

# VITAL CITIES

Urban sports promotion for social inclusion,  
healthy and active living



## FINAL REPORT 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.



## Table of Contents

I. INTRODUCTION .....	4
II. POLICY CONTEXT .....	4
Themes of the VITAL CITIES Concept .....	6
III. THE GOALS OF THE VITAL CITIES PROJECT .....	6
IV. PROJECT PARTNERS .....	7
V. METHODOLOGY USED IN TRANSNATIONAL EXCHANGE AND LEARNING .....	10
1. THE DEEP DIVE PROCESS .....	10
1.1. Introduction .....	10
1.2. The Self-Analysis process .....	11
1.3. The Deep Dive visitations .....	11
1.4. Peer Review Reports .....	12
1.5. Spin-off projects .....	12
VI. MAIN OUTPUTS OF THE VITAL CITIES PROJECT .....	12
1. INTEGRATED ACTION PLANS (IAPs) .....	12
2. VITAL CITIES LABEL .....	16
2. 1. PRINCIPLES OF A VITAL CITY .....	16
2.2. Purpose of the Label .....	16
2.3. Core standards applied to develop into a Vital City: .....	17
2.5. Transnational Label Governance .....	17
2.6. Advice on the Continuation .....	17
3. INVENTORY OF GOOD PRACTICES .....	18
3.1. Implementing community-based actions to redesign the public space .....	18
3.2. IT-based actions to redesign public space .....	18
3.3. Better orchestrating the services coordinated by the city to promote a healthy life style and social inclusion .....	19
3.4. Establishing innovative physical (not IT) equipment to promote sport in public spaces .....	20
3.5. Organisation of innovative events to promote healthy lifestyle .....	21
VII. POLICY LESSONS .....	21
7.1. The necessity to establish more inclusive governance .....	22
7.1.1. Recommendations on inclusive governance .....	22

7.2. The need to enhance monitoring .....	23
7.2.1. Recommendations on monitoring PA participation and facilities .....	25
7.3. The need to improve social inclusion.....	26
7.3.1. Recommendations to address social activities.....	28
7.4. The need for improving facilities.....	29
7.4.1. Recommendations for improving facilities .....	31
7.5. The need for shared responsibilities .....	32
7.5.1. Recommendations on the need for shared responsibilities.....	33

## I. INTRODUCTION

This Final Report presents the main outcomes and learning points of the VITAL CITIES project.

The VITAL CITIES project, which ran from February 2016 to April 2018, was supported by URBACT, a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development. The purpose of the “VITAL CITIES - Urban sports promotion for social inclusion, healthy and active living” network was 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.**

The 10 partners in the VITAL CITIES network came together because of their common interest in finding a novel approach for this challenge: instead of bringing inactive citizens to sports facilities, public space should be turned into a **low threshold facility** inviting all citizens to physical activity (PA). Opportunities for PA 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, partners found new, innovative tools and methods to be used in urban design and planning to reshape public spaces linked to sport and PA. Besides adequately providing for recreation and sport services, actions result in potential social, health and economic benefits.

The findings and conclusions of VITAL CITIES are relevant for the different governmental levels, including the European Commission. Through the exchange of knowledge and practices, VITAL CITIES partners have been able to see their local problems through of the eyes of the others and enlightening and the role of the city partners.

## II. POLICY CONTEXT

Being physically active is often a gateway to a better, healthier and socially active lifestyle, while it also mitigates the risk of health problems caused by wrong nutrition, smoking, alcohol and drugs use. As the OECD states: “Active living also positively contributes to economic prosperity and social cohesion in cities. Taking part in physical activity increases opportunities for socialization, networking and cultural identity”.

However, currently cities are challenged rather by the opposite: dramatic increase in the frequency of chronic diseases, such as hypertension, diabetes, coronary diseases, obesity and sedentary lifestyles resulting in high morbidity, loneliness and social exclusion. The WHO states that that more than 1/3 of the adult population does not meet the recommended levels of activity of 30 minutes/day. According to the Sport and Physical Activity Report of the European Union (Special Eurobarometer 412., 2014), 6 in every 10 people above 15 years never or seldom exercise or play sports, and more than half of the population never or seldom engage in other kinds of physical activity.

The Physical activity strategy for the WHO European Region 2016–2025 demonstrates disturbing evidence, according to which physical inactivity is becoming a leading risk

factor for ill health: in Europe 1 million deaths (about 10% of the total) and 8.3 million disability-adjusted life years lost per year (about 5% of the total) can be attributed to physical inactivity. However, if physical inactivity were to be eradicated, the average life expectancy could be increased by 0.63 years in the WHO European Region.

This is a downward trend towards less activity, which shows strong correlations also with gender and socio-economic status. Local governments have to play a key role in fighting this challenge. On the one hand, keeping people active and healthy is crucial to unburden the health and social care systems struggling with financial cuts and to contribute to local employment (e.g. prevent job fall out due to physical conditions, increased periods of sick leave, work disabilities and premature deaths).<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, also due to the recent financial crisis, the means for cities to plan, exploit and maintain public sports facilities are diminishing, resulting even in closure; and concentration of the remaining public facilities often farther away from the deprived areas. Most European cities have invested a lot in larger scale sports facilities over the past decades (e.g. sport halls, swimming pools, arenas) and by means of special arrangements (e.g. support schemes helping deprived groups access sport facilities) tried to get the inactive citizens become physically more active, with special attention to equity, deprivation and vulnerability. Yet, as the Eurobarometer on Sport and Physical Activity (2014) shows, these strategies have only succeeded partly, still leaving vast numbers of disadvantaged citizens inactive in their own environment. Parallel to that trend, as the inner-city areas are increasingly developed, the big sport facilities were gradually built in the outskirts, lending these facilities largely inaccessible.

Participation in organised sports is also decreasing, as well as the presence at traditional places of practicing sport, like sport halls and sport clubs. Furthermore, for 10% of the inactive European population engagement in sports or physical activities is simply too expensive.

Therefore, a new angle is needed: instead of 'bringing' the inactive citizens to the sports facilities, public space itself should be turned into a low threshold facility inviting all citizens to physical activity. Street layout, land use, the location of recreation facilities, parks and public buildings and the transport system can all either encourage or discourage 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.

Despite the known benefits of partnership-based approaches, in many cases sport and urban design are not treated in a cross-sectorial way. City officials responsible for sports do not regularly consult with planning officials, and often when it comes to urban planning, sport politicians are treated as of secondary importance. Therefore, applying an integrated and participatory approach, i.e. involvement of all policy sectors in cities and effective partnerships of relevant local stakeholders, is key to success. Efforts to enable and encourage physical activity require the participation and cooperation of many stakeholders, including local residents themselves.

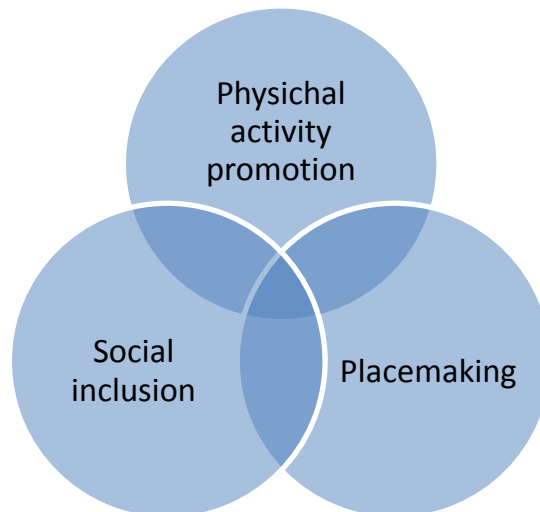
---

<sup>1</sup> The overall cost of physical inactivity is estimated to be €910 million per year (for a population of 10 million people, where half the population is insufficiently active) (WHO, 2007).

## Themes of the VITAL CITIES Concept

The VITAL CITIES project provided the opportunity for the 10 partners to commit successfully to the above challenges and to create synergies among municipal departments or institutions.

