

Action Plan for the region of Utrecht



Project: School Chance

Partner organisation(s) concerned: City of Utrecht

Country: The Netherland

NUTS2 region: Utrecht

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Introduction

School Chance is a project of the European Union and is funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The project organisation is Interreg Europe. School Chance focuses on policies that encourage cleaner transport and promote alternative behaviour in children's mobility to and from school and create an independent mentality regarding children's mobility.

School mobility is a hot topic: school traffic covers almost 15% of the total traffic at urban level. Research in several European countries shows that 30 to 60% of children are brought to school by car. Within School Chance, partners develop a strategy to make sustainable mobility in schools an essential part of their mobility policy and to increase sustainable mobility. The 4 main pillars in the development of policy and implementation for school mobility are:

- Information
- Education
- Promotion
- Infrastructure.

In SchoolChance partners work together and learn from each other's ways to promote safe, healthy, autonomous and sustainable travel to school. Each partner appointed a number of 'Good Practices' that was successful in their city and improved the policy on school mobility. From those good practices each partners selected some to copy into their own city. From this, each partner developed an action plan which describes the examples to be followed, how they are included in their own policy and how they can be implemented. Each partner also develops a certification model for 'mobility-friendly schools' and provides financing to be able to embed and implement the chosen examples in policy.

