

# VITAL CITIES

Urban sports promotion for social inclusion,  
healthy and active living



## BASELINE STUDY URBACT III

VITAL CITIES is a network of European cities, funded by the European Union in the frame of the URBACT III Programme. VITAL CITIES seeks answers to how to combat social exclusion through the redesign of public spaces in deprived residential areas by using the power and common language of sport through innovative community and IT based urban sport actions, innovative physical equipment and better orchestrated service delivery.

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## **I. STATE OF THE ART**

### **1. Foreword: aims and context**

This report aims to present the recent research and practice exploring the relationship between the built environment and the use of this environment for physical activity (sports) which impacts on social cohesion and healthy living. It mostly concentrates on the European level, but it also refers to a few globally relevant examples.

### **2. Introduction to the VITAL CITIES concept**

Despite the well-known benefits of physical activity on health and well-being there is a global prevalence of inactivity and sedentary lifestyles across all age groups. Governments and cities should take action to reverse this trend as it causes serious health risks, has high economic and social costs and negative environmental consequences. The built environment can both discourage and encourage physical activity. Cities should thrive for creating an enabling environment that is safe and accessible and can play a role in increasing physical activity levels of the whole population. Especially people living in deprived urban areas should be offered the opportunity and the means to engage in sport activities on a daily basis.

Therefore participants of the VITAL CITIES network aim to enter into a dialogue and learning process on how to (re)design public spaces using the power and common language of sport for the promotion of healthy lifestyle with a special focus on deprived residential areas. Instead of bringing inactive citizens to sports facilities, public space should be turned into a low threshold facility inviting all citizens to physical activity. Opportunities for physical activity need to be created close to where people live while also creating cleaner, safer, greener and more activity-friendly local environments.

The network has already identified five key themes to be investigated during the learning process. These can be applied as innovative, low-cost solutions for these areas. The key themes of the VITAL CITIES network are: (1) identifying community-based and/or (2) IT-based actions to redesign public spaces linked to leisure sport activities, (3) better orchestrating the services of the city to promote healthy lifestyle, (4) designing innovative physical activities to promote sport in public spaces and the (5) organisation of innovative events to promote healthy lifestyle.

### **3. Sport and physical activity for the promotion of healthy lifestyle**

#### ***3.1. Key definitions and principles***

Physical activity is an essential part of human functioning and a prerequisite for health and wellbeing. The European Union (EU) Working Group Sport and Health adopted a broad definition of physical activity, which is used for the purpose of this report. Physical activity is defined as

“any bodily movement associated with muscular contraction that increases energy expenditure above resting levels” (EU, 2008).<sup>1</sup> This includes all possible circumstances:

- leisure-time physical activity (including most sport activities and dancing)
- occupational physical activity
- physical activity at or near one’s home
- physical activity in connection with transport

Within this framework sports is referred to as “all forms of physical activity, which, through casual or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being” (Council of Europe, 1992).<sup>2</sup>

In a wider social context, sport can be regarded as a common language that cuts through social differences. According to the noted social scientist Zygmunt Bauman, it is “one of the few institutions in society, where people can still agree on the rules” (quoted by Superflex Studio).<sup>3</sup> This is the basis of sport for all principle, which emphasises everyone’s right and ability to participate in sport regardless of their socio-economic status, gender, and/or health condition. The VITAL CITIES framework relies on this principle and aims to capitalise on sport’s potential to overcome social inequalities especially in deprived residential areas.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends at least 30 minutes of physical activity each day in order to maintain a healthy lifestyle. This is the core principle of active living (WHO, 2006)<sup>4</sup>, the promotion of which is one of the objectives of the VITAL CITIES project.

### **3.2. Benefits of physical activity**

Physical activity has well-known health benefits.<sup>5</sup> Increasing the level of physical activity in Europe would lead to significant paybacks in public health as well as in a range of other areas. Researchers, for example, have shown that life expectancy in the European Region could be increased by 0.63 years if people moved more and led healthier lifestyles (WHO, 2015a, The Lancet, 2012).

In order to illustrate the potential impact of physical activity let us consider its possible economic benefits. For example, a comparative study that looked at 56 major cities in Europe and North America indicated that more than 76 000 new jobs could be created in the observed cities if the level of cycling was increased to that of Copenhagen, Denmark (WHO, 2015a).

<sup>1</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/sport/library/policy\\_documents/eu-physical-activity-guidelines-2008\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/sport/library/policy_documents/eu-physical-activity-guidelines-2008_en.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/epas/resources/charter\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/epas/resources/charter_en.asp)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.superflex.net/tools/superkilen>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.interiorhealth.ca/YourEnvironment/HealthyBuiltEnvironment/Documents/WHO-Promoting%20Physical%20Activity.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Notable health benefits consider physical activity’s effect in reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease, hypertension, diabetes and certain forms of cancer. It plays an important role the management of certain chronic conditions (WHO, 2015a, 2015b). Furthermore research shows that it has a positive effect on broad spectrum of mental health problems (WHO, 2015). It is also plays a key role in reducing obesity.

It is well known that sports and physical activity have a much larger spectrum of benefits than health. The Human Capital Model developed for the *Active Cities Designed to Move* report coordinated by Nike Inc. (2012), shows a very comprehensive overview and lists the benefits of physical activity on physical, emotional, social, intellectual and financial levels. The model was developed based on the input of experts and on a review of more than 500 research articles.<sup>6</sup>

Figure 1 demonstrates the benefits of physical activity beyond health on the individual level:

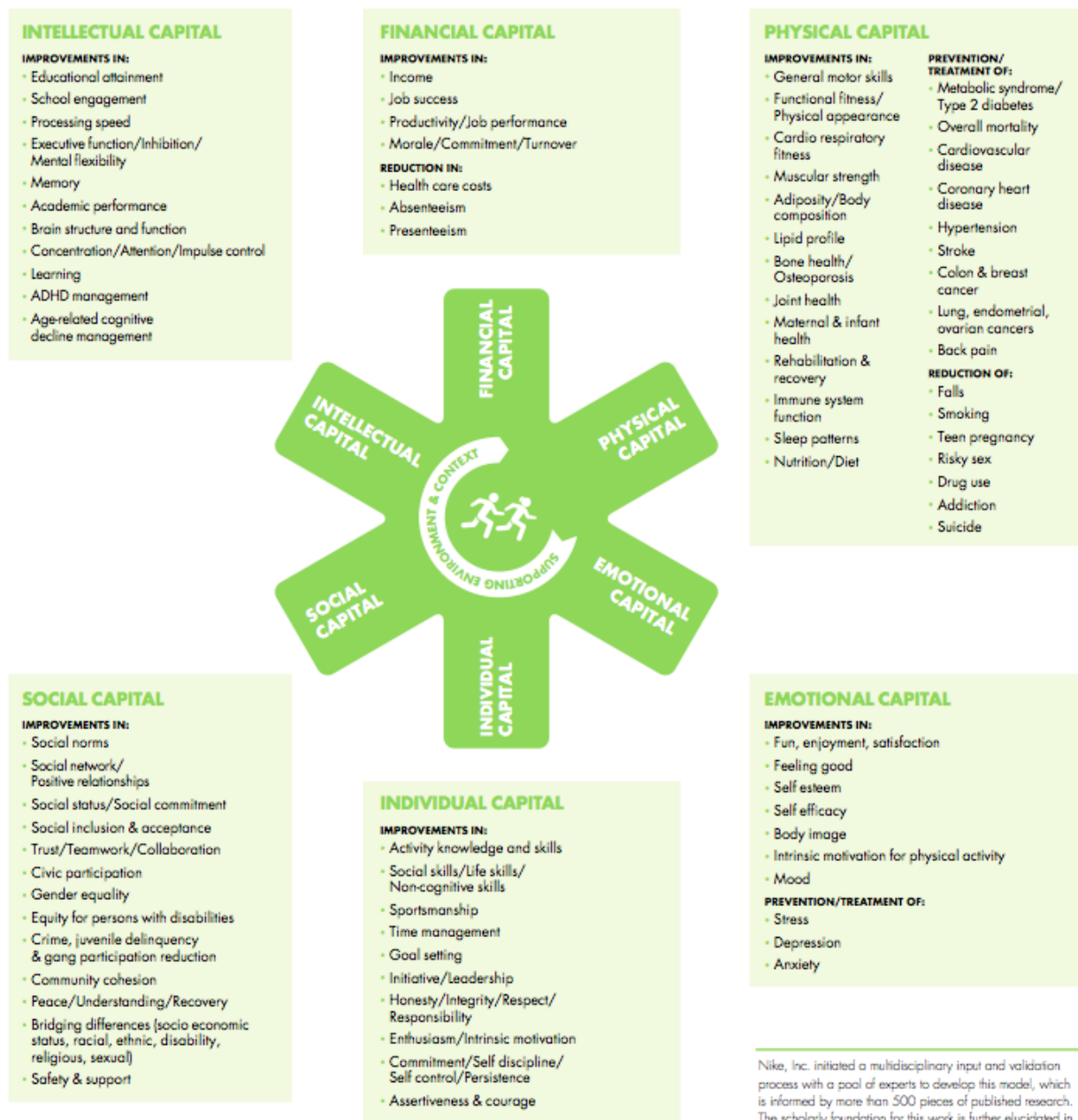


Figure 1: The Human Capital Model (Lee et. al., 2012)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.designedtomove.org/>

### **3.1. The problem of physical inactivity**

Despite these all-encompassing evidence-based benefits, physical activity is disappearing from daily life with a shocking speed.<sup>7</sup>

Even though there are still uncertainties in terms of the validity and comparability of data, the numbers below are alarming.

On a global scale, one third of adults do not reach the recommended levels of physical activity (WHO 2015a). In Europe 6 in every 10 people above 15 years of age never or seldom exercise or play a sport. More than half of the population never or seldom engage in other kinds of physical activity (like cycling, dancing or gardening) (EU, 2014).<sup>8</sup>

Less and less daily physical activity becomes the norm. People increasingly lead sedentary lifestyles with rising rates of excess weight and obesity<sup>9</sup> (EU, 2014, WHO 2015a). According to estimates, between 40 and 60% of the EU population leads sedentary lifestyles (EU, 2008).

It is a global phenomenon for which people and cities pay a high price.<sup>10</sup> Not just people's lives are at risk<sup>11</sup>, but the economic and social competitiveness of cities, too. This problem is a cyclic one, meaning that the costs and consequences of physical inactivity are passed forward through generations, until we find a way to stop it (Lee et. al., 2012).

## **4. The challenge of tackling inactivity for cities**

Some of the causes for physical inactivity lie in the urbanisation process and in lifestyle-related changes. "Local environments have become less and less conducive to physical activity. Through decisions impacting urban design, land use and transport, societies have become increasingly car-friendly over time. The growing geographical separation of living and working led to a decline in walking and cycling" (WHO, 2015a). Moreover, the safety of roads in many cases is also a concern that decreases the level of active transportation. Another contributing factor to this decline could be the increasingly ubiquitous nature of technology and entertainment.

Participation in organised sports is also shrinking, as well as the presence at traditional places of practicing sport, like sport halls and sport clubs (EU, 2014). Parallel to that trend, as the inner city areas are gradually developed, newly built big sport facilities are increasingly built in the outskirts, lending these facilities largely inaccessible.

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<sup>7</sup> In just 44 years (approximately 1.5 generations), physical activity in the United States has declined 32 percent and is on track for a 46 percent drop by 2030. The United Kingdom became 20 percent less physically active in the same amount of time and is trending toward a 35 percent decline by 2030 (EU, 2008).

<sup>8</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition\\_physical\\_activity/docs/ebs\\_412\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/docs/ebs_412_en.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> The statistics are disturbing: in 46 countries (accounting for 87% of the Region), more than 50% of adults are overweight or obese; in several of those countries the rate is close to 70% of the adult population.

<sup>10</sup> Besides direct health-care costs physical inactivity also causes high indirect costs due to increased periods of sick leave, work disabilities and premature deaths. For a population of 10 million people, where half the population is insufficiently active, the overall cost is estimated to be €910 million per year (6) (WHO, 2015).

<sup>11</sup> "1 million deaths (about 10% of the total) and 8.3 million disability-adjusted life years lost per year in the WHO European Region are attributable to physical inactivity. It is estimated to cause 5% of the burden of coronary heart disease, 7% of type 2 diabetes, 9% of breast cancer and 10% of colon cancer." (WHO, 2015a).



In many cases sports and urban design are not treated in a cross-sectorial way. Sport city officials do not regularly consult with planning officials. Moreover, when it comes to urban planning, sport politicians are treated as of secondary importance (Valle-Kompier, 2013).

On the other hand the urban environment provides opportunities for physical activity. As Bjarke Ingels comments in the *My Playground*<sup>12</sup> documentary: “life in the city is constantly evolving and it is our job as architects to make sure that our opportunities for expression are not limited, and that our cities match the life we want to live”. This documentary brings together architects and city planners, politicians with professional freerunners to comment on the relationship of movement and urban space. It shows how the city can be turned into a playground, with its limits constantly challenged. Of course freerunning is not the most prevalent urban sport, yet it is a great example that shows how new emerging sport types are expanding the boundaries of the city.

The economic crisis led to the complete reconsideration of the management of shared resources. Parallel to that trend broad movements of citizens have become actors in reclaiming public spaces as a counter-balancing act towards privatization and unbalanced use of public spaces. This global phenomenon has also many examples related to sports and physical activity. Clear illustrations for this are reconquering space for active transportation (Critical Mass movements, No Car Days, PARKing Days, Ciclovias), urban guerrilla gardening and turning unoccupied brownfields into active recreation spaces, like in the famous case of the Tempelhofer airport in Berlin, or the autonomous use of small spaces left over after planning where other independent sports related activities may take place. These examples are reinventing the rules of city making as they are challenging some basic urban planning mindsets. They make the most of limited available resources and reshape the very notion and our stance towards urban commons (traditionally defined as spaces and resources that is shared and accessible by everyone). These projects, movements and initiatives even if they are small-scale or spontaneous are reclaiming urban commons and are also reconfiguring the urban ecosystem (Ferguson, 2014). As a result they all pursue a more sustainable, resilient version of community building. Architects and planners and city officials need to respond to this trend.

In terms of funding this could mean that city officials need to find ways to sustain these auto-organised initiatives delivered by civil society actors (like NGOs, associations, simple citizen initiatives). This would enable for encouraging small-scale sports activities and facilities co-created with the community thus responding to their actual needs as opposed to larger scale, speculative sport infrastructure.

Consequently, one of the challenges of urban planning is to integrate these new activities within the existing structure (Andersen, 2011) and, of course, to reverse the trends leading to physical inactivity. The city should be as flexible and as accessible as possible in order to provide the opportunity of choosing from a variety of sport types, suitable for the entire population, and especially for susceptible groups, like children, elderly persons, disabled people or ethnic minorities.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://vimeo.com/7240892>



## 5. How urban design can encourage people to move

Traditionally, the relationship between public health and urban planning was maintained mostly by solving environmental issues. In the 21st century however, the risk of sedentary lifestyles requires planners and urban designers to look beyond this setting and to design neighbourhoods that encourage healthy, active lifestyles (Giles-Corti et al, 2015). This complex challenge requires a cross-sectorial approach and a closer cooperation between multiple sectors such as sports and public health professionals, urban planners, architects, politicians and city representatives (WHO 2015, Lee et. al., 2012).

This idea reverberates in the policy documents advocating for active living. One of the missions of the WHO, expressed in its *recent Physical Activity Strategy for the European Region*, is to ensure an “enabling environment that supports physical activity through engaging and safe built environments, accessible public spaces and infrastructure” (WHO, 2015a).

All the strategies, policy papers and guidelines reviewed for this paper stress the importance of a life-course approach in relation to enhancing the physical activity levels of the population. It is one of the priority areas of the WHO, in addition to being established as one of the strategic targets in Nike’s *Designed to Move* initiative mentioned earlier.

It is therefore especially important to improve the quality of the built environment as it is our everyday environment where we spend most of our time with activities related to work, leisure and transportation. This is one of the key challenges for the VITAL CITIES project.

### 5.1. WHO Healthy City Framework

In order to achieve the aim above, the WHO has developed a useful framework which will be considered as the backbone for the VITAL CITIES project. The organisation’s initiative called *Healthy Cities* defines such a city as “one that is continually creating and improving opportunities in the built and social environments and expanding community resources to enable all its citizens to be physically active in day-to-day life” (WHO, 2008, p3.).0

In this framework the built environment is one of the focus areas, and is strongly related to the social environment. The two domains reinforce and depend on each other. A comprehensive active living strategy would concentrate on all population groups and pay special attention to neighbourhoods with low socio/economic status. This is a central focus of the VITAL CITIES concept that concentrates on the neighbourhood level, marked in red in the Figure 2 below.

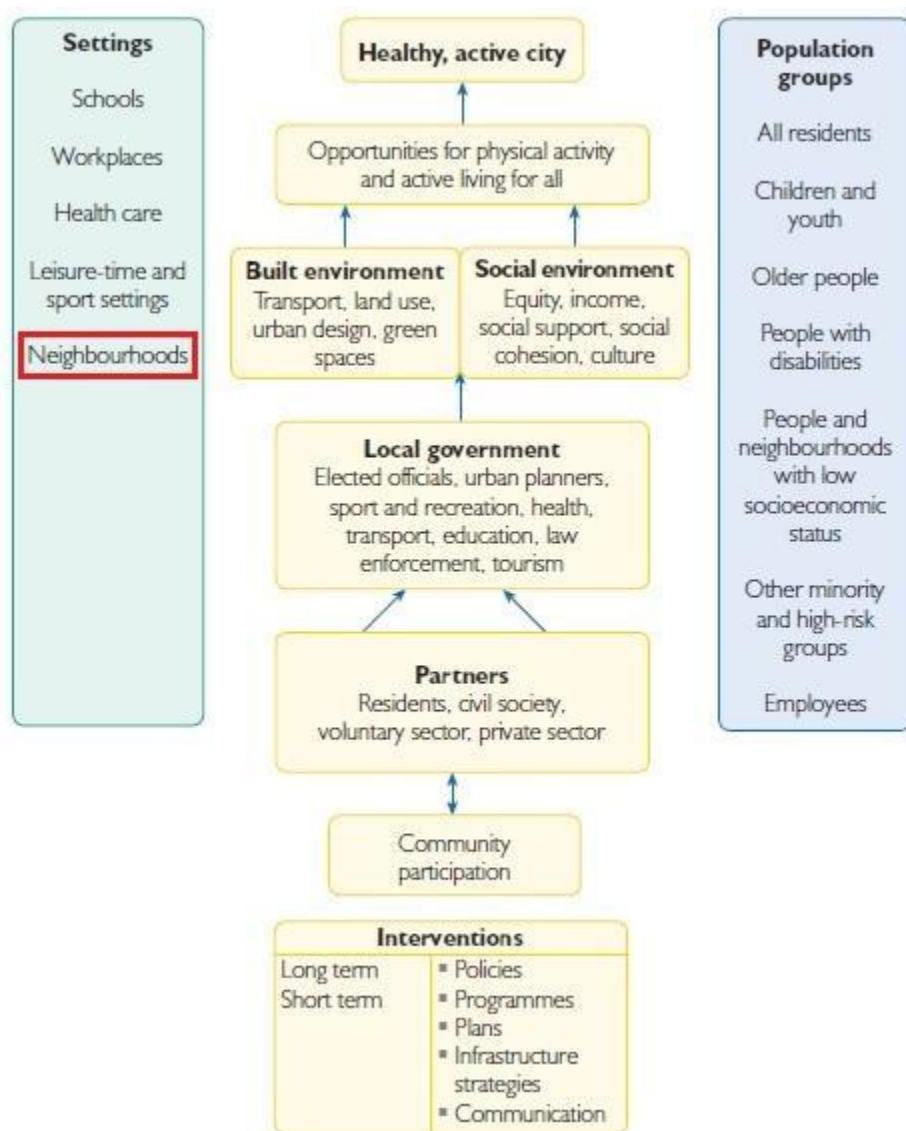


Figure 2: A framework for creating a healthy, active city (WHO, 2008, p.3.)

## 5.2. The existing link

The past 15 years abound in research evidence that shows how and to which extent the physical environment can affect physical activity levels. The following overview lists the most important attributes of the built environment that can contribute to the increase of physical activity levels based on the literature review of Giles-Corti et. al. (2015) and other design guidelines and policy papers studied for this report:

### 1. Transportation network

A well-connected public transportation network can enhance active living and be supportive for walking and cycling. This quality is affected by the factors below:

- **Quality public transit system**
- **Street-connectivity**

For example, numerous studies have found that a well-connected, safe street system encourages people to walk. Studies also found that in Germany, Denmark

and the Netherlands, countries known for their extensive bike infrastructure, obesity rates are lower (NYC, 2012).

- **Traffic volume**
- **Neighbourhood aesthetics and design**

A number of researchers have found that the quality of the public spaces can deter people from exercise and walking (CABE, 2008).

## 2. Local access to shops, services

If services (schools, shops, sport facilities) are within easy reach people are more likely to choose walking instead of taking their car to arrive at these destinations. The following factors play a key role here:

- **Proximity of services**
- **Mixed-use developments, neighbourhoods**

For example, the research suggests that neighbourhoods with mixed-use development correlate with lower level of obesity (NYC, 2012).

- **People's perceptions**

People's **perceptions** of public places based on qualities such as **aesthetic appeal and perceived safety** can affect physical activity in youth and adults (Nasar, 2005).

## 3. Access to sport and recreational facilities.

A number of studies have shown that **proximity** and **access** to parks and recreational spaces are crucial in enhancing physical activity levels both in the case of youth and adult population.

## 4. Green infrastructure

Quality and provision of green infrastructure contributes to active living. For example, a study referenced by *Greenspace Scotland* found that higher level of greenery can increase the activity levels of the population by almost three times. Proximity is also a key factor in this case, as the availability of green spaces also encourages people to move more (CABE, 2008; Arup, 2012).

## 5. Network of public open space

The quality and provision of **public open space** is key in promoting physical activity. Public open space, as employed in this paper, refers to outdoor spaces (parks, playgrounds, sport fields, squares) that are publicly accessible. As the scale of urbanization is increasing globally, access to such spaces becomes increasingly important. Studies also found that people living in close proximity of such places leads to an increase in physical activity levels in all age groups. Research also demonstrates that if a place is well equipped with playgrounds and sport infrastructure, after school activities are more likely to occur there.

A comprehensive active living strategy applies a cross-sectorial approach to develop design and policy measures to influence all the above factors. The mix of measures depends on the individual context that should be researched for each case. Acknowledging the importance of all the built environment attributes explained above, the VITAL CITIES framework aims to specifically concentrate on public open space development and to apply innovative tools to redesign such places that encourage active living.

### 5.3. Deprived areas

As seen above, the increased availability and improved quality of open public spaces and recreational areas can boost physical activity levels. This is especially important for deprived areas, in neighbourhoods with lower socio/economic status. These areas are the least likely to have access to quality sports and recreational facilities.

Furthermore, people living in neighbourhoods with lower socio/economic status are the hardest groups to reach in terms of physical activity promotion measures (programmes, campaigns).

Therefore, the VITAL CITIES concept concentrates on neighbourhood development in such areas, in line with the recommendations and policy principles of the WHO and EU aiming for universal access, tackling inequality and maximizing participation. In these areas, the concept will be most effective also because of its urgency.

Development at neighbourhood scale can entail small-scale interventions to complete the redesign and rehabilitation of public spaces.

Many examples already show that investment in deprived areas undertaken in order to encourage healthy lifestyles is worth the effort. The case of Merida Youth Factory is a great example to illustrate this potential. The colourful playground was built in the outskirts of a small town in Western Spain, a poor and isolated area. The building which has bright colours and light materials (designed by Selgas Cano Architects) created an open and welcoming space for various activities from skateboarding to basketball.



© Selgas Cano Architects



The municipality sought a cost-effective way to channel the energy of the district's youth towards physical activity. It commissioned the sport ground that was built from cheap materials and structures. Since its opening in 2010 it is filled with local youths.<sup>13</sup>

Another convincing example is the case of vertical gyms, an innovative project by the globally acclaimed studio of Urban Think Tank. The *Vertical Gymnasium*<sup>14</sup> project turned a former soccer field into a vertical fitness complex in the middle of a slum area in Caracas, a very densely populated area. The 1,000-m<sup>2</sup> complex includes basketball courts, a dance studio, weights, running tracks, as well as a rock-climbing wall spread on several storeys within the building. The complex receives an average of 15,000 visitors per month. Since its inauguration it has helped to lower the crime rate in the area by more than 30 percent. The success of the idea and the project inspired such vertical gyms all over the world.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.architectural-review.com/today/double-en-tendre-the-duality-of-two-small-town-spanish-public-spaces/8620143.fullarticle>

<sup>14</sup> [http://www.u-tt.com/projects\\_ChacaoVG.html](http://www.u-tt.com/projects_ChacaoVG.html)



© Urban Think Tank



#### 5.4. What do cities already do?

Many cities all over the world have recognised the urgency of action related to physical activity as well as the competitive advantage that stems from making it into a priority of action. Several cities, private companies and research institutions have adopted specific planning and design strategies in recent years in order to promote physical activity in urban settings.

In the US, the global report coordinated by Nike Inc. entitled *Designed to Move* is a global initiative created with the aim to reverse the trends and re-engineer physical activity back into everyday life. The report has ringed the alarm bell and inspired many cities worldwide to take the first steps.

For instance, soon after the release of the report in 2012, New York City followed suit by publishing its *Active Design Guidelines for New York City* coordinated by the Centre for Active Design, a not-for-profit organization committed to making health and physical activity a central priority in the design and development of buildings, streets and neighbourhoods.<sup>15</sup> The guideline is a result of the partnership of various city departments working with leading experts and professionals in the field. It intends to give designers and professionals concrete tools to encourage healthy lifestyles.

With a similar intention, Toronto, one of the most liveable cities in the world, released its guide *Active City Designing for Health* in 2014, in which it developed 10 key design principles to encourage active living.

In the UK, inspired by the *Design to Move* initiative an *All Party Commission on Physical Activity* was created in 2014 that advocates for a new approach in tackling the inactivity problem on a national level. It emphasises a cross-sectional working method and managed to create a nationwide coalition with leading third sector organisations such as the British Heart Foundation or Young Foundation. For the same reasons, the Design Council launched its initiative *Active by Design* in 2014. It aims to help national and local governments, developers, designers and communities to encourage active living by providing leadership, training and project support for newly designed places and redesigning existing infrastructure.

Besides these coalitions and initiatives, other city governments are also taking the first steps in the UK. For example, Liverpool has developed a cross-sectorial strategy to combat lower-than-average life expectancy and inactivity, Edinburgh is progressively investing in cycling schemes

<sup>15</sup> <http://centerforactivedesign.org/about/>

year by year, while London Boroughs are advocating for the default 20mph limits to encourage active transportation.

Copenhagen is a European benchmark city for championing active living strategies. It is characterised by experimental, out of the box thinking. The city is working close together with the academia, and the third sector like the *Foundation Culture and Sport* and the *Centre of Sport and Architecture* based at the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Copenhagen. The latter was among the first to develop guidelines for better integrating sport into the built environment. Their *Activating Architecture* report (2012) showcases several best practices along with useful measures and everyday ideas on improving the built environment.<sup>16</sup> The results are already visible. For instance, the increased investment in public space since the 1970s has been linked directly to a 65% rise in the number of cyclists and a significant drop in both the quantity and speed of automotive traffic (Arup, 2012). Copenhagen has also pursued pioneering work on developing schemes to reach out to the most vulnerable groups including ethnic minorities.

Besides these pioneering examples, the lack of funding for non-organised sport initiatives and measures is also a serious challenge for European municipalities. The literature review conducted for the report showed a common understanding of the arguments for the positive influence which sports can make to a range of social issues and health prevention. On the hand, there is also a lack of systematic monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes of sport or physical activity-based projects. This is partly due to the difficulty in defining measuring outcomes, the spontaneous nature, or short-term duration of such projects and limited funding. There is need for a better understanding of the relationship between participation in sport, the usage of existing sport infrastructure and the measurability of potential outcomes of new interventions. Also city municipalities should look for ways to better orchestrate the services and the budgets of various departments and allocate more funding for prevention and even sport-related infrastructure.

In many cases sport infrastructures like parks and playgrounds have been destroyed or not well-maintained and are left in derelict, even dangerous state. In the case of socialist playgrounds for example that at the time of their conceptions were praised for their progressive design, have been left abandoned to give space to newly built infrastructure. Considering the realities of austerity urbanism however, revitalising existing infrastructures became a more convincing objective for cities. These spaces could be considered as the target areas for community-based actions to revitalise deprived areas and provide access to sports, for all segments of the population.

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<sup>16</sup> [http://mbbl.dk/sites/mbbl.dk/files/dokumenter/publikationer/activating\\_architecture\\_lille.pdf](http://mbbl.dk/sites/mbbl.dk/files/dokumenter/publikationer/activating_architecture_lille.pdf)



## 5.5. Useful planning guidelines and principles

There are numerous guidelines, strategies and planning processes that VITAL CITIES can draw inspiration from. Even if there is no “one size fits all” solution, the project can benefit from the following methods by tailoring them to the specific local contexts of deprived urban areas.