The project specifically focused on the intersection of PA promotion, social inclusion and placemaking:



**Focus areas** of the VITAL CITIES project.

Within these domains the project concentrated on the following **themes** when designing for PA 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

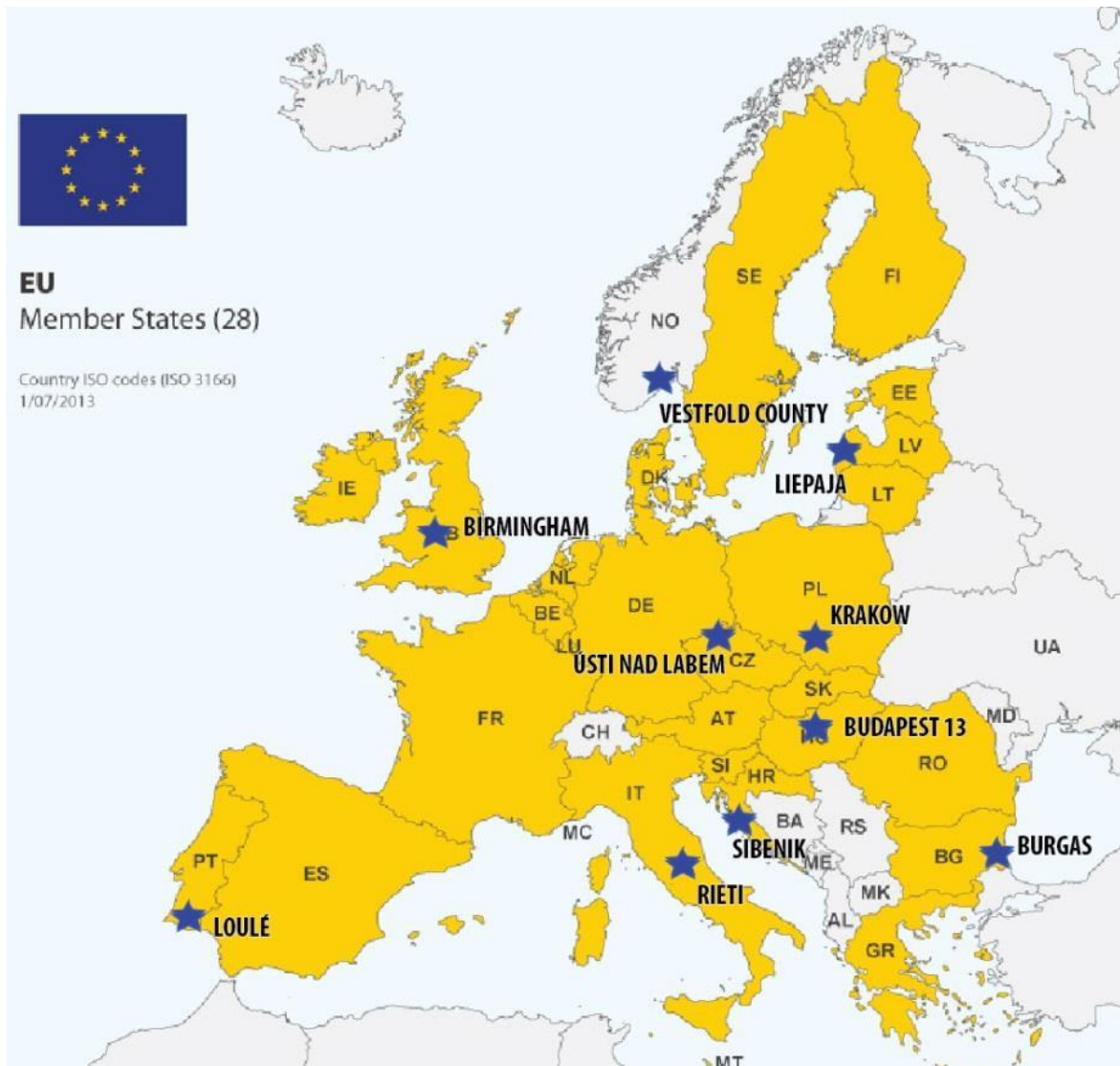
## III. THE GOALS OF THE VITAL CITIES PROJECT

At the start of the project the 10 partner cities were at different stages of PA promotion in deprived areas. They were all looking for new ways to boost physical activity in the deprived areas of their cities. The project was designed to provide partners with improved capacities in:

- Developing relevant monitoring instruments to measure the use of open facilities in public space for informal sports.

- Making use of new technologies in data capturing. The network could build on first experiences of Birmingham and Loulé with public bike schemes through GPS equipment.
- Low-cost, low-threshold physical equipment based on new creative concepts, applying new technologies.
- (Open) Data and the way it can be validated: this might enable new business-creation and financing models.
- A set of standards that must be met in order to qualify for the label 'officially designated VITAL CITY'. The principles of this would be built around open access to participation and breaking down the barriers of participation especially within the less active deprived population.

#### IV. PROJECT PARTNERS



Partner City	<i>Development challenges in the target areas of the partner cities</i>
<b>Loulé</b>	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).
<b>Birmingham</b>	The geographical coverage of the IAP is the whole city, concentrating on public spaces. 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. 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.
<b>13th District of Budapest (BP13)</b>	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 increasingly intensive and diverse recreational needs of residents, while the available green spaces in the district are limited. The target area, the Árpád-bridgehead housing estates contains 11 ten-storey housing blocks built in the 70s and 80s. Public green spaces can be found among the residential buildings, which accommodate one playground and one ball court. The public space beside the buildings are used for gardening purposes by the residential communities in the framework of the council's green area protection program.
<b>Burgas</b>	The large parks and public spaces which can be used for building sports facilities are in the focus. 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.



<b>Krakow</b>	<p>The target area is in Nowa Huta namely Zalew Nowohucki and Dłubnia River. Dłubnia is a unique river considered the last wild river in Kraków and the city aims to use its potential to attract citizens.</p> <p>Nowa Huta area is the youngest district of Kraków with more than 200,000 inhabitants, it is one of the most populous areas of the city. Nowa Huta was started in 1949 as a separate town near Kraków on terrain taken by the Communist government, planned as a centre of heavy industry. Nowadays population of Nowa Huta is dominated by blue collar workers. Main social problems of this district are unemployment, poverty, population decline and aging of the local community. Also, public spaces and old buildings of the district requires modernization and renovation.</p>
<b>Liepaja</b>	<p>Besides focusing on improving public spaces and sports facilities all around the city, Liepaja's target area, is Beberlini Park, 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.</p>
<b>Rieti</b>	<p>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. Rieti aims to improve the accessibility and the use of the central environmental and cultural system, while also increasing social inclusion. This 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.</p>
<b>Šibenik</b>	<p>The target area is Šubićevac Park 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.</p>
<b>Ústí nad Labem</b>	<p>The target locality of the VITAL CITIES is the ward Krásné Březno which is part of the City District of Ústí nad Labem – Neštětice. Krásné Březno is a typical housing-estate quarter. There are many unused and neglected yards and sports grounds not only among pre-fabricated high-rise buildings, where children used play and do sports. Besides, the neglected areas and unused spaces in neighbourhoods could be appropriate places for implementing new sport infrastructures.</p>
<b>Vestfold</b>	<p>The overall objective of the IAP is to develop the potential of</p>

<p><b>County</b></p>	<p>Lystlunden Park to stimulate physical activity and interaction, and thereby make it 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.</p>
----------------------	---

## V. METHODOLOGY USED IN TRANSNATIONAL EXCHANGE AND LEARNING

### 1. THE DEEP DIVE PROCESS

#### 1.1. Introduction

The purpose of this part is to summarise the key issues arising from the programme of Deep Dive process.

In line with the aims of the URBACT programme, the VITAL CITIES Deep Dive process provided the partner cities with opportunities for transnational exchange and learning. The general aim of the technique is to enhance standards of quality and improve performance by applying the experience of professionals (Deep Dive Experts) to assess and review the situation in the given city and contribute with ideas to the elaboration of the action planning.

In the course of the 10 Deep Dive Sessions organised in the project Deep Dive local experts with experience and knowledge in the main themes of the VITAL CITIES project were nominated by each partner city to assist the host partner of the Deep Dives and its ULG with expert input by providing them with examples of good and bad practices and recommendations for solutions to the challenges and problems for the target area identified by the partner city.

The Deep Dive process was composed of 3 parts:

- 1. Self-analysis process** – a self-review process performed by host cities with the aim of posing and answering critical questions on policy development and implementation.
- 2. 10 Deep Dive visitations** – 10 2-days site-visits to each of the partner cities with the aim to review the findings of Self-analysis process from an “external” expert perspective, come up with creative suggestion to the target area and action plans using the OPERA method.
- 3. Evaluation: Deep Dive report** – drawn up by the visitation delegation of 2 or 3 cities visiting as part of the Deep Dives summarising the results of the OPERA workshop and the recommendation of the IAPs.