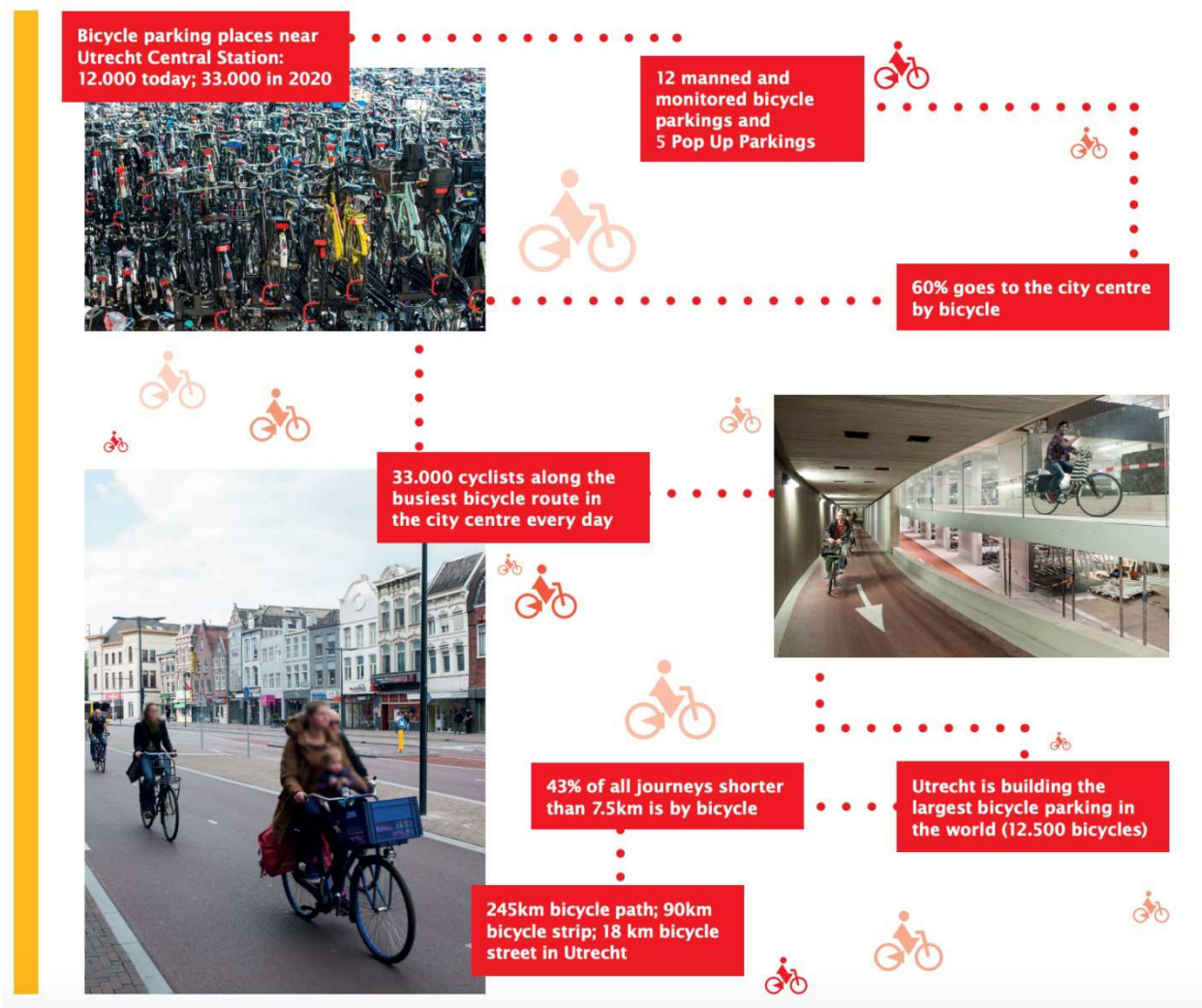


This is the action plan of the city of Utrecht, in which we describe which Good Practices for the city of Utrecht are interesting and what actions we will undertake on this basis. From 2012 to 2107, Utrecht has encouraged schools through the certification model Utrecht Safety Label (UVL) to take measures to improve mobility around schools. Two-thirds of the Utrecht schools had the label in 2017. In 2018 the model was evaluated and it has been decided to develop a new school approach. The acquired knowledge through School Chance is included in that new schools approach. The new schools approach focuses in particular on the group of schools that do not yet have a label and/or schools that do have the label, but still experience problems with mobility. Because Utrecht has already had a certification model and is now continuing this in a different form, no new certification model is being developed from School chance.

1 City of Utrecht, a bicycle friendly city

Utrecht is a bustling, bicycle-friendly city. Every day, between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m., over 125,000 cyclists ride to their work, school, university, public transport, shops or home through the city centre.

The municipality wants to make cycling even more attractive for these and other cyclists. Therefore, the bicycle is given precedence in the mobility policy of the municipality of Utrecht. We want to be the most bike-friendly city in the world. We want to keep our growing city liveable, accessible and economically strong, and we are convinced that the bicycle can and should play a major role in this.



2 Challenges

Utrecht has a very positive starting point for cycling. However the ambition of the city is to encourage even more people in and around Utrecht to use their bikes.

When it comes to children and their parents in particular, two alarming trends work against these ambitions:

- Parents are increasingly bringing their children to school (30%), while the average distance to the primary school is about 600 meters and 97% of the children live less than 2 km from their primary school. Parents mainly use the car to bring their children to school and go then go to work, resulting in traffic bottlenecks around schools and on highways when they leave the city. These children also grow up with the idea that car use for short distances is normal.
- Children go to school and to other destinations near their home independently at an increasingly later age. Although the statistics indicate that traffic becomes safer, parents do not think so. Because traffic is seen as unsafe, children are taken to school and clubs by car more often. This is why the development of the cycling skills of this new generation is at stake.

The challenge of the city of Utrecht is to promote sustainable mobility in primary schools and thereby reduce CO2 emissions.



3 Policy context

The Action Plan aims to impact either:

- a. Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
- b. European Territorial Cooperation programme
- c. Other regional development policy instrument

The city of Utrecht aims to impact c.



3.1 Policy instrument addressed

The policy instrument we addressed in the application of the project is the regional operational programme of the ERDF 'NL–Opportunities for West'. The programme aims for a low-carbon economy, among other things by stimulating sustainable mobility. Because the funds coming from this programme are all spend we needed to find other policy instruments to influence.

Instead of the ERDF programme, we are now addressing the following 3 policy instruments:

1. 'Optimising Use' – continued from 2019 as 'Target group approach'

Between 2015 and 2017 Utrecht and it's regional partners, carried out the action plan 'User-centred mobility' under the national programme 'Optimising Use'. The action plan implemented concrete and measurable measures to use the existing infrastructure more efficiently, aiming to reduce CO2 emissions and shorten travel times. One of the 5 target groups of the action plan was 'children and their parents'. The national programme 'Optimising Use' continued in the 'Short-term approach' (2019–2022) in order to ensure the continuity of the measures. Within this approach, Utrecht has developed the 'Target group approach'. The 'Target group approach' contains an adapted package of concrete and measurable measures to reduce CO2 emissions. Because one of the target groups is again 'children and their parents', the measures from School Chance are in line with this new approach.