In terms of a city-wide active living strategy the physical activity planning guide of the WHO (2008) proposes a three-stage planning process.<sup>17</sup> The stages include:

“Stage 1: building commitment and getting started – building commitment with key stakeholders, forming a leadership group, creating a vision, collecting information, identifying opportunities and constraints and setting goals and objectives;

Stage 2: preparing a plan – identifying and setting priorities among options for policies, plans, programmes, infrastructure development and communications in both the built and social environment;

Stage 3: implementing the plan and measuring success – implementing activities and interventions, evaluating and sharing results.”

The *Activating Architecture and Urban Planning* guide by the *Centre for Sport and Architecture* provides a very useful starting point for thinking about the target areas of the VITAL CITIES projects. It is more focused on the public spaces itself instead of a city-wide strategy. It proposes a three-step process when designing places for active living:

1. Mapping: it serves as a point of departure for the project’s development and involves the mapping of the already existent infrastructure and facilities, as well as functions and activities
2. Programming: at this phase the collected data is processed and the concrete intervention is decided upon, defining its function and its content.
3. Impact: implementation, the choice of surface and materials

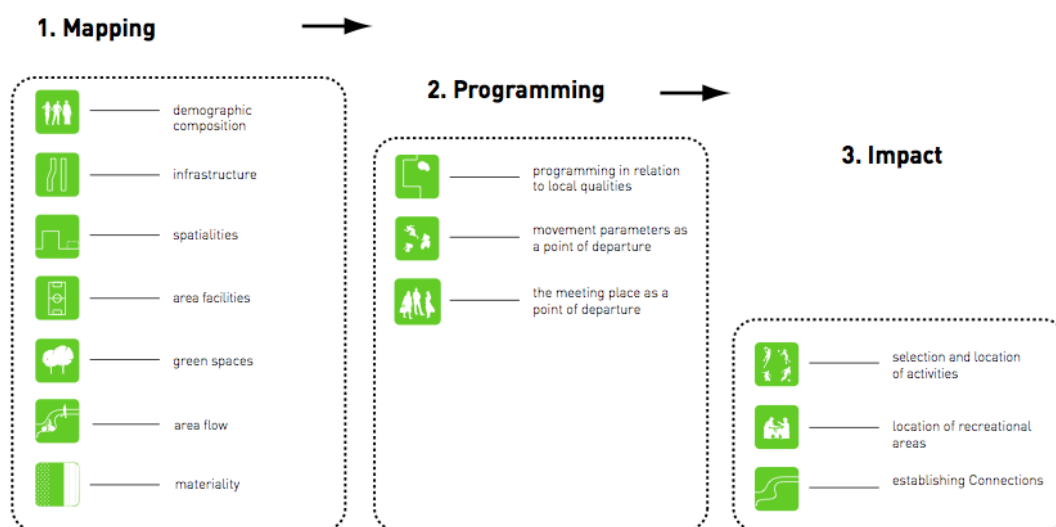


Figure 3.: Diagram of the Development Methodology

<sup>17</sup> [http://www.euro.who.int/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0012/99975/E91883.pdf](http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0012/99975/E91883.pdf)



Based on the guidelines a number of **success factors** can be taken into account both when thinking about existing and new infrastructure:

- **Less is more:** especially in/for deprived areas but also in other cases, a small change can have big impact. For example, the only requirement of ball games is the definition and surfacing of a limited area, action that can already provide enough means to play. This is how the De Salvio Playground in New York City was turned into a popular playground by adding surfacing on the walls of a vacant space
- **Details are important:** for example, the route leading to the playground, the opportunities created for having a pause in the area, the access to green space are all important details that should be considered.
- **Multiple age groups:** design should create the opportunity for movement for multiple age groups. This can be achieved by partitioning the place to allow for simultaneous activities.
- **Lighting:** clever lighting solutions can turn the place into an accessible play area regardless of the time frame.
- **Redundant areas:** unbuilt space, random gaps, vacant corners, spaces under bridges, parking lots can be all turned into active places.
- **Aesthetic changes:** are key to success because research shows that the perception of the environment matters for walking and increased physical activity.

When talking about the redesigning of public spaces public engagement is a crucial aspect both in the design and in the maintenance phase. The Project for Public Spaces, the organisation inventing and advocating for this method has identified 11 key elements in transforming public spaces into vibrant community places.<sup>18</sup> Implementation of the VITAL CITIES concept will benefit a lot from the method of Placemaking as a method for a hands-on and bottom up approach for improving a neighbourhood. The results and lessons learnt from the URBACT project P4C (Placemaking for Cities) are worth taking into account.

<sup>18</sup> 1. The community is the expert; 2. Create a place not a design; 3. Look for partners; 4. You can see a lot just by observing; 5. Have a vision; 6. Start with the petunias: lighter, quicker, cheaper; 7. Triangulate; 8. They always say it can't be done; 9. Form supports function; 10. Money is not the issue; You are never finished; <http://www.pps.org/reference/11steps/>

## 6. European Policy Context

A range of policy documents both by the European Union and the World Health Organisation stress the importance of increasing physical activity levels of the population, and equalising opportunities for participation through inclusive and participatory approaches, stakeholder networks and multi-sectoral action. Key features of these documents emphasise strong government intervention and leadership, community based action and the potential of physical activity in social inclusion.

### 6.1. European Union

By Article 6 and Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the EU has been assigned the competence, according to which sport is an area where action at EU level should support, coordinate and supplement the actions of Member States. Within this respect the EU has drawn up – predating this article 165 – and afterwards several important and relevant policies for the VITAL CITIES concept. Some of the relevant publications are:

- **2005:** The Green Paper on Promoting healthy diets and physical activity: a European dimension for the prevention of overweight, obesity and chronic diseases<sup>19</sup>
- **2007:** The White Paper on Sport<sup>20</sup>
- **2007:** The Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities<sup>21</sup>
- **2008:** EU Physical Activity Guidelines - Recommended Policy Actions in Support of Health-Enhancing Physical Activity<sup>22</sup>
- **2010:** European platform against poverty and social exclusion
- **2011:** European Commission's Communication on Sport
- **2011:** EU Work Plan for Sport (2011-2014)<sup>23</sup>
- **2013:** Council Recommendation on Promoting Health-Enhancing Physical Activity Across Sectors<sup>24</sup>
- **2014:** EU Work Plan for Sport (2014-2017)<sup>25</sup>
- **2014:** Special Eurobarometer (412) on Sport and Physical Activity<sup>26</sup>

The *EU Physical Activity Guidelines* are composed to be an inspiration for action-oriented national physical activity guidelines for policy-makers. It states that the main goal of sport-policy should be to increase participation in quality sports by the whole population.

In 2011, the European Commission published a *Communication on Developing the European dimension in Sport*. This communication recognises physical activity as one of most important factors that contributes to a healthy lifestyle.

<sup>19</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph\\_determinants/life\\_style/nutrition/documents/nutrition\\_gp\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style/nutrition/documents/nutrition_gp_en.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=URISERV:l35010>

<sup>21</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/archive/themes/urban/leipzig\\_charter.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/archive/themes/urban/leipzig_charter.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/sport/library/policy\\_documents/eu-physical-activity-guidelines-2008\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/sport/library/policy_documents/eu-physical-activity-guidelines-2008_en.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/sport/news/2014/20140124-sport-work-plan\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/sport/news/2014/20140124-sport-work-plan_en.htm)

<sup>24</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/sport/library/documents/hepa\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/sport/library/documents/hepa_en.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:42014Y0614%2803%29&from=EN>

<sup>26</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition\\_physical\\_activity/docs/ebs\\_412\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/docs/ebs_412_en.pdf)

One of the most recent documents of the EU in the subject is the *EU Work Plan for Sport (2014-2017)*. It calls national member states for the better recognition of the contribution of sports to the overall goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy. It elaborates on the sector's strong potential to contribute to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and new jobs and considers its positive effects on social inclusion, education and training as well as public health and active ageing. The work plan advocates for multilevel governance as well as for an integrative approach towards other relevant policy areas like health. The work plan opens financial resources of the Erasmus+ programme and other relevant EU programmes to support the priority themes and corresponding key topics.

*The Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities* commits itself for making European cities more healthy and attractive. It pays special attention to high quality of public spaces and calls to create attractive, user-oriented public spaces and achieve a high standard in terms of the living environment. It also advocates for proactive education and training policies for children and young people and the promotion of efficient and affordable public urban transport especially in deprived urban areas.

## **6.2. The World Health Organisation Regional Office for Europe**

The World Health Organisation (WHO) and in particular its European Region office is concerned with policies to keep citizens healthy amongst whole of Europe. Not so surprisingly the European Union and WHO European regional office strategies and policies run in parallel and interact to each other, which is logical giving the fact that out of the 53 countries of WHO European Region, 28 are member states of the EU.

Some of their relevant publications are:

- **2004:** Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health
- **2006:** Europe Promoting Physical Activity and Active Living in Urban Environments. The role of local governments<sup>27</sup>
- **2007:** Steps to Health: a European Framework to Promote Physical activity for Health<sup>28</sup>
- **2008:** A healthy city is an active city. A physical active guide<sup>29</sup>
- **2012:** Health 2020. The European policy for health and well-being<sup>30</sup>
- **2015:** Physical activity strategy for the WHO European Region 2016–2025<sup>31</sup>

A central theme to all of these strategies is the strong emphasis placed on policy- and environmental interventions which appear to show most promise for increasing physical activity levels of the population. Key features of such interventions are highlighted as: strong government intervention and leadership, community based action and the potential of a societal role for organised sports to improve physical activity behaviour and public health.

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.interiorhealth.ca/YourEnvironment/HealthyBuiltEnvironment/Documents/WHO-Promoting%20Physical%20Activity.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> [http://www.euro.who.int/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0020/101684/E90191.pdf](http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/101684/E90191.pdf)

<sup>29</sup> [http://www.euro.who.int/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0012/99975/E91883.pdf](http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0012/99975/E91883.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/health-policy/health-2020-the-european-policy-for-health-and-well-being/about-health-2020>

<sup>31</sup> [http://www.euro.who.int/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0010/282961/65wd09e\\_PhysicalActivityStrategy\\_150474.pdf](http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/282961/65wd09e_PhysicalActivityStrategy_150474.pdf)

*Health 2020. The European policy for health and well-being* is a framework based on the values enshrined in the WHO Constitution, to ensure “the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health” as a fundamental human right of all in the European Region. The policy framework makes the case for investment in health and creating societies where health is valued since good health is vital for economic and social development. The framework aims to advance well-being as social progress is increasingly measured by social cohesion, respect for diversity, security, work–life balance, good health and good education. It explicitly acknowledges the influence of the urban environment on health. Creating supportive environments and resilient communities is one of the 4 priority areas of the framework. Citizen’s opportunities for a healthy life are closely linked to the conditions in which they are born, grow, work and age.

The most recent document, published in December 2015, *the Physical activity strategy for the WHO European Region 2016–2025* is a strategic document. Based on the recent data on physical inactivity levels it urges members for partnership-based, multi-sectoral action to reverse the trends of sedentary lifestyle and inactivity. The document is inspired by *Health 2020* and advocated for an enabling environment for physical activity through safe, accessible public spaces and infrastructure.

### **6.3. Networks and relevant cooperation projects**

Within the WHO European Region, several networks have been active.

The *European Healthy Cities Network*<sup>32</sup> consists of nearly 100 cities and towns from 30 countries that are qualified and committed to health and sustainable development. Their overarching goal is to implement the *Health 2020* policy. A healthy city is defined as one that continually creates and improves its physical and social environments and expands the community resources that enable people to mutually support each other in performing all the functions of life and developing to their maximum potential.

The *European network for the promotion of health-enhancing physical activity* (HEPA) was founded in May 2005 in Gerlev, Denmark. It is dedicated to the promotion of physical activity among all people in the WHO European Region, by strengthening and supporting efforts to increase participation and improve the conditions for healthy lifestyles. WHO Europe closely collaborates with the network, consistently with the goals of its program on transport and health that include the promotion of physical activity as a healthy means for sustainable transport.

*Improving Infrastructures for Leisure-time Physical Activity in the Local-Arena*<sup>33</sup> was an EU-sponsored (DG SANCO) project that ran from 2009 until 2010. It aimed to identify, implement, and disseminate good practice in the planning, financing, building, and managing of local infrastructures for leisure-time physical activity. The projects continuation received funding through the Erasmus Plus Sport Programme and will provide expertise to relevant decision makers on how to implement the guidelines on policymaking, planning, building, financing, and

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<sup>32</sup> <http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/environment-and-health/urban-health/activities/healthy-cities/who-european-healthy-cities-network>

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.impala-eu.org>

management at national, regional, and local levels and to use them for improving the development of infrastructures to get more people physically active.

SPAcE<sup>34</sup> - *Supporting Policy and Action for Active Environments* - aims to integrate active transport programmes (i.e. walking to school, cycle to work schemes etc.) into public policy across the European Union. It is also funded through the Erasmus Plus Sport Programme. The overall aim of the SPAcE project is to make the healthy choice the easy choice through creating sustainable urban active environments in cities and towns across the European Union.

The VITAL CITIES concept also takes on board lessons from relevant other URBACT-projects: *Placemaking4Cities*, *Building Healthy Communities* and *URBAMECO* and *TOGETHER for Territories of Co-responsibility*.

The *Placemaking4Cities*<sup>35</sup> aimed to test and further develop the Placemaking method with different target groups and in different areas as an open living lab process in order to produce attractive, high quality, sustainable places in partner cities in which people want to work, live and relax.

The fast track project *Building Healthy Communities*<sup>36</sup> dealt with health as a basic condition for the wellbeing of individuals and the society, as a healthy population is also a prerequisite for economic productivity and prosperity. The key measurement indicators identified by this project will play a key role when defining the set of standards to be met in order to qualify for the label "Vital City". The project produced a universal checklist based on 4 headline and 4 twin indicators in order to help developers identify the existing vulnerabilities in a community.

The *URBAMECO* network<sup>37</sup> focused on strategies and projects that can foster sustainable integrated regeneration of critical, disadvantaged urban areas with a special focus on local economy development as a key aspect to fight social exclusion. Its four building blocks to value capacities will be considered as important aspect for VITAL CITIES.

The key lesson learned from the *TOGETHER for Territories of Co-responsibility*<sup>38</sup> project is that social inclusion and well-being in cities can hardly be reached without close cooperation between public authorities, citizens and private stakeholders following a principle of co-responsibility

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<sup>34</sup> <http://activeenvironments.eu/>

<sup>35</sup> <http://URBACT.eu/placemaking-cities>

<sup>36</sup> <http://URBACT.eu/building-healthy-communities-bhc>

<sup>37</sup> <http://URBACT.eu/urbameco>

<sup>38</sup> <http://URBACT.eu/together-territories-coresponsibility>

## 7. Themes of the VITAL CITIES Concept

Based on the above principles and guidelines, the VITAL CITIES Concept will concentrate on the following themes when designing for physical activity in deprived areas:

1. Implementing community-based actions to redesign public space
2. Implementing IT-based actions to redesign public space
3. Better orchestrating the services coordinated by the city to promote healthy life style and contribute to social inclusion
4. Establishing innovative physical (not IT) equipment to promote sport in public spaces
5. Organisation of innovative events to promote healthy lifestyle

The following chapter describes these themes by highlighting best practices examples from the field.

### 7.1. Implementing community-based actions to redesign the public space

The Placemaking methodology and all the reviewed guidelines emphasise community participation as a key to success also when designing for physical activity (WHO 2015, Lee et. al., 2012). It is especially important to maximise the future use of the facilities and ensure the care for the space. Successful strategies within this category could entail for example:

- recycle playground for children and adults
- table tennis during the night in the local school/community house
- interactive city games created by residents
- organisation of sport events by local NGOs

#### *El Campo de Cebada, Madrid, Spain*



© publicspace.org



Although not primarily designed for physical activity, the renovation of the site of “El Campo de Cebada” by the district’s residents meets almost all the success factors identified above.<sup>39</sup> People of the La Latina neighbourhood took over a site and turned it into a public facility. They also included facilities for recreation like pools, basketball and football courts and other sport areas.

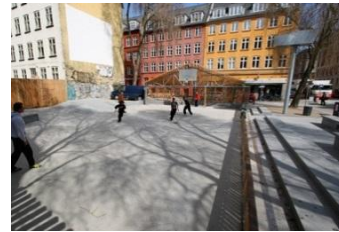
Interestingly, a part of the site had previously been a sports centre but it was demolished in 2009 despite being the only facility of this kind in the neighbourhood. Residents took initiative to replace it in a spontaneous and flexible way. Since then it has become a worldwide example

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.publicspace.org/en/works/g362-el-campo-de-cebada>



for community-driven urban actions advocating for values such as transparency, participation and social inclusion.

### ***Ravnsborggade Action Spot, Copenhagen, Denmark<sup>40</sup>***



© Danish Architecture Centre

The area can be found in Inner Nørrebro, one of the most ethnically and economically diverse neighbourhoods in Denmark that has recently undergone extensive renovation. It was a rather neglected land, only containing a fenced-in ball court in a bad condition. A group of local residents took initiative and contacted an architecture student, a local resident to help them design a multifunctional space. The concept reinterpreted the idea of the playground aiming to attract not only the district's youth, but also older residents for whom the space could provide means for recreation. Ravnsborggade Action Spot features a sunken court for ball games and is equipped with spectator seating along the sides. The plateaus on the sides can be used as a stage for theatrical and musical events. It is a prime example of local initiative, showing how a small upgrade in the aesthetic appeal can encourage people to move.

### ***Superkilen, Copenhagen, Denmark<sup>41</sup>***



© Superflex

Perhaps the most famous part of the recent renewal of the Nørrebro area is the Superkilen park designed by Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG), Topotek and SUPERFLEX Studio. Besides the attractive design and unique functionality, the project involved an intensive public participation process. The neighbourhood community is representing more than 60 nationalities.

People were asked to collect ideas for street furniture and playground items that are representative for their countries of origins. These then were chosen by the community and reproduced or brought and installed at the site. The park supports physical activity in a variety of ways. It boasts a boxing ring, slides, punching bags and skateboard ramps.

Superkilen was very well integrated in the existing urban infrastructure. For instance the bicycle lane that runs through the entire site was connected to the Green Path (Den Grønne

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.dac.dk/en/dac-life/copenhagen-x-gallery/cases/ravnsborggade-action-spot/>

<sup>41</sup> <http://centerforactivedesign.org/superkilen/>



Sti) which is approx. 9km long and crosses the city (making cycling convenient as transport and it is further on connected with other lanes).

### ***Rückenwind bike-sharing system, Berlin, Germany<sup>42</sup>***



© Rückenwind Association

A Berlin-based citizen initiative with the aim to improve the lives of local refugees and give them back a little bit of their independence with the help of bikes. Due to Berlins problematic refugee situation refugees cannot access public transportation services. The organisation collects bikes functional and un-functional, repairs them with the help of volunteers and refugees to give them occupation and appropriate means of transportation.

## ***7.2. IT-based actions to redesign public space***

IT supported games and other digital technology applications can provide creative means to encourage people to move. Especially among children, it can prove to be a useful tool to make physical activity fun and playful. For example

- interactive city games supported by IT applications
- Interactive screens, motion sensitive billboards

Although its applications are largely untapped in the area of active urban designed, the section below provides a few pioneering examples.

### ***Sports and Technology Foundation, Dutch Brainport region, the Netherlands***



© Sport and Technology Foundation

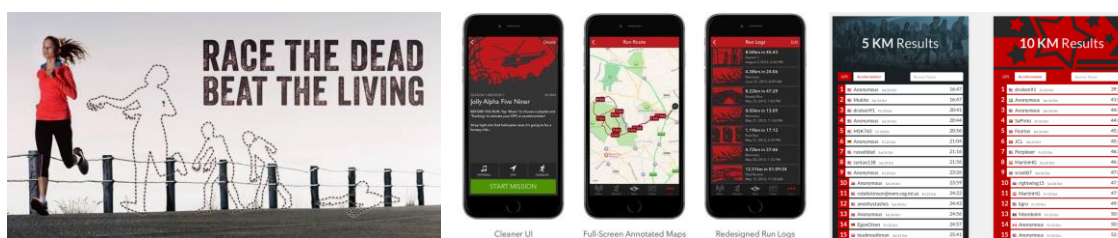
Sports and Technology is a networking organisation located in the top technology region of the Netherlands (Dutch Brainport region). It is a network of companies, sport field labs and knowledge organisations from around the area, united by the mission to stimulate sport participation and an active lifestyle. The foundation is closely linked to a network of (Sport) FieldLabs in the region, which are defined as research and development locations in real-life

<sup>42</sup> <http://rueckenwind.berlin/en/home/>

sports settings. Here, new technologies and products are developed/tested in cooperation between sports, knowledge organisations and companies. A location in a real-life setting allows citizens (children, adults, elderly) to engage in sports and perform activities. Businesses can install new product prototypes or production models in the field-lab where the end-users can use and test them as part of regular sports activity.

Since 2011, the Sports and Technology cluster has initiated R&D projects with more than 100 companies for a total of more than € 14 million euro. Sports and Technology is the project leader of the Profit project.<sup>43</sup> The project is a public private partnership in the area of sports and physical activity to set up a network of field-labs and to stimulate innovations leading to (new) business. It is co-funded by the European Union, under the Interreg IVB North West Europe programme. It combines technology, sports and health through the development of sport FieldLabs.

### ***Zombies, Run!, global<sup>44</sup>***



© Six to Start

Zombies, Run! is a popular running game developed by the London-based multi-platform design company Six to Start. In order to make jogging more fun they brought together creative professionals to design an interactive running game with an interactive storyline. Users follow a story set in a post-apocalyptic setting, adopt roles and complete missions while being chased by Zombies.

It was supported by the crowdfunding platform Kickstarter and it is the most popular running game to date having 2500 runners.

### ***7.3. Better orchestrating the services coordinated by the city to promote a healthy life style and social inclusion***

When planning for intensive physical activity the guidelines emphasise the importance of a cross-sectorial approach that carefully coordinates the city's facilities and provides incentives for residents to be active. This increases buy-in, support, resources and opportunities for any project. For example:

- City Sport Cards
- Playgrounds equipped with gyms for Mums: volunteers (organised by the municipality) take care of children, while a trainer provides specially adapted gym exercises for young mothers during specific days
- increase hours of operation, maximising opening hours

<sup>43</sup> [www.profitproject.org](http://www.profitproject.org)

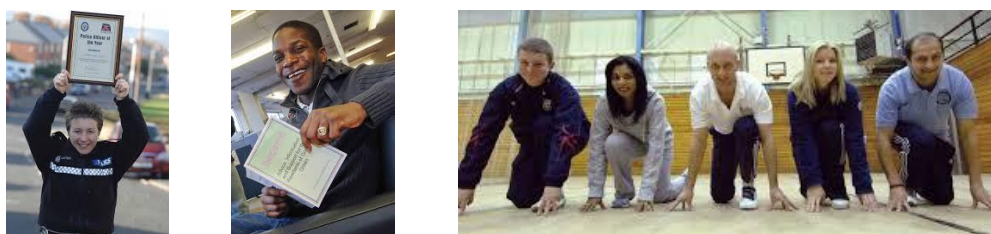
<sup>44</sup> <http://blog.zombiesrungame.com/>

- innovative safety measures
- joint programmes with resources to keep facilities well maintained

### ***Motion 2000, Turku, FI<sup>45</sup>***

The Motion 2000 project is a great example of a comprehensive approach. It was a city-wide strategy that was developed as a joint effort of city planners, city departments (Health Care, Social Welfare, Education and Youth affairs). It included not only changes in the built environment, but also a wide range of communication activities, services and counselling. The step-by-step approach coordinated by the Sport Department between 1993 and 2004 led to great results. The percentage of adult city residents active enough to maintain their health (three times per week, slightly sweating) increased from 28% to 42%.

### ***Greets Green Partnership, Active Lifestyles Project<sup>46</sup>***



© Greets Green Partnership

Greets Green is a deprived area in West Bromwich, UK. The Greets Green Partnership project was founded in 2006 and brought together local people, community and voluntary organisations, public agencies, local authorities and businesses to tackle local problems.

One of their projects has been the Active Lifestyles project that was launched in 2006. It aimed to increase access to and participation in physical activity, raise the number of local physical activity projects and the number of people who can deliver physical activity sessions and to increase the uptake of mainstream services.

Focusing on three specific target groups: young people, black and minority ethnic communities, and older people, the project managed to involve local residents, community organisations, schools, voluntary organisations and statutory agencies. One of the key elements of the project was to train and employ local people as community champions/trainers to promote physical activity. Project partners established a Community Fund that offered small grant for community initiated projects like ladies' aerobics or local football teams and older people's clubs.

One of the strengths of the project was the concentrated effort of the various partners who ensured a sense of ownership within the community. The project established an Active Lifestyles Steering Group that consisted of community representatives. It provided the means for informal comments and constant feedback.

The project was funded by Greets Green Partnership and sponsored by Sandwell Primary Care Trust (PCT). Then the funding was entirely taken over by PCT to make sure the project can

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.ubcwheel.eu/index.php/gdpd/article/995>

<sup>46</sup> [http://greetsgreenpartnership.org.uk/pdf\\_archive/case\\_studies/health/Getting\\_active\\_in\\_Greets\\_Green.pdf](http://greetsgreenpartnership.org.uk/pdf_archive/case_studies/health/Getting_active_in_Greets_Green.pdf)

continue and even rolled onto other areas.

### ***ACTIVE - Active Children through Incentive Vouchers<sup>47</sup>***

In the framework of a study conducted by the British Medical Association pupils aged 13-14 years old from a secondary school in a deprived area of Swansea were given £25 vouchers per month for a six months period. Each year, 9 pupils were selected for the study. They could spend their vouchers on existing activities at leisure centres, to buy sports equipment or to employ new coaches.

The study aimed to assess the voucher schemes' effect on increasing participation in physical activities. The researchers convinced 22 activity providers from the area to offer a wide variety of services (like waterpark, football pitches, climbing walls, sports shops).

A facilitator was commissioned to distribute the vouchers every month during school assembly for six months. They were also assisting participants with any queries. Focus groups were formed to measure the effects of the project before, during and after its duration to qualitatively assess the participant's views of the scheme and how it had impacted on their physical activity levels.

Results showed significant increase in physical fitness of the participants. They used at least one voucher during the scheme. The majority of vouchers were used for ad hoc activities but social activities also proved popular with 41% reportedly using their vouchers with friends. Given that each pupil was given a voucher, the belief that everyone was using them reduced some barriers to engage in physical activity. Pupils respected the flexibility and choice factor of the project and the fact that all their friends could participate. According to the teachers, the voucher scheme changed children's perceptions of physical activity and helped them to build favour physical education lessons.

### ***7.4. Establishing innovative physical (not IT) equipment to promote sport in public spaces***

It is worth emphasising the idea that even small interventions can motivate people to be more active. The aesthetical appeal and the perception of a certain space are key factors in encouraging physical activities. Eye-catching and innovative equipment, such as the creation of walking routes, innovative wayfinding solutions<sup>48</sup>, creative staircase markings<sup>49</sup> or innovative paving<sup>50</sup> can be all seen as relevant interventions in encouraging people to move.

### ***Das Netz, Berlin, Germany<sup>51</sup>***

<sup>47</sup> <http://www.bhfactive.org.uk/userfiles/Documents/CasestudybookletInnovatetoActivate.pdf>

<sup>48</sup> <http://pearsonlloyd.com/2013/09/public-realm/>

<sup>49</sup> <http://www.thefuntheory.com/piano-staircase>

<sup>50</sup> <http://gehlarchitects.com/cases/new-road-brighton-uk/>

<sup>51</sup> <http://www.stadtkunstprojekte.de/projekte/kaiak/netz/netz.html>





© NL Architects



Das Netz is an innovative playground that invites everybody to try it. It was created by NL Architects and installed on/in an urban void. It is a rectangular “tube” of steel net that connects two firewalls. From the sections attached to the walls, the forces deform the net into a double cone. According to the architects it is an “urban hammock”, a climbing object, an informal auditorium, providing space for outdoor movie screenings or theatre plays. And it certainly works as an extension of the terrace of the bar across the street. The project was commissioned by an art foundation called Stadtkunstprojekte, mostly known for its open swimming pool project on the Spree river, in Badeschiff.

### ***Geopark by Helen Hard, Stavanger, Norway<sup>52</sup>***



© Helen & Hard Architects



The Geopark is a playful urban space on Stavanger’s waterfront. It was built on a vacant forecourt in front of the Oil Museum. The architects, Helen & Hard designed the park with the intention to make use of the expertise and material resources of the offshore industry in a sustainable way. They used recycled and reshaped elements from petroleum installations. They relied on three types of local resources: 1) the geological and seismic expertise of the oil industry; 2) technology and materials (including waste) related to the production of oil; 3) the ideas of local youth groups for the programming of the new park. Activities such as biking, climbing, exhibitions, concerts, jumping, ball play and chilling-out take place there. The park was an immediate success. It is filled during the daytime with kids and parents, making it a vivid meeting spot. Initially it was planned for 1 year, but everyone involved intends to make it permanent.

## ***7.5. Organisation of innovative events to promote healthy lifestyle***

Especially in the context of deprived urban areas, it is important to provide innovative programming and activities that reach out to the most vulnerable groups and empower and encourage the inhabitants to use the facilities and infrastructures in the neighbourhood. Special programming can also help to increase the image of a place.

