Sustainable Mobility Campaigns for Young People

Lessons learned from the CONNECT project
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1 Introduction

Talking about success and different actions simply isn’t enough. In the CONNECT project, dissemination, implementation and learning by doing was the main drive. As such, the project opened eyes for new mobility by using the power of the youth.

We are pleased to mention that CONNECT is an award winning project! In 2009, the project was awarded the prestigious Sustainable Energy Europe Award in the category ‘Promotional, Communication and Educational Actions’ out of 259 candidates.

CONNECT was praised for setting up new and easy sustainable mobility campaigns where pupils and students have a central and active role. The jury also noted and appreciated the benefits of a project consortium with a balance over Europe, with a prominent involvement of newer member states. Evidence has shown that CONNECT successfully increases sustainable transport modes and reduces CO₂.

In three years time, CONNECT reached almost 85,000 pupils, over 5,000 teachers spread over more than 350 schools in nine countries.

We invite you all to discover our project and to make use of the experiences and lessons learned.

THE TRUTH ABOUT MOBILITY

Over the last few decades our expectations of mobility have changed considerably, with a tremendous rise in automotive traffic. Most of us can get to different places very easily and comfortably. But this development has led to a massive increase in traffic problems. These can only be solved if we learn to think in ways that consider the interaction between different travel modes.

Mobility is a very important issue for people. However, the aim should be to deliver mobility with minimal effect on human health and the environment.

Children and young people can be shining examples in displaying intermodal travel behaviour. Although the number of accompanied trips by car is steadily increasing, children travel more often than adults (adults take on average 3-4 trips daily, children 5-6 trips daily). Most of their trips are by walking, cycling and public transport. On the other hand children are the most affected by the negative impacts associated with traffic. If we want children to continue to live well in a society where traffic plays a vital role, it is of prime importance that adults, in particular those in direct contact with children, are aware of their prominent mobility behaviour.
2 CONNECTing people

What started as a small campaign to promote walking and cycling to school with a handful of schools in Flanders, Belgium, has recently become an (almost) European wide campaign.

The European project CONNECT encourages children and their parents, as well as young people, to use more sustainable transport modes when travelling to and from school.

Overall, the project has three main objectives:

- Informing children, students and parents of the benefits of travelling to and from school using sustainable modes.
- Teaching children to travel to school in a safe way, by increasing their knowledge and skills in daily traffic.
- Encouraging children, pupils and parents to travel to school using sustainable modes.

CONNECT has developed a campaign for primary and secondary schools that can be implemented in all European countries.

- Traffic Snake Game for primary schools
- ECO-TRIP campaign for secondary schools.

The objective of both campaigns is to reduce car travel through the promotion of walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing. We want to encourage people to try alternatives to the car and we want to connect good practice across Europe.

Countries involved in the campaign are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Slovenia and the United Kingdom.

Did you know that ...

- Children are part of the most mobile population group. They cover the largest distances per day on average.
- Children do not walk to their destinations using a straight forward route. Instead, they take on a more exploratory approach to their journey.
- The trip to school is one of the few opportunities for children to explore new areas independently.
- People consume 315 kilojoules of energy for a distance of 1 km on foot, whereas a car in an urban area consumes 3,100 kilojoules for the same distance.
- Average walking speed is 3 to 4 km/h for children.
- Pedestrians regard monotonous routes as especially long and unpleasant.
- 75% of all EU citizens consider pedestrian precincts in the city area to be very important.
• 85% of all EU citizens opt for pedestrian traffic when conflicts occur in traffic planning even if this is a disadvantage to car drivers.

• Half an hour of walking every day has been proven to enhance fitness and health.

• The more attractive and varied the routes are, the more pedestrians enjoy walking.
3 Why promoting walking and cycling for children?