## ***1.2. The Self-Analysis process***

The Self Analyses Tool was the first part of the Deep Dive process. The main question behind the Self-Analysis was: are we doing the right things and in the right way? To answer that question each city underwent a self-assessment process to help identify the stage of development that the city is at in relation to infrastructures to support PA. The analysis was carried out together with the ULG in the framework of 3 ULG meetings.

The Self-Analysis focused on the core theme of the VITAL CITIES project, namely how to develop low-threshold infrastructures to promote PA for vulnerable groups. Cities were asked to carry out the analysis related to their chosen target area and/or topic.

The goal was to gather all the information at place, narrow down the challenges, identify any lack of data, which then could be research further during the project. The results were summarised in the Self-Analysis report defining a mission and concrete objectives that can lay the foundation for the IAP.

Based on a modular questionnaire helping the discussion, during the 3 ULG meetings cities focused on the following aspects:

- policy and planning including monitoring aspects
- socio-spatial aspects
- financial and management issues including innovation aspects

Based on the discussions a written report was synthesised and agreed on together with the ULG converging into a common vision, mission and a set of concrete objectives that forms the basis of the IAP. The Self-analysis reports were sent to the Deep Dive expert teams before the visitations took place.

## ***1.3. The Deep Dive visitations***

The Deep Dive Sessions were 10 trilateral micro-consultancy sessions with the aim to check the findings in the Self-Analysis process through interviews with stakeholders and field visits. The process of 'whom to visit who' was based on an invitation by the learning needs of the inviting city.

Each Deep Dive took the format of a 2-day workshop, with the participation of the Deep Dive Expert Teams of 2 Partner Cities. It included meetings with the host city ULG members, elected representatives and a site-visits. It also included a hands-on workshop generating development ideas for the target area using the OPERA method. For the visit of the 'physical' target area, the Placemaking methodology that was educated in Birmingham was used.

Schedule for the Deep Dive Visitation Sessions were as follows:

Results of the process were then synthesised in a Deep Dive Report.

When evaluating the method in the mid-term meeting, Partners all agreed that the Deep Dive Sessions proved to be the most interesting learning progress at transnational level. Cities received valuable input from the visiting teams. Also, there were a lot of inspiring good practices that circulated within the network that support the exchange process. To make the most out of the process in the future, it is recommended that the host city prepares clear questions and objectives, and provides the expert team with additional information materials (planning documents, data). Room for flexibility is needed: biggest added value was created when experts came up with new suggestions when shifting the focus. It is also very important to have the possibility to present the findings to key stakeholders. The partner city Vestfold was a very good example in using that opportunity. Partners in general observed that a change in mind-set is needed, from 'not' to 'can' while looking for the unobvious ways and persons, carefully looking at what can work at local level. Experimentation should therefore be on the menu, encouraged by political leaders and fast learning and adaption of good practices from other partners at local level.

#### **1.4. Peer Review Reports**

As a follow-up of the Deep Dive visits, a peer review of the draft Integrated Action Plans took place, to enhance peer learning. It served as a quality control tool, to ensure the high-quality level of the IAPs.

#### **1.5. Spin-off projects**

The aim of co-designing spin-off projects with the partners in the framework of the VITAL CITIES project was to demonstrate a possible way linking the planning phase of the IAPs with implementation. The methodology used was the following:

- each partner defined those actions in its IAP which can be subject to further EU funding
- a mini-scan for possible funding opportunities for 2014-2020 period were carried out
- matching the similar initiatives of IAPs with funding opportunities development directions were defined
- project ideas were elaborated as possible continuation of the VITAL CITIES project on transnational level
- Some cities clearly gained financial support for their plans like Rieti from the national authorities, while Rieti but also cities like Liepaja, Sibenik, Usti nad Labem and Krakow secured attention from the authorities responsible for ERDF in Poland.

## **VI. MAIN OUTPUTS OF THE VITAL CITIES PROJECT**

### **1. INTEGRATED ACTION PLANS (IAPs)**

All partners in the VITAL CITIES network successfully applied the URBACT model. URBACT Local Groups were established bringing together key stakeholders interested in the improved conditions for physical activities in most cases including civil associations and representatives of the residents. The ULGs, in some cases with the assistance of

external experts elaborated the Integrated Action Plans (IAPs). IAPs are different, as the local situation, including the legal and institutional set up. They all designed as integrated local strategies to tackle the particular problems of physical activity levels of the population specifically in the field of social and built environment and governance. The planning process was tailored to incorporate the learning and understanding from the Deep Dive process.

#### Overview of the IAPs

Target Areas	Main aims of the IAP
<b>Loulé</b>	<p>1. Coppingen and Stuttgart Streets In Quarteira city, Coppingen and Stuttgart streets are densely populated areas. Here, the city envisions the creation of a green, wooded space with outdoor fitness equipment and children space that will serve the population, with the goal to stimulate physical activity and social life.</p> <p>2. Surrounding area of Abelheira and Amendoeira Here, the city intends to create a link between the two neighbourhoods that allows recovering the whole area so that it can be enjoyed in full by the entire population.</p> <p>3. Surrounding area of the Municipal Stadium One of the main element of this ongoing project is to create a new solution for the stadium wall as it is a barrier between the surrounding neighbourhoods, school and streets.</p>
<b>Birmingham</b>	<p>The IAP has the following objectives: To seek out activity taking place across the city that can contribute to the VITAL CITY Vision; To Influence activities to strengthen their contribution to the VITAL CITY vision; To create new opportunities, activities and collaborations contributing to a VITAL CITY vision. Therefore, the municipality has identified and mapped activities that are taking place across the city that contribute in some way toward the VITAL CITY goal. Each activity has been matched to a domain, but it is also recognised that they will likely link and contribute to each other and to other themes. The action plan captures details for each activity.</p>
<b>13th District of Budapest (BP13)</b>	<p>The geographical coverage of the IAP will be the public spaces around the Árpád bridge housing estates, with the aim of creating an action plan for its complex regeneration in line with the VITAL CITIES concept. 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.</p>
<b>Burgas</b>	<p>The residential quarters of Burgas have large parks and green areas, some of which have not been sufficiently maintained to date. Using these existing green areas can offer new, unexploited solutions for</p>

	<p>residents. Over the past years, the municipality has gradually begun to renovate these spaces and equip them with a variety of sports and leisure facilities to make them accessible to their citizens for practicing sporting activities promoting a healthy lifestyle. Vital Cities project allows Burgas barriers for its residents to practice sports in public spaces and to find a way to remove these barriers.</p>
<b>Krakow</b>	<p>Main goals of the IAP is the comprehensive revitalization of the Nowa Huta Lagoon area in the social and spatial aspect and improvement of the lives of the residents through sports activation. Directions of actions: Activation and integration of the Nowa Huta local community through sports and recreation activities; Limiting marginalization and social exclusion in Nowa Huta; Building a local identity.</p>
<b>Liepaja</b>	<p>When speaking about development and situation improvement in Beberliņi Park, usually infrastructure improvements are considered as priority, without looking for soft measures. Because of this the IAP will propose to better orchestrate services giving the opportunity to be healthy and active. The IAP considers the following measures to improve the situation: Amendments to Liepāja City binding regulations; Information on sites where public initiatives are welcomed provided by the Real Estate Administration; Overview of territory use (topographic plans and engineering networks) provided by the Construction Board; Development of IT platform for submitting public initiatives.</p>
<b>Rieti</b>	<p>The municipality aims to induce centripetal movements in the inhabitants by means of an offer to environmental quality and services and to offer of quality cultural services. It aims to increase social inclusion by promoting physical activity in vulnerable groups - the elderly and children, in disadvantaged population groups. It aims to disseminate the culture of well-being to sensitize people towards widespread physical activity and healthy food. The target area is the development of Velino's area by urban layout and planning. One of the main actions is to initiate coordinated programs of amateur sports, to play along Velino and to cut a deal with Italian State to value Velino's park and the near historical centre. The city aims to promote the green economy and the physical and social reconnection of peripheral areas of the city whose inhabitants would be given the chance to reach the environmental central system.</p>
<b>Šibenik</b>	<p>Forest park Šubićevac is public, urban, "neighbourhood" park, and has a recreation field areas, playgrounds and private tennis courts. Park also has running tracks and provides programming, such as regular individual trainings, team sports organised by a sports club, school physical activity program and public events for children and team sports, such as basketball, or running, depending on the season. Because of its terrain configuration and spatial layout, the city of Šibenik is limited with the ability to build new recreational</p>