<sup>52</sup> <http://www.helenhard.no/projects/geopark/>

### ***Ciclovía, Bogota, Colombia***



© Wikimedia



Ciclovías is a world-famous event series that makes use of the existing infrastructure, namely the roads. It was introduced by former Bogotá mayor, Enrique Peñalosa, as an effort to provide democratic and sustainable opportunities for physical activity. Since 1976 the city offers car-free weekends and holidays on a string of its major roads. Bogotá's ciclovía is now a 110 km-long municipally-sanctioned road closure. It enables pedestrians and cyclists to spread out and traverse the city in comfort. The realm of activities is expanding, including today also rollerblading, yoga and dancing. The programme has expanded geographically spreading across Latin America, the United States and in several European and Australian cities.

### ***Homeless Football Club in West Lothian<sup>53</sup>***

The homeless football is a monthly activity in West Lothian (Scotland, UK), for people who are or have been homeless or those at risk of homelessness. The project aims to improve the physical and mental well-being of people experiencing homelessness and to reduce social isolation. Various services are working together within the partnership led by the Livingston Football Club. About on average 20 males are attending the club. Additionally to the trainings there are health promotion and/or service awareness sessions offered. The success of the programme led several participants to continue the football sessions even after they had found permanent tenancies because of the positive impact Homeless Football has on their lives. The project has already been awarded with several local prizes.

### ***The Rope Forest by Keingart<sup>54</sup>***



© Keingart

Temporary artistic urban interventions can also contribute to raise awareness and promote a healthier, more sustainable lifestyle. For instance the artwork of Keingart and architecture and design studio based in Denmark, installed 3,500 white ropes in Carlsberg that hang down from the 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> roof. This installation entices the audience to play with the thousands of ropes swaying in the wind. Even though the city of Carlsberg has got movable urban life on its three

<sup>53</sup> [http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4\\_EqualOpportunitiesCommittee/Inquiries/North\\_East\\_Glasgow\\_Suicide\\_Prevention\\_Partnership\\_1.pdf](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_EqualOpportunitiesCommittee/Inquiries/North_East_Glasgow_Suicide_Prevention_Partnership_1.pdf)

<sup>54</sup> <http://keingart.com/frizone-abnet-i-the-rope-show/>

squares, with this project the common sense has been challenged and the urban space has preliminarily changed.

### ***The Art Pacemaker<sup>55</sup>***

The Albanian artists, Driant Zeneli's project The Art Pacemaker is a "race of art", a collective performance, a running guided tour through galleries, foundations, non-profit spaces and museums of a city. The pacemaker acts as a motivator as well as a leader. During a marathon, the "pacemaker" is a runner in charge to run at a steady pace in order to stop in the time indicated by the numbers written on the balloons that they have fasten to their vest. When runners stop at any gallery or museum, the artists-pacemaker focus on a single work, they introduce "pacemaker work" for runners. The recurring rapid transfers and the several stops at each single artwork aim to let runners achieving the feeling they have visited a museum expanded, abolishing the fragmentary nature of the complete route and the individual location.

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<sup>55</sup> <http://driantzeneli.blogspot.de/2014/08/the-art-pacemaker.html>



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## II. PROFILES OF THE PARTICIPATING CITIES

### 1. City Profile of Loulé

#### **Key facts**

- Population: 70,622, growing tendency
- Unemployment: 14,1 %
- GDP/person: 20,900 euro
- Key economic sector in the employment: services-tourism
- Life expectancy: Men 73 years, Women 79 years

#### **1. Main characteristics of the city**

##### **1.1. Geography**

Located in the very heart of the Algarve, in the District of Faro, the City of Loulé is the largest and most populous municipality in the region. It is distributed throughout nine civil parishes and divided into four zones with distinct characteristics: Hill Chain, Foot of the Hill, Gullies and Coastline.

The municipality is lying by the sea, on 765,12 km<sup>2</sup>. Enjoying excellent accessibilities, Highway A2 or Faro International Airport, the Municipality of Loulé is furnished with a modern road network. The climate is mild throughout the year making the Municipality of Loulé, and Algarve in general, one of the most attractive touristic regions in all of Europe.

The Municipality of Loulé consists of 9 civil parishes. The old part of the city is where most of the administrative and urban functions are concentrated (schools of all levels, shopping streets, city administration), as well as the main sport stadiums and facilities. It is divided into two civil parishes – S. Clemente and S. Sebastião. The village of Almancil has two well-established holiday and residential developments nearby (Quinta do Lago and Vale do Lobo) and is a hub of tourism related services. In Almancil the latest public park has been completed with equipments such as a pétanque facility, fitness gear and playing items for youth. On the coast, the relatively new settlement of Quarteira is developed around the former fishing village, which grew from the 80s on, when international tourism started taking up. Quarteira, with its beaches and a promenades, offers in itself opportunities for being physically active. Urban sprawl is taking place between and around these cores due to old farm estates being converted into developments of detached houses.

##### **1.2. Social and economic profile of the city**

The Municipality of Loulé has 70 622 inhabitants (2011), 16.5% of which are residing foreigners. The last decade witnessed a demographical growth of over 20%, with a particular emphasis on the civil parishes of Quarteira, S. Clemente and Almancil. The density population is low (92/km<sup>2</sup>). Regarding age groups, the majority of the population is working-age (56% are 25-64 years old). Although the aging index is high, with a rate of approx. 129%, Loulé stays above the national average.

##### **1.3. Governance**

The Municipal Council of Loulé is the executive body of the municipality and its mission is to define and implement policies that promote the development of the county in different areas,

according to the legal competences. The Mayor works together the municipal council, a supervisory body of municipal activities and a forum for debate.

## ***2. Main characteristics in terms of urban sports and healthy living***

### ***2.1. Sport facilities***

Sports eclecticism has long been a distinctive brand in the Municipality of Loulé, where more than 69 types of sports are being practiced, throughout 57 clubs and associations and involving about 8 000 registered athletes every day, who compete at all levels (local, regional, national and international). Diversity reigns in the city: from gymnastics to swimming, horse riding to pigeon racing, triathlon to handball and BMX to motocross. Loulé has an extensive sports infrastructure: the city is equipped with 241 sports establishments, 137 of which are open to the public offering more than 30 modalities for the citizens. On average, they are used by 50 000 people per month.

There is a strong cycling tradition in Loulé, the Louletano Desportos Clube, the largest club in the municipality, achieved several accomplishments on a national level. The club is investing in training, together with the Clube de BTT Terra de Loulé, standing out as Portugal's prime and one of Europe's largest mountain bike schools.

The Municipality of Loulé has the largest number of golf courses (13) in the Algarve region. The municipality's coastline, of about 13 km, enables the practice of equally important nautical activities. Among these, CIMAV (Vilamoura Marina's International Club) is the most significant in terms of sailing, surf and, more. Rugby, basketball and roller-skate hockey are also getting more and more important, not only due to the number of participants but also because they promote the municipality through their achievements.

The public bike share system counts 36 stations and over 200 bicycles. It is a GSM-guided system. There are citizens' initiatives growing on social platforms like Facebook groups for bicyclists.

### ***2.2. Health***

Cardiovascular problems among the population and child obesity are increasing at an alarming rate, as a result of a sedentary lifestyle. On the other hand, 35% of the population practices a type of sport regularly, at least twice a week, which is well above European average.

Loulé is facing a new challenge to keep senior citizens active, preventing their social exclusion and supporting their needs of maintaining their autonomy and social bounds. Due to increasing work-load people are systematically pushed to postpone social moments and active living choices, leading to social exclusion and health problems.

## ***3. Opportunities and challenges addressed by the VITAL CITIES network***

### ***3.1. Overall challenge***

The old paradigm of public sports facilities was focusing on big central infrastructures. Such positioning demands a rigid scheduling to attend, reducing the accessibility and is expensive to maintain, reflected in the entrance fees. Moreover, there are districts with poor accessibility to such sports facilities. This imposes a two-fold challenge on the Municipality, determined to provide access for sports to all of its residents and maintain the central infrastructure. The city is looking for solutions to improve its sport infrastructure and innovative physical equipment providing accessible opportunities for its citizens to pursue an active lifestyle close to their homes.

### ***The challenge of the "Sports for all" principle***

Large scale sports facilities in the municipality are used for well-organized, centralised, formal sports, with scheduled trainings. There is a growing need to shift from this approach, as this format does not effectively reach the most vulnerable target groups (children, disadvantaged people, elderly) and is mostly used by the well-off population.

The municipality recognized the need to move from the development of large scale centralised facilities to smaller scale urban sports equipment, embedded in the living areas. Involving residents of deprived areas in sport activities is also a challenge for Loulé. The objective of the Municipality is to open it up the deprived areas through connecting the community by creating public spaces and sport facilities: safe open spaces, close to the community. In short, make the sport accessible to all the residents of the municipality.

The application of this new approach requires a change in the mind-set of the municipality as well, to bring down the 'silos' of the different departments (Social, Sports, Urban Planning) and develop a holistic, integrated approach.

### ***The challenge to find a suitable monitoring system***

To implement a successful transition from central facilities to community based, embedded equipment, the municipality has to have sufficient data on the needs of its residents and their sport habits. The challenge in this regards it to find the most suitable methods for monitoring sports activity in the municipality and apply them to the local circumstances.

## **3.2. Concrete needed investments**

The following concrete investments would be needed in the city to implement the VITAL CITIES concept:

- development of a monitoring system (e.g. through creating more public spaces with free Internet access, creating an application that allows the community to have access to various information)
- Placemaking method: creating multi-functional small scale sports equipment, which can be used by the whole community (children, adults and seniors)
- awareness raising and community engagement activities to ensure the involvement and commitment of residents to sports

## **4. Existing general strategies & policy instruments of the city related to urban sports promotion and healthy lifestyle**

Sport has been a priority area for Loulé for a long time. In the last forty years the municipality has continuously developed the sports policies and infrastructure of the city. Loulé is committed to its *Sports for All* initiative, facilitating the accessibility of sports for everyone.

The municipality's commitment results from experience, the belief that sport is the most effective instrument to promote inclusion at all levels, and a way to prevent and treat disease and empower citizens. Since the Portuguese revolution sports has been a means to promote and facilitate social integration in the country, breaking socio-economic barriers. As a result of the systematic implementation of its policies, the city has a vivid sports life and a wide range of sports offers. Loulé has successfully addressed the challenge of providing access to sports to a large number of people, who have the time and will to pursue an active life style, but lack the facilities, knowledge and orientation. Through persistent work the municipality broke down the barriers to sports. Loulé has been awarded the title of *European City of Sport* for 2015, as the recognition of four decades of work.

The most important policy document in the subject is the *Municipality of Loulé SPORTS CHARTER*: a planning instrument directly connected to the Municipal Master Plan allowing for strategic analysis of sports in the city with the aim of mapping the needs of residents and set goals.

The city also has a yearly revised *Sports Development Support Programme*. It covers different areas of intervention: sports equipment, programme contracts and association movement support, school sports organisation, teaching sports for the population and organisation of sporting events. The Municipal Council puts an emphasis on supporting school sports, introducing different modalities of sport to children. The Council, cooperating with schools, regularly surveys the existing needs, fostering sports practice through sports projects and developing some modalities through the presence of technicians in schools, teaching children and youngsters. The programme is trying to detect potential sports talents as well and refer them to sports clubs and modalities. Moreover, the programme supports placing physical education teachers on Curricular Development Activities.

Loulé is developing several programmes for various age groups (from 6 to 80 years) with the purpose of creating sports habits and developing a sports culture among citizens so as to prevent diseases and social exclusion. Loulé has a large set of monthly and weekly activities that try to increase access to sports. As a result of the approach some groups have evolved from open to all, non-competitive events to informal clubs, promoting weekly events for "more than amateurs but less than formal practitioners".

Walking and running centres are a good illustration of that initiative. In these centres accredited technicians provide assistance to citizens, evaluating both their health and physical conditions and assigning them adequate exercises. The objective is to contribute to the improvement of the population's health levels through regular exercise, to fight sedentary habits, to increase opportunities for practicing sports open for the whole population and to develop and reinforce, among local communities, a social environment conducive to an active lifestyle.

Loulé has a dedicated *Active Seniors Programme* for its citizens over 55 as well, to preserve and improve their physical and mental well-being and maintain their functional autonomy, contributing to their better health condition.



## ***5. Learning needs and best practices related to the main topics of the project***

Loulé has best practices to be shared with the partnership regarding four of the five main topics of the project:

### ***Theme 1: Implementing community-based actions to redesign the public space***

- *Seniores Activos* – is a programme funded by the municipality that takes Sports Monitors to most of the urban areas and promotes exercising for seniors twice a week in several urban areas using not only Sport Facilities but using School and Cultural Facilities where there are no sports facilities.
- *IPSS Activos* – is the name of a programme being prepared to introduce Boccia in retirement houses for seniors who have no physical autonomy.
- *Street Workout and Geriatric Parks* – municipal programme in preparation to revitalize urban public spaces regenerating or creating new outdoor places where young and older people can meet and with no charge use sport equipment/machines while socialising.

### ***Theme 3: Better orchestrating the services coordinated by the city to promote healthy life style***

- *Centro Municipal de Marcha – Corrida (Municipal March and Running Centre)*: In this centre accredited technicians provide assistance to citizens, evaluating both their health and physical condition and assigning them adequate exercises. The objective is to contribute to the improvement of the population's health levels through regular exercise, to fight sedentary habits, to increase opportunities for practicing sports open for the whole population and to develop and reinforce, among local communities, a social environment conducive to an active lifestyle. The Centre organizes walking and running activities 4 days a week, 2 days in Loulé and 2 days in Quarteira.
- *Contratos-Programa de Desenvolvimento Desportivo (Sport Development Contracts)* – is a financial programme that consists of the distribution of 700.000 Euros per year to the Clubs that promote sports among young people, the programme considers: type of sport; age of the practitioners; number of those who are municipal residents; competitive level; number of sport technicians allocated; this programme also gives free access to Public Facilities for the Clubs.

### ***Theme 4: Establishing innovative physical (not IT) equipment to promote sport in public spaces***

- sport tracks in different colours
- cycling and running track in a well maintained central lane park in the middle of the main road with lots of public work out spots. There is 'room' for private personal trainers to meet and work out with their clients

### ***Theme 5: Organisation of innovative events to promote healthy lifestyle***

- *European City of Sport 2015* – Loulé's goal is to achieve 800 sportive events/manifestations, going from the regular football games of its clubs to receiving the national Boccias championship, including two half-marathons, an international table

tennis open, weekly footing events, riding competitions (national and international), Surf championships, cycling events.

- Baile Social – a weekly dance event for seniors (above 55) that reunites hundreds of citizens on Saturday afternoons.

## **6. Initial Focus of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP)**

Loulé will concentrate on the identification of measures to increase and diversify its already existing activities and on better orchestrating the municipal services to reach a wider array of residents. The city is planning to increase the volume of outdoor places suitable for non-organized sport activities, and in the frame of the IAP is looking for innovative solutions (using the Placemaking method) to be tested in the target area.

### **Priorities**

- improve access to sports facilities, focusing on residents in deprived areas ('Sports for All')
- break down organisational barriers
- develop an appropriate monitoring system for the sports equipment in the city (to know the extent of usage) as well as to measure the health status of the residents to measure the impact of the actions (obesity, cardiovascular diseases)
- introduce new community engagement methods to reach new target groups
- implement small scale Placemaking actions in the target area by introducing innovative physical sports equipment
- organise innovative events

### **Target area**

The major target area for the municipality is the deprived area of Quarteira. Here apartment blocks were built in the 60s, and are currently mostly occupied by families of ethnic origins like Roma, Romanians or Ukrainians. Due to the large number of foreign residents, the neighbourhood is socially separated from other areas of the city. Sports opportunities are very limited in the area (a school basketball pitch and a closed sport court). The municipality would like to open up these facilities after the school hours for the use of the neighbourhood, to facilitate an informal basketball and football club.

The second possible target area is situated a bit down from the hill towards the seaside. It is mainly occupied by lower-middle income households. In this area the municipality would like to install innovative sports equipment by using the Placemaking method.

### **Target groups**

The specific target groups of the action plan will be the people living in deprived neighbourhoods, particularly the youth, who are at the risk of social and economic isolation. Another target group are the elderly, reaching out to them would be important to maintain their physical independence and prevent isolation.

### **Framework of implementation**

Within the Portuguese ERDF programmes there is a national strand on heavy infrastructure but also regional strands for example for the South of the Algarve region. Within the latter there is a strand aiming at SME's and Innovation while for the 16 municipalities there is a separate strand also aiming at sustainable development and energy transition. The municipalities themselves are entities which can steer the calls. Therefore, meeting up with the Management Authorities has not been foreseen in the programme.

## ***7. Approach and composition of the URBACT Local Support Group (ULSG)***

Loulé possesses an outstanding relationship with local key private and public stakeholders. They cooperate professionally on event organization, and also have an old history in community based local initiatives in the field of sports and leisure.

Institutionally, the municipality already maintains agreements with a diverse range of federations, associations and other sports entities, with the purpose of organising events in the municipality. In the VITAL CITIES project Loulé intends to further increase the participation of stakeholders on the definition, implementation and evaluation of the planned initiatives. It also aims to establish a Municipal Sport Council reuniting all the stakeholders of the sport sector to participate in the creation of the sports policies for the coming years.

Apart from the municipal services, parishes and municipal companies, Loulé wishes to involve local healthcare services (public and private) and organized clubs and unorganized sport groups that are already working in the promotion of physical activities and events. The municipality also believes that a wider scale of school and university participation can trigger a spill-over effect beyond the project.

### ***The initial ULSG consists of:***

- Parish Councils
- Municipal Enterprises
- Sports Clubs

### ***The ULSG could be further extended with:***

- 4 parishes
- Representatives of the 3 municipality services
- Skate park association
- Personal training company
- Association Quarteira for BMX bikes
- Vertical Navis; a Facebook group aiming at promoting cycling, running and walking
- Health Services

## 2. City Profile Birmingham

### **Key facts**

- Population: 1.24 million, growing tendency
- Unemployment: 5,8%
- GDP/person: recovering from the 2008-09 recession
- Key economic sector in the employment: public sector ;strong manufacturing and engineering background, thriving services and financial sector
- Life expectancy: Men 72,8 years, Women 79,2 years

### **1. Main characteristics of the city**

#### **1.1. Geography**

Birmingham is the second largest city in the UK, with a population of 1.1 million rising to a 1.24 million Daytime Population, covering 267km<sup>2</sup>. The city is growing, estimated to rise by circa 10% by 2021.

Birmingham is the main city within the West Midlands Urban conurbation and wider region. It recently completed a devolution deal with the Central Government securing a position for

economic investment and prioritising vulnerable individuals.

Furthermore, it is the regional capital and, as such, the regional centre for commerce and industry, shopping and other leisure and cultural activities. The city is also a centre for higher education and associated R&D based at the city's universities.

Birmingham has a significant advantage compared to most other areas of the UK due to its geographical position which means that it is within four hours travel time of 90% of the UK's population and business. The city is situated at the heart of the UK's motorway and rail network, with Birmingham Airport, the third busiest UK airport outside of London and the South East. The city's good physical connectivity brings significant growth opportunities for the local economy, enhanced by recent investment decisions in relation to High Speed Rail, city centre Metro, New Street Gateway and Birmingham Airport – which will further enhance national and international connectivity.

#### **1.2. Social and economic profile of the city**

Birmingham has a population of just over one million. The city has a relatively youthful age structure, and a large and diverse BME (black and minority ethnic) population, with 40% of working age residents being from an ethnic minority. Population projections suggest that Birmingham's working age population is expected to grow by more than 43 000 between 2011 and 2021.

When compared with the UK and the core cities, Birmingham has a relatively low proportion of highly skilled residents and a high proportion of its working age population with no formal qualifications. There are large differences between qualification levels of residents from different parts of the city and between different ethnic groups.

In Birmingham there is a clear link between, qualifications and skills, economic activity and employment, unemployment and deprivation levels. Those areas of the city that do poorly in relation to one of the factors are also likely to do poorly in relation to the others, with the inner city and some outer city estates consistently being the areas that perform less well.

Birmingham has a vibrant economy with a historically strong manufacturing and engineering background, but also a thriving services and financial sector. The city benefits, in addition, of a strong entrepreneurial base partly fuelled by the diversity of communities.

The stock of active business in the city increased by 480 between 2011 and 2012 (+1.6%) to stand at 30 850; Birmingham accounts for 16.5% of all active businesses in the region and 48.5% of business in the GBSLEP (Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership), highlighting the city's position as a key economic driver.

Birmingham has a growing reputation as an international business location and the city economy performs well on a number of measures. Economic output totalled £21.2bn in 2012 which accounted for 21% of the total economic output in the West Midlands.

On a sectoral basis the public sector is the largest employer in the city accounting for a third of employment in the city. The financial and professional services sector is the largest in terms of economic output contributing to around a third of the city's GVA.

The local economy has been hit hard by the 2008-09 recession and the recovery has this far been relatively fragile.

### **1.3. Governance**

There are 120 Elected Political Members in 40 electoral wards.

The Leader, Deputy Leader and Cabinet are determined by the majority party (Labour Party).

The main political decision making meetings are:

- Full Council
- Cabinet
- Executive Management Team
- Scrutiny (back bench members)

The administrative structure of the city is made up the Chief Executive – the lead officer, Cohort of Strategic Directors, Supporting Directors and Assistant Directors.

Main Decision making groups are:

- Corporate Management Team
- Effectively Managed Council Business
- Directorate Management Teams

### **1.4. Key challenges the city is facing**

The city has some significant issues with relative deprivation.

Birmingham is ranked the:

- 6<sup>th</sup> most deprived local authority district in relative rankings (an increase from the 8<sup>th</sup> position in 2010)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> most deprived English Core City
- most deprived of West Midlands region's local authorities

450K+ people live in the 10% most deprived communities within England.

Also, the level of employment is lower than national averages and there are difficulties related to the segment of the society that are long term unemployed.

The city has relatively lower levels of physical activity which also relate to public health issues of lower life expectancy and limiting long term illness.

Birmingham is wholly an urban local authority that also has a large number of a parks and open spaces. One key environmental challenge is the requirement to build new homes to meet a housing deficit.

## ***2. Main characteristics in terms of urban sports and healthy living***

### ***2.1. Sport facilities***

The local authority owns many public spaces. Some will be in ownership of other public authorities such as the highway authority. Birmingham has 571 parks totalling 14miles<sup>2</sup> in size, numerous playgrounds and pedestrian squares. Some areas of the city are very green, open and with excellent space for physical activity. The more deprived inner city areas tend to be less well equipped, more densely urban. Therefore, the target population included people typically living in areas that have less quality public space for outdoor activities.

The city council runs Leisure Centres and there are some owned by private trusts. These are called wellbeing centres.

### ***2.2. Health***

The health of people in Birmingham is varied compared with the England average. Deprivation is higher than average and about 29.9% (73 000) of children live in poverty. Life expectancy for both men and women is lower than the England average. Life expectancy is 7.6 years lower for men and 6.2 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Birmingham than in the least deprived areas. In 2012, 23% of adults were classified as obese. The rate of smoking related deaths was worse than the average for England. This represents 1,353 deaths per year. Estimated levels of adult physical activity are worse than the England average. Priorities in Birmingham include childhood obesity, statutory homelessness, and reducing the numbers of vulnerable children and adults.

## ***3. Opportunities and challenges addressed by the VITAL CITIES network***

### ***3.1. Overall challenge***

Costs, social distance (finding similar people), geographical proximity and appropriateness of activity have been identified as key barriers for residents to engage in physical activities in Birmingham. The main challenge in the city is to bring down these barriers, which requires a change in social services, physical infrastructure and the behaviour of the people. The city has



implemented different programmes for this, but there is plenty of space to enhance overall participation and activity levels of its citizens.

In social terms, the main challenges are health inequality, below average physical activity and above average child obesity index. In Birmingham 80% of people are not exercising regularly and 65% of adults do not participate in sports at least once a week for 30mins. 39% of 10-11 years olds have excess weight (obesity). There are higher rates of death from preventable diseases such as coronary heart disease, stroke and certain cancers compared to the national average, as well as higher levels of diabetes. It is known that members of lower socio-economic groups and some ethnic minority groups (especially women) are less likely to participate in physical activity and sports.

In terms of infrastructure, Birmingham is focusing on the creation of an environment that provokes activity, and changes people's perceptions about what public space is for and who can use it. Some areas of the city are very green, open and with excellent space for physical activity. The more deprived inner city areas tend to be less well equipped, more densely urban. The residents living in these areas have less quality public space for activity. The city is looking for measures to encourage people to reclaim public space, and use it for physical activity – including active travel.

Besides the residents' challenge to participate in sport, another important issue is building evidence that investment in sports as a means for prevention is worthwhile. The city would like to have proof so as to make a change in budget allocation on local level from social department to physical activity or also starting discussions with other funds. Data capturing is a challenge for the Municipality as a proof of money spent well. People potentially leave data on their behaviour everywhere (e.g. social media and platforms and sports apps, etc.), the challenge is convincing them that data collection by the local authority is for their own benefit. Designing appropriate policies with a lasting effect would also require the cooperation of different municipal departments (e.g. integrating the results of the wellbeing services in town planning practices) and there is room for improvement in this regard in the city.

### **3.2. Concrete needed investments**

Concrete investment being made already includes an enormous enhancement in cycling network.

Further needed investment examples:

- Built environment more conducive to physical activity, supporting active streets
- Improvements and investment in open spaces
- Investment in equipment e.g. more bikes

## **4. Existing general strategies & policy instruments of the city related to urban sports promotion and healthy lifestyle**

The *Active Birmingham* programme in conjunction with the Wellbeing service has an established communication network through volunteer groups like friends of parks, Birmingham Open Spaces forum as well as the 450K+ signed up members of *Be Active*.

### **Monitoring the programme**

All activities that take place in leisure centres are recorded in a database system. *Active Parks* is also recording all participation. The *Bike giveaway* recorded the details of all participants (3000).

The city is working with Sport England on a new approach to fill in the gaps particularly focusing on more casual activity or activity not recorded e.g. dog walking.

Birmingham recognises particular target groups which the city can profile using data. For example, it is particularly interested in getting those who are inactive to become active. The city also needs to focus on preventing childhood obesity. Also it wishes to get the elderly to become more active and seek benefits from reduced social isolation. The city is also aware that price is a big barrier for practicing activities. Therefore, programmes like *Be Active* offers free access to its events.

## **5. Learning needs and best practices related to the main topics of the project**

### **5.1. Learning needs**

Birmingham is keen to find out about:

- other best and next practices
- ways to build evidence base for policy making: capturing data on the physical activity of its resident, through innovation and integration of technology
- methods to address special cultural needs: people with disabilities, migrant communities
- solutions to fill the gap left by the public service retirement, innovative funding schemes for supporting physical activity
- ways to boost cooperation between Municipal departments, and create links between physical activity of the residents and town planning

### **5.2. Good practices**

Birmingham City Council has a wealth of experience in running public and private partnerships in many settings. The *Active Birmingham* project is working for example with Coca-Cola on a corporate social responsibility project called Park lives. The city council regularly commissions private sector services and works in partnership with providers in many settings.

Considering the five project aims, the following best practices can be presented for the network related to the five thematic focus areas of VITAL CITIES.

### **Theme 1: Implementing community-based actions to redesign the public space**

- The city has a well-established *Active Birmingham Programme*  
Part of this include the *Active Parks*, *Active Streets* and *Big Birmingham Bikes* programmes that are all about getting people active in public spaces. Therefore, the city is geared up for this but there is plenty of space to enhance the overall participation and activity levels of its citizens. The *Be Active Programme* has been shown to be successful and has been established for a number of years. *Active Parks* is growing and participation

is good. Other aspects such as *Big Birmingham Bikes* are more recent and evaluation is being conducted but it is not possible to claim success yet.

These initiatives include:

- Activities going from a small summer festival, conservation activities, (community) gardening, over ranger groups for youth till sports and physical activities like hiking or jogging / running, largely organised by local volunteers. The word 'sports' is avoided as not to set any threshold. Some activities are just aiming at the 'perpetual beginner' and to keep them involved.
- The *Active Streets* project is about closing streets for the purpose of a community festival
- The City of Birmingham organises some projects like 'Tai Chi in the Park' which is open and free for everyone; it mainly focusses on special target groups like elderly, vulnerable groups Walking and jogging groups are active in parks, fully ran by volunteers.
- *Active Schools* is aiming at creating a positive and active attitude at school level.

- *Girls Can campaign*

The campaign aims at increasing, together with Sports England, the participation of girls and woman in sports. It has been largely successful in Birmingham and relates to the participation of woman in 'woman only' fitness centres in deprived, ethnic diverse neighbourhoods.

Some 'role' models emerged from this scheme like a young Muslim woman finishing the Birmingham marathon after becoming active through this scheme.

The drawback of this scheme, however, is that the scarce resources like accommodations are not equipped for such large groups, bearing risks in terms of maintenance failures. However, the overwhelming success has sparked off the outdoor activities in parks even more.

## ***Theme 2: Implementing IT-based actions to redesign the public space***

- The city has a database system fed by membership card technology that tells the activities of all 450K *Be Active* members. This is however due for update very soon. Stakeholders are working at the cutting edge of this in terms of an experimental programme that brings Sport England and many industry tech firms together. They try to establish industry standards for data to allow an industry wide data sharing approach that can provide insight but also operational flexibility and ultimately value back to the customer in return for their activity data.