Young people are a very important target group for changing travel modes, as mobility attitudes are deeply influenced by experiences from an early age. The travel behaviour of parents has a significant impact on children and their choice of travel modes. On the other hand, parents, who are encouraged to accompany their children to school in an environmentally sustainable way, are more likely to reflect on their own mobility behaviour.

Most children and adolescents do not formally learn how to use alternative transport modes, or learn about the advantages of using sustainable transport from their parents or their school. Mobility and traffic education is still too often only related to learning traffic rules or road safety training. However, we learned from research that children and young people who cycle and walk less, are more likely to become obese and unhealthy. We also see in other research that children like walking and cycling very much, in particular the social contact they have with their parents/peers and having the feeling of being more independent from an early age.

Many children are driven by car to schools that are often within walking or cycling distances. Getting a driving-licence and using a car is also an important milestone for teenagers. How can we change that driving a car is seen as the end-goal? Today’s children are tomorrow’s adult transport users and individual mobility behaviour is created at a very early age. Road safety education therefore needs a boost in mobility education to show students and teachers alike that using alternative modes has a number of benefits and - obviously - is also good for the environment.

SHORT FACTS – CYCLING

Did you know that ...

- 2/3 of all urban car trips cover a distance of less than 5 km and could easily be replaced by the bicycle.
- Up to 10 bicycles fit into one car parking space.
- It has been proven that regular cycling improves your health and fitness by:
  - improving the lung and respiratory functions;
  - regulates the blood sugar and blood lipid levels;
  - preventing obesity;
  - strengthening the cardio-vascular system;
  - reducing the production of stress hormones; and
  - releasing feel-good endorphins which improve your mood.
It doesn’t rain as much as people sometimes think; it only rains 6% to 10% of the time, mainly during the night.

100 bicycles could be produced with the energy and the resources needed for the production and disposal of one single car.

The bicycle is six times more efficient than a car with an average degree of occupancy.

Cycling is fun and helps users to explore their local surroundings.

Cycle pooling for school children is not only a healthy alternative to using the car, but is also fun.


### 4 Building blocks

CONNECT is not the first project with the aim of increasing sustainable transport modes. The project sought to use as much of the previously gained knowledge as possible.

Good practice was collected from the countries participating in the project. The success (or failure) factors, as well as their final impact on the target group were considered. The aim was to find out what the sticking points for the different actions were, as well as what makes an action or a campaign successful, ensuring that it also works in another country or in a different situation. In total, 45 case studies of programmes related to transport and mobility that have been implemented in primary schools in the nine participating EU countries were collected. For secondary schools another 34 case studies were found. All were used and described in the CONNECT “Report on Best Practises for Primary and Secondary level Schools”. The findings from the report were used to create and improve CONNECT’s Traffic Snake Game and ECO-TRIP campaigns. We will explain them in more detail further on in this brochure.

To quote the American Author Henry Thoreau: “It is not enough to be busy, so are the ants. The question is: What are we busy about?”. The consortium has been busy about making a change, and seeing that become reality, makes the effort worthwhile. It is pleasing to experience that the project partners’ work behind the scenes, has genuinely become a reality in schools throughout Europe these past years. The fact that the campaigns not only seem to appeal, but also attract several ten thousands of young people to join and to change their behaviour is surely satisfying.

Raf Canters, Project Coordinator Connect, Mobiel 21 vzw

**SHORT FACTS – PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

Did you know that ...

- The risk of a fatal accident is 30 times lower for tram passengers and 20 times lower for bus passengers than for car occupants.
- Public transport, when used frequently, produces less emissions and consumes less energy and space, than cars.
- Renewable energy use of vehicles with combustion engines is only 10 to 20 per cent, compared to electrically powered trams and trains (80%).
- Public means of transport are used permanently, whereas cars are only used 1 hour per day on average and have to be parked 23 hours per day.
- Stationary cars alone consumes the same space as all rail traffic.
• Public means of transport are much cheaper compared to the total costs of a car, not only due to fuel costs but also fixed costs (purchase, insurance, taxes, depreciation, interest rates etc.) that have to be paid for, whereas in the case of public transport only variable fares arise.

