activities that might otherwise compel them to use a car.

Photo: The Fietje cargo bike ©Bremen

Encourage and make active modes accessible for children.



The premise of SUNRISE’s sister project, Metamorphosis, is that when a neighbourhood has many children on its public spaces, this is a major indicator that it is well designed as a sustainable neighbourhood. A co-created measure in Thessaloniki’s Neo Rysio neighbourhood shows how **the neighbourhood scale is the natural geographic domain of children, and likewise active modes are the natural**

mode of children. The neighbourhood’s pedibus measure provides a means to encourage safe travel to school on foot. This walking school bus begins at the house of the children living furthest from the school and continues along a predetermined route, picking up other children along the way. The children have safety in numbers and get a bit of extra physical activity along the way. Encouraging and instating such a measure means addressing concerns related to active modes, namely those of safety and convenience such as: Are there safe street crossings along the route? Is there ample sidewalk space? Are there cars moving at



high speeds? Does the environment feel safe? Addressing such issues benefits the walkability of a neighbourhood not only for children, but for most residents.

Photo: Children take part of the co-implementation of this measure by painting the wayfinding signs around the neighbourhood. ©TheTA

Integrate active modes with public transport.

Another way to encourage the use of active modes is to ensure that they are attractive options not only for covering short distances, but also possible and attractive as a first or last leg of travel for longer trips. A city with good public transport options is a city that is more attractive for active modes of travel. Coordinating walking and cycling with public transport is mutually beneficial. It has been found that investing in active modes supports PT use, and that access to public transport helps pedestrians and cyclists make longer and more complex trips. Thessaloniki's measure to improve bus stops and provide bus stop shelters illustrates well that **well-integrated public transport options are instrumental in fostering active modes in neighbourhoods.** Providing real-time bus information and integrating bus stops with weather protection, seating, signage, and lighting makes the bus attractive which in turn makes active modes to reach the bus attractive. The bus stops are located conveniently within walking distances and provide a hub for the local community.



Photo: Planning the location of a smart bus stop in Thessaloniki's Neo Rysio neighbourhood ©TheTA



Give the stage to trusted voices to promote active modes.



While co-creation may come to feel like second nature for those who are directly involved, other citizens are unlikely to be aware of how mobility changes in their neighbourhood are brought about. Involving a wider audience in the co-creation process can improve feelings of representation among citizens and increase support of active modes measures. In Baka, the walking to school program shows how a **visible co-creative campaign can increase travel via active modes**. Children took part in the co-creative process as “walkability ambassadors”, taking the stage at community events to explain walkability concepts to adults and children of the neighbourhood. Local children as ambassadors generated attention and triggered a unique social

dynamic that could not otherwise have been achieved. The talented kids who care about environmental issues took it upon themselves to be ambassadors for walkability in their neighbourhood, and effectively spread the word.

Photo: Walkability ambassadors in Baka ©Jerusalem

Active modes beyond the neighbourhood

The neighbourhood is an ideal springboard for active modes, because measures to encourage walking, cycling, and other active modes are easier to implement in a smaller area. Campaigns are more effective at the small scale, because people more readily see the habits of their neighbours as relatable and doable. There is a priceless benefit to being a local and trusted person when working at neighbourhood level; you are in a better position to receive the wishes and concerns of your fellow citizens, and your own message will carry more weight.

A lot can be achieved at the neighbourhood level. At the same time, not *everything* can be done at neighbourhood level. Many projects require complementarity with city-wide efforts. For example, active modes need good public transport to work well over longer distances that extend beyond the neighbourhood area, and their points of connection also need good walking and cycling options.

Active modes are attractive beyond the neighbourhood, with benefits for the entire city. Active modes:

- reduce car dependence
- reduces transport system’s carbon footprint
- have minor infrastructure requirements compared with other modes
- increase physical activity