	<p>areas. So, the emphasis of the action plan is on the restoration of existing public/recreational areas.</p>
<b>Ústí nad Labem</b>	<p>The main objective of the project is to identify ways of encouraging the city inhabitants to do sports, changing public space into attractive, low-threshold sports grounds, promoting municipal sports events and use neglected public areas meaningfully.</p> <p>The IAP of Usti nad Labem contains the essential identified needs within these topics and the measures which are aiming to achieve the following, among other things: The city should support active sports life of its inhabitants not only in the sense of support of organised sports organisations and should use innovative instruments for this purpose, and local citizens should be involved, interested in active spending of their leisure time in public spaces and to develop it themselves, so that they feel fine there.</p>
<b>Vestfold County</b>	<p>Vestfold has a clear strategic vision to integrate public health into the strategic planning for the county and the municipality of Horten. There is a shared approach with municipality functions like planning, transport, parks, education coming together.</p> <p>The city takes the Vital City challenge seriously and makes some clear strategies and bold decisions. For example, the desire to maintain a density of population to guard against sprawl and keep trips to small trips that can be by walking. The development of the central square reclaiming this public space as well as recognising the view to the water, the need for informal seats and fun things like skating, music and even risk type activity like slack line.</p> <p>The city takes its existing plans as the framework of the IAP. The actions are anchored in these plans and funded over the municipal budget. The IAP points out the main challenges and suggests actions to meet them through better orchestration of public services within the existing framework. Lystlunden Park is the target area for the IAP.</p>

The analysis of the Integrated Action Plans shows:

- The IAPs are different, as the local situation, but they all are designed as integrated local strategies to tackle the particular challenges. The planning process was tailored to incorporate the learning and understanding from the Deep Dive process.
- Emphasis on social and community aspects (it is also reflected on higher level policy recommendations)
- Image and infrastructure improvement need to be integral parts of the regeneration strategy and need management and coordination with other development activities
- Small scale interventions can result inviting public spaces (place-making philosophy and process) providing opportunities for social interactions
- During the whole project life time, small pilot activates were encouraged. Since the project advocated for both soft and hard actions, it was possible for the cities to start with some low-costs actions like:
  - Working on ICT-tools: most cities reinforced their internet presence and social media presence and communities in the field of PA and sports, while

for example Burgas worked on operationalizing a planning and maintenance tool for its PA and sports facilities.

- Delivering new sports and PA services on public spaces was an easy to copy model from the city of Birmingham, which set foot on the ground in cities like Loulé, Rieti, Budapest, Liepaja through a series of simple activities.
- Promoting public space for physical activities has been sparked of or intensified in several cities like Budapest, Birmingham, Krakow, Usti nad Labem. In Vestfold, the banning of cars in favor of an ice-skate rink let to a permanent transformation for PA all year around.
- The city of Loulé, lead partner of the project made reservations for the reconversion of 3 public spaces and finished the 'Stuttgart'/'Coppingen' area in Quarteira, that was visited during the final event.
- Most of the cities have actions to better monitoring the outcome or results of their action plan in a broader context of completing their policy cycle.
- Cities are positive about the break they made working amongst silo's and look back on this as a positive experience.
- Cities are committed to continue using the URBACT method in different aspects of local development both in the field of public health and other important issues and tasks for the municipalities, as well as sharing and teach colleagues in the different techniques

## **2. VITAL CITIES LABEL**

Within the network of VITAL CITIES, a feasibility study was written concerning the development of label that would be funded on the VITAL CITIES principles. This below section summarises the main ideas behind such a label.

### **2.1. PRINCIPLES OF A VITAL CITY**

A Municipality - working in partnership - shall endeavour that citizens making use of the city's open public spaces in the vicinity of their homes and doing so people:

- lead active, fit, healthy lifestyle at all ages
- experience physical and mental wellbeing
- improve social integration through physical activities

### **2.2. Purpose of the Label**

- continue networking and exchange of learning through creating the VITAL CITIES Platform, collecting and disseminating good practices and stories (sustainability issue)
- represent basic standards for cities in relation to the enhanced utilization of public spaces as near home attractions for regular leisure-time physical activity and enhanced involvement of people living in neighbourhoods with low socio economic status, which impacts on social cohesion and healthy living
- make VITAL CITIES internationally recognised linking it to already established brands (such as the EU's Green Capital, or the European cities of Sport, or the



UNESCO Creative Cities Network, etc.) or networks which have similar overall objectives set

### ***2.3. Core standards applied to develop into a Vital City:***

- **high level political commitment** towards regular leisure-time physical activities in open public spaces defined as a horizontal theme in multi-sectoral approach and integrated public policies including appropriate governance/management of the theme
- **approach:** multi-sectoral i.e. exploring the relationship between open public spaces used for physical activities and healthy living and social inclusion
- **policy:** integrate the concept of providing a wide range of opportunities for regular leisure- time physical activities for residents in open public spaces into other relevant sector oriented policies the Municipality develops
- **place:** safe and welcoming, equipped with appropriate infrastructure and facilities, services organised, encourage people to mingle and enjoy the place
- **target group:** the whole population of the city, however some special groups need different, tailor-made approach such as people in neighbourhoods with low socio-economic status, or any age group, which needs special attention
- **attraction through identity, visibility:** implementing the Communication Strategy which makes opportunities for leisure-time physical activity visible for each target group, including conversation (two-way communication) with residents as beneficiaries (personal stories, how physical activities changed life)

### ***2.5. Transnational Label Governance***

Branding is considered by the URBACT project City Logo as an organisational and management issue. The project also suggests that making branding work requires the setting up of a shared working area, a platform for the diverse entities of the city, targeting and interacting with different stakeholder groups, and a brand partnership as a governing system. This pattern could work both on the level of the individual cities of the current Vital Cities partnership and for the transnational network too.

### ***2.6. Advice on the Continuation***

Based upon the Vital Cities Label Feasibility study, the above it is recommended:

- to develop a charter of commitment, entailing the main. The charter could be signed during the last meeting (or short here after).
- organise a founding meeting as a side kick during (or within a reasonable time span after) the closing meeting of Vital Cities, as to discuss the next steps, the division of tasks and roles by the core group, thinking of:
  - a marketing base of the label as proposed by Loulé
  - a conference as proposed by Birmingham
- to certify the Vital Cities and recognise their effort by granting all Vital Cities an official certificate to be handed over by the Mayor of the City of Loulé

### 3. INVENTORY OF GOOD PRACTICES

Based on the 5 key themes of the VITAL CITIES project (see chapter II.) partners identified best practices that fall within the intersection of physical activity promotion, social inclusion and placemaking. The best practices that are worth sharing beyond the partnership are detailed below.

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

##### ***Planning with public participation, Budapest, Hungary***



© <http://www.angyalzold.hu>

The 13th District of Budapest has a significant amount of green spaces (The size of green spaces is 1 million sq. m, which includes the 382 000-sq. m. green spaces around high-rise housing estates). The management and development tasks for the public and green spaces are determined in the municipalities' public and green space strategy for the period of 2015-2019. The strategy emphasizes the complex regeneration of public spaces around high-rise housing estates. The strategy determines "a protocol for public partnership" describing the ways local residents should be involved in the preparation and later in the maintenance of urban green. The aim is to create public space design that meets the recreational needs of the local residents and finds compromises between conflicting land uses.

As part of this project the district's Public Services Plc. coordinates and facilitates the public participation process with public opinion polls, public participation in planning techniques. Through the public opinion polls 300-400 residents are interviewed and through the public participation workshops 20-50 participants are reached per session. The final product is a planning program, which takes in consideration the findings of the opinion poll as well as the result of the planning workshops. This planning program is converted into a public space regeneration plan. The cost of the opinion poll, public participation workshops, and the landscape design concept plan is approx. 1 000 EUR financed by municipal resources.<sup>2</sup>

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

##### ***Beach Accessibility Complex (BAC) for People with disabilities, Liepaja, Latvia***

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.angyalzold.hu>



© <http://liepaja.travel/en/liepaja/liepaja-accessible-to-everyone/>

A great example on the use of sport to combat social exclusion is the Beach Accessibility Complex (BAC) for People with disabilities, opened in 2013 at Liepaja beach.