2. 'Road Safety Programme'

In Utrecht school mobility is not only about sustainability but also about road safety. Therefore we also address to the existing 'Road Safety Program' of the municipality of Utrecht. The 'Road Safety Program' of the municipality of Utrecht has a regional function. If we improve this program with the measures from the SchoolChance project, we will also influence the regional policy.

3. 'Tour the Force'

This year school mobility was also included in the cycling program 'Tour the Force, part 2' of the national Ministry of Transport. With the measures of the SchoolChance project, we are also addressing to this policy instrument.

3.2 Improvement of the policy instrument

Utrecht realised several mobility management projects in the period of 2015 – 2017 as a part of the program 'User-centred mobility'. From these projects we have learned that the measures have to connect more with the needs of schools. Also addressing children as adults of the future, asks for a special approach.

Measures to stimulate sustainable mobility need to be more in line with the needs of schools, have more interaction with schools and a clear 'what's in it for me'. Addressing children as adults of the future also requires a long-term approach, but there is no clear insight into long-term effects. Promoting alternative mobility behaviour facilitates the choice of more sustainable alternatives for transport and mobility by parents and by children as adults of the future. Specifically, we want to improve the policy instrument by developing new projects and measures aimed at the following elements:

New technologies

Parents must have the confidence to let their children walk to school and bike. New innovative technologies can support this, for example by making their children more visible to other road operators.

Educational and communicative activities for pupils

Children need to understand why walking or cycling to school is positive and enjoying doing this through fun actions and marketing campaigns.

Role of parents and teachers

In order to influence the travel behaviour, the social context is very important. Parents and teachers can stimulate each other in new travel habits and we want to develop ways to keep them busy in the long run.

Infrastructure

Utrecht has already implemented major infrastructural improvements around a majority of schools in the road safety programme.

4 Inspiration

In the project we learned which Good Practices are interesting for the city of Utrecht and how these are relevant for the mobility policy of Utrecht. We copied the measures 'Mobility Manager' and 'Closing the schoolstreet' from the city of Reggio Emilia.

4.1 Source of inspiration from the project

During the different Study Visits we experienced some good examples of projects that we could possibly apply in Utrecht.



In Reggio Emilia we learned that a special appointed Mobility Manager explored the special needs of the school and became a spider in the web around all mobility issues.

The closing of the schoolstreet during starting time of the school of Reggio Emilia was new and unknown for Utrecht. We saw that the street is much safer for the children and that there is a strong commitment of the parents involved.



That's why we are going to apply both approaches from the experience in Reggio Emilia using the knowledge and the lessons learned.

During the Local Stakeholder Meetings we discussed both measure with stakeholders. They were positive and think the Mobility Managers can guide and help schools, parents and children in their search for a better school mobility: how to make it safer and healthier. The local stakeholders were enthusiastic about the presented plans, especially in combination with an online platform. On this platform all regional measures and projects about school mobility are put together: this can be a helpful guide.



The stakeholders also believe that the measure 'Closing the schoolstreet' can be very effective, as long as the school surroundings are suitable. Worth to try is what they said, so that's what we are going to do in Utrecht.

4.2 What we did in the project

Summarized we did the following actions during the SchoolChance project's implementation in phase 1:

- 2017 Collection of Good Practices for the city of Utrecht
- 2018/2019 Study Visits to Gävle, Gdansk, Reggio Emilia, Barcelona, Graz
- 2018 Organization of Thematic Training in Utrecht
- 2019 Participation in Thematic Training in Brasov
- 2019 Participation in seminar on financial tools Graz
- 2019 Participation in two Transfer Workshops in Brasov and Barcelona
- 2019 Presentation about the GP's of Utrecht in three Transfer Workshops in Brasov, Barcelona and Bologna
- 2018/2019 Local Stakeholder Meetings
- 2019 Local Workshop with the school 'Cluster Voorn'
- 2019 Final Peer to Peer Reviews of Regional Action Plan
- 2019 Survey about school mobility and the planned actions from SchoolChance

5 Actions

5.1 Mobility Manager(s)

With the inspiration from the Mobility Manager in Reggio Emilia we introduced a Mobility Manager fitting the Utrecht needs and situation. The Mobility Manager is a coach specially oriented for the schools and the neighbourhood. This coach explores together with stakeholders which measures can be taken to achieve a shift in the modal split of parents bringing their children to school.