Success factors:

Ease of implementation (and a flexible approach)

Train the trainer (it will pay off!)

A successful campaign as the basis for a pro-walking and pro-cycling culture

Involve the children (and use small rewards)

Focus on real life (and own behaviour)

The project induced something beautiful at school. Suddenly a lot of pupils had a common project. They all want to see the short movies others have made. You just feel that this brought a pretty dynamic at school.

Johanna Vandenbussche, Teacher KTA GENT, European short movie winner 2009.

• With public transport you can do other things during the trip, like reading, watching a movie, playing a game, text messaging or talking to friends and/or fellow passengers.
5 Training

Sharing of knowledge is essential for spreading good ideas and examples. But having knowledge is not enough, one must also DO things in order to make a change. In order to encourage a change from knowing to doing, the CONNECT project team set up training days for teachers who took part in the campaigns.

The training consisted of two concepts. The first concept, train the trainer, had a top-down approach. The project partners trained the local actors to ensure that all the CONNECT trainers provided a common understanding and approach to the campaign.

Train the trainer - EU Level

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Basic training sessions & Local site visits

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<td>National trainers</td>
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SHORT FACTS – DRIVING A CAR

Did you know that …

- Half of all car journeys are less than 3 km.
- The majority of women, children, teenagers and older people use public transport, whereas men (between 20 and 60 years) mainly use the car.
- Working women with children are the most mobile (8.4 trips per day on average compared to 3.6 trips per day done by other adults) and most environmentally conscious road users.
- On average, 42 minutes per day are spent on driving children to different destinations by car.
- Only children who regularly walk/cycle to school on their own gain the necessary road safety skills.
- Most children involved in car traffic accidents are up to the age of 10 years.
Fuel costs account for only 20% of all car costs, and costs are also incurred even if the car is not used; whereas, for public transport only the actual transport fare has to be paid.

The second concept, train the practitioner, has a bottom-up approach. These sessions are intended for representatives of schools and local actors. During the train-the-practitioner sessions schools received campaign materials such as banners, stickers, posters and a manual for teachers.

During CONNECT almost 600 people from primary schools and 200 people from secondary schools were trained. Next to the practical campaign aspects the training also provided information on the basics of mobility for children, communication strategies as well as mobility management measures for schools.

Train the practitioners - National Level

CONNECT PARTNERS

national/local training workshops

LOCAL ACTORS
(school representatives & local authorities)

local workshops

TEACHERS & PARENTS

implementation

CHILDREN & YOUNGSTERS

- Within the EU road traffic consumes about 60% of all oil imports.
- On average, the car is unused for 23 of 24 hours a day.

The children are so enthusiastic about the Traffic Game – it is a sheer joy to watch them.

City of Graz, Lisa Rücker (Deputy of the mayor)
The Traffic Snake Game is the CONNECT campaign for primary schools. This game is a fun campaign that stimulates young children and their parents to travel to school in an environmentally friendly, safe and healthy way.

Many parents find themselves in a vicious circle. Since car traffic is increasing, more unsafe situations occur, which increase the feeling of insecurity. As a result, parents drive their children to school by car, which in turn, results in more car traffic in and around the vicinity of the school. The Traffic Snake Game aims to break this vicious circle by encouraging schools, children and parents to adopt walking, cycling, car sharing or public transport when travelling to and from school. By walking and cycling, children become more aware of their surroundings and develop road safety skills as well as improve their ability to anticipate other road users. Furthermore, walking and cycling contributes to the recommended amount of daily exercise that children need. It also reduces congestion and parking pressure in school environments.

The Traffic Snake Game is played over the course of one week. Each class is given five large green class dots to represent the five days of the week. Every time a pupil uses a sustainable mode of transport to travel to school, he/she receives a travel mode sticker. All the stickers are collected onto the class dot. Once the class dot has been filled, it is then attached to the Traffic Snake Game banner which is displayed in a prominent place within the school such as the school hall or main gate. The aim of the game is to reach the head of the snake.