It is the first innovation of this kind in Latvia where there is a beach where visually impaired people can enjoy beach and sea. The beach has always been a public space and open for everyone, but in many cases it can't be used by all. This innovation helps people who did not have the possibility to use the beach in Liepaja due to a lack of access of all its facilities. It is a success story from the start; the number of visitors has increased each year (from 350 participants to 1145 persons within 3 years).

All facilities are specifically adapted for visually impaired persons and persons with movement disorders. Persons can change their swimming suits, safely leave all belongings and use a shower after relaxation on the beach. Several innovative physical equipment are implemented like 2 swimming wheelchairs, audio buoys (in auxiliary for swimming for visually impaired persons, accompanied by assistants), a wooden plank path in order to reach the sea, a tactile map, installed for visually impaired persons to understand location of the complex. Furthermore, 2 assistants are working on site to help navigate people through the complex. Their surveillance produces a safe environment for the visually impaired but without the need for constant individual assistance which fosters a sense of freedom.<sup>3</sup>

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

#### ***Big Birmingham Bikes Scheme, Birmingham, UK***



© <http://www.birminghamupdates.com/post/105795229968>

As part of the Big Birmingham Bikes Scheme 3,000 out of 5,000 bikes are given away for free to citizens that live in an area of high deprivation. It specifically targets citizens and communities living in neighbourhoods of high deprivation in the city (facing high unemployment rates, poor health and areas of poor housing). In addition, the

<sup>3</sup> <http://liepaja.travel/en/liepaja/liepaja-accessible-to-everyone/liepaja-%E2%80%93-accessible-to-everyone/>

programme offers bike led activities, short-term hire of bikes, cycle maintenance courses and many free cycling activities. It employs a unique way to incentivise the users by offering reward points for continuing to use the cycle. The project also implements an extensive, GPS-based monitoring system to gain real-time information on usage (journeys, speeds travelled, routes) to inform planners and decision makers.

The project is part of a £24m Birmingham Bike Revolution started in 2014. The vision is to make cycling an everyday way to travel in Birmingham over the next 20 years. It aims that 5% of all trips in the city to be made by bike by 2023 and to double this again to 10% by 2033. This will help to make the city healthier, greener, safer and less congested.

The programme is a co-production of various stakeholders. It is managed by Birmingham City Council Department of Transport in conjunction with Birmingham’s Well-Being Service, Sport England, Public Health, Local Bike retailers and a dedicated Big Birmingham Bikes Team. It is funding by Birmingham Council (Local with £6.3m) and by the Department of Transport Grant (National with £17m).<sup>4</sup>

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

#### ***6 minutes for health, Usti nad Labem, Czech Republic***



© Šest minut pro zdraví

The aim of this initiative is to establish innovative physical equipment and construct walking routes to promote sport in public spaces. The area that is targeted is called Mestske sady, which is a park in Usti nad Labem. Potential patients and seniors are the target group as their physical condition could benefit from this project. A path through the “Active Park” was constructed in September 2013 and it is in close proximity of health facilities. This makes it possible for patients to use the health path and receive feedback from medical professionals who can examine the patient’s health condition by obtaining information about the function of the heart, lungs and blood vessels. Other visitors of the park can equally use the path without supervision as it is publicly accessible. The route is accommodated with distance markers and a clock (stopwatch) with the purpose of providing accessible monitoring of one’s performance on the track. Information is provided through information shields.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/bbb>

The funding for this project comes from the city, health insurance companies, and the implementer's budget. At the moment, it is difficult to keep track of how many persons are using the path. The current estimation is that 5 patients utilize the health path daily.<sup>5</sup>

### 3.5. Organisation of innovative events to promote healthy lifestyle

#### National Rugby Centre Lubocza, Nowa Huta, Kraków, Poland



National Rugby Centre Lubocza is brand new and modern facility operating since 2015. It boasts two pitches, multifunctional playgrounds. The "Rugby for everyone" project takes place in the centre, which aims to educate children and teenagers via systematic sport activities to promote a healthy lifestyle and prevent addiction. The programme targets the children and teenagers from primary school and junior high school living in Nowa Huta, a deprived area in the outskirts of Kraków. The centre cooperates with the schools in the area to popularize rugby and PA by organizing tournaments and competitions. The programme is maintained through the cooperation of three entities Nowa Huta Rugby Club, the Municipality of Kraków and the Polish Rugby Association and is financed by the municipality.

## VII. POLICY LESSONS

Overall, the VITAL CITIES network of the ten partner cities identified and agreed in the need of 3 main policy changes, which are to facilitate physical activity promotion in deprived areas. The table below summarises the main outcomes of the reports grouped within the 3 aspects.

	LOULÉ	BIRMINGHAM	BP13	BURGS	KRAKÓW	LIEPAJA	RIETI	SIBENIK	USTI NAD LABEM	VESTFOLD
<b>1. Policy and Planning Aspects</b>										
<b>MORE INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE</b>										
• encourage cross-departmental collaboration (work across the silos)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>ENHANCE MONITORING</b>										

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.6minutprozdрави.cz/en>

• improve monitoring (regarding facilities and/or participation)	X	X	X	X	X		
<b>2. Socio-Spatial Aspects</b>							
<b>IMPROVE SOCIAL INCLUSION</b>							
• facilitate social activities, involve, motivate	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
• improve image of the area			X	X	X	X	
• raise awareness about existing PA activities and facilities	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>IMPROVE FACILITIES</b>							
• create/improve facilities in deprived neighbourhoods		X	X	X	X	X	X
• encourage active transportation		X	X	X	X	X	
• connect with blue-green infrastructure			X		X	X	
<b>3. Business, Financing and Management Aspects</b>							
<b>SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES</b>							
- involve residents in co-design of PA infrastructures and activities		X	X	X	X	X	X
• engage residents, NGOs, private sector in the maintenance of PA infrastructures and activities		X	X	X	X	X	

## 7.1. The necessity to establish more inclusive governance

Within VITAL CITIES Integrated Action Plans are essentially area based integrated development strategies including activities that aim to improve tackle a number of different but interrelated issues such as social cohesion, quality of public spaces, safety, active transportation regarding PA. In order to arrive to the proper solution, the participation of a wide range of stakeholders at different levels is required. For this a rather complex system of governance is necessary that comprises of different levels of formal administrative and equally important informal structures. Well established mechanisms need to ensure make the operation of these two layers smooth together. The horizontal dimension of governance means cooperation arrangements between different fields (sports, public health, economics, environmental). The vertical dimension of governance is a well-established system that provides the operational framework for neighbourhood level decisions to be channelled into city level strategies and thereby ensuring their timely implementation.

Partner cities' governance structures varies significantly. There are partners who capitalise on the learning process and start to rearrange their complex system of governance. But even those who could deliver good practices to the partnership can further improve their system by making it more transparent, efficient and/or by developing missing links between levels or stakeholders.

### 7.1.1. Recommendations on inclusive governance

- Departments related to sport and PA are dispersed across departments. In some cases there is a dedicated sport department, but in many cases, it belongs to the tourism and/or culture, wellbeing, public services or health departments.

Constantly identifying and consciously focusing on the collaboration across the departments should be an everyday activity.

- For this a common topic could be picked that is important for all units. For example, the issue of volunteering is a very important one in the field of well-being, culture. Now it seems that every unit reinvents the wheel while it is a common issue that could be addressed across departments.
- Regarding public participation processes. There seems to be a kind of participatory fatigue with public hearings amongst citizens. Civic participation should always be a 2-way process, with a clear and short communication, managing expectations on beforehand and also immediate action afterwards. In general, if it comes to 'their' environment, citizens tend to take ownership. The focus should be own how to encourage citizens to take ownership.
- Allow room for feedback like the case of the whiteboards in Budapest. Another good approach is the Usti nad Labem practice of a simple participative tool like the sense map.<sup>6</sup>
- For experimenting with low-threshold interventions and developing regular PA the tool of participatory budgeting is recommended that allows room for citizens to have a say on how to allocate part of a municipal or public budget. Consult the example of Loulé who has already collected significant experience within this area.<sup>7</sup>
- In some cases, reaching out to the community or community leaders is a step out of their comfort zone. Sometimes the Deep Dive teams used the opportunity of the visitation to reach out to community leaders (for example in the case of school children in Liepaja, Latvia). Also, project partners stepped on board of working amongst silos, which is a new experience.
- IAPs are documents which are not integral parts of the formal planning system. To increase the efficiency of area based approach represented by the IAPs needs, apart from establishing the appropriate structures of governance, the IAPs to be embedded in the local/municipal policies.
- In many of the visited target areas territorial integration into the wider city environment is an issue. Therefore, is it recommended that the LAPs contain activities which makes clear how spatial links need to the link between them and urban special plan

## 7.2. The need to enhance monitoring

In the Baseline Study, it was stated that 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 justify and allocate more funding for prevention, maintenance and even sport-related infrastructure.