The Mobility Manager is:

- a clear point of contact for schools for mobility and road safety issues;
- an expert who is specifically known with the available measures that helps the schools the most;
- a coach who explores together with stakeholders in and around the schools what measures can be taken to achieve a shift in the modal split of parents bringing their children to school.



Stakeholders involved:

- Schools
- Parents
- Neighbourhood
- Safety First Association Netherlands (VVN)
- Province (Goedopweg.nl)

Type of information that schools receive from the Mobility Manager:

- keeping up to date information of changes in the traffic situation around the school and in the neighbourhood;
- information and actions on the traffic (safety) situation around the school;
- getting practical tips and information about the educational offer.

There is an online platform called www.goedopweg.nl/scholen. The Mobility Manager is the intermediate between the schools and this platform, but schools can also approach the platform by themselves.

Speciaal voor | werkegevers logistiek scholen Nieuws Over ons FAQ Resultaten Contact

Goedopweg Acties Projecten Vind P+R Plan je reis

Veilig op de fiets naar school

Lesaanbod speciaal voor scholen

Speciaal voor scholen
Deel deze pagina

Fietsen is gezond en in Nederland nemen kinderen al van jongs af aan deel aan het verkeer. Scholen kunnen hun leerlingen helpen om dat zo veilig mogelijk te doen. Veilig Verkeer Nederland, de ANWB, de Fietsmeesters en de fietsersbond bieden in de regio Utrecht lespakketten en trainingen aan om op een leuke manier op school aan de slag te gaan met veilig fietsen. Jong geleerd is oud gedaan!

Lespakketten en trainingen

Verkeersmethode Veilig Verkeer Nederland
Met deze verkeersmethode hebt u de garantie van kwalitatief en actueel lesmateriaal in groep 1 tot en met 8.

Op de fiets? Even niets
Online lespakket van Veilig Verkeer Nederland over afleiding door mobieltjes op de fiets.

www.goedopweg.nl

Existing measures that help schools the most to encourage walking and cycling:

- road Safety Traffic exam according to the method of Safe Traffic Netherlands;
- lessons in cycling and cycling skills;
- practical programs and projects that unburden the school;
- practical lessons in cycling;
- specific lessons such as the blind spot area of cars and trucks.