The main objective of the game is to engage as many children as possible. Children motivate their parents to choose more sustainable modes of transport like walking, cycling, using a kick scooter, roller skates, public transport or car sharing. The influence of the children on their parents is very high due to children wanting to be able to put a sticker on to their class dot. Also children who live far away from school and for whom the car seems to be the only solution, they can also participate. These pupils are encouraged to ask their parents to park their car at least 200 metres from the school gate and then walk the remainder of the route. Alternatively they can choose to carshare. The Traffic Snake Game encourages teachers to participate as well. Extra stickers are offered, when teachers travel to school in a sustainable way. In this way, teachers are encouraged to travel sustainably.
Deluxe version

The basic Traffic Snake Game is the minimum, but every participating school is encouraged to set up the ‘deluxe’ version. The whole school pays extra attention to sustainable transport during the entire week of the game. Activities that make the campaign deluxe include for example: a car free day or cycle training at the school. The results of the Traffic Snake Game are more prominent if the schools opts to participate in the deluxe version.

Example: walking and cycling pools

The school initiative works by providing suitable information to the pupil’s parents and covers walking communities or walking buses/trains. Walking communities/buses/trains function quite simply and are not difficult to implement. Volunteer adults and/or teachers walk or cycle to school together with children who live near them or en-route to the school. This measure is an important contribution to the school’s reduction in traffic congestion. It makes the journey to school a more enjoyable experience whilst at the same time allowing children to socialise. The measure can also include learning about road safety and is particularly good for young children.
This road safety campaign can also offer pupils a chance to examine their school surroundings for danger spots and lacking facilities which are relevant for them to be able to travel sustainably. The pupils examine existing infrastructure and facilities that are available to support walking and cycling to school as well as public transport. This action can be combined as part of the curriculum and children could carry out interviews with other pedestrians, traffic planners or local politicians, whilst under supervision from their teachers. The children can present the results of their analysis by means of posters or photos and provide suggestions on measures that are required to improve their school surroundings.

Example: analysis of the school surroundings

I love this game very much because I’ve seen a lot of children walking to school who usually travel by car.
For me, participating in the game means to get fit and healthy to school.
It was great to collect all these dots on the banner, so that we get to be the winners.

Statements of Austrian kids who participated in the Traffic Snake Game
The children made proposals and motivated the parents concerning better traffic behaviour.

Christa Kellner, principal of PVS Schulschwestern

The Traffic Snake Game is a good way to let the children be more independent and go to school car free.

Gerda Lechner, principal of VS Eisteich

Due to the daily traffic chaos in front of the school I asked myself how I can contribute to avoid this. So now my child gets out of the car far more away from the school and I turn over and drive to work on another way.

Gertrud Maier, teacher of PVS Schulschwestern

Example: children’s city map

Developing a map of the city/local area for children can help to encourage walking and cycling to and from school. Devising a city map for children involves an analysis of the school surroundings with school and recreational facilities in mind: stops/stations, playgrounds, meeting places, parks etc. All prominent spots are recorded in an area map as symbols that have been defined by the children. An analysis of danger spots and places where accidents happen frequently is advisable. This colourful and children friendly design map can be distributed at the beginning of the school year serving as an orientation guide for children joining a school.
Unlike the Traffic Snake Game which has benefitted from many years of trialling and experimenting, the ECO-TRIP campaign is a brand new campaign for a new target group.

The main goal of the ECO-TRIP campaign is to raise awareness amongst young people (secondary schools) of sustainable trips to and from school. To involve young people, we asked them to create their own short movie about their views of sustainable travel.

The ECO-TRIP campaign consists of 3 steps.

