

Biking comes back to Seixal

“Pedale Pela Sua Saúde – Domingos Sem Carros no Seixal”

AMESEIXAL - Portugal

Summary

This project took place in Seixal under AMESEIXAL co-ordination. Thirty bicycles have been bought, with the financial support of local companies and 3 electrical bicycles were donated to the project by EDP (power utility). During 3 days (21, 22 and 28 of September 2003) the bicycles were put at the disposal of the public for free. Car circulation was interrupted in the city centre of Seixal on 21 and 28 of September to reduce the risk of accidents. This initiative was a total success. People of all ages enjoyed a car free day and did some exercise. This project stopped in October 2003 and will start again in 2004 during the summer period.

End-user area	Target Audience	Technical
<input type="checkbox"/> New buildings	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Citizens	<input type="checkbox"/> Energy efficiency
<input type="checkbox"/> Refurbishment of buildings	<input type="checkbox"/> Households	<input type="checkbox"/> Heating
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transport and mobility	<input type="checkbox"/> Property owners	<input type="checkbox"/> Cooling
<input type="checkbox"/> Financial instruments	<input type="checkbox"/> Schools and universities	<input type="checkbox"/> Appliances
<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Decision makers	<input type="checkbox"/> Lighting
<input type="checkbox"/> Legal initiatives (municipal regulations, directives, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/> Local and regional authorities	<input type="checkbox"/> CHP
<input type="checkbox"/> Planning issues	<input type="checkbox"/> Transport companies	<input type="checkbox"/> District Heating
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustainable communities	<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities	<input type="checkbox"/> Solar energy
<input type="checkbox"/> User behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/> ESCOs	<input type="checkbox"/> Biomass
<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Architects and engineers	<input type="checkbox"/> Wind
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Financial institutions	<input type="checkbox"/> Geothermal
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Hydro power
		<input type="checkbox"/> Other

Context

Portugal is one the EU Member States where citizens practise less physical exercise. Consequences are dramatic from the point of view of public health. On the other hand bicycles are rarely used for short distance travels. Most people use their car instead. Our project aimed at increasing the use of bicycles by local population in a city where, 30 years ago, most of the workers of the large manufacturing cork and steel plants went to work by bicycle.

Objectives

The main objectives pursued were:

- To increase the use of bicycles by local population;

- To promote healthier ways of life;
- To reduce car traffic in the long term;
- To increase Seixal attractiveness for tourism.

Process

This project was launched by AMESEIXAL with the collaboration of several Departments of the City Council as a permanent measure of the Car Free European Day. Thirty bicycles have been bought, with the financial support of local companies. Three electrical bicycles were donated to the project by EDP (power utility). A small metallic plate was welded in each bicycle to display the logo of the companies which provided their financial contribution. During 3 days (21, 22 and 28 of September 2003) the bicycles were put at the disposal of the public for free. Car circulation was interrupted in the city centre of Seixal on 21 and 28 of September to reduce the risk of accidents. This initiative was a total success. People of all ages enjoyed a car free day and did some exercise. This project stopped in October 2003 and will start again in 2004 during the summer period. One of our main concerns was the robbery. The measure used to prevent it (caution plus signature of a responsibility act) proved to be very efficient as no bicycle or helmet were stolen.

Financial resources and partners

The bicycles were bought with AMESEIXAL budget. Five companies provided a financial contribution to the project.

Results

The objectives set initially were met. This initiative was a total success. People of all ages enjoyed a car free day and did some exercise. Many people approached us spontaneously to express their satisfaction. As a result of this action a strategy of development of bicycle lanes will soon be outlined.



Lessons learned and repeatability

There is no doubt that this project can be replicated throughout the EU. This kind of project is relatively easy to set up. No major problem was found during its implementation in Seixal. The impact among local population was very positive.

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