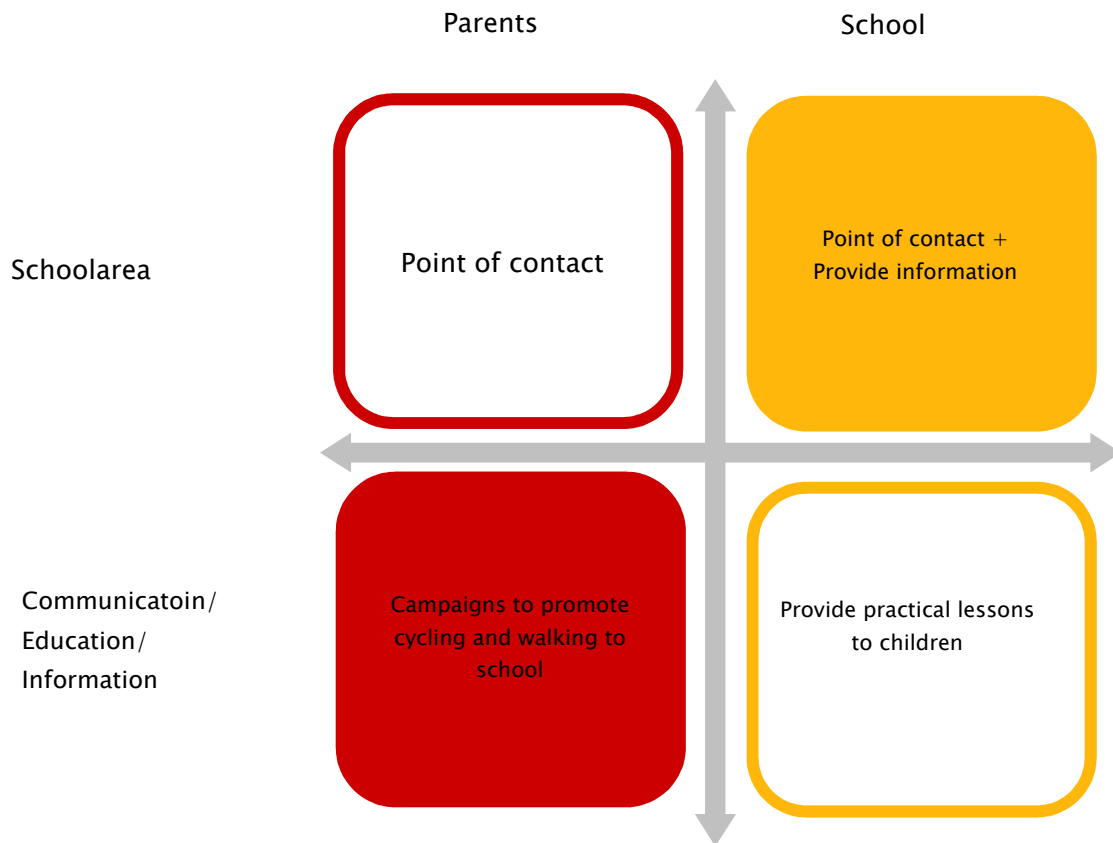
Customization is often needed and new measures can be developed in corporation with for example the Municipality of Utrecht, the Province of Utrecht or Road Safety Netherlands.

Implementation

Through a tender, the municipality of Utrecht has selected the 'Cycling masters' (De Fietsmeesters) as the organization that can best represent the Mobility Managers for a period of 5,5 years. The costs for this period are €149.772. The 'Target group approach' is carried out by the Mobility Management Program and therefore the tender was also implemented by this department. The costs are funded by the earlier named 'Short term approach' programme.

The Mobility Manager has started in October of 2019 with collecting data from the schools and their mobility problems. In phase two of the SchoolChance project, the 'Cycling Masters' is going to work out a plan of action with their specific goals for the implementation of the Mobility Manager.

Visualization of the role of the mobility manager:



Effects and monitoring

With the introduction of the Mobility Manager we expect that we can meet the needs of the school in a better way than we did till now. Because the Mobility Manager is a clear point of contact for schools for mobility and road safety issues, the schools have better access to the measures and can implement those more easily with help of the Mobility Manager. Also there is a better monitoring of the effect of the measures by the Mobility Manager. The Mobility Manager also shares their knowledge about the measures with the municipality and other party's such as the province and organisations as Safe Traffic Netherlands, so the offer of measures can be adjusted when needed.

The Mobility Manager aims especially at the 83 schools that do not have the Road Safety Label (anymore). The goals are:

- at least 10 schools without the Road Safety Label have taken one or more measures from the offered measures at the online platform at the end of 2021.
- to increase the number of active traffic parents with at least 10 at the end of 2021.
- at least 6 schools without the Road Safety Label have taken infrastructural measures to improve safety at the end of 2021.

After one year we will evaluate the actions of the Mobility Manager. We will look at the results and whether the actions of the Mobility Manager are satisfactory and as agreed.

At the end of 2021 we will perform a general evaluation to examine if we meet the goals.



'Logo of the Cycling Masters'

5.2 Closing the school street

After the Study Visit in Reggio Emilia where we saw the good practice 'The closing of the school street for cars' we considered it would be a suitable measure for the mobility problems around schools in Utrecht. It is an infrastructural measure to make the surroundings of the schools more safe and with cleaner air. If the surrounding of the school becomes safer, parents have more confidence letting their children go to school by themselves. This results in less traffic problems around school.