**Debate**
- to draw attention to the project in the school
- to raise awareness on environmental issues
- matching to age and curricula where possible

**Movie & slogan**
- to produce a short movie on ‘ecofriendly trips’ and ‘sustainable travel’
- this can include subthemes like health, climate change or road safety
- youngsters opinions and viewpoints

**Eco-trip week**
- an ECO-TRIPPER is someone who travels to and from school in a sustainable way
- the main aim of the ECO-TRIP week is to get as many people as possible to travel to school in a sustainable way
- the goal for this week is to reach an increase of at least 10% compared to the initial zero-measurement
Developing and Disseminating excellent Mobility Management Measures for Young People
Deluxe version

The deluxe version of ECO-TRIP consists of the basic version with additional lessons and activities. Participating schools are encouraged to pay extra attention to sustainable transport during the entire week of the game. These additional activities can make the campaign more effective than the basic version.

In the Netherlands, some schools had a comedian attend the launch of the campaign, who introduced the theme of sustainable travel in a humoristic way. Other countries invited police officers to teach the students about road safety issues or organised a car free day. In schools where the students have to wear uniforms, they allowed pupils to attend school wearing a green item of clothing or non-uniform day. These deluxe activities can vary from school to school and country to country, fitting both needs as well as means.

Example: lessons regarding the issue of mobility

The issue of “Mobility and Traffic” can be integrated and dealt with in numerous subjects at school: from biology and language lessons to maths and crafts through to history and geography.

Suited for lessons are e.g.:
- Analysis of the school surroundings and creation of a “city map for children”.
- “Transportation – past and present”: research in literature & internet, interviews with senior citizens that tell us about their journey to school.
- Photo story, painting and writing competition regarding the topic of “public transport” and/or “cycling”.
- Analysis of the impact of traffic on health and the environment.
- Acting out different traffic situations of everyday life in roll play.

There are no limitations for creativity. When dealing with traffic (events) and setting signals for an improved environmental awareness, the goal can be achieved in a variety of ways, matching the needs of the target group.
Example: crossroads debate

The crossroads debate can be a great icebreaker. The debate is organised in the school hall or another large space. It is a big activity, which involves four classes. The panel chairman introduces different ideas with a short movie. All students are involved and express their opinion with a thumbs up and thumbs down card. Then the debate begins, with students discussing the ideas. Towards the end, the panel chairman reveals to the students some facts about the topics discussed. Finally the jury, consisting of teachers and other parties, select the student who debated the best.
8 Results

The CONNECT project turned out to be a very fruitful and successful project. This is clearly shown in the numbers pupils, teachers and schools that have been involved. Furthermore all partners have a very positive feeling with the project. The project has given all partners the opportunity to be in close contact with school and their students and indirect with the parents and other involved parties like local government and police.

Traffic Snake Game

Crucial for the success of the implementation of the Traffic Snake Game were the years of experience with the campaign in Austria, the Netherlands and especially Flanders. This made it easy to instruct and coach other new coming countries. The Traffic Snake Game was easily blueprinted and well accepted in all countries. The snowball effect is large and the enthusiasm of the participants gives a real effect in changing behaviour.

During the CONNECT project 71,028 children joined the Traffic Snake Game. The average number of participating children over all the countries is 2,000 each year. A total of 4,504 teachers were involved in the Traffic Snake Game. This is much more than the performance indicator of 100 teachers. The overall results of the first two project years showed that the pupils preferred cycling to school above any other mode of travel. During the first two years the amount of sustainable trips increased with an average of 14%. Over the two years an estimated saving of 592,000 car kilometers was realised, which represents a reduction of approximately 100,000 kg CO₂.

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<tr>
<td>participating children</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>71,028</td>
<td>+ 56,028</td>
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<tr>
<td>involved teachers</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>4,504</td>
<td>+ 4,404</td>
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- Children motivate, stimulate and convince parents to walk or cycle to school;
- The whole school is involved;
- During one week children and parents experience that it is nice to walk or cycle to school. One day is too short to get used to a new transport mode. Longer than one week might be a threshold for some schools.
The ECOTRIP campaign

This campaign was new for all involved parties. Fortunately the campaign was warmly welcomed by the partners and the schools. The CONNECT project defined a broad campaign with a lot of different activities. All participants liked the short movie competition very much. Introducing a competition was a well rewarded element.