## ***Theme 3: Better orchestrating the services coordinated by the city to promote healthy life style***

- Through active Birmingham programme the city is exploring new financial models such as demonstrating the Return on Investment from physical activity that open spaces can provide to release investment for example from other partners like the health service.

## ***Theme 4: Establishing innovative physical (not IT) equipment to promote sport in public spaces***

- The city designed canal towpaths which offer traffic free environments for cyclists and walkers and have designated off-road cycling and walking routes. Besides, Birmingham is investing heavily in its cycling infrastructure and the bike giveaway programme.
- *The Birmingham Bike Scheme* as a 'next practice': orange bikes everywhere!  
As a city with large amounts of citizens under pressure and being disadvantaged, the city of Birmingham came up with an unusual scheme. It consists of providing 5000 orange bikes for free to the most deprived and most excluded parts of population: 3000 directly for the most deprived citizens and 2000 for deprived groups (through short/long term loan). Citizens that are selected, need to qualify. First of all, they need to prove that they are able to drive safely a bike. Free courses are provided at local training centres run by volunteers: school classes are sometimes taught in small groups during school hours how to ride. Lots of young Muslim women are taught how to ride and how to be independent for their transport. After successfully passing 'the ability to ride test' the 'applicant' also needs to get in contact with their local supplier as to build a strong relationship. This is to make the bicycle a long lasting, well-kept asset and to stimulate the owner to keep the bicycle. The bikes are equipped with built in GPS system as to track and have a view on its actual use. Each new owner needs to prove a minimum use of the bicycle, as it is not meant to be put in a shed. After distributing some 1500 bicycles, the first benefits start showing. There is a testimonial of a long term unemployed who finally has been able to commute from and to work, which before was impossible. The orange bikes are visible in the streets of Birmingham and will contribute to the higher aim of 'the cycling revolution', which is beneficial for health, social deployment and the air quality. Within the Birmingham cycle revolution, targets have been set from 2% in the modal split to 5% by 2023 to 10 % by 2033. For this a £ 60 million scheme for bicycling has been dedicated, connecting to 'cycle cities programme' and 'Birmingham cycle revolution'. There is money for breaking the inner-city ring road and make it more walkable and cycle-friendly. It aims at offering 'more choice' in modalities than just motorised means of transportation. Birmingham organises a big bike festival through private sponsorships for 6 years.

#### **Theme 5: Organisation of innovative events to promote healthy lifestyle**

- As an example *The City of Running* programme includes grassroots running events in parks leading to major 10K and half marathon events. The active Parks programme is active in over 65 parks in the city.

### **6. Initial Focus of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP)**

#### **Priorities**

Birmingham is working towards social, environmental and economic sustainability in terms of physical activity of its residents. The city intends to create seamless pathways to help people of all abilities to move easily into active and sporting lifestyles, by providing them with the right things, at the right place and right time. The main result Birmingham is seeking is the improved social capital and community networks through enhanced participation and community action, to own, control and run their own activities.

The main goal of the IAP would be to remove barriers of residents to physical activity and contribute to a behavioural change. For this the city needs to better understand these barriers

and address them with evidence based measures and policies. Also, the IAP can bring further innovation to help make new in-roads into the most deprived and least active communities.

Birmingham has a number of good practices and in the IAP will look for ways to scale up these proven measures to city level, mainly in terms of innovative use of public spaces and environment. An important pillar will be the data capturing through technology and innovation.

The IAP will also focus on understanding what does the city need to be able to demonstrate in order to become a VITAL CITY. This definition will be elaborated together with the Partner Cities and the support of experts provided by the URBACT programme.

### ***Target area***

The geographical coverage of the IAP is the whole city, concentrating on public spaces. Birmingham would like to find ways of boosting activity that is taken to places in the city where the targeted more deprived and less active population reside (urban streets) as well as looking to work with employers using the charter for social responsibility to introduce work place activities. In addition, there are two strands of the Active Birmingham programme that are to be further developed via low cost measures related to (1) Active Streets and (2) Active Employers.

### ***Target group***

The target group of the IAP will be the more deprived, socially isolated people, focusing on early life and later life, specifically women and young families, and the cultural needs of minority groups.

## ***7. Approach and composition of the URBACT Local Support Group (ULSG)***

### ***Senior Stakeholders:***

- Councillor Paulette Hamilton – Cabinet Member Health and Wellbeing
- Councillor Lisa Trickett – Cabinet Member Sustainability
- Jacqui Kennedy – Strategic Director Place Directorate
- Steve Hollingworth – Assistant Director Wellbeing Service

### ***Leading Officers:***

- Steve Rose – Project lead, Head of Strategic Research
- Karen Creavin – Head of Wellbeing Service

### ***Other Stakeholders:***

- Birmingham Open Spaces Forum
- Active Parks Activity Leaders

### ***Key project staff:***

- Steve Rose – Head of Service level in the organisation used to managing a portfolio of projects in a matrix was across the organisation and partners.
- Karen Creavin – Head of Service level with wealth of experience in the strategic and operational delivery of physical activity and wellbeing services.
- Ravinder Bains – Experienced project manager at middle manager level.

***Potential ULSG members:***

- City Council Member(s) and senior officers from including (Wellbeing, Planning and transportation and health)
- Volunteers and Community Representatives:
  - Friends of Parks
  - Birmingham Open Spaces forum
- Central government
- Sport England
- Private Sector
- Chamber of commerce

Most of them are already active within the *Active Birmingham* programme.



### 3. City Profile 13<sup>th</sup> District of Budapest

#### **Key facts**

- Population: 119 352, growing tendency
- Unemployment: 8,7%
- GDP/person: 20 480 EUR
- Key economic sector in the employment: services-tourism
- Life expectancy: Men 72,8 years, Women 79,2 years

#### **1. Main characteristics of the city**

##### **1.1. Geography**

Budapest is the capital of Hungary, consisting of 23 districts. The 13<sup>th</sup> district is one of the most rapidly developing areas of the city. It is located in the Northern part of Budapest, on the left bank of the Danube (the Pest side), and is bordered by the river on the West, train lines

on the North and East, and a main road (Szent István boulevard) on the South. The 13<sup>th</sup> district is the 4<sup>th</sup> most populated district of the capital (and 11<sup>th</sup> in Hungary), with 120 000 residents. The territory of the district is 11.33 km<sup>2</sup>, consisting of Angyalföld, Újlipótváros, Vizafogó, and the southern part of Nép Island.

##### **1.2. Social and economic profile of the city**

Until the beginning of the 1980s, the district was regarded as a major industrial part of Budapest where more than 100 000 workers worked in over 400 factories, plants, industrial sites and workshops. The 90s brought fundamental changes in the economic structure of the district: the traditional industrial activities rapidly disappeared, giving way to an economy based on trade and services. The shift is visible in the built environment as well, as the workshops and factories have been replaced by modern office-centres, banks, car- and furniture-saloons, shopping and amusement centres. Besides, 25% of the office buildings of the capital are located in the district.

The structural economic transformation manifested in the townscape and resulted in considerable increase of the living standards. The renewal and reconstruction of the district is continuous. The more than 73 000 flats of the district are preferred by the middle class. As the industrial activities vanished from the district, the composition of the population has significantly changed. Although many families have been living in the district for generations, it is also popular among young people, who move here from other parts of the city or the country. It is also preferred among the foreign population of Budapest. The district is characterised by an active civil sector: there are 80 civil organizations, with around 10 000 members.

The population of the 13<sup>th</sup> District of Budapest reaches 120 000 residents, and around 70-80 000 people work in the district. 55% of the residents are women. 18% of the population is under 18 years, 63% belong to the age group 19-61, and 23% are over 62 years. The population is steadily increasing due to the local, national and also international immigration. Due to this trend the district is getting younger, the proportion of the population over 60 years is decreasing, while the age group 30-39 is increasing. The unemployment rate is 8,7%.

### **1.3. Governance**

Budapest has a two-level local governance system: The Metropolitan Municipality and the district municipalities share the ownership of public spaces and institutions, as well as the related management and maintenance responsibilities.

To facilitate the integrated and effective management of public spaces, the municipality founded the 13<sup>th</sup> District of Budapest Public Services Plc. in 2012, which consists of 5 divisions: Investments, Property Management, Public Spaces, Culture, and Sports. The company is responsible for the implementation of policies and the management of major public services provided by the Municipality.

The Division of Public Spaces is managing the District Municipality owned public spaces. The management duties include the maintenance and development of recreational areas and green spaces (approx. 900 000 m<sup>2</sup> green space, including 54 playgrounds, 19 play areas, 9 fitness areas), as well as the maintenance and development of the road system and the parking facilities.

### **1.4. Key challenges the city is facing**

Similar to other areas in Budapest, the 13<sup>th</sup> District has experienced a continuous inflow of population which puts a lot of pressure on the public spaces and the existing infrastructure. Hence, the municipality's overall challenge is finding a reconciliation scheme for the different land-use conflicts: the increase in the residential density boosts traffic flows and the need for parking spaces. At the same time, the municipality has to accommodate the more and more intensive and diverse recreational needs of residents, while the number of attractive green spaces in the district is limited.

Therefore, making better use of the capacities of the existing infrastructure is vital. The regeneration of the existing dull public spaces and sport facilities is a challenge that the municipality wants to address by involving the local residents. Authorities believe that participatory processes are a good solution for providing suitable recreational facilities for the community and that citizens' involvement in the regeneration process can stimulate the feeling of ownership of public spaces. Luckily, the high rise housing estates have a relatively high proportion of green areas which have the potential to become popular and inspiring leisure amenities. Looking at the socioeconomic status of the population it becomes obvious that there is a need for free sport equipment which can be used by persons with limited financial opportunities, too. Besides, these groups are often socially isolated and less motivated to practice physical activities, increasing the need for promotion campaigns and awareness raising.

Nonetheless, the municipality faces an additional challenge concerning its organisational structure which, for the moment, is not very effective. Currently, three divisions work separately on promoting sport in public spaces, but a better management would create positive synergies between them, from the planning to the implementation phase of the projects. In addition, better cooperation with the Metropolitan Municipality is needed since it is the owner of several public parks and main roads, restricting the right of the 13<sup>th</sup> municipality to implement development projects in these areas.

## ***2. Main characteristics in terms of urban sports and healthy living***

### ***2.1. Sport facilities***

The district is one of the strongholds of the national sport life, where sports clubs have long traditions. Due to the extensive industrial activities in the area, by the 1950s the district was known as a 'Workers' Quarter' of Budapest. In its industrial period, the factory owners put a lot of effort in improving cultural institutions and sports facilities and several factories operated cultural clubs, sports clubs and libraries. Some of them are still functioning today, adding to the 38 sports clubs in the district where 7800 members are registered. Currently there are 38 sports clubs in the district with 7800 registered sportsmen and sportswomen.

Among these sports clubs, the Budapest Honvéd SE and the Vasas SC have international reputation, winning several Olympic Games, World and European Championships. ATTE is the public sports club having 1200 registered members. The municipality is directly supporting the biggest sport clubs. Beyond professional sports, there are several community organisations in the district, which organise regular events with the participation of 1200-1500 people yearly. The Public Services Plc. organises 20-25 sport events a year with approx. 5000 participants, in cooperation with the local sport clubs and associations.

There are 16 public parks (210 000 m<sup>2</sup>) and 16 green space areas surrounding housing estates (670 000 m<sup>2</sup>) managed by the Public Services Plc., which can be used for recreation and sports (including 54 playgrounds, 19 ball play areas, 9 fitness parks, 20 dog walking area). The quality of green spaces is regularly monitored (using a method adopted from Greenspace Scotland), to determine the interventions needed. Complex development programmes have been implemented in the housing blocks of the district with the active involvement of the residents. During the renovation, public fitness facilities have been installed but, unfortunately, there are no statistics available for the number of users.

The municipality promotes regular sport activity in every age group. It pays particular attention to safeguarding equal opportunities in recreational sports and niche sports. To promote active ageing, it provides opportunities for physical activity for the elderly and disabled persons, like subsidised tickets to swimming pools and the organisation of gymnastic therapy training. The Division of Sport of the Public Services Plc. cooperates with the educational institutions of the district, focusing on the importance of regular physical activity and sports for children. In order to provide the suitable sports facilities, it conducts regular medical check-ups in schools, and has established the Angyalföld Sport School and Pupils' Sports Club.

### ***2.2. Health***

Although data on the district level is missing, according to the OECD, life expectancy at birth in Hungary is 75 years, five years lower than the OECD average of 80 years, and one of the lowest in the OECD. The difference between men (72) and women (79) is quite high.

In the 13<sup>th</sup> District of Budapest, the leading cause of death is cancer (26%). Cardiovascular diseases are also frequent (mostly heart conditions or hypertonia) both in case of man and woman. It can be concluded, that the poor health condition of the population is related to life style: unhealthy

eating habits, no recreational sports, smoking, alcohol consumption, as well as untreated mental health problems.

The municipality focuses on prevention, and promotes the importance of health in every aspects of life.

### ***3. Opportunities and challenges addressed by the VITAL CITIES network***

#### ***3.1. Overall challenge***

Due to the growth of the population, the municipality is facing use conflicts of public spaces. The increase of residential density boosts traffic flows and the need for parking spaces. At the same time, the Municipality has to accommodate the more and more intensive and diverse recreational needs of residents, while the available green spaces in the district are limited.

#### ***3.2. Concrete needed investments***

The regeneration of public spaces around high rise housing estates and the improvement of sport facilities are priorities. These areas have great potentials because of the relatively high proportion of green spaces which are currently not attractive enough to motivate residents to use them. The Public Services Plc. is seeking opportunities to increase the number of sport facilities in the district and make better use of the capacities of the existing infrastructure. Moreover, the municipality is looking for solutions to facilitate the involvement of the residents in the regeneration process to stimulate the feeling of ownership of public spaces.

### ***4. Existing general strategies & policy instruments of the city related to promotion of sports and healthy lifestyle***

The municipality has multiple strategies covering different thematic scopes, all of which mention sports in relation to health issues and urban development.

- The municipality's long term development strategy describes the 'humanisation of the public spaces at the housing estates to improve the quality of life of the residents' as a major urban regeneration goal.
- One of the main priorities of the integrated urban development strategy is 'Viable Environment', describing the development of recreational areas in the district. The strategy emphasizes the importance of the creation and sustainability of civil partnerships, and cooperation with the Metropolitan Municipality of Budapest and the neighbouring district.
- The municipality's medium term programme, titled *13<sup>th</sup> District keeping the momentum 2015-2019*, sets out the following goals:
  - complex rehabilitation of housing estates and public spaces,
  - supporting mass sport activities,
  - building fitness areas in public spaces, creating new community areas for the youth
- *Local Sport Strategy*, revised biennially since the 90s. The strategy builds on 3 pillars: 1) sport clubs, 2) sport in kindergartens and schools, 3) sport facilities operated by the Division of Sports of the Public Services Plc., with the aim of promoting a healthy life

style, recreational sports and facilitating community development. The sports actions are complemented by a health-screening programme.

- *AngelGREEN+ 2015-2019*, the municipality's public space strategy and programme, converts the broad statements of the above strategies into concrete projects and programmes, outlining the necessary steps, schedule and budget. The strategy also includes a programme for the preparation and monitoring of regeneration projects.

## ***5. Learning needs and best practices related to the main topics of the project***

### ***5.1. Learning needs***

- new models of collaborative planning
- implementing IT techniques in planning processes
- examples of innovative outdoor equipment
- open parks idea (Birmingham)

### ***5.2. Good practices***

The Division of Public Spaces is experienced in regenerating public recreational spaces in a way which reflects the demand of the residents with public opinion polls, public participation in planning techniques, as well as managing the green spaces in partnership with local residents. The Public Spaces Division created a protocol for the cooperation with the civil organisations and residents, based on repeated opinion polls and monitoring and used it successfully in different settings throughout the district. However, to achieve even better results, the organisation is looking for novel planning practices and co-creation methods.

The Országbíró high rise housing estate is one of the successfully implemented projects of the district. Consultations with the residents were carried during the planning and implementation process. Residents were invited from different parts of the housing estate for forums and were asked to list the values of the area, define how they can contribute to develop their environment, e.g. residential communities maintain green areas in front of several blocks. During the forum participants could vote for the most relevant problems and most important development needs. The planners tried to demonstrate the decision-making difficulties arising from the different needs, while residents could vote for the different alternatives of the plans.

Another good example is the Vizafogó lakótelep. A survey was conducted with the residents of the Vizafogó housing estate about the renewal of the public green spaces. It was revealed, that the residents' activity (running, gym) in public places strongly increased thanks to the new sports ground and fitness park. It indicates that the public space developments help to motivate people doing sports and living healthy life. Regarding the different age groups, all groups between age 18-63 had a significant increase in sport activity in public spaces. The most significant increase can be seen at the age 42-62.

Specifically related to the VITAL CITIES themes, Budapest has the following practices to share:

***Theme 3: Better orchestrating the services coordinated by the city to promote healthy life style***

- The district created a card used for providing social services, yet this could be used for accessing discounts for sport activities. Moreover, the card could be used for monitoring the usage of sport facilities, helping further developments by unravelling the local needs on this field.

***Theme 4: Establishing innovative physical (not IT) equipment to promote sport in public spaces***

- One of the main cultural centres accommodates a literature playground linking culture to sport.
- fitness parks

***6. Initial Focus of the Integrated Action Plan***

***Priorities***

In order to address the challenges currently faced, the 13<sup>th</sup> District Municipality decided to build on the potential of the existing dull public spaces, focusing on redesigning the ones found between the high rise housing estates in the district. The Public Services Plc. expects to gather new ideas for its public space regeneration programmes and learn new methods to co-create public spaces with the residents. Thus, the regeneration of these areas will include innovative outdoor sport equipment which will be promoted among the inhabitants through new IT based techniques. Besides involving the community in the planning and the design phases, BP13 will also adopt a bottom-up approach in organising sport activities, encouraging healthier lifestyles. In addition, the cooperation between the division of Sport and Public Space will be improved.

***Target Area***

The geographical coverage of the IAP will be the public spaces around one or more housing estates, with the aim of creating an action plan for its complex regeneration in line with the Vital Cities concept.

***Target groups***

The district would like to address the entire population, focusing especially on creating equal chances and access for its inhabitants. In some cases, this might mean prioritising the more deprived and more sensitive groups, including children, elderly, people with disabilities, as well as the economically disadvantaged inhabitants of all ages.

***Framework of implementation***

The IAP elaborated shall be implemented in the 2015-2019 planning period of the Municipality. The renewal of public green spaces is a high priority in the District, thus the Municipality is willing to implement the IAP elaborated in the project. The Municipality can provide secure financial background for the project implementation. The Municipality implements regeneration



programmes from its own financial resources, but is interested in applying for EU funding through national operation programmes. Due to its self-funded development practices, the Municipality has no working relation with the Hungarian Managing Authorities.

The ERDF programme covers the area. The most relevant national operational programmes are the Competitive Central-Hungary Operational Programme, as the main territorial operational programme, and the Human Resources Development Operational Programme, a sectorial programme relevant to the policy challenge.

## ***7. Approach and composition of the URBACT Local Support Group (ULSG)***

There is no already existing group which could be the core of the ULSG, thus it will be a new group in the District. Since the Public Services Plc. has good relations with the local organisations, no problems are foreseen during the engagement of the potential ULSG members. The ULSG coordinator plans to create an open ULSG with core members – participants of first ULSG meeting of the city visit – and additional members will be involved along the implementation process. The Public Services Plc. will create a detailed programme schedule to safeguard the active participation of ULSG members throughout the project. The objectives of the project on local level will be clearly communicated towards the ULSG, as well as the involvement of the group in decision making. The Public Services Plc. will provide detailed feedback to all members following the ULSG meetings.

### ***The members of the initial ULSG:***

- Public Services Plc.: Division of Public Spaces, Sports, and Culture
- Mayor's Office
- Centre for the Operation and Maintenance of Public Institutions and the schools of the district
- 13<sup>th</sup> District Local Patriots' Association
- Hungarian Cyclists' Club
- 13<sup>th</sup> District Health Service

### ***Other potential ULSG members:***

- local community organisations
- Sport Clubs and Associations
- environmental protection associations
- local SMEs supporting healthy lifestyle
- Service Providers who owns underutilise places in the district (rails)
- communities are born along with investments

### ***Apart from the main stakeholders in the district, the Public Services Plc. plans to involve professional organisations in the work of the ULSG:***

- KÉK – Hungarian Contemporary Architecture Centre
- MUT – Hungarian Society for Urban Planning
- Corvinus University of Budapest

## 4. City Profile Burgas

### **Key facts**

- Population: 310 277, growing tendency
- Unemployment: 9% with seasonal character
- GDP/person: 5500 Euro
- Key economic sector in the employment: Petrol refining industry, ship building, fish processing, tourism
- Life expectancy: 74.3 years

### **1. Main characteristics of the city**

#### **1.1. Geography**

Burgas is the second-largest city on the Bulgarian Black Sea Coast and the fourth-largest in Bulgaria after Sofia, Plovdiv and Varna, with a population of 310 277 inhabitants. It is a greater medium city with an urban centre of at least 50 000 inhabitants. Serving as capital for the Burgas Province, the city is an important industrial, transport,

cultural and tourist centre. There are 14 settlements on the territory of the municipality, including 2 cities (Burgas and Balgarovo) and 12 villages.

It was thought that Burgas had been founded as a fishermen village in the 19th century, but recent excavations and findings show that its history dates back to antiquity, with evidence of a port and a settlement belonging to Roman times.

The city benefits from very good transport connections within its limits, as well as good road transport connections with the other main cities in the country. Moreover, Burgas has a port which can serve large vessels and beginning with 2013, the passenger marine terminal for cruise liners has also started operating. Besides, Burgas airport has the maximum hours of sun per year in Bulgaria, functioning actively mainly in the summer season.

#### **1.2. Social and economic profile of the city**

In the 1880s, during the first decade after the liberation of Bulgaria, the population of Burgas counted approximately 6 000 inhabitants. This number steadily increased each decade, mostly due to the migrants coming from the rural areas and the surrounding smaller towns, reaching its peak during the period of 1988-1991 when the city's population exceeded 200 000 persons. The population maintained a growing tendency until today. Currently, 94% of the inhabitants are Bulgarians, 3% Turkish, 2% Roma and 1% belong to other ethnicities.

The unemployment rate of 9% is influenced by a seasonal character. The GDP/person is 5500 euro, having a slight growth tendency in the last 4 years. The key economic sectors in employment are the petrol refining industry, ship building, fish processing and tourism. Burgas has certain advantages in the region. First of all, LUKOIL Neftochim Burgas is the largest oil refinery in Southeast Europe and the largest industrial enterprise. In addition, the Port of Burgas is the largest port in Bulgaria, allowing the city to become the centre of the Bulgarian fishing and fish processing industry.

#### **1.3. Governance**

The political decision making structure is made up the Mayor, the 5 Vice-Mayors with different fields and the Municipal Council which is the main decision making body.

Regarding the administrative structure, five vice-mayors are subordinated to the Mayor in the fields of Finances, Health prevention, Spatial planning, Education and European policies and Environment. The administration is divided in Directorates and Departments.

#### ***1.4. Key challenges the city is facing***

Burgas is confronting with two main social problems: the lack of social cohesion and an ageing population. The economic problems translate into low incomes for most of the inhabitants. Besides, in terms of environmental problems, air pollution is the most significant threat because it can engender numerous respiratory diseases among residents.

## ***2. Main characteristics in terms of urban sports and healthy living***

### ***2.1. Sport facilities***

The municipality is implementing an active policy aiming to promote sports for healthy living. For this purpose, numerous athletic facilities, including swimming pools, have been built in the last years. A large sports hall is now also under construction. Moreover, the outdoors amenities in Burgas consist of 7 parks and 3 gardens, out of which some are equipped with playgrounds as well. In total, Burgas counts 138 children playgrounds. Team activities can be organized as there are 2 football playgrounds, 1 volley-ball playground and 1 tennis playground on the Central beach, used in the summer season by both local citizens and tourists. Overall, the parks are effectively used for sports, being complemented by a skater park in Izgrev Housing, as well as 6 open-air fitness facilities. The sea park offers good possibilities for paragliding and the city's location between the North Sea and different lakes enriches the options for water sports. Furthermore, the network of bicycle lanes is constantly being developed.

All these facilities are actively used by citizens, and inhabitants of less developed parts of the town have expressed their interest in having them built in their neighbourhoods too. Approximately 40% of the citizens of Burgas practice different sports and this percentage has grown significantly in the recent years. Although monitoring of users' age profile is lacking, it can be assumed that people in active age and youngsters are probably the most engaged. Around 15-20% of the total population are members of sports clubs, associations or sports groups. Nonetheless, the lack of free time is considered a major obstacle for mass sport activities, and to tackle this issue, the local authority is working actively to develop good sport infrastructure that covers the entire area of the city. These actions have played a major role so far because they allow all inhabitants to be more active in close proximity to their own home.

The new sport amenities built are:

- Football pitches, outdoor fitness facilities, outdoor table tennis, and bicycle lanes in every district of Burgas;
- Sport facilities on the beach: volleyball courts, football pitches, beach tennis courts
- Renovated tracks/paths in parks used for: walking, running, jogging, cycling, etc.
- Sports halls
- Swimming pools

## **2.2. Health**

The most common health problems for the population of Burgas Municipality are those related to organs of blood circulation – 23,2%, followed by illnesses of the respiratory system – 18.9%. The group of children aged 0-17 seem to suffer mostly from respiratory system disorders – 52,0%, whereas individuals older than 18 encounter problems with blood circulation organs – 28,7%, and the respiratory system – 10,8%.

Obesity and diabetes are disorders of the endocrine system. In total, diseases of the endocrine system account for 2,6%, with 0,4% for children. In opposition, the rate of chronic diseases (including blood circulation diseases, respiratory disorders, secretory diseases, etc.) is 60,9%.

Life expectancy for Burgas is 74.3 years. Leading causes of death for the elderly people are the blood circulation diseases – 68,4%, followed by cancer – 17,7%. For children, the first place is occupied by conditions in the perinatal period – 41,2%, followed by congenital abnormalities – 20,6%, blood circulation diseases – 14,7%, disorders of the respiratory system – 11,8%, and digestive system diseases – 5,9%.

Focusing on all these health problems of the residents, Burgas has chosen to combine sports with health prevention instead of a stand-alone department or a combination of culture and sports. Sports & Health has been united to promote prevention for diseases like diabetes.

## **3. Opportunities and challenges addressed by the VITAL CITIES network**

### **3.1. Overall challenge**

In Burgas, the main challenge is the insufficient number of sports facilities in the suburbs and in some of the housing complexes. The city does not have a systematic map of all available sport facilities but it is highly probable that more green spaces and sport amenities are needed. Additionally, the Vital Cities project will enable Burgas to determine other factors that hinder citizens from practicing physical activities in public spaces.

It is also true that national politics focus on competition sport instead of recreational sports for all. In Burgas the big new halls are built for professional sportsmen and cannot be considered as low threshold facilities for the people living nearby.

The city relies on the Vital Cities project and the Integrated Action Plan which will be the base for developing a sports strategy at the local level.

### **3.2. Concrete needed investments**

Burgas is willing to invest in various demonstrations of physical activities in public spaces in order to inspire its inhabitants to follow this example. It can be an experiment conducted before building new public facilities.

#### ***4. Existing general strategies & policy instruments of the city related to urban sports promotion and healthy lifestyle***

Burgas Municipality has developed the *2014- 2020 Sports Development Plan for the City of Burgas*, which includes the strategy for the development of sport and physical education. The main objectives of the plan are the following:

- Developing and improving conditions for systematic sport activities for children and young people, taking into consideration their health, life and personal qualities.
- Reinforcing the public perception of physical education and sports as essential components of a healthy lifestyle.
- Regaining and expanding the city's position among the international and national sports elites by providing better opportunities for professional levels, as well as encouraging high achievements for children and youth.

#### ***5. Learning needs and best practices related to the main topics of the project***

##### ***5.1. Learning needs***

- Local strategies for engaging people in sport activities
- Innovative solutions for implementing community-based actions and participative planning approaches to redesign the public space and make it suitable for sport activities and urban recreation
- Better management of services coordinated by the city to promote a healthy life style;
- Improving risk management capacities, communication skills and strategies, as well as social psychology fundamentals – since improving the situation requires a bilateral process that needs a good preliminary assessment and efficient communication between all stakeholders, and especially in the case of deprived areas and minorities;
- Tactics to implement informal types of sport in the city
- Ways of using sport as a tool for crime prevention, social inclusion or preventive healthcare
- Inventive solutions for integrating public sports in public transport, for instance creating small sport stations in the transport hubs
- Models for developing a cycling city and bike culture
- Developing IT equipment and using existing platforms and ICT related equipment to determine more children and youngsters to spend time outdoors

##### ***5.2. Good practices***

Burgas has good practices to be shared with the partners relating to three from five of the project's themes:

##### ***Theme 1: Implementing community-based actions to redesign the public space***

- In order to identify problems and challenges, a method which proved successful has been the organization of focus groups for sports related matters. An effective way to involve different actors took the format of public discussions which were announced in advance, allowing all interested residents to participate and discuss important issues of the city or

of particular areas. Other focus groups, public debates, as well as educational campaigns were organized to demonstrate the benefits of physical activities.