Utrecht has 114 primary schools. The survey that we have done for Schoolchance among 35 out of the 114 schools in Utrecht, has shown that a third of the schools are interested in a pilot for closing the street. 75% of the schools with a road safety label and mobility problems are interested in the measure. 30% of the other types of schools are interested.

From the workshop with the school and from the survey we learned that for the measure 'Closing the schoolstreet' a good preparation is needed:

- according to schools it is necessary that the infrastructure is adjusted under the direction of the municipality, in consultation with the school and the new mobility manager.
- insight into the physical environment of the school and into possible objections and doubts of the parties involved.
- schools who want to communicate in cooperation with the municipality with parents, children and local residents.
- enforcement must be possible.

The survey contains a virtual scan of each school that participated to make sure that closing of the street is possible. The following aspects were considered for the virtual scan:

- How are the access roads used? (main road or residential area)
- What is the maximum permitted speed?
- Are previously taken physical measures around the school visible? (e.g. colored poles)
- How is the public space around the school arranged?
- How much parking is there around the school?
- Are there other places in the area that should be accessible for the car?
- Are there commercial activities in the area?

The conclusion of the survey and the virtual scan is that six schools (of the 35 schools in the survey) are interested in the measure and according to the scan it is also possible to implement it. Another six schools are also interested in the measure but the scan shows that the measure is more difficult to implement. In the table below all results of the scan are shown:

Result scan	Opinion of the school to close the street	Number of schools where the scan and opinion match	Number of schools where the scan and opinion don't match
Possible	Yes	6	
Possible	No		8
Partly possible	Yes	6	
Partly possible	No		10
Not possible	Yes		1
Not possible	No	4	
Total		16	19

Implementation

To be able to do a pilot for the 'Closure of the school street for cars during starting and closing times' we are going to make a plan of action before the end of this year. We already have a lot of information; as a result of the workshop with the school we have a roadmap where we can base the pilot on. The roadmap contains information about the following topics: 'traffic', 'implementation', 'communication' and 'evaluation'. With help from the school and other experts we need to get more detailed information about the costs.

For the pilot we address the program "Road Safety" of the municipality of Utrecht. We are applying for co-funding of the Ministry of Transport by the cycling program 'Tour the Force, part 2'.

Stakeholders involved

- Schools
- Parents
- Neighbourhood
- Province of Utrecht (Goedopweg.nl)
- Municipality of Utrecht
- Ministry of Transport
- Enforcement department
- Police

Effect and monitoring

With this measure we want to achieve a modal shift from car to bike and walking. Because the distance to school becomes more little and there is no parking facility near school, people who live close to school will not bring their children to school by car. Children learn that it is better to walk of cycle for a short distance.

With this new measure for Utrecht we expect that the surroundings of the schools becomes safer, because:

- we expect a modal shift from car to bike and walking;
- children learn that it is better to walk or cycle for a short distance;
- there are less traffic problems around school;
- as the school area becomes saver, parents have more confidence to let their children go to school themselves.
- Less pollution in the direct surrounding of the schools when the streets are closed.

With the measure 'Closing the school street during starting and ending times of the school' we aim to do 2 pilots in 2020 - 2021. We will evaluate the outcome of the pilots through a survey. When the pilots are successful, we will add this measure to the list of measures on the online platform Goedopweg.nl. So that from 2021 on more schools have access to the experiences from this pilot.



6 Next steps

Autumn 2019

'Closure of the school street': making a roadmap for a pilot

'Mobility Manager': collecting data from the schools and their mobility problems

January 2020

Miniconference with local stakeholders about the actions from the Regional Action

Spring 2020

Preparation of the pilot 'Closure of the street for cars'

'Mobility Manager': plan of action with specific goals for the implementation

Summer - winter 2020

'Closure of the school street for cars': implementation of two pilots

'Mobility Manager': implementation

2021

'Closure of the school street for cars': evaluation of two pilots

'Mobility Manager': evaluation of the implementation

Evaluation if the measures improve the policy of the 'Target Group Approach'

If successfully: integration of the measures in the 'Target Group approach'

2022

End of project