<sup>6</sup> People just can indicate how they appreciate locations in the city, by rating them in six categories: 1) Here I am proud of the city, 2) Here I spend time, 3) Here I see the opportunity for development, 4) Here I will take a visit, 5) Here is ugly, 6) Here it is dangerous ([Http://mapy.mag-ul.cz/apps/pocity](http://mapy.mag-ul.cz/apps/pocity)).

Birmingham is a good example for various monitoring activities. As stated in the Self-Analysis Report of Birmingham, the city recognises the importance of technology and, in particular, an unwavering focus on data and the need to collect it and maximise its use and value. Data is a valuable commodity, for example, to private business & marketers, commissioners and researchers alike. As such that value can be realised and benefited by the citizen who Birmingham continues to recognise as having 'monetary cost' as their main barrier to participation.

Birmingham Wellbeing Service has been able to demonstrate its connection, through proportionate over representation of its participant base, with the more deprived and 'target groups' within the city. This is a sound base to continue with the required social movement to get people more connected. The Active Data programme has helped to bring data together to allow a far greater understanding of who, what, where and when. The city now should build on this wealth of data to help drive innovation and evidence of what works.

#### **Best practice: Monitoring in Birmingham**

##### **Wellbeing monitoring data**

The Birmingham Wellbeing Service also collects monitoring data in relation to its physical activity and sports services provision, including key schemes designed to encourage physical activity and wellbeing. This data shows that groups that traditionally are less likely to be active, such as people from BME (black and ethnic minorities), females and those from more deprived areas are being targeted by these services, resulting in a higher participation amongst these groups.

##### **Spatial audit**

The city has gathered a series of data and maps that provide a strategic demographic understanding of the city. The maps also go on to show some of the recognised spatial assets like green space as well as possible opportunities like car parks, streets etc. Finally, the spatial audit shows the footprint of the existing wellbeing service delivery. The intention is to provide a sense of what happens now and on what scale. It also helps to bring to life opportunities such as the abundance of green space that could be utilised to create 'wild' routes in the city.

##### **Active data**

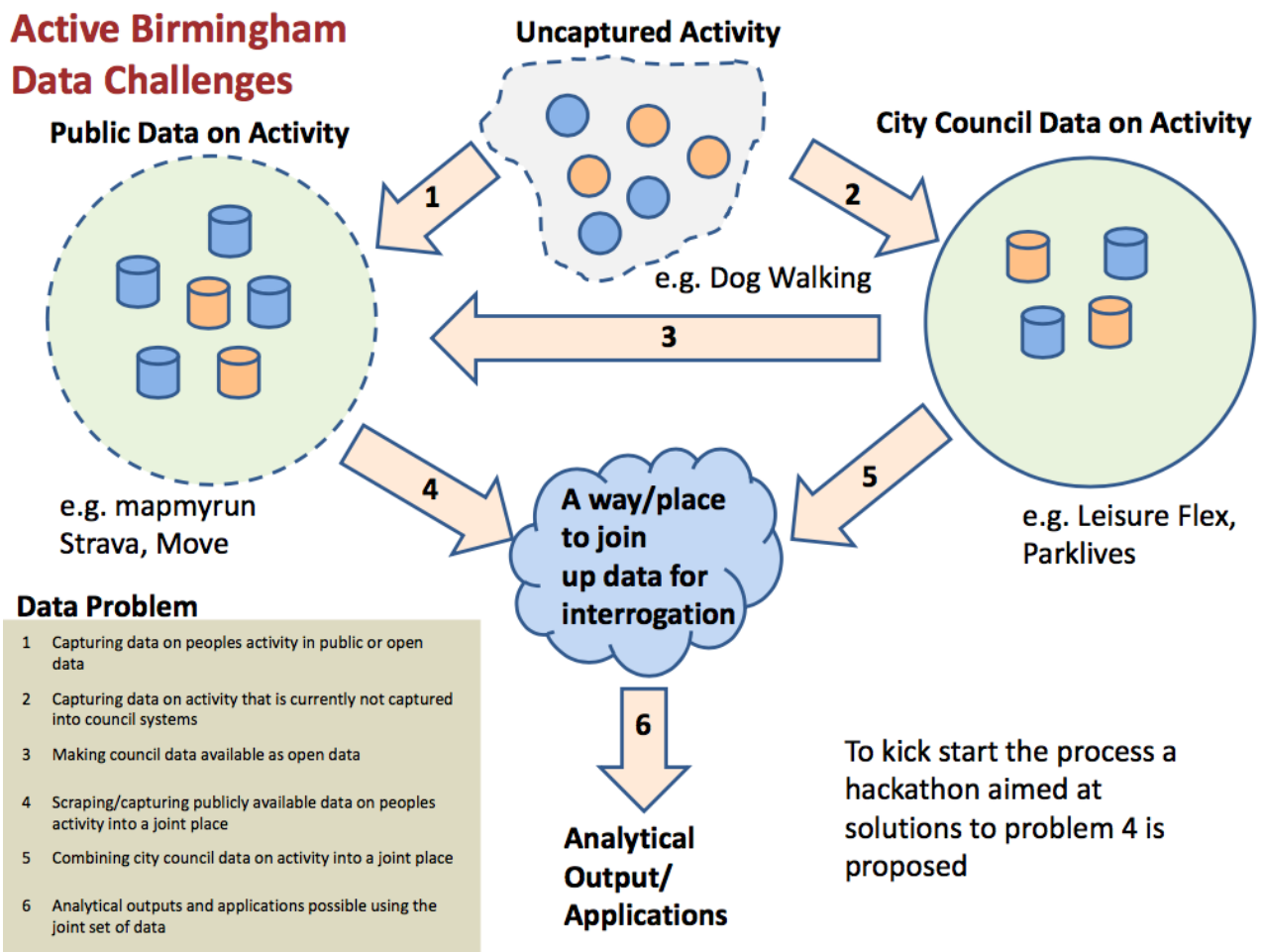
Birmingham Wellbeing Service, in conjunction with Sport England and a patchwork of digital creative companies, have trialled collecting data in digital ways and pulling together this data into a single customer view. This has been successful in providing a richer understanding of who is participating but also around defining need, the right kind of offer and measuring success.



**7.2.1. Recommendations on monitoring PA participation and facilities**

- It is important to have an overview of existing data. Based on the Self-Analysis tool cities should already have a clear picture on the strength and weaknesses of their respective monitoring systems. Partners could consider the following questions when reviewing the state of their monitoring systems:
  - o Is there a database of PA Infrastructures?
  - o Is there an inventory of available PA programmes, e.g. exercise classes?
  - o Is there a database which tracks PA behaviour amongst the general population (like the proportion of active citizens, types of PA, socio-demographic characteristics etc.)?
  - o Is there an inventory of demands by the general population, residents of a specific area on sports clubs, or other providers of PA programmes (like assessment of demands by different types of stakeholders, missing infrastructures as perceived by the general population, perception and satisfaction etc.)?

For example, in the case of Birmingham, the results of the assessment can be summarised as follows:



© Birmingham Wellbeing Service

- Regarding participation in PA refer to the surveys successfully employed by Budapest Sibenik and Birmingham:
  - o Birmingham Resident Consultation Survey: E-Survey of our 2,000 people Wellbeing People’s Panel receiving a total response of 244 (12.2%).
  - o Budapest Resident Consultation Survey on sport habits of the population of the district (700 people panel, total response 565 (81%).
  - o Sibenik Online questionnaire with a convenience sample within local sport clubs and educational institutions regarding the target area. Aim was to survey the opinions and views on the park facilities (access to and satisfaction with facilities); Response rate: sport clubs: 41/19, 46%; educational institutions: 50/8, 16%.
- Use the power of geospatial mapping of PA infrastructure, activities and behaviour. It is recommended to use the software of ArcGIS when developing PA mapping projects.
- Cooperate with knowledge institute to develop joint project in the field.
- Leverage the social media incl. feedback mechanisms.