- The city supports informal sports such as roller-skating or skateboarding, but also jogging for which informal groups of people over 55 years were formed. These persons do fitness or open air aerobics in public spaces and during the summer an instructor is paid to the club by the city to assist them.

#### ***Theme 4: Establishing innovative physical (not IT) equipment to promote sport in public spaces***

- Burgas has good practices in establishing innovative physical equipment (non-IT) to promote sport in public spaces. The city deployed open air fitness equipment, designed bicycle routes and set up a municipal system for renting bikes. This public rent-a-bike system has several stations throughout the city.

#### ***Theme 5: Organisation of innovative events to promote healthy lifestyle***

- In 2015 the municipality arranged various public sport events on a weekly basis, aiming to reach a wider community circle. The high interest convinced the sports department to plan further public sport events in 2016 (marathons, competitions, cycling, or relay races).
- The city considers as its important role to provide disabled people with the opportunity for physical activities. It organises various events dedicated to that goal (swimming marathons, sponsoring of special sport clubs, basketball team). Burgas also hosted the first Balkan Paralympic tournament in 2015.
- Famous sportsmen of the city are also involved in promoting healthy lifestyle, especially among children.

### ***6. Initial focus of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP)***

#### ***Priorities***

In the Integrated Action Plan (IAP) Burgas's ambition is to cover not only the urban territory of Burgas, but also the adjacent settlements which suffer from the lack of sporting facilities and events. The municipality will first try to identify the important target groups, and then elaborate measures to reach out to them.

The potential objectives of the IAP are:

- To set up measures which can improve the quality of life via public access to sport facilities
- To create strategies for better communication between stakeholders
- To acquire new management approaches for the services coordinated by the city to promote a healthy life style

The expected key result of the IAP would be:

- Identification of target groups in the city and the adjacent settlements



- Creation of measures for including important, yet not addressed target groups
- Mapping the existent public sport facilities on the territory of the town
- Planning to implement measures which can constitute the basis for a local sport strategy
- Development of a better governance scheme and communication between local stakeholders in order to motivate residents to do sport and raise their awareness on the significance of sport and its benefits for health
- Implementing some small pilots in the local community
- The willingness of developing through a long-term plan a cycling infrastructure e.g. connecting the outer parts of the city with the central parts through separate lanes

### ***Target area***

The large parks and public spaces which can be used for building sports facilities are in the focus of the AIP. It is expected that the regeneration of these spaces will have a positive effect on the quality of life of the inhabitants, therefore the rehabilitations of parks and constructions of new sports facilities are planned.

Existing parks are in poor conditions because of people who use some areas for illegal landfills. At the same time, there is a considerable number of persons in the target areas that are difficult to convince to practice sports or maintain the facilities.

The target areas are also affected by strong social polarization, having a high percentage of Roma population. Nonetheless, in two of the target areas where the Roma minority has a significant share in the total population, the construction of an additional unit to the existing kindergarten (for sport purposes) has started.

### ***Target groups***

One of the most important target groups are the numerous children that suffer from respiratory problems or problems of the locomotive system and for whom sports represent a way of rehabilitation and recovery.

### ***Framework of implementation***

The following Operational Programmes cover the partner area:

- Regions in growth
- Innovations and competitiveness
- Science and Education for Smart Growth

A number of projects have been implemented in the previous period, engendering good working relations with the Managing Authorities of these Operational Programmes.

## ***7. Approach and composition of the URBACT Local Group (ULSG)***

### ***Key stakeholders recommended to be involved in the ULSG:***

- The European Policies and Programmes Department
- the Sports, Prevention and Youth Activities Department

- the Spatial Planning Department, the Education Directorate
- the Centre for Administrative Services "Vuzrazhdane"
- the Municipal Enterprise Sporting Facilities
- the Public Council for Sports; municipal councillor
- citizens' organizations
- NGOs
- sports clubs based in Burgas

***ULSG members from the Burgas Municipality:***

- Veselina Dimitrova – local coordinator, chief expert of the Investment Projects Department, experience in management, coordination and implementation of EU funded projects
- Veselina Devedjieva – Chief of the Sports, Prevention and Youth Activities Department, experience in management and organization of sports activities
- Tsvetozar Manolov – Chief expert of the Sports, Prevention and Youth Activities Department, experience in coordination and implementation of EU funded projects
- Nikolay Tsotsomanski – Chief expert of the Spatial Planning Department, master of Urbanism;
- Zhivko Ivanov – Director of the Municipal Enterprise Sporting Facilities
- Magdalena Manolova – Director of the Centre for Administrative Services "Vuzrazhdane"
- Maya Velcheva – Director of the European Policies and Programmes Directorate
- Nikolay Stankov – Expert in the Education Directorate, experience in projects in sports

***Additional stakeholders:***

- Stephan Kolev – municipal councillor
- Dr. Stoichkova – NGO Sector (Association for rehabilitation of children with pulmonary problems)
- Managers of sports clubs for football, martial arts, and cycling
- Representatives of citizens' organizations

## 5. City Profile Krakow

### **Key facts**

- Population: 761 800, growing tendency
- Unemployment: 5,2%
- GDP/person: 21500 EUR
- Key economic sector in the employment: manufacturing centre: steel, tobacco and pharmaceuticals , service sector: tourism, leading software firms, major outsourcing destinations
- Life expectancy: Men: 75,1 (Poland: 72), Woman: 82 (Poland 81)

### **1. Main characteristics of the city**

#### **1.1. Geography**

Krakow lies in the centre of continental Europe, roughly halfway between the westernmost point in Portugal and the easternmost Urals, and equidistant from the Mediterranean and the arctic Barents Sea. The city's 326.8km<sup>2</sup> area (0.1 per cent of Poland's territory) spreads on both banks of the Vistula (Wisla) river, about 219m above the sea level on the Malopolska Uplands at the foot of the Carpathian Mountains. Nonetheless, the size of

the Functional Urban Area is 1 191km and is composed of the city of Krakow and 13 communes.

In the public consciousness, Krakow functions primarily as a city of history and monuments, a treasury of national souvenirs, a cradle of science and culture. Krakow is known for being the first city in Poland to adopt a sustainable transport policy in 1993 and implement a series of programmes such as an access restriction scheme for the inner city area. In 2008 Krakow was the first Polish city to launch the public bike rental scheme.

#### **1.2. Social and economic profile of the city**

With its 760 000-plus residents, Krakow is Poland's 2<sup>nd</sup> largest city and an unquestioned metropolis of the country's southern half. The city has growing population trends and since 2008 the population has risen with more than 7000 inhabitants. Less than 1% of the inhabitants currently living in the city were born abroad.

The largest ethnic minority in Malopolska region is constituted by the Roma community, which, according to 2002 statistics, numbered 3 500 people (the largest community of all the other regions, or 17% of all Roma people in Poland).

Krakow is Poland's 4<sup>th</sup> biggest manufacturing centre, with steel, tobacco and pharmaceuticals being the key industries. With regards to the service sector, the city is second only to the capital, Warsaw. On top of being the country's prime tourist destination, it boasts headquarters of 6 banks, 15 major institutions of higher education, and a plethora of consultants and stockbrokers. Krakow is also home to two of Poland's biggest Internet portals and many leading software firms. Recently, the city has become one of the world's major outsourcing destinations.

#### **1.3. Governance**

The political decision-making structure is composed of the President elected in direct elections and four vice-presidents responsible for different matters. The City Council with its 43 deputies (directly elected) is the legislative body that proposes and passes laws which become binding local laws.

Regarding the administrative structure, the president and the 4 vice presidents are the executive body. The City Hall of Krakow prepares law projects and executes the laws voted by the City Council. There are 36 departments in the City Hall structure and many external entities responsible for investment, school finances, housing, culture institutions, social affairs.

#### ***1.4. Key challenges the city is facing***

Krakow is facing different social and demographic problems, among which an ageing society. Besides, financial difficulties and housing problems are most critical among elderly people, and problems of delinquency are observed in the suburbs (big housing estates).

Krakow's authorities identified four areas of support for vulnerable population groups adding up into a comprehensive strategy:

1. Social welfare (generally directed to people in financial difficulties)
2. Prevention and solutions to alcohol-related problems
3. Support to disabled persons and
4. Prevention and countermeasures against juvenile delinquency

The strategy comprises a number of prevention and intervention measures geared at the support of individual development of children and young people, programmes to ensure attractive ways of spending free time.

One of the main economic problems of the city is the lack of budget for all local investments, which is necessary to solve problems that arose during the years of stagnation. Krakow has to pay almost 100 million EUR of credits each year to pay back recent investments. However, Krakow is still developing.

Regarding the environmental challenges, Krakow is one of the most polluted cities in Europe and does not meet European or national air quality standards.

## ***2. Main characteristics in terms of urban sports and healthy living***

### ***2.1. Sport facilities***

Sport has always occupied an important place in Krakow. This is the city where the Polish Olympic movement was born. The oldest, still-operating Polish sports clubs, which brought up outstanding athletes and Olympians, were also established here. It is a city that loves and respects sport, cherishes fair play and promotes social development taking care of the health and physical activation of its citizens. The main goal of promoting an active and healthy lifestyle has been implemented using 'tailor-made' measures with a prominent aspect of education – which in the long run influences changing the attitudes of citizens, often accustomed to passive leisure activities. Strengthening social cohesion and promoting the fashion for living a healthy lifestyle are notable and valuable results.

Appreciating the social, educational, health benefits of sport, as well as its cultural and promotional role, Krakow consistently invests in projects aimed at strengthening its condition. Large expenditures are spent on the development of sports and recreational projects, as well as

the expansion and modernisation of infrastructure (new sports facilities are established, such as halls, playgrounds and swimming pools, while stadiums undergo modernisation).

Krakow recognises the importance of sport as a tool for social inclusion of its citizens, especially children and young people whose mental and physical development largely depends on exercising. For this reason, the city has applied and is now a candidate for the European Capital of Sport 2015.

## **2.2. Health**

Men's life expectancy is 75,1, higher than the Polish average of 72, while women's is 82, only one year more than the national number. Approximately 46% of death causes are related to cardiovascular diseases and 25% to cancer.

Approximately 5% of Krakow's citizens are suffering from obesity and chronic illnesses. The problem of obesity is growing year after year among school-children, determined mainly by unhealthy eating habits and lack of motivation to do sports.

Only 17% of citizens declare exercising regularly and physical exercises are mainly popular among students (22%). Just 7% of working people are eager to participate in sports programmes and the least active groups are the unemployed and the seniors (4% and 2% respectively).

## **3. Opportunities and challenges addressed by the VITAL CITIES network**

### **3.1. Overall challenge**

In the face of the growing interest in physical activity of residents of Krakow, it is necessary to create new sports offer and expand existing sports offer for residents of the city. To meet this emerging need, the city would like to create new sports offers and expand the existing sport opportunities by adding new, demand driven "accessible to all" types of facilities and organize special awareness raising events. There are already successful mass sports programmes managed by the municipality and other related actors, but there is a lack of synergies between these initiatives. Currently, there is a lack of cooperation between the local actors and stakeholders in the city including district councils, sport clubs, schools, cultural and welfare centres. Each organisation works on its own, resulting in inefficient operation and slivering the efforts. At the time of austerity measures, there is a need for more conscious operation with regards to financial, human and physical resources. Moreover, sport related actions lack the interdisciplinary approach (connecting sport, leisure, education and health care), thus do not contribute effectively to the promotion of healthy lifestyles among the local communities.

Additionally, Krakow estimates that approximately 5% of its citizens are suffering from obesity and as a result, chronic illnesses. Obesity is affecting school children who lack healthy eating habits and motivation to do sports. On top of that, the suburbs of Krakow are not well connected to the sport facilities so citizens have difficulties accessing them by means of public transport.

Furthermore, the communication of free municipal sport programmes is not sufficient: many people simply do not know about the different sport opportunities provided by the municipality.

### **3.2. Concrete needed investments**

The municipality has decided to make the public spaces more suitable for physical activity and also make better use of its already existing sports infrastructure by improving their accessibility. Krakow is, thus, planning to build new playgrounds and open air gyms because this kind of facilities are getting more popular, being suitable for children, young people and elders as well. These can also turn into places for encounter which help create a community feeling, strengthening the social cohesion.

## **4. Existing general strategies & policy instruments of the city related to urban sports promotion and healthy lifestyle**

The city of Krakow implements a number of regular sports programmes and events. It provides financial support for the activities of sports organisations and clubs under grant programmes and a scholarship programme for sportsmen.

Krakow was the first in Poland to create a *Sports Development Programme* which systemized and identified priorities for action in the field of sports. These include:

- Co-creation and implementation of municipal policies to support and promote physical culture
- Implementation of activities related to the promotion of active and healthy lifestyle
- Creation of conditions for shaping the attitudes of active leisure
- Cooperation with sports clubs and universities in the field of sport
- Co-organization of sporting events throughout the city

Offering quality leisure time for citizens, promoting and consolidating healthy habits of outdoor activity are an important value of the programme. Strengthening social cohesion and promoting the fashion for living a healthy lifestyle are notable and very valuable results of the Programme's implementation.

In order to maintain a direct contact with the local communities, the municipality of Krakow has its own website ([www.krakow.pl](http://www.krakow.pl)) and the Department of Sport has a Facebook fan page.

The municipality has developed various systems of indicators and metrics to monitor participation in its sports program.

## **5. Learning needs and best practices related to the main topics of the project**

### **5.1. Learning needs**

- participatory approaches and ways of involving people in decision making process
- experience in practices of the URBACT method
- experiences in other cities, best practices tested

### **5.2. Good practices**

Krakow has rich experience in implementing small and large scale sports actions and is ready to share the lessons learnt with the VITAL CITIES partnership. It also brings in experience on



improving citizens' access to sports facilities, promoting healthy lifestyle and physical activation of vulnerable groups (e.g. youth, elderly).

Specifically, Krakow has co-designed with local stakeholders a number of community based programs aiming at providing completely free sports offer for all citizens in Krakow, regardless of their physical condition or age: e.g. qualified instructors providing proper care during different sports activities where participants can choose from a wide range of activities and events tailored to the level of beginners and more advanced athletes.

ComCom Zone, a sport and culture institution which combines three functions: 1. sport and recreation, 2. education, 3. psychological help for children and teenagers in difficult family situation. It functions as a high standard multifunctional centre and acts as a safe shelter for youth.

Rugby Centre, situated at the fringes of Nowa Huta, offering outdoor sports facilities for rugby and other ball games. The centre is opened after school hours and youth can use facilities informally but under surveillance of a tutor.

Centrum Sportu i Kultury Sidzina: offers both indoor and outdoor facilities, and cultural activities are also taking place here (painting, ceramics). In order to cover maintenance costs, some of the rooms are let to health related small business. The activities are organised by volunteers. Trainers however are professionals. The sports activities for the youth are for free, adults pay subscription fees.

Related to the specific project themes, Krakow has the following good practices to be shared:

### ***Theme 1: Implementing community-based actions to redesign the public space***

- *My coach, my playground* – The aim of the program is to provide children and young people with modern sports infrastructure. As an alternative form of spending leisure time, the program is implemented at sports facilities located near schools and at multifunctional playgrounds. Under the supervision of qualified coaches, youngsters can participate in sports activities which popularise an active lifestyle. Programmes are implemented in co-operation with the authorities of the city and are addressed to communities, as well as large and small settlements.
- *I can swim* – The aim is to provide children and young people with an opportunity to improve their swimming skills; the programme is run at swimming pools located in the outskirts of the city, improving the access of its citizens to sports facilities.
- *Sport against exclusion* – A programme targeted towards children and young people from communities most at risk of social exclusion. It mainly aims at the active social inclusion of young people through increasing their participation in sport and recreational as well as educational activities, workshops, seminars and sports camps.
- *Krakow runs, Krakow walks* – Year-round sports activities held at four running tracks and five Nordic walking routes, carried out by qualified instructors. Every citizen of Krakow, regardless of age and physical condition, may participate at designated locations in training sessions, as well as sports and recreational activities seven days a week. Physical activation of the elderly and promotion of a healthy lifestyle are important.

- A special program runs on combat sports through the antidrug agency together with the police forces.

#### ***Theme 5: Organisation of innovative events to promote healthy lifestyle***

- *Krakow Youth Olympics* – This is a year-round sports competition of children and school youth. The purpose of the sport education programme is to awaken among young people the competition spirit based on fair play, as well as to monitor the sports potential of Krakow's young people. Competition in different age groups is organised in individual and team disciplines.

### ***6. Initial Focus of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP)***

#### ***Priorities***

The scope of activities under the Integrated Action Plan will rely on expanding and improving the opportunities for sports activities for the residents of Krakow in line with the city's strategic programme aimed at preserving the citizens' physical and mental health and promoting Krakow as an active city. Apart from making the public spaces more suitable for physical activity, there is room for improvement with regards to better orchestrating services, i.e. better combining and coordinating the actions undertaken in the frame of different programmes at different levels (city, districts, schools, sport clubs, NGOs, etc.). The first steps should be the identification and elimination of basic conflicts, in particular ordering and regulating the legal status of bigger actions and introducing legal-economic instruments that enable efficient administration. Krakow plans to work out a programme or method to work with local stakeholders to collect ideas for actions and implement them (to create a procedure: from idea to action).

Beyond the transformation of the public spaces in Krakow, the city would like to find ways to make better use of its already existing sports infrastructure by improving their accessibility. The defined target area is Narodowe Centrum Rugby Lubocza. This is a new, well-equipped facility with skilled staff, which provides the opportunity for various kinds of sport activities and is active within the community. Beyond focusing on rugby, the centre provides sports programmes and leisure activities for children, and people who are at the risk of social exclusion. However, it is not a popular place among citizens since it is quite far away from the city centre.

#### ***Target area***

Besides generally targeting public spaces, Krakow has also defined the target area of Narodowe Centrum Rugby Lubocza. This is a brand new, modern well-equipped facility which provides the opportunity for various kinds of sport activities. There are two pitches with artificial lightning: main (100x70m) and training (60x30m), multifunctional playgrounds (32,10x19,10m) and back room with three changing rooms. However, this is not a popular place among citizens since it is quite far away from the city centre, requiring the public transport to be improved. This facility provides great opportunities for creating a centre of sports for children and people who are in danger of social exclusion.

#### ***Target groups***

The municipality decided to focus primarily on the young population.

### ***Framework of the implementation***

The following operational programs can support the implementation of the project goals:

- Malopolska Regional Operational Programme (ERDF and EFS);
- Central Operational Programmes: OP Infrastructure and Environment, OP Knowledge, Education, Development (EFS), OP Digital Poland.

## ***7. Approach and composition of the URBACT Local Group (ULSG)***

Krakow aims to focus on the improvement of coordination and cooperation of different stakeholders on sport activities and sport policies, therefore the composition of its ULSG will be crucial. The ULSG will operate on two levels:

1. Core ULSG, composed by institutional authorities and the main decision makers
2. the Project Team, as well as main sport organizations representatives

### ***Members of the core group***

- representatives of the Municipality of Krakow (project team, staff members from other departments: Directorate of Infrastructure and Transport, City Communication Company, Architecture and Urban Planning, Environment Department)
- representatives of sport organizations:
  - Krakow School Sport Centre
  - Interschool Sport Centre West
  - Interschool Sport Centre East
  - NGO "Fundacja Ukryte Skrzydła"
  - Rugby Club
  - OYAMA Karate

The ULSG members are from different sport organizations, more or less connected with the city administration. Thanks to their diverse experience, Krakow will have different points of view on how to create a friendly environment for sports activity and encourage people to take part in it. Krakow intends to involve all members of the ULSG in creating local sports events (one of them could provide facilities, another sport animation, etc.), promotion of the events and healthy lifestyle in general among the target group.

2) a Wider ULSG, formed by different types of users, who will be asked to participate to the meetings and concrete works regarding the project schedule, phases and timetable, and project needs. They will be invited on an ad hoc basis.

### ***Additional members***

- councillors of the City Council of Krakow
- councillors of the District Councils
- representatives of the selected urban units and private entities responsible for the functioning of the municipal and council infrastructure
- Municipal Social Welfare Centre

- invited knowledge providers: professional organisations or associations (architects, urban planners, etc.), experts from the University
- other associations and NGOs (Environmental organizations, cultural associations, representatives of old people, representative of schools, street workers, volunteers, citizens, etc.)
- institutions responsible for safety (Police, City Guards, Fire Services)
- Business sector: real estate owners, business and commercial entities active within the area
- leaders of local communities (representatives of the residents, acting actively in the statutory bodies of housing cooperatives, housing associations, civil organisations active within the housing estate area, etc.)

## 6. City Profile Liepaja

### **Key facts**

- Population: 71,125 shrinking tendency
- Unemployment: 11.5%
- GDP/person: 8497 EUR
- Key economic sector in the employment: commerce sector, manufacturing, construction, transport and storage
- Life expectancy: Men 69 years, Women 79 years

### **1. Main characteristics of the city**

#### **1.1. Geography**

Liepāja, also known as the 'city of wind', is the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest city in Latvia and 10<sup>th</sup> largest one in the Baltic States. The city is located on a stretch of land between the Baltic Sea and the Liepāja Lake, which are connected by the Trade Canal. The oldest electric tram line in the Baltic States' territory curves through the city's residential neighbourhoods from north to south.

The sea with its widest sandy beach in the country, the beautiful scenery and colourful sunsets are just a few of many magnets that attract locals, neighbours and guests from all over Europe and around the world. Liepāja is a destination city with high touristic added value.

It has good multimodal connections through rail – port – air. The airport has been reconstructed recently and will be in full operation in 2017 after international certification.

#### **1.2. Social and economic profile of the city**

The population size is 71 125 inhabitants, with a shrinking tendency nowadays. The ethnic configuration of the city is comprised of Latvians (54,69%), Russians (30.88%), Ukrainians (4,93%) and others (9,5%).

The unemployment rate is rather high, 11,5%, while the GDP/person is 8497 euro per capita in Kurzeme region, suffering a slight decline tendency in the last years. Historically, the most developed industrial spheres are metalworking, textile industry, production of construction materials, food processing, shipbuilding, cargo transportation and handling as well as other sectors. Therefore, key economic sectors in employment are commerce 32,7%, manufacturing 21,9%, construction 15,3%, transport and storage 14,7%. In addition, the Liepaja Business centre in the industrial park represents the workplace of 600 employees.

The city's future aspirations include the re-establishment of the spa and health tourism industry. Vigorous efforts are made in order to reinstate Liepāja's status as a popular spa resort city.

#### **1.3. Governance**

The decision making structure is represented by the City Council for which 14 deputies and a mayor are voted. The City Council appoints the members of four standing committees, which prepare issues to be discussed in the Council meetings: Finance Committee; City Economy and Development Committee; Social Affairs, Health Care, Education and Public Order Committee; Culture and Sports Committee. Besides, the local municipality's administration structure works with 120 employees.

#### ***1.4. Key challenges the city is facing***

Liepaja is confronting with two main social problems: the decline of the number of inhabitants and an ageing society.

The economic problems translate into the weakening of the manufacturing industry and the transition from manufacturing to commerce sector, a shift which affects the population and the unemployment rate

## ***2. Main characteristics in terms of urban sports and healthy living***

### ***2.1. Sport facilities***

In public spaces, street workout equipment is available all around the city. In addition, Liepaja has a wide and meshed network of cycle paths (200km). An important boost was given by building and improving the cycle path that surrounds the city and which is planned to be expanded to connect to the nearby towns.

The first outdoor gym equipment was set in the city in 2015. Furthermore, there are 8 outdoor basketball fields, athletics stadium, 7 beach-volleyball fields and multiple football pitches, including 1 mini-pitch – all free for everyone to use. Indoor and outdoor skate-parks and motocross track are used often and in good weather conditions are full. There are voluntarily organized active lifestyle groups, where people gather for running, cycling, aerobics, swimming or Nordic-walking.

As mentioned, these activities can be practiced for free by residents, yet for a certain cost, people can also use many sport-halls (football, basketball, volleyball, floorball etc.), gyms, swimming pools, bowling alleys, shooting ranges, gymnastics hall, mini golf course, riding course, or squash courts.

Many investments have been made in sports and leisure infrastructure in the last years. The city representatives are looking forward to learn how to reconstruct tennis courts and also improve rowing facilities. Generally, investments in public facilities are made by the city or the state and then are rented out to schools or clubs. The creation of new active zones which encourage physical exercise has already led to an increase in the level of citizens involved in sports. In Raiņa park residents can run, do street-workout or aerobics and there is also a playground. Jūrmala park has multiple sport and playground facilities including tennis-courts, 2 stadiums, a skate park, street workout equipment, cycle paths, playgrounds and mini-golf. The Ventspils ielas park in Lauma neighbourhood is a green zone with children playground and street workout equipment. Liepaja beach provides opportunities to play volleyball, football, as well as practice individual sports like running or cycling.

Related to the project's topic, the city has already designed a project for Zirgu sala (Horse Island), which is part of Lake of Liepaja in a NATURA 2000 territory. It was financed by the state and a cross border project, but also Nature 2000 resources were used. However, the accessibility is not very good and developing infrastructural connections by creating walking and cycling routes is needed.



Regarding school sports, courts are being redeveloped for track and field, volleyball and tennis. They are open in the evenings and well-lit in order to be used after school time as well by the residents.

Football is quite well developed on different levels, from local to national, and so is floorball (field hockey). In what concerns tennis, Liepaja organised the Davis cup for Latvia here. Besides, in terms of physical education, Liepaja developed a swimming teaching program for 2<sup>nd</sup> class pupils who receive 28 lessons funded by the city (including coaching, transport, etc.). In addition, gymnastics and judo are very popular in the city.

Unfortunately, no comprehensive methods are implemented to measure the number of people who use the sport facilities. Still, based on the usage rate of various sport facilities, the number of members in sport clubs and the overall load of public spaces for sport, it can be assumed that around 25% of the population is actively performing physical exercises in Liepaja.

The most accurate monitoring can be made for youth and young adults since Liepaja has information about sport club(school) members covering the age group 5 to 25, which is the most active age group. Other monitoring measures are installed in the case of sport events which take place in Liepaja. It is possible to analyse the number of people participating, distinguishing between the different age groups in running events or city football championship. Based on this data, estimates regarding the number of active people who are doing physical activity can be calculated. At the same time people who are training individually and are not participating in any events must also be considered as they could be around 20% on top of those who are registered in any clubs or events. On top of all these estimations, a certain group can easily be monitored. The persons at risk of poverty, as long as they are part of a sport school, receive significant discounts for attaining trainings or swimming pools.

## **2.2. Health**

Out of Liepaja's 71 125 inhabitant, around 30% regularly conduct an examination of their health. In 2014, 31% of the inhabitants started to enlarge their level of daily activity and refine their eating habits. 59% considered improving their health habits and agreed that more physical activity it would make a positive impact for their health. Nevertheless, the surveys show that there are more persons talking about improving their health than persons actually taking concrete steps.

For the non-communicable diseases (NCDs), the main health risk factors in the city are smoking (men 46%, women 20%), alcohol consumption (men – 19.7 litre/person, women – 6.3 litre/person), raised blood pressure (men 47%, women 42%) and obesity (22% men, 27% women). Prevention is based on the elimination of lifestyle-related risk factors (smoking, obesity, alcohol) and inclusion of appropriate physical activity.

Leading causes of death are cardiovascular diseases and oncological problems.

The average life expectancy at birth is 74.1 years (69 – men, 79 – women).

### ***3. Opportunities and challenges addressed by the VITAL CITIES network***

Liepaja is striving to promote a more active lifestyle among the local communities since one of its greatest challenges for the moment is related to health issues. Morbidity and premature death causes, as well as cardiovascular and oncological illnesses are all considered direct consequences of sedentary ways of living and unhealthy eating habits.

The city's deprived territories have potential for being remodelled into attractive sports and active recreation areas. Liepaja's challenge consists of undertaking the efforts to redesign them, not only for the inhabitants, but also for visitors, trying to boost sport tourism. Currently, the city is working to supply the basic equipment for these areas, but is limited in its capacities and knowledge for implementing any ground-breaking solutions. Besides different ball games fields, outdoor fitness facilities and a well-developed cycle path are operating at full capacity in good weather conditions.

Not having an integrated system to cover all sport related issues is another problem which makes reaching the common goal even more difficult. Moreover, the municipality would like to work together with the civil sector but, at the moment, this is a challenge since there are few community initiatives related to sports. The Municipality aims to change the behaviour of the residents with regards to public spaces, so they will be more proactive in using them according to their needs. The Municipality has to learn how to become a facilitator of grassroots initiatives and to build the trust between the local authorities and the community.

### ***4. Existing general strategies & policy instruments of the city related to urban sports promotion and healthy lifestyle***

Liepaja has an *Urban Development Programme for 2014 - 2020* which comprises a specific objective to remodel deprived territories and to promote an active and healthy lifestyle for the local inhabitants (Policy 2.2. "Attractive public infrastructure for inhabitants of Liepaja and its guests"; Policy 1.2. "Active, healthy and socially protected inhabitants").