During CONNECT project 66 secondary schools participated with the ECO-TRIP Campaign. In total 12,799 students joined the ECO-TRIP Campaign. The students were accompanied by 580 teachers. At most schools only one or two teachers are involved with the ECO-TRIP Campaign. When schools managed to implement a campaign for the whole school and to involve all teachers, almost 3000 teachers were reached.

During the two project years over 80 short movies were made in nine countries. Each year 9 national winners and two international winners were rewarded. The movies were shown and discussed in schools as well as on social network websites. In the first year of the campaign, the modal shift results were limited, but still there was a 4% increase of sustainable trips during the ECO-TRIP week of the campaign.

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<tr>
<td>involved teachers</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>+ 80</td>
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9 Lessons learned

Sustainable mobility. In most European countries, the change from Traffic Safety Education towards Mobility Education is an ongoing struggle both at the level of curricula as well as at the actual schools. Unfortunately mobility has still a rather low priority. The best way forward for sustainable mobility at schools is link it to the topic Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). ESD aims to develop skills and abilities, awareness, attitudes and values as well as a better understanding of sustainability issues. Campaigns like the Traffic Snake Game and Eco-Trip are a good starting point for further development of sustainable trips to schools.

Tailor-made approach. An EU school campaign can work best by adding tailor made relations to the country like translations, adaptations to the curriculum and close contact with schools. These have proven extremely important for CONNECT. Furthermore a campaign is best embedded in a national, regional or local context.

Learning by doing. The CONNECT campaigns have proven to provide good results. A long-term effect is only reachable when the school draws attention to the topic on a regularly basis, as the generation of schoolchildren (and parents) renews every year.

Competition. All over Europe the CONNECT campaigns have proven to be appealing to children and young people because of the element of competition. Children are focussed on collecting dots, while the young people are eager to win from others by making the best movie.

Enthusiastic adoption. The success of the campaigns in the different countries were heavily dependent on an enthusiastic teacher or principal at a school. You need an enthusiastic forerunner!

Level of Implementation. Convincing school teachers and students takes power of persuasion, especially to motivate them to make the most of the campaign by implementing its deluxe version (‘we integrate’ and ‘we build upon’), rather than its standard version (‘we participate’).

Organisation. The organisation of the campaign in primary schools is very different from the organisation in secondary schools. In primary schools, children have a fixed teacher for the year. This allows them to implement extra activities within the curriculum with relative ease. In secondary schools, teachers tend to change according to the subject. So there is a need for a campaign coordinator to oversee its implementation within key curriculum areas.

Easy does it. In all cases the campaign should be relatively hassle free to implement at a school. A tailor-made approach and close contact with the school are helpful in this matter.

Timing. For secondary schools it is really important to give the schools the time to implement the campaign in their planning. Planning this year allows doing next year. It is best to plan the ECO-TRIP campaign before the academic year activities and curriculum is decided.

Political threshold. The CONNECT campaigns have proven to have a low political threshold and this is a huge advantage to attract stakeholders. The theme of sustainable mobility is easily picked up these days: the combination of safety, health and children can be a good opportunity for a more structured working basis. Take advantage of it!
10 Your CONNECTion

The story does not end when the EU funded project ends. CONNECT has many national/regional stakeholders within the nine countries and a number of schools. CONNECT is focusing on achieving a snowball effect in order to spread the campaign across Europe as well as spread it over more schools within a country.

The CONNECT campaign also aims to help decrease the effects of school journeys on the climate by reducing global warming. Contact the consortium partner in your country if you are interested in participating in the project. Contact the project coordinator if your country is not yet involved in the CONNECT campaigns.

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