### 7.3. The need to improve social inclusion

As the table above shows, social inclusion related to increased PA is the most common issue for the VITAL CITIES partners and the one which partners found most problematic. It is the area where the urgency of learning from each other is the strongest.

It is recommended to explain what is meant by the term PA promotion with regards to socially disadvantaged groups connected to the target areas. Not just in terms of theory but in terms of practice. The meaning of social inclusion must be applied to the local situation in each partner city and defined in such a way that permits measurable indicators.

**Definition: socially disadvantaged groups (Sdg):**

**Social disadvantage relates to socioeconomic aspects such as income, employment, education and socioeconomic status; to sociocultural aspects such as gender, ethnicity, religion, culture, migrant status and social capital; to sociogeographical aspects such as living in a deprived neighbourhood; and to age. SdG may actually be affected by more than one of these dimensions.**

*World Health Organization: Physical activity promotion in socially disadvantaged groups: principles for action. PHAN Work Package 4 Final Report.  
[[http://www.euro.who.int/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/185954/E96817eng.pdf](http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/185954/E96817eng.pdf)]*

It is advisable to develop the measurable indicators in order to tackle the precise social inclusion issues on the target areas. There are a number of aspects of social inclusion related to the target areas. Among them are:

- poverty and unemployment

- ethnic minorities
- aging population
- population decline
- social isolation
- poor image of the target area
- physical isolation from the rest of the city

In most of the target areas, these issues have become worse in recent years. All the different housing estates/neighbourhoods now suffer from either spatial separation/segregation, bad image, or social, ethnic separation/segregation or the unfortunate combination of the three. As part of different governmental programmes and other projects a lot of actions were carried out in these areas aimed at the involvement of individuals, families or communities into mainstream society and fostering social cohesion. Vast amounts of experience have been gained in designing and implementing activities such as language-, community-, skills trainings, adult education, entrepreneurship, bridging and bonding by cultural or sports activities. Activities were made possible due to the national, municipal social welfare system, and/or NGOs, and also due to the civic initiatives of the marginalised groups themselves.

However, partners were unable to report many tangible results in overall improvements to social inclusion. The main reason for this is the multifaceted and multi-level character of social inclusion. In addition to the problems identified in a neighbourhood, there are the results of higher level structural influences. Experiences show, that the greatest potential for successful results of the interventions lays in coordinating the targeted and complementary activities at the neighbourhood level with effective policies on all aspects of urban renewal and social housing at the city and national levels.

With regards to the VITAL CITIES topic Partners could rarely demonstrate with data the eventual link between social status and physical inactivity.

The learning process so far confirms that above quoted WHO report on this compound relationship. "The challenge of physical activity promotion in socially disadvantaged groups (SdG) lies in its complexity: as much as there is no "unique disadvantaged group" that can be targeted, there is no "unique physical activity" that can be promoted. both depending on the situation and on each other. To this extent, physical activity promotion in SdG is not much different from general physical activity promotion, as it is almost always targeted at specific population groups as well. In the case of physical activity promotion in SdG, however, targeting and implementation measures are likely to be different and more intense.

The main difference, when looking at physical activity promotion specific to SdG, is the "how". It matters greatly how targeting is done, how interventions are delivered and how much the reports to reach the respective target group can be increased. In this context, it is important that policy-makers and programme developers recognize that SdG may need more intensive support at all stages, which will be effected by, for example, project time duration, funding and capacity-building needs. conversely, it is only reasonable to expect that the benefits of engaging SdG in physical activity are potentially greater than those for other target groups.

There is a risk that one-dimensional campaigns focusing on information and awareness may actually increase inequalities between SdG and the population as a whole, as they are much more successful in population groups characterized by higher education and self-sufficiency. This suggests that for SdG, interventions need to combine a variety of strategies going beyond information. In addition, since SdG constitute a very specific target population, there is a need to increasingly consider contextual dimensions for physical activity. In other words, there is a need to remove potential obstacles that may arise in relation to personal characteristics or geographical or residential location.”<sup>8</sup>

### **7.3.1. Recommendations to address social activities**

The following part summarises the different aspects of social inclusion on the target areas estates, and relevant actions to address them.

- Facilitate social activities, involve, motivate
  - o The key question is how to change people’s mind-set towards physical activities, achieving behaviour change
  - o Measures to enable participation
  - o Organising social activities – provision of spaces, organisation
  - o Reach out to schools (as done in Usti nad Labem en Liepaja)
  - o Have someone inside the community
  - o Use the connections with the university (Sibenik, Loulé, Usti nad Labem) for developing measurable indicators
  - o Build on existing connections
- Improve image of the area
  - o Rename/rebrand estate as part of LAP regeneration programme
  - o Publicity - ‘good news stories’
- Raise awareness about existing PA activities and facilities
  - o Organised sports vs. PA. The star character of organised sports can be inspirational (examples from Sibenik and Liepaja). 2 very different things, PA is about: Step out of the door and move together, about movement friendship, fun, citizenship.
  - o Communication is very important (that is why the involvement of private actors, like a shopping mall could be key to success in order to increase outreach). Understanding the emotional aspect of sports can be used while creating content for social media, especially targeted towards young people.
  - o Specifying the target groups. No one wants to be a target group. It is more about how you talk to people as citizens. Experts should understand that. Be conscious whom you are targeting.
  - o Incentives can be a good tool (measures of sport clubs offering free access, tax holidays for employees, lifestyle focus, if you move then you can get a reward, like go to the cinema).

<sup>8</sup> World Health Organization: Physical activity promotion in socially disadvantaged groups: principles for action. PHAN Work Package 4 Final Report. [[http://www.euro.who.int/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/185954/E96817eng.pdf](http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/185954/E96817eng.pdf)]

- Point of entry, communication culture of the municipality: if someone comes with an idea, there have to be ways to channel the idea through the administration.
- Activities that complement each other (through children you attract parents)
- Focus on promotion of the park using different layers (history, identity)

## 7.4. The need for improving facilities

The target areas of the VITAL CITIES partners are mostly public spaces in proximity of housing estates, urban green spaces (parks and forests) and waterfront areas as shown in the table below:

	LOULÉ	BIRMINGHAM	BP13	BURGS	KRAKÓW	LIEPAJA	RIETI	SIBENIK	USTI NAD LABEM	VESTFOLD
<b>Typology of target areas</b>										
• <b>public space around housing estates</b>	X		X	X					X	
• <b>urban green spaces (parks, forests)</b>						X		X		X
• <b>waterfronts</b>		X			X		X			

One of the main problems related to the target areas is the state of the public area:

- Lack of green spaces
- Increased car traffic
- Playground and other public spaces around the estates are neglected
- Lack of proper public lighting
- Vandalism
- Illegal dumping
- Safety

When thinking of PA promotion measures it is important to take the broad definition of PA. During the Deep Dives it turned out that in all of the Partners cases different departments perceive sport and PA differently. There seems to be different emphasis between departments on the importance of increasing PA. A common understanding is needed where it is recommended to take the broadest sense by including various traditional games, dancing and community gardening.

### Definition: Active Living:

As stated in the *Active City: Designing for Health* guidelines by the City Toronto: Active living is about incorporating more physical activity into all aspects of our lives. Street design, bike lanes and sidewalks; housing types and neighbourhood design; patterns of development; the provision of trees, parks, green space and recreational facilities; and the location of jobs, schools and services are all important components of the built environment. The most effective approach for influencing PA rates is likely one that applies multiple interventions to different aspects and features of the built environment.

Many of the Partner cities seem to be going through a bike revolution that is a good means of encouraging active transportation. However there seem to be not so much knowledge yet about effects and models of seizing the economic benefits of biking (classifications of) types of bike lanes etc. This knowledge could be acquired in the city organisation or e.g. by lining up with a knowledge institute like a university.

Some countries in the EU, like the Netherland ad Belgium have already systems put in place like the bicycling 'nodes' network' that could be explored by Partners.<sup>9</sup>

Some of the more challenging longer term concepts on a social-spatial level would be the apparent dominance of the car in Birmingham. There are very few car free places general view was that places did not have a clarity of use and signage usually spelled out what was not allowed.