Additionally, the municipality has also created a long-term development concept to transform a former military territory in Beberlini, Karosta, into a recreational site. Besides, many investments were made in sports and leisure infrastructure in the last years. For instance, the city has already designed a project for Zirgu sala (Horse Island), which is part of Lake of Liepaja in a NATURA 2000 territory. It was financed by the state and a cross border project, but Nature 2000 resources were also used. However, the accessibility is not very good and developing infrastructural connections by creating walking and cycling routes is needed.

### ***5. Learning needs and best practices related to the main topics of the project***

#### ***5.1. Learning needs***

Liepaja has defined its specific learning needs in terms of:

- innovative ideas in helping the integration of social risk groups
- ways of involving different target groups
- approaches for motivating youngsters to do sport regularly

- actions for implementing IT-based actions to promote health and sport activities in public spaces
- launching and operating city sports cards
- alternative ways in which city councils organise their decision-making processes and the way further investments are discussed
- knowledge in terms of business plans and financial management

## **5.2. Good practices**

Liepaja can disseminate its experience for the other partners since the municipality has already started investing in its sports infrastructure, creating outdoor fitness equipment, a 200km cycle path network, different fields, skate-parks, running and walking tracks, etc. These activities are free for the citizens, and for a small cost, many sport-halls offer an even wider range of activities. The creation of new active zones which encourage physical exercise has already led to an increase in the level of citizens involved in sports

Liepaja has good practices to be shared with the partners relating to four of the project's main themes:

### ***Theme 1: Implementing community-based actions to redesign the public space***

- Beberliņi is a former military base where residents can go running, cycling, practice wakeboarding and swimming, as well as play beach volleyball or football. In winter it is mainly used for skating or winter swimming. It is considered a good bottom-up practice due to the fact that people used the site first, and only afterwards investment were made by the municipality.

### ***Theme 2: Implementing IT-based actions to redesign the public space***

- There are bonus schemes for people to be active (like e.g. bicycle schemes); Individuals can register their performance online (through Facebook) and compete.
- The city invited students of the media school to make a lot of small high quality video films that are posted on other social media channels. The channels have spread and broadcasted people see themselves as 'heroes'. There are also videos in which sports champions starred and gave testimonials on Liepaja.

### ***Theme 3: Better orchestrating the services coordinated by the city to promote healthy life style***

- The city created publicly available sport facilities in various places in the city including running routes, bmx tracks, roller-skating track, volleyball fields and other valuable sport opportunities. The intention is to increase their visibility, by placing encouraging and informative signs in popular public spaces where people are doing physical activities.

### ***Theme 5: Organisation of innovative events to promote healthy lifestyle***

- Liepaja is quite well known for organising European and World Championships at different levels (men, women, college), broadcasted on Eurosport. Among the most popular ones

are boxing championships. Furthermore, there are numerous events in different motorsports, as well as triathlons for both adults and children. Since cross fit has become very popular in Liepaja, numerous indoor and outdoor competitions, as well as boot camps, are being organized by NGOs or the army. Another type of event is organized by the city in collaboration with an NGO, allowing residents that enjoy beach volley to compete. In addition, canoe rowing, cycling and streetball championships became a widespread practice.

- The municipality, together with professional coaches, is going to organise weekly trainings for all groups of people. Trainings include running, Nordic-walking, street workout, CrossFit, cycling and aerobics.
- The city organised running events such as (half-) marathons, which are accessible for wider categories of people, including impaired persons using a wheel chair and the elderly population who can do Nordic walks.
- The NGOs often organise training sessions before events such as triathlons, marathons, or CrossFit. These are quite informal - community-based - events for which the municipality provides media coverage and publicity.
- One of the city's strong assets lies in its capacity of organising big events which involve numerous stakeholders, by using limited financial resources.
- Liepaja considers quite important to educate local inhabitants about healthy life-styles, healthy eating habits and the need to take personal responsibility for one's own health. There is a strong tradition of health promotion activities in the city with the participation of local specialists, NGOs and active people. Health Promotion includes informative lectures, physical activities, health measurements.

## **6. Initial focus of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP)**

### **Priorities**

The overall geographical coverage of the IAP is the city of Liepaja and, in line with the city's major challenges, the overall goal is to involve more citizens in physical activities, encouraging them to make lifestyle changes that can result in better health conditions.

The potential objectives of the IAP are:

- Improving information exchange between sport related institutions and end-users
- Organizing activities for residents in different neighbourhoods
- Encouraging people to organize activities themselves
- Creating new and innovative sites for physical activities

The results expected by the municipality are two-sided. On one hand, Liepaja is hoping to increase the level of participation in physical activities, as well as the citizens' satisfaction with sport facilities. Helping people become more health-conscious will reduce the number of illnesses the population is struggling with at the moment. Besides, co-producing the IAP means that a wider range of the community can be involved in organizing sport activities, resulting in a higher level of trust between the Municipality and the community.

On the other hand, the Municipality expects to plant additional priorities in local and national development programmes where some zones of Liepaja would be given preference. The IAP can

definitely help upgrading the current development plans concerning health and environmental issues.

### ***Target area***

The municipality has already expressed its future plans of investment for the following three years. Besides focusing on improving public spaces and sports facilities all around the city, Liepaja has two potential target areas. Beberlini, the former military area, while being an example of bottom-up initiative from the community which was further developed by authorities, could still benefit from improvements. New infrastructure and novel facilities would attract more users and even tourists, while also emphasising the municipality's will to invest in civil initiatives. A second potential target area could be Liepaja's peninsula for which works of improvement and maintenance have already started.

### ***Target groups***

Besides benefitting the entire population, developing and improving these public outdoor spaces would particularly increase the opportunity for people with low income and who are in risk of poverty (who already have social guarantees for attending trainings) to practice sports, without any additional cost for the municipality.

Besides this specific target group, the municipality would like to boost civil initiatives overall and demonstrate citizens that they can get support for their ideas.

### ***Framework of the implementation***

Liepaja has a project management and a financial department which work closely with the National authority (that is also the management authority of the EU funded regional programs - ERDF). Through the European City of Sports, the plans of the cities are known and embraced by the Management Authority.

## ***7. Approach and composition of the Urban Local Group (ULSG)***

The key stakeholders recommended to be involved in the ULSG's core group are

- Vilnis Vitkovskis – Deputy Major of Education, Culture and Sports
- Artis Lagzdīņš – Head of Sports Department (Liepaja City Council)
- Kristaps Reinfelds- External Project Manager
- Mārtiņš Jansons – Project Manager in Sports Department
- Elīna Tolmačova – Head of Environment, Health and Community Participation Department
- Evija Murniece - Sport's department deputy director.

The extended group will involve various stakeholders coming from NGOs, small business owners, end users. The ULSG in Liepaja will be a new group which will involve persons from various sports who are active at training and organizing level. In addition, people with high understanding of the city's sport possibilities and people who are using them frequently are invited as well. The work will be done both separately and in teams, to achieve the best results, and meetings will be organized at least once every two months with all members of the ULSG

group. In the meantime, every member could get some tasks for the IAP in order to understand better some issues or become more acquainted with different sites. The members will be motivated by the possibility to acquire new experiences and be part of new networks – both local and international. Visiting other cities is a great opportunity to discover innovative approaches that can be implemented in Liepaja.



## 7. City Profile Rieti

### **Key facts**

- Population: 47 698
- Unemployment: 12,30%
- GDP/person: 16234 EUR
- Key economic sector in the employment: agriculture, commerce, and industry and tourism
- Life expectancy: Men 78,4 years, Women 83,9 years

### **1. Main characteristics of the city**

#### **1.1. Geography**

Rieti is a city in Lazio, central Italy, and the capital of province of Rieti. The town centre rests on a small hilltop, commanding a wide plain at the southern edge of an **ancient lake**. The area is now the fertile basin of the Velino River. Only the small Ripasottile and Lungo lakes remain from the original large one.

Rieti was the province capital of the Papal States from 1816 to 1860. After the unification of Italy, it was initially part of Umbria, being annexed to Lazio in 1923. It became the provincial capital in 1927.

Rieti is connected to the main surrounding cities by Highway A1, Route Salaria SS4 (Rome, L'Aquila, Ascoli Piceno, Pescara), Route Ternana SS 79, as well as railway to Terni and L'Aquila. Besides, Rieti has a local airport.

#### **1.2. Social and economic profile of the city**

The population size is 47 698 inhabitants, with an ethnic configuration comprised of Romanians (24,73%), Albanians (10,93%), Ukrainians (10,84%), Moroccans (8,38%), Polish (7,74%), Macedonians (7,13%), Bulgarians (3,52%), Moldavians (2,32%), Chinese (2,32%) and Eritreans (1,95%).

The GDP/person is 16 234 euro per capita, yet there has been a slight declining tendency in the last years. Key economic sectors in the employment are agriculture, commerce, industry and tourism. The unemployment rate was 12,3% in 2014.

#### **1.3. Governance**

The political decision making structure is made up of the Mayor and the City Council. Regarding the administrative structure of the Municipality, there are seven Departments lead by a Manager.

#### **1.3. Key challenges the city is facing**

Rieti is confronting with the following social challenges:

- General impoverishment of the population with increasing inability of families to meet their primary needs;
- Percentage of families below the poverty line recorded a rate of 9.3%, higher than other provinces in Lazio have;
- Aging of population with increasing health and social needs and increasing demand for specialists and facilities
- Lack of facilities and services that support the family during the recovery period after hospitalisation and children-in-need;

- Difficulties in integrating services, projects and social benefits both at managerial and professional level because of the fragmentation of interventions.

The economic challenges of the city are:

- High youth unemployment rate due to the lack of availability of work and difficulties of reintegration into the labour market;
- Functional depletion of monumental historical buildings, previously occupied by important local and national institutions or by commercial activities and craft workshops;
- Crisis of companies situated in the Industrial Core of Rieti;
- Decreased distribution of financial resources from the state and the region to the municipalities;
- Difficulty to establish networks between organizations belonging to different sectors;

Regarding the environmental problems, the remediation of brownfields located near the centre of the city can be mentioned.

## ***2. Main characteristics in terms of urban sports and healthy living***

### ***2.1. Sport facilities***

Rieti offers publicly available sport opportunities for practicing basketball, tennis, soccer, rugby, swimming, bowling and skiing.

Numerous green spaces in the city are appropriate for sport activities:

- Canniccia park
- Borgo Sant'Antonio park
- Piazza Oberdan garden
- Fonte Cottorella park
- Lama park
- Angelucci park
- Coriandolo playground
- Elephant park
- Liberato di Benedetto park
- Colle San Mauro park
- Chiesa Avventista garden

Many actions have been implemented to promote wellness and outdoor activities in the city. For instance, Rieti has an urban bike-sharing service operated by the Youth Information Service of the City. The bicycle routes stretch from the city centre to the province. Also, fitness trails were created along the banks of the Velino River together with other outdoor sports facilities. Furthermore, urban trekking can be practiced and trekking maps are provided as well.

In addition, there is a big Municipality Field of Athletics that guarantees free access to all young people who want to practise sport activities. It allows many disadvantaged young people - including poor and disabled ones - to be involved in sports together with their peers.

There are strong points considering the cultural tradition of sports and the good quality of sport facilities. The very famous IAAF meeting of Rieti has a long tradition and is broadcasted on Eurosport. It could be used to raise awareness among students.

On the other hand, there are some weaknesses too. For instance, many suburbs with small green areas are not well connected to the city centre. The inadequate street layout and infrastructures of the suburbs are also typical. Thus, there is a strong need for equipped itineraries to connect the different existing sport facilities and green areas.

Finally, schools should be better used to raise awareness; they really matter for changing the mind-set of children and parents.

In general, sport events are organized by schools (courses of urban ecology in primary and secondary schools, marathon), the Municipality (Rieti Child Friendly City -performances, workshops, training activities) and the Sports Clubs.

Many important sport events, involving a big part of young population, are held within the Municipality sport facilities. For example:

- International Meeting of Athletics (45 editions)
- Juniors European Championship of Athletics (year 2013)
- European Championship of gliders
- Football National Championship

## **2.2. Health**

The data derived from the exemptions and disease history forms in December 2012 of the population in the province of Rieti (Lazio Region source) indicates that 30% males and 28.5% females suffer from high blood pressure, 26,5% males and 17.5% females from cardiovascular diseases, 20% males and 18.5% females from diabetes, 14% females from thyroid disorders, and 3% of both from bronchopulmonary diseases. Leading causes of death are cardiovascular diseases and oncological problems. The average life expectancy at birth is 78,4 years for males and 83,9 years for females.

36% of the population of the province of Rieti composed of adults 18 to 69 years are overweight and 10% of them are obese. This condition increases with age (45% of the overweight and 17% of the obese are persons in the age group 50-69 years) and is more common for men (44% of the overweight and 10% of the obese are males), among people with lower levels of education (51% of the overweight and 21% of the obese are individuals with no or elementary education) and among the most economically disadvantaged (46% of the overweight and 15% of the obese). 32% of the overweight people reported a diagnosis of hypertension or hypercholesterolemia, 3% had an infarct, while 10% have chronic respiratory diseases.

In terms of lifestyle, the population aged 18-69 showed the following figures: 31,3% have an active lifestyle, 34,6% practice physical activity lower than recommended and 34,1% are completely sedentary. Physical inactivity increases with age (41% in the age group 50-69) and is more common in people with low levels of education (45% of the subjects have only primary and lower secondary education) and greater economic difficulties (58%). There were no substantial differences between the sexes. The sedentary lifestyle is associated in 43% of the cases with depression, in 36% with hypertension, in 36% with overweight and in 35% with smoking habits.

The regional study also includes the health condition of children living in the province of Rieti: 2,4% of the children are severely obese, 7,7% are obese, 23,2% overweight, 65,8% have normal weight and 0,9% are underweight. 18% of children were not active on the day before

the survey. Only 25% of them participated in physical activities at school during the previous day, with similar proportions for females and males.

### ***3. Opportunities and challenges addressed by the VITAL CITIES network***

The city of Rieti has built several sporting facilities in the last decades, but these have attracted only a minority of the population. They have not been sufficient to spread a healthy and active lifestyle and the number of professional trainers is inadequate. Consequently, the facilities cannot attract the residents in order to introduce sports in their ordinary daily activities.

One of the most important challenges that the city wants to deal with is capitalizing the significant environmental and landscape heritage in order to improve the lifestyles of the inhabitants, integrating environmental quality with quality of life.

The urban structure of Rieti, strongly characterized by Velino River's eco-system and by some suburban neighbourhoods, would lend itself very well to the implementation of a high environmental infrastructure network for pedestrians. It could also serve the social reconnection of the suburbs to the city centre.

In the recent years, a bicycle route of considerable length was made: a challenge could be the completion of this infrastructure with a secondary network of pedestrian paths.

### ***4. Existing general strategies & policy instruments of the city related to urban sports promotion and healthy lifestyle***

Rieti created the *Plan for Local Sustainable Development* (ERDF 2007-2013) with which the administration has taken steps to upgrade the historical centre, including thematic tours of augmented reality for the use of artistic heritage of the city and paths for the blind.

The Urban Regeneration Plan is dedicated to the city centre and comprises material actions (such as pedestrianisation of the area, increase of the green spaces, increase of seating and socializing spaces, increase of public lighting systems, etc.) and intangible actions (such as increase of neighbourhood and recreational activities for the revitalization of the historical city centre, etc.).

Rieti developed a *Social Renewal Plan Accompanying Infrastructure development* (PAS) (intervention unfunded) in order to fasten the complementing infrastructural developments in some parts of the city with interventions supporting the social renewal process. The scope of the plan is the following:

- Personal Social Services: through opening an agency for social development
- Promotion of local events: to spread a new culture of focusing on the themes of sustainability and active citizenship
- Support of training activities on issues related to environmental education, social issues, culture and tourism

### ***5. Learning needs and best practices related to the main topics of the project***

#### ***5.1. Learning needs***

The municipality is looking forward to learning and getting new experiences in order to improve its integrated urban planning, sport facilities management and integrated communication.

Rieti is particularly interested in learning how to implement community-based actions to redesign the public space linked to sport activities, urban sports, games, physical exercises, etc. in an innovative way and how to develop the organisation of its innovative events. In addition, Rieti would like to learn how to communicate a healthy life style to its citizens.

## **5.2. Good practices**

Rieti has good practices to be shared with the partners relating to most of the project's main themes:

### ***Theme 1: Implementing community-based actions to redesign the public space***

- One of the most important good practice is the project called ***City of the Children***, led by the Italian National Centre of Research (CNR) with Spain, Mexico, Columbia and Italy. The main motivation of the project is that during the last decades, due to the choice of the adult and productive citizen as a parameter of development and change, the city has lost its original characteristics of being a place for meeting and interacting. It has given up its public areas that were essential conditions for socialising, allowing its courtyards, sidewalks, streets and squares to take on functions linked to the automobile and trade, taking these areas away from its citizens. The organisation of cities refused the characteristic of shared and systematic space, where each part needed the other, to assign defined spaces to functions or different social classes. This resulted in ghetto areas and privileged areas, thereby emptying the city centres and developing the modern suburbs. The city, modified in this way, has become ugly, dangerous and an unhealthy environment because of atmospheric and acoustic pollution.  
The planning, development, coordination and research activities related to the project are carried out by the International Laboratory which was created within the Institute of Cognitive Sciences and Technologies of the National Council of Research and managed in collaboration with the City of Rome. In 2001, when the latter joined the project, took on the role of Leader city. It meets with the cities that intend to join the project, and periodically organizes conventions, meetings among the cities and training courses for the operators.  
The project intends to promote two fundamental aspects in the life of children: their autonomy and their participation. In the last few years these two main approaches have given rise to various activities.
- Additionally, the municipality initiated a participatory management of green areas, developing firstly a municipal regulation and open call for citizens to participate. The project involves the planning of 40 hectares of green space in order to create a symbiosis between the green and the city. It triggered a virtuous cycle of public-private management of green areas and public parks.

### ***Theme 2: Implementing IT-based actions to redesign the public space***

- Rieti developed an augmented reality system that informs on city routes and on the architectural emergencies.

### ***Theme 3: Better orchestrating the services coordinated by the city to promote healthy life style***

- The city benefits from urban trekking routes in the centre, as well as health and fitness paths in the green spaces and along the river. Also, the bike-sharing system is operating in the historical city centre. In addition, Rieti has pedibus routes to the schools of the historical city centre.

### ***Theme 5: Organisation of innovative events to promote healthy lifestyle***

- To raise public attention for sport, a series of promotional events are organized every year: *Cycling in the City*, *Spring Marathon*, *International Meeting of Athletics*, *Bruno Carotti Cup* (famous race of machines Rieti-Terminillo at the 52<sup>nd</sup> edition), *Festival of the Sun* (canoe and tub race on the Velino River at the 47<sup>th</sup> edition), as well as tours organized by CAI (Italian Alpine Club).
- The policy approach behind the organization of *The Festival of the Sun* could be shared with the partners because it is the most important civic celebration that has been involving all the citizens of the city during the past 46 springs, making sports and folklore co-protagonists of the Velino River. This event involves also the twinned cities of Rieti Municipality and, in particular, there is a strong connection with the city of Ito (Japan) who shares the same kind of event.
- The river is the centre of the historical and cultural landscape of Rieti. For this reason, the *Festival of the Sun* is a tribute of the city to the river. Velino River is the scene of numerous races every year where city's ancient quarters challenge each other. The prominent event of the festival is the *Palio della Tinozza* where the representatives of the districts compete along about 800 meters of the river in large tubs (the so called *Tinozza*) thus challenging the pitfalls and the fierce opponents.

## ***6. Initial focus of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP)***

### ***Priorities***

In line with the administrative programme of Rieti Municipality, the IAP's main goal is to enhance the general quality of urban life. Rieti is aiming to create an "Environmental Central System" along the Velino River, through which physical activities and leisure can become a common practice enjoyed by all ages.

To achieve this goal, specific objectives have to be met. Among them, the most important would be to improve the accessibility and the use of the central environmental and cultural system, while also increasing social inclusion. The pursuit of the above mentioned objectives implies the achievement of many other indirect objectives such as the promotion of green economy, as well as the physical and social reconnection of peripheral areas of the city whose inhabitants would be given the chance to reach the environmental central system. Finally, it would improve the attractiveness of eco-tourism in the city of Rieti.

Besides, the municipality is looking to disseminate the culture of well-being, rising awareness both for the benefits of practicing sports and healthy eating.



### ***Target groups***

Certainly, improving the environmental and cultural services would benefit the entire population but physical activity should be promoted better in certain cases. For instance, the city will focus on vulnerable age groups (the elderly and children), as well as the social strata with lower income and other disadvantaged population groups.

Expected changes:

- greater coordination in local sectorial policies: Territory governance, Social services, Productive activities, Environment Management, Cultural activities
- improvement in city management after learning from the best practices of other cities in the network
- creating urban regeneration plans as a regular tool for territorial transformations management

### ***Framework of implementation***

Since the municipality has established good working relations with the managing authorities of the OPs of Lazio region, the ESF PO of Lazio is relevant as it includes a priority axis which matches the policy challenge addressed by Rieti:

- Priority Axis 2 - Social inclusion and poverty reduction
  - Investment Priority 9 - Active Inclusion also to promote equal opportunities and active participation and improve employability
  - Specific Objective 9.1 - Reduction of poverty, social exclusion and promoting social innovation.
  - Action 9.1.4 Experimentation of some social innovation projects

## ***7. Approach and composition of the Urban Local Group (ULSG)***

***Rieti has already invited the following stakeholders to be ULSG members:***

- Manuela Rinaldi, Architect, Expert in Urban Planning and Development of the territory, Director of European Department - City Administration
- Stefania Pesce, Dr, Expert in project management, Official in the European Department - City Administration
- Emanuele Grillo, Architect, Building supervision, Official in the Department IV - City Administration
- Stefano Spadoni, Architect, Public works planning and supervision, Official in the Department V - City Administration
- Alessandro Colalelli, Dr, Environment supervision, Executive in the Department VI - City Administration
- Massimo Veronese, Engineer, Sport facilities planning and supervision, Official in the Department VI - City Administration
- Gianluca Fovi De Ruggiero, Medical doctor, Medical surveillance, Department ISP.USL RIETI
- Felicetta Camilli, Medical doctor, Medical surveillance, Department ISP.USL RIETI

- Carlo Cellammare, Engineer, Academic in Urban Planning, Scientific Coordinator of CRITEVAT (center of research in Engineering for the Protection and Enhancement of the Environment and Territory) of University La Sapienza
- Carlo Cecere, Engineer, Academic in Architecture, Technology and Environmental Sustainability, teacher at University - La Sapienza
- Letizia Appolloni, Architect, Researcher in Urban Planning, University - La Sapienza
- Mario Fontana Medical doctor, Coordinator of the Department of physiotherapy at University, La Sapienza
- Carlo Patrizio, Engineer, Academic in Bio-building at University of La Sapienza, Coordinator of LUP (Permanent Urban Lab)
- Riccardo Balloni, Dr, Teacher in Physical Education at High School, Coordinator of CONI (Olympic national Committee- Section of RIETI)
- Giovanni Ludovisi, Architect, Assessor in Urban Planning and Territory management, Department of Urban Planning and Territory management

***Moreover, the following associations' representatives are welcomed to the ULSG meetings:***

- Territory and Environment Department of University La Sapienza
- LUP - Permanent Urban Laboratory
- CRITEVAT (Rieti Centre Local Development and Environment) of University of La Sapienza
- CONI (National Italian Olympic Committee)
- Department ISP.USL RIETI
- Department Physiotherapy at University - La Sapienza

Rieti municipality will use the experience of the LUP (Urban Permanent Laboratory) in order to operate the ULSG. They will appoint two or three members of the ULSG to actively participate in all the ULSG activities.

## 8. City Profile Šibenik

### Key facts

- Population: 46 372, shrinking tendency
- Unemployment: 10,21 %
- GDP/person: 7930 EUR
- Key economic sector in the employment: public sector, tourism, trade
- Life expectancy: 77,4 years

### 1. Main characteristics of the city

#### 1.1. Geography

Šibenik is a historic city in Croatia, located in central Dalmatia where the river Krka flows into the Adriatic Sea. Šibenik is the political, educational, transport, industrial and touristic centre of Šibenik–Knin County and also the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest city in the historic region of Dalmatia.

It is the oldest native Croatian town on the shores of the sea.

Unlike most Dalmatian towns, Šibenik sprang to life around the 9<sup>th</sup> century and was not an outgrowth of an earlier coastal settlement. It began as a fortification built on a hill in the western part of the area and the settlement grew at its base. Although Croatia declared its independence from Yugoslavia in 1991 (the beginning of Republic of Croatia), it took four years of war to establish a safe country. During this war years, Šibenik was heavily bombed and most of its industry, as well as its everyday infrastructure were destroyed.

In the last few years Šibenik turned to tourism and today most of the profits come from that business sector. The city's central location on the Adriatic Croatian coast is an asset, as it is situated between two airports and can also be reached through the A1 highway.

#### 1.2. Social and economic profile of the city

Šibenik had a population of 46 372 inhabitants in 2011, maintaining a shrinking tendency. The city's ethnic composition is made of 94.62% Croats, 3.10% Serbians, 0.36% Albanians, 0.27% Bosnians and 1.36% belonging to other ethnicities.

The unemployment rate is 10,21%. The GDP/person is 7930 euro (data for Šibenik-knin County), with a slight growth tendency in the last years. The key economic sectors in employment are government, trade and tourism.

#### 1.3 Governance

Šibenik's administration is represented by the mayor who works together with different departments, while the City Council comprises of various boards and committees, such as the Committee for Social Affairs, Committee for Planning, Financing and City Property, The Committee for the Development of Local Self-Government, among others.

#### 1.4. Key challenges the city is facing

Šibenik, a centre of metal industry during the communist period, is now refocusing on tourism in order to drive its economic development. Nonetheless, the heavy industrial activity left its marks on the city which is now struggling with environmental problems such as air and soil

pollution (left behind by the closed factories). Besides, the economic transformation triggered high rates of unemployment, prevailing now among the young and the elderly population who are afraid of failure and do not take entrepreneurial initiatives.

In addition to these problems, the city is also facing numerous social issues, including teen violence, social exclusion of sensitive social groups (such as people with disabilities, elders/retired) and growing social distancing and class differences. Moreover, although the traditional Mediterranean diet is a healthy one, the number of people struggling with weight problems is increasing.

Therefore, the authorities feel the need to intervene and encourage healthier regimes, as well as to ease the burdens created by high expenses of life and low incomes which determine people to spend most of the time inside their homes.

## ***2. Main characteristics in terms of urban sports and healthy living***

### ***2.1. Sport facilities***

The city generally offers significant possibilities for practicing traditional sports such as football, basketball, volleyball, athletics, sailing, rowing, swimming and water polo. There are also some sport clubs for biking, hiking and numerous contact sports like boxing, taekwondo, targeting not only professional athletes, but also children. Yet, sport clubs do not offer any recreational programmes and sportive activities outside of organized environments are rare.

Traditionally, many beaches and nature sites in Šibenik provide opportunities for sports and open air activities. The main green spaces are in the neighbourhood called Šubićevac where the largest park area with jogging tracks can also be found. In addition, every part of the city is furnished with small playgrounds. Nevertheless, these tracks and parks are inadequately equipped and can present potential dangers. There are a few basketball and football playgrounds. In the summer months, beaches are commonly used as playgrounds.

### ***2.2. Health***

In spite of the traditional Mediterranean diet, the percentage of obese people, particularly young children, is growing. Many children, even from early childhood, have increased weight problems, mostly because of lack of outdoor activities and the typical 21<sup>st</sup> century sedentary lifestyle. In addition, the overall proportions of obesity and chronic illnesses such as diabetes, hypertension, respiratory problems, like asthma and cardiovascular diseases are rising. Another increasing problem is alcohol and cigarettes abuse among the adolescents.

Generally, the social classes which benefit from a higher income tend to smoke less, have better health care and are involved in more physical activities.

The health system is satisfactory, but not enough attention is dedicated to prevention.

The average life expectancy in Šibenik is 77 years. The leading death causes are cardiovascular diseases and carcinoma.

### ***3. Opportunities and challenges addressed by the VITAL CITIES network***

#### ***3.1. Overall challenge***

Šibenik does not have so many publicly available sport opportunities, apart from old, vast playgrounds that are being used for occasional football or basketball. Unfortunately, the city is not taking full advantage of its potential. The existing parks located in almost every neighbourhood used to have recreational equipment, but they were destroyed during the war and have not been included in the financial/revitalisation focus until today.

Besides, Šibenik has large green areas, many beaches and nature sites but the lack of financial resources makes the maintenance impossible. Additionally, ex-military camps found in residential areas are other settings which could be turned into recreational areas that residents can use freely for sports activities.

#### ***3.2. Concrete needed investments***

- Infrastructural investments in old recreational parks
- Investment into purchasing/creating an artificial climbing wall
- Organization of urban tracking
- Building walking trails
- Building bicycle lines

### ***4. Existing general strategies & policy instruments of the city related to urban sports promotion and healthy lifestyle***

An integrated urban strategy was designed in 2013 covering a 15-year period. The key objective of the strategy is the revitalisation of the city centre by developing its housing function, the communal infrastructure, as well as the business function. The strategy's integrated approach is based on a joint action plan for the private and the public sector, and it is in line with the City's strategy and Šibenik-Knin county's strategy as well. A participative planning process was used by creating seven focus groups, conducting opinion polls and organizing two open conferences.

Although Šibenik's general integrated strategy did not focus on sports and healthy lifestyles promotion, the city incorporated these topics in the newly created Innovative Tourism Strategy. The document defines sports as traditional activities for the city, highlighting the potential for development. In addition, another project called 'Jewel' (aiming to devise a long-term revitalization model of the historic centre), resulted in the redesign of a public square.

In addition, in the beginning of 2016, the City made an open call for proposals for sport programmes and public needs.

Through this open call, Šibenik will fund the following actions:

- activities of sports associations and community sports
- implementation of sports activities for children and youth
- programmes of sporting activities for people with disabilities

- general and specific healthcare of athletes

## ***5. Learning needs and best practices related to the main topics of the project***

### ***5.1. Learning needs***

Sibenik has two general learning needs:

1. the stakeholders would like to learn how to use an integrated approach in order to solve combined problems of the residents
2. joint actions of the Municipality Departments, city owned institutions and NGOs are needed

More specifically, Šibenik intends to learn how to engage children in sports projects, both in schools and outside of them, as well as the parents of these children. Since parents are the models for their children, chances are that if they lead a sedentary lifestyle, children will not find sports too appealing either.

The city needs to raise the inhabitants' awareness of already existing facilities, and, at the same time, determine more community involvement, supporting the 'informal' user groups of the infrastructure.

In addition, Šibenik aims to learn how to set up a monitoring system to gather data on both formal and informal sports activities since at the moment, there is no proper way of observing users or their online activities (on dedicated Facebook groups, for example).

### ***5.2. Good practices***

Šibenik has good practices to be shared with the partners related to three out of five of the project's themes:

#### ***Theme 1: Implementing community-based actions to redesign the public space***

- Drazena Petrovica is still a 'role model' for the young population of Šibenik since he was the first and very successful Croatian to play in the NBA league in the US. The city has tried to honour him by placing his statue and his photo next to the open basketball pitch built nearby the school, in the new development of the old town. Moreover, the public square behind the school is called RTG Drazena Petrovica and is decorated with his golden shoes as a small art installation, as well as an interesting interactive game using led lighting; the game is a pre-programmed game, with different varieties. Having the form of a half basketball, it fits very well as it builds on the Drazena Petrovica heritage.
- Also, the renovation of Beach Banj where the newly built recreational infrastructure offers publicly available sport opportunities is another good practice.

#### ***Theme 4: Establishing innovative physical (not IT) equipment to promote sport in public spaces***

- Reconstruction and revitalization of the pathway in St. Anthony's channel, funded by the Šibenik-knin County, now has different recreational infrastructural equipment.

### ***Theme 5: Organisation of innovative events to promote healthy lifestyle***

- A traditional race is organized by the municipality, consisting of a phase when small wooden carts are built, and another one when teams race downhill with the carts.
- In Šibenik all kinds of sport events are organized by the NGO 'Sporza'
  - Duathlon/triathlon events
  - Initiation and training for sports like volleyball, basketball and tracking
- On a national level, another strong point is the different sport clubs which are financed by the cities. These clubs can organise events in order to promote themselves and their activities.

### ***6. Initial focus of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP)***

The initial focus of the IAP would be to transform the existing public areas into sport friendly zones. The overall intention is to change the perception of the population that believes physical activity can only be pursued in sports clubs through the 'sport for all' and 'sport in the open' ambitions. Therefore, the priorities are:

- Revitalizing old/damaged sports facilities
- Revitalizing green recreational zones
- Increasing physical activity of all citizens

Šibenik's municipality believes there will be many positive changes as a result of the co-production of the IAP, from different angles: the authorities will learn how to better manage sports areas and public spaces, while also creating a local document focusing on this subject. The process should engender sustainable and lasting partnerships between the stakeholders and the city's administration, sports clubs, recreational and health facilities. At the same time, involving multiple stakeholders in the process will determine a win-win situation as leaders can understand and deal with local issues easier and faster, while the community enjoys the outcomes.

The municipality's specific expected results are:

- Good practice transfer
- Better governance of public spaces and their usage
- Improvement of local policies in regard to this particular issue
- Reviving the old sport facilities and recreational zones
- More citizens involved in recreational activities
- Healthier lifestyles as a result of the awareness raising campaigns and the new developments
- Better monitoring of sport activities of citizens

### ***Target area***

The target area is Šubićevac and the municipality's intention is to transform it into the green lungs of Šibenik. The area lies on the outer limit of a city quarter dominated by 'mixed' apartment



buildings of 4 to 10 stories (or more), built between the 70s and the 90s. Recently, some new small size apartment buildings have been added on a former factory brownfield. Next to the housing estates, there is a park created on a mountainous terrain, which is also a small natural reserve. At the basis of the hill some small investments have been made, including:

- a pétanque lane, targeting especially the older population, aiming to improve the social inclusion and diminish the feeling of isolation.
- a small playing area
- the start of a lane / pathway for jogging

The upper part offers the possibility for upgrading and adding extra equipment / installations.

### **Target groups**

The municipality's intention is to change the population's mind-set and separate recreation from the sports clubs, trying to promote "sport for all", while also inducing a new view on the open public spaces as areas for "sports in the open". Improving green areas and public spaces will, of course, benefit the entire population, but authorities intend to target especially the young population (since the proportion of overweight children, as well as the number of young smokers is increasing) and the least well-off social groups whose access to sport clubs is financially restricted.

### **Framework of implementation**

The *Konkurentnost i kohezija 2014-2020 Operational Programme* covers the partner area. The following priorities of the program can support the implementation of the IAP:

- Zaštita okoliša i održivost resursa – Environmental protection and sustainability of resources
- Socijalno uključivanje i zdravlje – Social inclusion and health

As the Municipality of Šibenik implemented more than 30 projects in the last period, they have excellent relations with the Managing Authorities.

## **7. Approach and composition of the Urban Local Support Group (ULSG)**

It is primarily the city departments of economics, social issues and communal infrastructure that will be involved in the implementation of the project. Therefore, the key stakeholders recommended to be involved in the ULSG come from the following organizations:

- Department of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Development
- Department of Social Services
- Department of Utility Services
- Sports community
- Manager of Šibenik sports facilities
- NGO representatives
- Volleyball club for disabled
- Representatives of architectural associations
- Social pedagogue
- Health advisor
- Sport clubs' representatives

***The ULSG members from the Šibenik Municipality will be the following:***

- Maja Čeko, Higher associate for development, City of Šibenik
- Martina Rak, Higher associate for development, City of Šibenik
- Petar Mišura, Deputy Head of department of economy, entrepreneurship and development, City of Šibenik
- Miroslav Lucic, Head of Department of communal infrastructure, City of Šibenik
- Mirjana Žurić, Head of Department of social services, City of Šibenik
- Joško Jurić, President, Sports society of City of Šibenik
- Sanja Kale, Social pedagogue, Centre for Social Care
- Andrija Španja, Representative of sports institution, Public institution for sports facilities - Šibenik
- Ivona Berlengi, architect, Studio Arx
- Goran Drenski, Representative, Volleyball for disabled , Healthy lifestyle representative
- Tomislav Travčić, President Society for sports and recreation "Sport for everybody" 08 Forca Šibenik
- Uni Sport

This ULSG will be set up as a new group. The ULSG members' active participation can be secured by intensively involving them in the decision making process. This will engender a feeling of ownership over the project, motivating members to participate more actively in the entire process.

The ULSG will work based on the conclusions formulated at the meetings together with the local coordinator. All decisions will be made by considering the majority of the group members.

## 9. City Profile Ústí nad Labem

### **Key facts**

- Population: 93 409, stagnating
- Unemployment: 10,4 %
- GDP/person: 11400 EUR
- Key economic sector in the employment: services
- Life expectancy: Men 73 years, Women 79,3 years

### **1. Main characteristics of the city**

#### **1.1. Geography**

Ústí nad Labem, formerly known by its German name Aussig, is the 8<sup>th</sup> most populous city of the Czech Republic. It is the capital of its eponymous region, thus the region's authorities and the University are located here.

Ústí is situated in a mountainous district at the confluence of the Bílina and Elbe rivers. The city is an important industrial (chemical, food industry), educational, business and cultural centre in the North part of the Czech Republic. Ústí is a centre for tourism owing to the romantic landscape of the Bohemian Highlands (České středohoří) and the České Švýcarsko National Park.

Regarding its transport connections, some main European roads and railway lines connecting Berlin via Prague to Vienna or Budapest, together with the Elbe waterway, cross Ústí nad Labem Region. The region is also crossed by the D8 motorway, which connects Prague with the German border.

#### **1.2. Social and economic profile of the city**

Ústí has a population of 93 409 inhabitants, maintaining a shrinking tendency nowadays. The city's ethnic composition is made of Czech 93%, Slovak 2%, German 1% and 2% belonging to other ethnicities. The Roma population is estimated to be 10%.

Regarding the economic situation of the city, there is a slight growth tendency in the last years. Nonetheless, the unemployment rate is rather high – 10,4%.

#### **1.3. Governance**

The decision making structure is made up the Assembly of Representatives, the City Council, the Mayor and the Deputy Mayors. Considering the administrative structure, there is the City Hall with a Secretary and four municipal offices.

#### **1.4. Key challenges the city is facing**

The city is confronted with numerous social problems, including high levels of social exclusion (especially for the 10% Roma population), substance abuse and criminality. Besides, the unemployment rate and the low educational level of the inhabitants (compared to the national average level) further complicate the municipality's situation. These economic problems arose mainly due to the transformation of the economic structures, leaving behind abandoned brownfields in the city. Therefore, the development of sport facilities and public spaces could contribute to lessen both social and economic difficulties.

## ***2. Main characteristics in terms of urban sports and healthy living***

### ***2.1. Sport facilities***

Ústí has a couple of active parks such as Mestske Sady and Sektorove Centrum, providing opportunities for playing petanque and ball sports. Besides more traditional facilities (such as swimming pools, spas, an ice rink, football and athletic stadiums, tennis courts, fitness centres, climbing and bouldering walls), the city is also equipped with a bike park called Hill of Strizovice. Moreover, while Milada Lake is appropriate for windsurfing and kitesurfing, Hostovice and Dobetice offer space for paragliding. Furthermore, the Marian rock, the Strizovice hill, the central park in Severni Terasa housing estate, the playgrounds of different housing estate and schools, as well as Elbe's riversides are all green public places.

### ***2.2. Health***

Leading causes of death are cardiovascular diseases and oncological problems. The main chronic diseases include diabetes and various allergies. The number of patients grows very steeply and it is high above the national average.

The average life expectancy at birth is 76 years.

## ***3. Opportunities and challenges addressed by the VITAL CITIES network***

### ***3.1. Overall challenge***

The city of Ústí nad Labem is currently concentrating on issues related to social inclusion, public space renovations and reasonable urban development, as well as sport and health promotion.

One significant challenge in Ústí is determined by the fact that in the end of the 80s, sports and public facilities were taken away in favour of car parking, especially in the dense multi-storage block buildings. Consequently, the shortage of sport facilities (such as football pitches) and also playgrounds is typical in some areas of the city. In addition, some of the deprived zones (for instance Předlice) are troublesome for the Municipality because the perception of public safety here is not satisfactory enough, determining parents to avoid allowing children to use public spaces alone. Therefore, the municipality must not only improve the physical infrastructure, but also work on changing mind-sets.

Along the same lines, authorities believe that the promotion of sport events should have an enlarged target. These important actions (such as half-marathons) are disseminated through the city's newspaper, website, Facebook page and posters, but are not inclusive enough in terms of audience. An emphasis put on children and youngsters could motivate them to replace some of their daily habits which keep them inactive, like using computers for long periods of time, with physical activities. Furthermore, the elderly population would also benefit from events dedicated to their age group, since an active lifestyle can be commenced anytime.

Last but not least, a significant challenge for the city is reconnecting to its river since for the moment, the banks are cut off by large and heavy infrastructure. Nevertheless, the European Motorway Prague – Dresden will soon be ready, reducing the amount of traffic that goes through

the city and the Elbe valley, and the construction of a tunnel is planned. These actions will allow the city to take full advantage of the natural landscape and provide riverside public space for sport activities.

### **3.2. Concrete needed investments**

- Building and reconstruction of derelict playgrounds
- Innovative access in using the current infrastructure
- Building new sport infrastructure in suitable places

## **4. Existing general strategies & policy instruments of the city related to urban sports promotion and healthy lifestyle**

Apart from the investments made in the physical infrastructure, the *City Development Strategy 2015-2020* partially deals with sports and lifestyle matters by emphasising the need for active work with persons at risk of social exclusion, as well as for enhancing conditions for sport and leisure activities through adequate urban development.

Also, the municipality has a subsidy created as a tool for the realisation of The Healthy City and Local Agenda 21 Projects through small programmes.

## **5. Learning needs and best practices related to the main topics of the project**

### **5.1. Learning needs**

The city does not have a policy addressing sport issues in a coordinated and well planned way, meaning that weaknesses in this field are not dealt with through an integrated approach. Therefore, the municipality would like to learn how to work in a more structured way. In addition, Ústí nad Labem aspires to learn how to:

- use sport in public places as a tool for social inclusion, focusing on the deprived areas
- find simple, yet effective solutions which can harness the potential of existing places without need for big investments
- discover tools for the involvement of local communities and community empowerment
- improve the image of the city, effective PR and branding of activities
- improve the promotion of healthy lifestyles by using new ICT tools
- organize new activities and modern, attractive regular events with their successful promotion
- search for possibilities of using commercial sports facilities for public purposes

### **5.2. Good practices**

Although Ústí nad Labem does not have much experience in the field, the city could share the projects which are being implemented under the framework of the Healthy City project guaranteed by the World Health Organization (WHO):

- Charity of Usti nad Labem – Activity dance ensemble Somnakune Chace
- High school of Health, Palachova – Being overweight is not IN

- High school, Jateční – In motion!
- Owners of the house Tolstoy – Go to the woods!
- Kindergarten Butterfly, Kepler - A healthy boy and a girl, it's our kindergarten!

In addition, the city is a member of a voluntary association of municipalities called Lake Milada that focuses on the organization of cultural and sports programs which do not require special infrastructure and their inputs are low-cost. Innovative ideas learned in this association could be disseminated for the other partners.

Related to the VITAL CITIES network's themes, Ústí nad Labem has good practices to be shared in terms of:

### ***Theme 1: Implementing community-based actions to redesign the public space***

- In the framework of the *City Park – Active Park* children's playgrounds, sports/workout facilities, petanque, inline skating and skate parks were built, while green areas were renewed.
- The city has, in addition, a very nice example of brownfield redevelopment through the project called the *Sector Centre*. In the concerned area, a shopping mall was due to be built. However, the construction that started in the 80s never finished due to the velvet revolution and the lengthy court trials over the land's ownership, turning the area into a brownfield. The city seized the opportunity to buy it and turned it into a multipurpose sports facility, after consulting the residents of the neighbourhood to understand their needs. As a result, a field hockey pitch, basketball pitches and 2 petanque areas have been installed. Around the area, there is a walking/cycling path used, amongst others, by elderly Nordic walkers. A small circuit offers space for children practising their bicycle skills. The area is well connected via walking / cycling lanes, but there is still a desire to improve it by bridging the main and busy entrance road of the quarters.
- Moreover, local NGOs are quite active in organizing sport activities. They organize public workouts for excluded population and mainly for Roma residents. In the Předlice primary school, 100 % of the pupils belong to the Roma ethnicity. Leisure activities are organized for both pupils and adults (for instance on the school's playground).

### ***Theme 3: Better orchestrating the services coordinated by the city to promote healthy life style***

- The city council operates a voucher scheme for children under 18 years old in order to motivate them to participate in sports without bearing all costs themselves.

### ***Theme 4: Establishing innovative physical (not IT) equipment to promote sport in public spaces***

- The City Park is located in the city's largest quarter, Severní Terasi (approx. 25 000 inhabitants), a neighbourhood where high-rise blocks started being built in the 70s and have extended from there on. The park is equipped with a game called *6 Minutes for Health*, a route of 300m, which is marked in different ways: every 50m are signalled with a marking stone, while every 100m have a big stopwatch. The intention is to encourage people to walk briskly during 6 minutes, keep track of their time and distance,

so that after 6 minutes they can evaluate their performance. An information board shows different physical fitness levels, based on the participant's age, going from a green zone (good), to an orange one (worrying), and ending with a red one (dangerous). In addition, people can get in contact by using the link/address written on the information plate. The advantages of this game are that it is very easy to understand and is a low cost investment. In this case, the game was created by volunteering organisations including the cardiologist society.

#### ***Theme 5: Organisation of innovative events to promote healthy lifestyle***

- The town can be proud of the half marathon as an event that makes the city famous. In addition, spontaneous sport groups organise sport events in an informal way.

### ***6. Initial Focus of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP)***

The IAP should cover the area of the city enlarged up to Milada Lake. The overall goal is to develop an action plan that deals with developing public spaces, tackling social exclusion by ensuring open access to recreation and sports activities for all citizens, while also promoting physical activities and healthy lifestyles in an integrated way.

#### ***Potential objectives of the IAP***

- To analyse the current situation in order to find prospective locations suitable for small investments that can have considerable impacts
- To define potential areas for sport activities, especially in deprived neighbourhoods where these can be turned into tools for social inclusion
- To design a concept for the development of these areas by activating, involving and empowering local communities
- To suggest plans for sports orientated activities and events to be held on a regular basis
- To define plans for promotion, dissemination and communication

#### ***Potential Target Areas***

The Mariánská rocks are at the outskirts of the city, facing the inner city area on the Elbe embankment. Currently, they are still in use as a stone quarry. The rocks could offer a climbing wall facility, but also host an already planned new pathway, which would go from the city to the upper quarters and to the private zoo.

The Central Park Severní Terasa is a big, yet enclosed space between high rising blocks of the 70s. The park offers a small park café, playgrounds, free Wi-Fi and also some outdoor fitness equipment. There are cultural features like sculptures and a pond with a bridge used sometimes as a 'cat-walk'. There is a walking / cycling lane that could be improved and marked in order to encourage people to use it for cycling or inline skating.

Also, the area around the Elbe River and Milada Lake could be target areas. Besides, the neglected areas and unused spaces in neighbourhoods could be appropriate places for implementing new sport infrastructures.



### ***Framework of the implementation***

The following operational programmes provide the framework of implementation of the IAP:

- OP Research, Development and Education
  - Priority: TO9 - Social inclusion
- IROP (Integrational Regional Operational Program): aims to improve public administration and public services in the Czech Republic, particularly in the areas of education, health care, social services, social inclusion, regional transport, urban development, and culture
  - priority: Enhancement of public services and quality life of the citizens

## ***7. Approach and composition of the URBACT Local Group (ULSG)***

### ***The key stakeholders recommended to be involved in the ULSG:***

- Municipality:
  - Department of Strategic Development
  - Department of Investment and Urban planning, City architects
  - Department of Culture, Sports and Social affairs
- People in Need, NGO
- Primary schools in deprived areas: Předlice - headmaster
- City Districts, Sports Union, Senior Council, Voluntary Centre, Youth Centre

In general, the ULSG will be set up as a new group, although the different stakeholders have already collaborated on different topics within the municipality. The Municipality has worked together with the People in Need and with the Youth Centre as well. The ULSG will be appointed officially by the City Council, giving it higher credit and motivation. The selected members will be those who are interested in the topic, who are active and creative. It is believed that being part of the group will be more than just a duty. Depending on the motivation of the ULSG members, the possibility of attending some of the transnational meetings and learning from abroad will be created. The Municipality intends to organize regular appointments, active discussions, constant cooperation with the lead and thematic experts, bringing inputs and knowledge and providing feedback on outputs for the ULSG.

## 10. City Profile Vestfold County

### **Key facts**

- Population: 245.000, growing tendency
- Unemployment: 4, 1 %
- GDP/person: 34 555 EUR
- Key economic sector in the employment: Agriculture, industry, service, public sector.
- Life expectancy: Men 79 years, Women 83 years

### **1. Main characteristics of the city**

#### **1.1. Geography**

Vestfold County has a central position on the eastern coastline, south of the Norwegian capital of Oslo. Tønsberg is the regional capital and also one of Norway's oldest cities. Vestfold was historically an important place for trade and commerce and the footsteps of the Vikings are still visible in the landscapes. Seafaring and

fishing have always been important activities in the areas.

Despite being the smallest Norwegian county in size with 2.216 square kilometres, it is the third most densely populated with 108 person/km<sup>2</sup>. The county consists of 14 municipalities with 8 small and medium sized cities. The coastline is 980 kilometres long with more than 1000 islands, yet 80% of the population lives in the eastern coastal areas. The county's northern cities are well connected to the capital, but a large part of the county is more peripheral, playing the role of Oslo's "backyard". Vestfold is well connected, both at national and international level by train, bus, and local and national airports.

#### **1.2. Social and economic profile of the city**

Vestfold County has a population of 245 000 inhabitants, maintaining an increasing tendency nowadays, with 41 239 inhabitants in Tønsberg and 44 929 in Sandefjord. 12,2% of the county's population belongs to an ethnic minority and the ethnic configuration is comprised of: Europeans (without Turkey) - 7,2%, Asians (with Turkey) - 3,5%, South/Central Americans - 3%, North Americans - 2 % and Africans - 1,1 %.

The unemployment rate is 4,1%, and in addition, 11,2% of the population is permanently outside the work force due to physical and/or mental health issues (compared to the 9,4% national average).

The GDP/person is 34 555 euro per capita in Vestfold County, whereas the national average is app. 60 111 euro. The economy has been in decline since 2008 and the crisis in the Norwegian oil and gas industry is contributing to further decline. The key economic sectors in employment are agriculture, industry, service and public sector. Besides, there is a big tourism industry.

#### **1.4. Governance**

Public administration in Norway has a structure with three levels: central government, county government and municipal government. The County Council is the principal elected body, and consists of 39 members who are directly elected every 4 years. The County Council meets 5-6 times a year to make decisions vital to the region. The Council exercises its power through its budget and planning system. There are three principal standing committees whose members are

elected by the county council. These committees provide the political leadership for the County Councils main activities.

The county, through its Departments of Regional Development, Culture and Education, is actively involved in urban development, in cooperation with the municipalities. The county administration is responsible for building and administering high schools. It finances the building of sports and physical infrastructure for sports and culture activities and supports public health measures, such as facilitating and stimulating outdoor activities.

#### ***1.4. Key challenges the cities are facing***

Vestfold County is confronted with serious social problems like loneliness, isolation, school dropout, inactivity, mental health problems and obesity. Moreover, the educational level of the county is lower than the national average.

Economic growth in the county is low and declining compared to the national level. As a result, one of the main challenges is the loss of employment opportunities for less educated groups. Besides, the county harbours several highly specialized technical businesses and research facilities. Yet, compared to the rest of the country, the cities face challenges such as unemployment and job market exclusion especially among youths. Furthermore, the young population moves out for education, while in the family grounding phase it chooses to return, engendering an enormous challenge for the municipalities in terms of spatial planning. In addition, the part of the youth that stays requires, generally, social benefits schemes.

In terms of spatial planning, the municipality must manage the land use conflict generated by the pressure to build houses and the need to protect the best farmlands and the Viking heritage. The residents' wish to build summer houses is one of the biggest issues.

Additionally, there is a risk of urban sprawl - e.g. for shopping malls. The municipality has the intention to concentrate these commercial buildings into towns instead of letting the urban sprawl to continue developing. In order to achieve it, a new spatial plan has been designed focusing on a "strategic densification of towns". This transformation would be beneficial also for the city centres of the county which are declining/degrading and where the living conditions are generally poorer than in other areas.

## ***2. Main characteristics in terms of urban sports and healthy living***

### ***2.1 Sport facilities***

Although all cities have public spaces and parks in various sizes, with at least one public space suitable for sports, most of them are not particularly attractive or well-equipped for outdoor physical activities. Nonetheless, there are more than 300 formal sports clubs in the county. All the municipalities have facilities like football fields (many both indoors and outdoors), handball arenas and swimming pools. During wintertime, most municipalities offer ice skating rinks and prepare tracks for cross-country skiing.

Moreover, encouraging walking and cycling is an important goal on the policy agenda. The county's almost 1000km of coastline are well-served by a North-South cycle path.

## **2.2. Health**

Obesity affects an increasing proportion of the population (e.g. 35% of pregnant women at their first medical control and 27% of men above 18 years). Approximately 34% of the population in the age group 30-74 years suffers from diabetes, requiring specialized treatment. In the age group 45-74 years, 107 persons out of 1000 suffer from respiratory diseases. In terms of cardiovascular diseases, in the age group 0-74 years, 135 persons out of 1000 require appropriate medication. The rate of obesity among children (at regional level) is alarming as well: 3.5% of the 8-year-old children are obese, while for the same age group, the percentage of obese and overweight reaches 15.4%.

The leading causes of death in the county are cancer, cardiovascular diseases, respiratory diseases, mental disorders, neural diseases and accidents. The regional data shows that the 25% of adult population (16-79 years) conducts exercises for less than 1 hour per week, not meeting the general recommendation.

The investigation of lifestyle differences between social groups will be part of an on-going research project. On national level, there are documented lifestyle differences between social groups. Groups with lower or no education tend to be less physically active and eat unhealthier than groups that are more educated. In addition, the level of mental problems, lifestyle diseases, smoking and alcohol consumption are higher in these groups as well.

The average life expectancy in the county is 79 years for men and 83 years for women.

## **3. Opportunities and challenges addressed by the VITAL CITIES network**

### **3.1. Overall challenge**

Social inequalities are mirrored in the participation in sports activities and in the different lifestyles people have. It means that lifestyle diseases and obesity are overrepresented in disadvantaged groups and groups with low levels of education.

In addition, increasing inactivity among the youth is a concern. The main challenge is that many of the city centres lack areas suitable for physical activities for the youth, particularly for girls, especially due to the increasing privatization of the urban landscapes. The accessible ones are often in poor quality.

Furthermore, many places prioritize cars and parking spaces over people and hence public spaces are decreasing in the cities. As a consequence, the residents do not consider the public spaces attractive and inviting.

Finally, public services could be better orchestrated, both in general and in terms of sport service provision in cities.

### **3.2. Concrete needed investments**

In general, Vestfold County would like to determine Norwegians to spend more time outdoors. For this, the municipalities need to make their public spaces more inviting for physical activity

and nurture leisure and socialising. Developing the infrastructure would not only encourage more people to practice sports, but would also improve the overall aspect of the built environment, making cities more attractive for inhabitants.

#### ***4. Existing general strategies & policy instruments of the city related to urban sports promotion and healthy lifestyle***

In 2013 the county ratified an overarching plan for the area, including transport development and city planning, called the *Regional Plan for Sustainable Area Policy*. Through this plan, the county has developed strategies, maps and guidelines for the county's development. These maps document the most important local recreational areas and green structures, categorized with values from A (highest value) to C.

Additionally, the county has developed and implemented a variety of plans covering a wide range of themes, such as:

- Regional strategic plan for culture
- Regional plan for education and training
- Regional plan for public health

A variety of partnerships have been designed to implement these plans.

#### ***5. Learning needs and best practices related to the main topics of the project***

##### ***5.1. Learning needs***

- How to succeed to turn the cities' plans from theory to practice
- How to activate the population, since, in general, Norwegians spend too much time indoors
- How to redesign public spaces to motivate residents to use them for sport activities in order to combat obesity, inactivity and loneliness.
- How to encourage cooperation and coordination between municipality departments in order to use resources in the best possible way
- How to redesign public places to be a place for inclusion and integration of different generations
- Experiment with urban design and temporary instalments to see how these affect residents' behaviour and activity in public spaces

##### ***5.2. Good practices***

In general, the Municipality would like to share knowledge and planning experience related to

- experience with developing tools for policymaking
- broad partnership networks (businesses, enterprises, educational institutions, municipalities)
- well-established financial tools and assets
- perspectives of regional development

Related to the specific project themes, Vestfold County has the following good practices to be shared:

***Theme 3: Better orchestrating the services coordinated by the city to promote healthy life style***

- The municipality of Horten has developed a program and methodology promoting and stimulating healthy eating and physical activity in kindergartens and schools, called: Health promoting adolescence in Horten (*HOPP-project*). HOPP focuses on nutrition and diet, physical activity in learning situations at school, in addition to capacity building among teachers and parents. A strong point is the multilevel approach to these issues, and the ultimate vision to enhance physical activity for the whole population. On the other hand, these efforts need to be better orchestrated, and implemented in urban public space, as low-threshold recreation facilities inviting people to become physically active in their spare-time. The municipal administration has done a self-evaluation of the HOPP-program, mainly considering the administrative matters. The University College Campus Kristiania has started a prospective clinical controlled study on the effects of 60 minutes of daily physical activities in every primary school in Horten, measured by physiological variables, psychological health and academic levels. Besides, the research will monitor effects of nutritional guidance for parents.