When thinking about the specific actions, it is advisable to look though the different planning guides related to PA and public space design that are circulating within the network:



- McKeown, D., Keesmaat, J., Buckley, S. (2014). *Active City: Designing for Health*. City of Toronto: Toronto. Available at: [\[http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2014/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-69334.pdf\]](http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2014/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-69334.pdf).
- Andersen, R. B. (2011). *Activating: architecture and urban planning*. The Sports Confederation of Denmark, The Ministry of Social Affairs: Copenhagen. [\[http://mbbl.dk/sites/mbbl.dk/files/dokumenter/publikationer/activating\\_architecture\\_lille.pdf\]](http://mbbl.dk/sites/mbbl.dk/files/dokumenter/publikationer/activating_architecture_lille.pdf)
- MacCallum, L., Howson, N., Gopu, N. eds. (2012). *Designed to move. A Physical Activity Action Agenda*. Nike Inc. Available at: [\[http://www.cedar.iph.cam.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Designed\\_to\\_move\\_report.pdf\]](http://www.cedar.iph.cam.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Designed_to_move_report.pdf).
- Arup eds. (2016). *Cities Alive. Towards a walking world*. Arup, London. Available at:

<sup>9</sup> <https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fietsroutenewerk>

[[http://publications.arup.com/publications/c/cities alive towards a walking world](http://publications.arup.com/publications/c/cities_alive_towards_a_walking_world)].

- Edwards, P., Tsouros, A. (2008). *A healthy city is an active city: A physical activity planning guide*. WHO Regional Office for Europe: Copenhagen. [[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)].
- IMPALA (2011). *Proposed European Guidelines: Improving Infrastructures for Leisure-Time Physical Activity in the Local Arena*. University of Erlangen-Nuremberg: Nuremberg. [[http://www.impala-eu.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/2011\\_IMPALA\\_guideline\\_web.pdf](http://www.impala-eu.org/fileadmin/user_upload/2011_IMPALA_guideline_web.pdf)].

#### **7.4.1. Recommendations for improving facilities**

- Create/improve facilities in deprived neighbourhoods
  - o Think of intergenerational facilities (pick-nick tables, small street libraries)
  - o Consider creative public lighting interventions (through an open design call): small-scale, but socially catalytic interventions in the urban fabric need to be designed and implemented
  - o The right spot of the intervention is to be identified by thorough analysis people's involvement, including the young generation in the process is a must (participatory process/community approach, dialogue between designers and the community)
  - o When purchasing new infrastructure, equipment try to use locally designed produce instead of ordering from the catalogue (through an open design call for example)
  - o Use some pilot money for pilot actions, start immediately
  - o Think of using recycled materials like car tires to build an exciting play area
  - o Do not and only provide good basic infrastructure at the target area, think in terms of equipment too. On the other hand, basic infrastructure (paths, public lighting schemes, toilets and the lower sports pitches should be well-designed and maintained and accessible. Think of road and pedestrian crossing safety measures). The 'do not' goes hand in hand with a kind of nostalgic 'retro' setting and branding of the place.
  - o Think of street art, murals to liven up the place
  - o Visibility is ensured by landscaping, vegetation and lighting
  - o Think of intergenerational infrastructure or activities
- Encourage active transportation
  - o Accessibility needs clear organisation of urban flows and continuity of the street pattern (clear orientation of pedestrians / design elements / easy and safe walking)
  - o Vitality is ensured by mixed routes which combine car, bicycle and pedestrian movements
  - o Establish links to core areas in the city
  - o Design improvements eg. to improve access across difficult boundaries such as busy roads
  - o Public transport improvements eg. changes to bus routes.

- Make sure that borders are made clear between public, semi-private and private spaces
- Talking to school work programmes
- Consider bike to work campaigns also as a good way to improve relationships with the private sector
- Capitalise on interim mixed use (parking place turned into basket court)
- Develop/improve public bike system, think of electronic bikes
- Find the active communities and consult their needs: skating communities
- Connect with blue-green infrastructure (BGI)
  - Comparable to other uses of water, healthy living activities require clear (and in case of swimming) clean water. Additionally, to the design principles that have been described already, these activities need connectivity, particularly for rowing, boating, sailing and swimming. Connectivity also serves the possibilities to flush, and enhances the ecological structure.
  - There is a positive link between BGI and well-being that can be translated into economic benefits. For example, in the case of the activities Bishan-Ang Mo Kio Park in Singapore after physical upgrading of the park 50% of its users were engaging in physical activities.<sup>10</sup>



Car tire playgrounds in Norway: [http://orkangervel.no/index.php?artikkelvalg=vis\\_innhold&visning=1&id=2730](http://orkangervel.no/index.php?artikkelvalg=vis_innhold&visning=1&id=2730)

## 7.5. The need for shared responsibilities

As already stated in the governance chapter above there is a need for new governing spaces that allow for social innovation and experimentation between public, private, voluntary and academic sectors. Co-production between these actors can be a means and a form of new governing spaces for 21st century cities.

As formulated in the research brief on co-production at the University of Oxford, called Jam and Justice quoting a government official words: "The aim is to find the jam in the sandwich'. This means moving beyond unhelpful binaries of 'top down' and 'bottom up' by experimenting in the boundary spaces of urban governance in order to more effectively and democratically govern complex wicked urban issues."<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Strengthening Blue-Green Infrastructure in our Cities - Enhancing Blue- Green infrastructure & social performance in high density urban environments co-ordinated by Ramboll's Liveable Cities Lab can be accessed through: [https://issuu.com/ramboll/docs/blue-green\\_infrastructure\\_lcl\\_20160?e=4162991/36504872](https://issuu.com/ramboll/docs/blue-green_infrastructure_lcl_20160?e=4162991/36504872)

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.urbantransformations.ox.ac.uk/blog/2017/jam-justice-co-producing-urban-governance-for-social-innovation/>



“‘Jam’ is therefore about trying to bring together different urban constituencies to experiment and innovate to address our shared problems. ‘Justice’ is about re-connecting with those who have been disenfranchised and excluded from the search for solutions. Addressing these concerns requires re-thinking the relationship between cities and knowledge and designing for co-production, in order to recognise and value the expertise and resources of wider urban constituencies.”<sup>12</sup>

Regarding PA promotions in terms of facilities and activities the involvement of the community has far reaching benefits. It increases the liveability of the neighbourhood, contributes to safety and decreases criminal and anti-social behaviour and as an overarching result people identify with their neighbourhood and public space and feel ownership towards.

Therefore, this aim is also relevant for VITAL CITIES Partners who face the following related problems that co-production could solve:

- scarce municipal resources vs. high maintenance costs of public spaces and PA related infrastructure
- new user demands connected to public spaces and urban green spaces that are difficult to combine within the urban planning processes
- grassroots initiatives connected to PA promotion and interventions (and also promoting community building and social inclusion) do not have impact on policy-making
- grassroots initiatives are isolated with low capacities
- low level of community engagement as citizens and bottom-up initiatives are not motivated/ mobilised and/ or supported effectively
- with some Partners the above groups’ participation in the ULG is limited
- residents are not informed / aware enough on the issue of the various benefits of PA and its possibilities
- willingness for voluntarism and self-organisation is often missing amongst citizens
- city administrations do not seem to be fully aware of the strategic benefits of collaboration with citizens, community groups and civil associations

### ***7.5.1. Recommendations on the need for shared responsibilities***

- Involving companies: be strategic about what it is you are trying to achieve, 1-1 conversation with the companies, talk about what you need, not what they can offer you, allow them to make the decision whether they want to participate, no-one wants to come into an open forum. Look at their key performance indicator in order to understand their motives.
- Maintenance need to be made easy by proper design of the environment for public use (materials applied, clear indication of different functions, etc.)
- Structural Cooperation with 3rd parties e.g. (small) business, socio economic partners, knowledge partners
- Building on strengths (heritage / energy / resources (e.g. ‘Active Label’ branding, culture, intangible (food – ‘coolness’), capital of sport, tourism destination)

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.urbantransformations.ox.ac.uk/blog/2017/jam-justice-co-producing-urban-governance-for-social-innovation/>

- ULG: It is important to emphasize the need for an agreed vision expressing what people think their particular neighbourhood should be like in a given period of time and that the planned activities are designed to serve the achievement of the agreed vision.
- A city-wide vision brings benefits to all neighbourhoods. Area based approaches are more efficient and deliver more results when they are embedded in local/regional policies disadvantaged neighbourhoods need to become part of overall development project.
- ULG composition (core – extended) – usual suspects - difficult outreaching to community itself (bubble); role of schools