***Theme 4: Establishing innovative physical (not IT) equipment to promote sport in public spaces***

- The county has also developed coherent paths (coastal-path, Viking-path, pilgrim-path) along the eastern coastline suited for walking and cycling. These paths are part of the North Sea Trail.
- Active Horten
- Healthy Local Communities

***Theme 5: Organisation of innovative events to promote healthy lifestyle***

- Also, the Municipality has best practices in the following fields with a focus on the investigation of the background, obstacles of and solutions for inactivity:
  - Monitoring public health, and considering social determinants, risk factors, protective and health-promoting factors and local challenges, in a systematic manner
  - Mapping environmental and social qualities in local areas at neighbourhood level, adopting a participatory approach where people map what they consider valuable in their community
  - Mapping green spaces using GIS-technology, regional governance, democratic participatory processes, bottom-up planning

***6. Initial focus of the Local Action Plan (IAP)***

The overall objective of the IAP will be to develop public spaces to stimulate physical activity and interaction, and thereby make the county's cities more attractive for inhabitants. It includes

creating meeting places and increasing participation in social life for vulnerable groups. In addition, the county would like to achieve more physical activity, better mental and physical health, less loneliness, less obesity for all age groups through the following actions:

- Activate youth, especially girls
- Create places of contact between generations
- Generate activity to improve public health
- Revitalize the urban landscapes of towns and cities
- Use historical and modern urban spaces to strengthen the sense of place and identity

### ***Target groups***

In general, the target group of the IAP is composed of the residents of the cities with a focus on the ones living in the city centre without available sport facilities or green spaces appropriate for doing sport. Nevertheless, the IAP intends to concentrate on the youth, in order to motivate them to contribute to the development of the society as a whole, both on short and long term.

## ***7. Approach and composition of the Urban Local Group (ULSG)***

***Key groups of stakeholders recommended to be involved in the ULSG are:***

- local youth
- student organisations, youth activity centres
- politicians, elected officials
- county and municipal authorities from a broad range of sectors
- city departments (public health, city development, civil society)
- NGOs such as Sports Clubs, non-profit organizations
- urban planning experts
- high schools, secondary schools
- local businesses and business associations
- land owners

On the first ULSG meeting, the following municipality staff members participated and they will have an important role in the further ULSG meetings as well:

- Arild Moen, Director, Department of Culture, Vestfold County Administration
- Thomas Slagsvold, International Coordinator, Vestfold County Administration/University College of Southeast Norway
- Elin Anne Gunleiksrud, Advisor, Department of Public Health, Vestfold County Administration
- Line Havstein Advisor, Department of Regional Development, Vestfold County Administration
- Per Kvaale Caspersen, Regional Development Sverre Høifødt, Vestfold County Administration
- Katja Buen, Head of Unit, City Development, Horten Municipality
- Ranveig Odden, Public Health Coordinator Horten Municipality
- Raymond Johnsen, Leader, Centre of culture, Vestfold County Administration



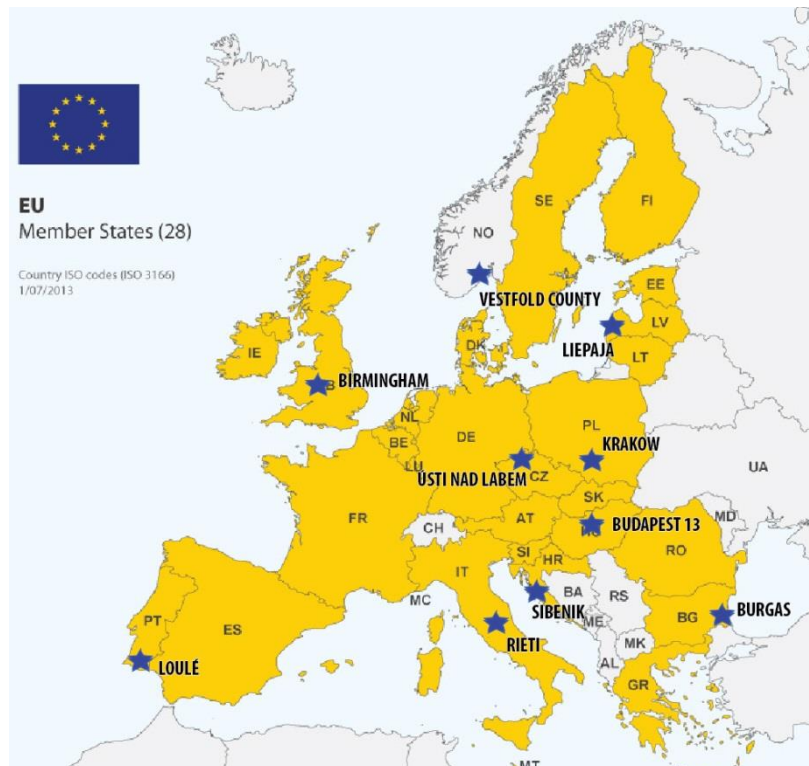
Vestfold County Municipality has a plethora of established networks and partnerships (public health, culture, planning networks, etc.) that could contribute to the project. The Municipality has also established a group of the members of Departments of Regional Development and Culture and Education that will be a key group in this project. They have contacts with municipalities, student organisations, high schools, urban planning experts, etc. A new group will be set up by organizing the ULSG consisting of people from relevant departments. The County is very determined to actively involve the youth. The ULSG is going to be operated by political anchoring, active participation, maintaining a clear vision of the added value brought by the community's participation in the network.

### III. SYNTHESIS

The participants of the “VITAL CITIES - Urban sports promotion for social inclusion, healthy and active living” network aim to enter into a dialogue and learning process to find out how to redesign and reconstruct public spaces by using the power and common language of sport for the promotion of healthy lifestyles with a special focus on deprived residential areas.

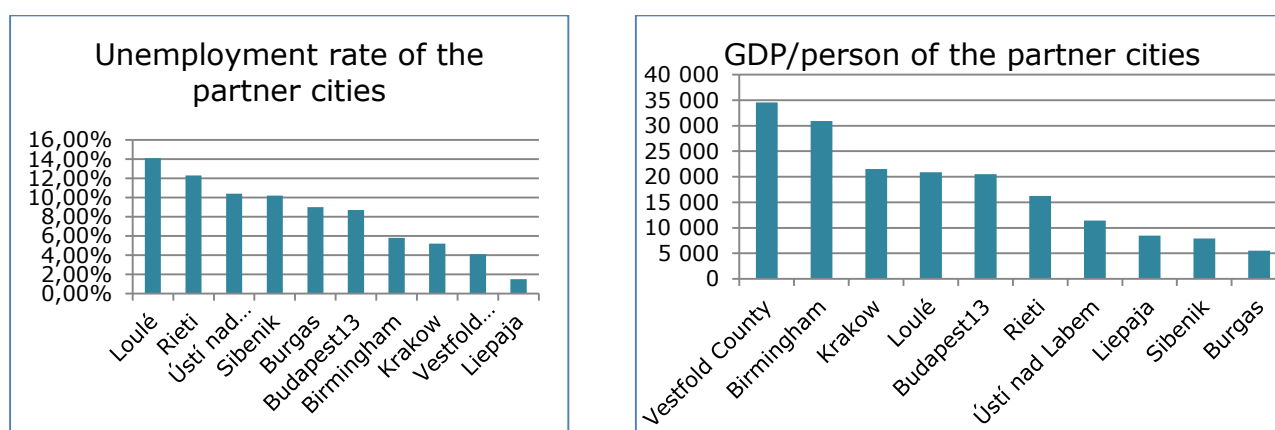
To reverse the alarming trends of physical inactivity and the challenge it presents for cities’ sport infrastructure as outlined in the State of the Art report, partners aim to apply a novel approach: instead of bringing inactive citizens to sports facilities, public space should be turned into a low threshold facility inviting all citizens to physical activity. Opportunities for physical activity need to be designed close to where people live while also creating cleaner, safer, greener and more activity-friendly local environments. As a result of the learning process and if the collaboration is successful, partners will be equipped with new, innovative tools and methods to be used in urban design and planning to reshape public spaces linked to sport and physical activities. Besides adequately providing for recreation and sport services, actions would result in potential social, health and economic benefits.

During Phase 1 the network has been extended from 4 (initially 5 but the City of Eindhoven dropped out) to 10 cities, resulting in a geographically balanced partnership composed of cities facing similar problems related to the proposed policy challenge.



*Figure 4.: The cities of the VITAL CITIES network*

The cities in the network are mostly medium sized ones (with a population ranging from 46 000 to 1.1 million people). They are characterised by relatively high unemployment rates (between 4,1% - Vestfold, and 12% - Rieti). In many of the cases the cities face a shrinking tendency and an ageing society with young adults leaving for economically more prosperous parts of the country. Mostly as a consequence of the high unemployment rate, in nearly all cases social exclusion and isolation, increasing drug use and criminality are considered the most significant social challenges, issues especially difficult to tackle in deprived areas. Within these circumstances sport could be considered as an exceptionally useful tool to address these challenges, as well the health-related ones caused by the inactivity problem described in the State of the Art report and in the City Profiles.



**Figure 5.: The unemployment rates and GDP/person of the partner cities**

The global trend of physical inactivity is also highly relevant for all the partners. Even though most of the cities lack comprehensive and comparable data, it is clearly visible from the city profiles that partner cities' population are highly concerned by the health problems related to physical inactivity (cardiovascular diseases), obesity and diabetes. Especially youth and children are at risk of entering into the dangerous lifecycle of physical inactivity as described in the State of the Art report. Therefore, partners consider children and youth, as well as senior citizens among the most vulnerable social groups and the most relevant target groups for improving physical activity levels.

During the city visits each partner defined the learning needs in terms of the policy challenges and capacity building, experiences and practices to be shared within the network. The results of this work and the additional needs that emerged are summarised in the tables below in the following order:

1. Learning needs of partner cities
2. Needs in terms of capacity building
3. Potential Contribution in terms of experience
4. Potential contribution of good practice related to the project themes
5. Development of Integrated Action Plans
6. Initial composition of the ULSGs

## 1. Learning needs of partner cities

The table below explains the specific learning needs of partner cities that emerged from partners' self-evaluation as well as during the city visits. Partners have also ranked the relevance of the 5 themes of the VITAL CITIES concept with regards to their specific learning needs (1 = the most interesting, 5 = least interesting).

Partner City	Learning Needs	Ranking of the Relevance of Project Themes				
		Theme 1 (Community-based actions)	Theme 2 (IT-based actions)	Theme 3 (Services)	Theme 4 (Equipment)	Theme 5 (Events)
Loulé	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- awareness raising amongst citizens on existing offer of sport facilities</li> <li>- how to use social media and ICT-platforms for awareness raising</li> <li>- methods for the integration of socially vulnerable groups</li> <li>- multi-functional small scale sports equipment</li> <li>- Placemaking method</li> <li>- funding opportunities for IAP</li> </ul>	5	2	1	3	4
Birmingham	-development of a monitoring system by catching relevant data on how many people are physically active as to build evidence for investments to be done	1	3	4	5	2
BP13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- involvement of citizens in decision-making processes</li> <li>- co-designing and promoting new public spaces for physical activities and sports (from Birmingham)</li> <li>- funding opportunities for IAP</li> </ul>	3	5	1	4	2
Burgas	- citizens' need assessment concerning physical activity (what kind of sports or physical activity would they like prefer doing?)	1	4	2	3	5

Partner City	Learning Needs	Ranking of the Relevance of Project Themes				
		Theme 1 (Community-based actions)	Theme 2 (IT-based actions)	Theme 3 (Services)	Theme 4 (Equipment)	Theme 5 (Events)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- involvement of citizen in data collection and co-design of public spaces (especially at high-rise housing estates)</li> <li>- methods of encouraging and motivating citizens for physical activity</li> <li>- implementation of informal sports' types in the city</li> <li>- the potential of sports as a tool for crime prevention, social inclusion and health prevention</li> <li>- integration of public sports with public transport facilities</li> </ul>					
Krakow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- involvement of citizens in decision-making processes</li> <li>- experience with the URBACT methodology</li> <li>- integration of public sports with public transport facilities (especially in suburbs)</li> <li>- methods of encouraging and motivating citizens for physical activity</li> <li>- awareness raising amongst citizens on existing offer of sport facilities</li> <li>- green space management (from Budapest, Birmingham)</li> </ul>	2	5	1	3	4
Liepaja	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- methods for the integration of socially vulnerable groups</li> <li>- ways to involve different target groups</li> <li>- ways to motivate young people for physical activity</li> <li>- how to launch and operate a city sports card</li> <li>- green space management (from Budapest, Birmingham)</li> <li>- development of a monitoring system by catching relevant data on how many people are</li> </ul>	3	1	2	5	4

Partner City	Learning Needs	Ranking of the Relevance of Project Themes				
		Theme 1 (Community-based actions)	Theme 2 (IT-based actions)	Theme 3 (Services)	Theme 4 (Equipment)	Theme 5 (Events)
	physically active as to build evidence for investments done (opinion pools from Budapest)					
Rieti	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- integrated approach towards urban planning, management of sport facilities and communication</li> <li>- awareness raising amongst citizens on existing offer of sport facilities</li> <li>- funding opportunities for IAP</li> </ul>	1	5	3	4	2
Šibenik	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ways to involve different target groups</li> <li>- ways to motivate young people for physical activity</li> <li>- ways to raise the inhabitants' awareness on already existing facilities (active parks from Birmingham)</li> <li>- development of a monitoring system by catching relevant data on how many people are physically active as to build evidence for investments done</li> <li>- revitalising former military base ( from Liepaja)</li> </ul>	1	4	5	3	2
Ústí nad Labem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- integrated approach towards urban planning, management of sport facilities and communication</li> <li>- sport as a tool for social inclusion in deprived areas</li> <li>- involvement of citizens in decision-making processes</li> <li>- involvement of citizen in data collection and co-design of public spaces (especially at high-rise housing estates)</li> <li>- ways to promote healthy life-style by using new ICT tools</li> </ul>	5	2	1	4	3

Partner City	Learning Needs	Ranking of the Relevance of Project Themes				
		Theme 1 (Community-based actions)	Theme 2 (IT-based actions)	Theme 3 (Services)	Theme 4 (Equipment)	Theme 5 (Events)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- develop attractive regular events with successful promotion</li> <li>- ways to utilise commercial sports facilities for public purposes</li> <li>- funding opportunities for IAP</li> </ul>					
Vestfold County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- methods of encouraging and motivating citizens for physical activity</li> <li>- involvement of citizen in co-design of public spaces (from Budapest, Ústí nad Labem)</li> <li>-how to redesign public places to be a place for inclusion and integration of different generations</li> <li>-temporary instalments to see how these affect residents' behaviour and activity in public spaces</li> <li>- managing green spaces with volunteers (from Birmingham)</li> </ul>	2	4	1	3	5



The 5 themes of the project were all relevant to partners but not in an equal manner.

In terms of the cities' sport infrastructures, the challenges identified in the State of the Art report clearly reverberate among all the partners. Regarding these challenges the most relevant project themes were community-based actions to redesign public space (Theme 1), better orchestrating the services of the cities (Theme 3) and to find innovative physical equipment to promote a healthy lifestyle (Theme 4).

Even though numerous cities are making significant investments in upgrading their sport and leisure facilities (Krakow, Loulé, Liepaja), in almost all cases the lack or insufficient volume of outdoor spaces suitable for sports activities is a problem. In this sense, deprived areas are especially affected. Furthermore, in many cases limited city budgets make it difficult to maintain the central infrastructure while also facilitating access for physical activity for all segments of the population in deprived areas (Loulé and Krakow, but also relevant for the other partners). As the inner city areas are increasingly developed, the lack of space suitable for physical activities and conflicts of use (like car-parking) are also enormous problems (Birmingham, Budapest, Vestfold, Ústí nad Labem). Parks and playgrounds are often inadequately equipped and even potentially dangerous (Sibenik, Ústí nad Labem, Budapest). Also, the lack of suitable transportation is an obstacle which limits citizens living in the suburbs to access the urban sport infrastructure.

The cities are, therefore, very interested in implementing community-based actions and finding innovative, low-cost equipment to tackle these issues. Besides, the partners are also interested in upgrading the run-down infrastructure (like ex-military camps, socialist designed playgrounds, and abandoned brownfields) in a similar manner with the involvement of the community.

For engaging the local community, the Placemaking method, also described in the first part, was found as a powerful method by the partners.

Most of the cities emphasized during their visit the difficulty to 'team up' with the local community and more specific NGOs and citizens, in order to achieve co-designed community actions and public spaces. In some cases, municipalities thought they might have been too much in the lead and sometimes not connected with their cities well enough, especially in terms of realistic delivery of plans within a bottom up approach. The concrete need evolved as having a systematic way of working on this "knowledge gap" by using a proven set of tools. The Placemaking method which has proven to be useful in previous (EU-) funded and URBACT projects raised solid interest resulting in a need to learn to embrace this methodology. It will be incorporated into the implementation process of the VITAL CITIES project and specific expertise will be sought to guide the partners in this process.

Many of the cities have a vivid sport life with a wide range of sports to offer (Krakow, Loulé) and various events therefore the organisation of innovative events (Theme 5) proved to be less relevant for partners.

Regarding Theme 2, the IT-based action to redesign public spaces, it turned out that it would be a great additional tool to a newly emerging need, namely on data capturing and monitoring methods.

As emerging from the planning guides reviewed for the State of the Art report, mapping of the existing facilities and their use is key to determine development goals, as well as build an evidence-based policy for future investments.

For enclosed sport facilities, it is easier to capture data through existing technologies (like smart cash registers, smart sport and city cards). However, for open public spaces, monitoring is less obvious given the nature and character of the facility and their users. This fact might be hindering investment decisions in favour of the traditional sport facilities.

During the city visit it turned out that only a few advanced cities have embraced the entire policy cycle related to monitoring physical activity levels and usage, while others lack even data on enclosed, formal facilities. The majority of cities lack relevant, comparable data on physical activity levels of the different target groups, as well data on how citizens use public space for physical activity. Only Birmingham, Krakow and Vestfold dispose of a suitable monitoring system and indicators from which other cities could learn. While Budapest is regularly monitoring the quality of the green spaces, data on how people use them is missing.

Some cities have already started gaining and retrieving data by analysing simple surveys or new high tech systems like GPS-tracking systems in public bike schemes, but also by following social on-line platforms and social media.

This could be a basis of a learning process and exchange between cities on data capturing and monitoring methods in order to find the best method to collect data by also involving residents. Some additional professional knowledge might be needed for this.

## 2. Needs in terms of capacity building

The following table shows the issues and learning needs in terms of capacity building both internally, for the municipality and with regards to the ULSGs.

Partner City	Learning needs in terms of capacity building
Loulé	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- improve cross departmental cooperation within the municipality</li> <li>- breaking down the silos between the departments</li> <li>- increase stakeholder involvement, especially from the Healthcare sector</li> <li>- funding opportunities for IAP's</li> </ul>
Birmingham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- innovative data collection methods</li> <li>- breaking down the silos between the departments</li> </ul>
BP13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Public Spaces Plc. aims to improve its development protocol, and introduce innovative solutions.</li> <li>- new ideas for its public space regeneration programmes and learn new methods to co-create public spaces with the residents</li> <li>- funding opportunities for IAP's</li> </ul>
Burgas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- risk management capacities</li> <li>- increase stakeholder involvement, especially at deprived residential areas</li> <li>- find preliminary assessment methods of new stakeholders</li> </ul>
Krakow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- stakeholder engagement</li> </ul>

	- improve cross-departmental cooperation within the municipality
Liepāja	- how to discuss the further investments with the city - stakeholder engagement, sharing of responsibility - gain and also share knowledge in terms of business plans and financial management
Rieti	- integrated approach towards stakeholder engagement - improve cross-departmental cooperation within the municipality - knowledge sharing in a cross-disciplinary way - funding opportunities for IAP's
Šibenik	- networking - proactive involvement of core stakeholders - development of joint actions of the Municipality Departments, city owned institutions and NGOs
Ústí nad Labem	- capacity sharing between operational issues and policy planning within the municipality - branding and PR for its activities - funding opportunities for IAP's
Vestfold County	- improve cross-departmental cooperation within the municipality - resource efficiency - better connect policy development (theory) with on ground delivery, embracing bottom-up initiatives at public spaces(=practice).

The lack of integrated approach, as identified in the State of the Art report, which would harmonise urban planning principles with sport planning is a common challenge in each of the cases. Partners intend to be pioneers in breaking this barrier and work in a cross-departmental way to better orchestrate their services. This is essential in order to leverage the significant benefits of physical activity that go beyond health, such as social, environmental, as well as economic benefits, especially regarding the health care system.

Partners also wish to create a "VITAL CITIES" brand to be allocated to cities ensuring open access to recreation and sport services and breaking down barriers to participation especially among people leaving in low-income neighbourhoods. Creation of such a brand would also help to exploiting the transnational cooperation beyond the projects' lifetime.

Remarkably, the majority of the partner cities mentioned they regard the VITAL CITIES network being only the start of a long term cooperation which goes beyond the lifespan of the project, since they all expect the path towards a more physically active population to be a long and hard one, intertwining with other policy areas like public health and food.

Therefore, cities would like to consider how to spark a long term movement by creating a VITAL CITY brand, an umbrella which can stimulate cities to yield for a higher qualification step by step, while at the same time get acknowledgement by policy drivers like the European Commission. Therefore, the thought of developing a VITAL CITY brand has rooted and aspects like mobility, informal sports or healthy schools are considered useful ingredients to be developed. As this would require special knowledge both on content and process, cities thought it would be best to have some external guidance and assistance mobilised for this.

### 3. Potential Contribution in terms of experience

This table summarises the experience of partner cities collected during the self-evaluation process and city visits.

Partner City	Potential Contribution in terms of experience
Loulé	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- awarded the title of "European City of Sport 2015" – insight in the composition of city labels/brands</li> <li>- experience in promoting the sport for all principles</li> <li>- a financial programme to promote sports among young people</li> </ul>
Birmingham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- data collection, interpretation and ICT based mechanisms to connect health and sports as well as examples of successful business creation</li> <li>- communication and dissemination</li> </ul>
BP13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- participative planning methods: involvement of residents in the planning of the green spaces' regeneration</li> </ul>
Burgas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- organizing large and small scale sport events</li> <li>-facilitating informal and leisure sports activities</li> <li>-social inclusion and cross-sectorial approach (with health)</li> <li>-health prevention programme</li> <li>-organization of focus groups for sports related matters</li> </ul>
Krakow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- sport as a tool for social inclusion combining expertise from different sectors (sport, education, phycology)</li> <li>- establishing sport-related community centres in deprived areas</li> <li>- involvement of youth, providing after school activities and tutoring for the youth</li> </ul>
Liepaja	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- building and improving cycle paths</li> <li>- voluntarily organized active lifestyle groups</li> <li>- high-quality parks providing great opportunities for sports</li> </ul>
Rieti	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- involvement of children and youth in sport promotion</li> <li>- participatory management of green areas</li> <li>- city-wide sport events</li> </ul>
Šibenik	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-experiences in implementing urban development plan focusing on the city centre</li> <li>-invested in some of the poorly maintained, devastated public spaces or built a new one</li> <li>-relationship with the media on local level, experience and active in using different social networks</li> </ul>
Ústí nad Labem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- participation in the Healthy City project of WHO</li> <li>- participative approaches and teaming up with different stakeholders to reach out to the local Roma community</li> </ul>
Vestfold County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-monitoring public health, and considering social determinants, risk factors and protective and health-promoting factors and local challenges, in a systematic manner</li> <li>- mapping environmental and social qualities in local areas at neighbourhood level with a participatory approach</li> <li>- regional governance, democratic participatory processes, bottom-up planning</li> </ul>

#### 4. Potential contribution of good practice related to the project themes

During Phase 1 partners were asked to carefully review and collect their good practices related to the 5 project themes. The table below presents the summary of these practices.

Partner city	Potential contribution of good practice related to the project themes				
	THEME 1 (Community-based actions)	THEME 2 (IT-based actions)	THEME 3 (Services)	THEME 4 (Equipment)	THEME 5 (Events)
Loulé	"Street workout and Geriatric parks" - municipal program in preparation to revitalize urban public spaces			- sports tracks in different colours, cycling and running track in a well maintained central lane park with workout stations	- various events to promote physical activity for seniors - Walking and running activities - Facebook groups (for informal use of central park lane and in cycling)
Birmingham	- Active Birmingham Programme to get people active in public spaces - Girls can campaign to promote sports among girls and women	- data collection program fed by "Be Active" membership cards	- new financial models such as demonstrating the ROI from physical activity that open spaces can provide to release investment	- Birmingham Bike Scheme providing 5000 orange bikes for free to the most deprived and most excluded parts of population	- The City of Running Programme - Active Parks Programme

Partner city	Potential contribution of good practice related to the project themes				
	THEME 1 (Community-based actions)	THEME 2 (IT-based actions)	THEME 3 (Services)	THEME 4 (Equipment)	THEME 5 (Events)
BP13				- open air fitness	- cultural events in public spaces and parks
Burgas	- focus groups, public debates, as well as educational campaigns to demonstrate the benefits of physical activities			- open air fitness equipment, bicycle routes, bike renting scheme	- Balkan Paralympic tournament - weekly sports events, famous sportsmen promoting healthy lifestyle among children
Krakow	- sport against exclusion - a programme targeted towards children and young people from communities most at risk of social exclusion				- sports coaching for the youth in multifunctional playgrounds, Krakow Youth Olympics, Krakow runs, Krakow walks events - I can swim: provides children and young people with an opportunity to improve their swimming skills

Partner city	Potential contribution of good practice related to the project themes				
	THEME 1 (Community-based actions)	THEME 2 (IT-based actions)	THEME 3 (Services)	THEME 4 (Equipment)	THEME 5 (Events)
Liepaja	- renewal of a former military place	- mobile application with information on the city's sport offer - bonus schemes for people to be active - use of social media for motivating people to move		- running routes, BMX tracks, roller-skating track, volleyball fields - informative signs in popular public spaces where people are doing physical activities	- weekly trainings - cooperation with NGOs to promote their training sessions - strong tradition of health promotion activities
Rieti	- "City of the children" promote two fundamental aspects in the life of children: their autonomy and their participation	- Augmented reality application on city routes		- urban trekking routes, health and fitness paths, pedibus routes	- cycle, running events, competitions - cultural and traditional events
Šibenik	- Converting Dražen Petrović Square into a sports square			- reconstruction and revitalization of a pathway with recreational	- traditional sport events and trainings



Partner city	Potential contribution of good practice related to the project themes				
	THEME 1 (Community-based actions)	THEME 2 (IT-based actions)	THEME 3 (Services)	THEME 4 (Equipment)	THEME 5 (Events)
				infrastructural equipment - interactive game, basketball in the square	
Ústí nad Labem	- installation of various additional equipment while the renewal of green areas (children's playgrounds, workout facilities) - Brownfield redevelopment		- voucher scheme for children under 18 to motivate them to participate in sports	- game called '6 minutes for health'	- public workouts for excluded population and mainly for Roma residents - Half marathon, informal sport events
Vestfold County		- mapping green spaces using GIS-technology	- ongoing project aiming at increasing physical activity in schools and kindergartens, and activating youth during vacations (HOPP-project)	- establishing walking-routes (coastal-path, Viking-path, pilgrim-path)	

Partner cities will work on an issue absolutely urgent and relevant on a European level. Focusing on the core topic, using sport as tool for inclusion in deprived areas while developing public space, only a few cities have good practices. Especially Birmingham, Vestfold and Krakow could be considered as experienced cities with relation to sport and social inclusion, while other partners are only in the beginning of a learning process in bringing these issues together. During Phase 1 partners had the chance to gain a quick glimpse into each other's good practices. This will be further developed during matchmaking exercises in the kick-off meeting, following a more detailed analysis and presentation of the good practices to make sure partners will be able to capitalise from each other's practical experience.

## 5. Development of Integrated Action Plans

Very few cities mentioned to have already 'put some money aside' as to implement their integrated action plan, while most of them stated that they were looking for additional funding, having made no or a limited allocation in their city budget (so far) as to implement the Integrated Action Plan. In very few cases partners were able to already involve the management authority of their regional ERDF programme during the city visit while meeting up with the ULSG. Although this was rarely the case, various cities expressed the absolute importance of having the management authority somehow involved. Moreover, most cities were eager to discover new possibilities for EU and other forms of funding and financing. For EU-funds especially cities hoped to learn about possibilities on cooperation and horizontal funds. However, these funds and financing options are for most of the smaller cities still perceived as rather complex. In order to enhance the chances for the implementation of the Integrated Action Plans, the need to get additional guidance and acquire practical knowledge and skills in this field, as well as to learn how to work in practice with these unknown funds, was expressed.

## 6. Initial composition of the ULSGs

In terms of governance the ULSG network includes some less and some more experienced partners. Krakow's experience with URBACT and working with the various sports organisations, Loulé's extended stakeholder networks and Usti and Labem working with primary schools in deprived areas are all good practices to learn from. The Active Park Program of Birmingham is a good example for engaging volunteers. However, all the partner cities need to improve their capacity in enabling the local government to collaborate with citizens and develop new models for the cooperation. Partners agree on the need for internal institutional changes within the local government and for developing new ways of communication with citizens.

## 7. Overall conclusion

The overall conclusion is that the VITAL CITIES issues are being considered as a policy priority by all participating cities which can be considered as a guaranty for a smooth implementation of the project.

In terms of knowledge transfer and exchange each city brings in specific know how in the interest of other partners. During the city visit debates with the ULSG's some evolution took place regarding learning needs and policy challenges (e.g. data collection and analyses, funding opportunities for the IAP's and the use of specific tools for community engagement). As such these needs will not change but these elements will enrich the final outcome of the project. Regarding the sustainability of the project all cities expressed a clear intention and expectation that the VITAL CITIES project should create a strong basis for further implementation also after the lifetime of the project.