

CycleCities brings a cycling revolution to Gdansk's primary schools

The image of school yards crowded with bicycles will stay in the minds of Gdansk citizens and decision makers for a long time. The CycleCities project awareness raising campaign was able to provide a clear demonstration of the potential of cycling as a transport alternative. In the winning school the % of pupils commuting to school by bike was as high as 53% and in all the participating schools 39%, which beats Amsterdam and Copenhagen.

It all started with the campaign “Traffic Organisation and Mobility in the City” the main objective of which was to raise awareness of primary school pupils about how the traffic around their school operates and the potential conflict between motorised vehicles and cycling. The school class visits in the ITS centre were followed by workshops with pupils in their schools. Children were familiarised with cycling infrastructure principles and together with the mobility instructors were working on the maps on how to make their school environs more cycling friendly. This part of the campaign has influenced children’s perception of a bicycle as a valuable mean of transport and gave them an appetite to take an active part in the biggest inter-school cycling competition so far.

An invitation to participate in “Cycling May” campaign was sent to all primary schools, 25 of which had responded positively, enlisting nearly 4400 pupils from 218 classes. The rules were simple: the school-children and the school staff were encouraged to choose two wheels for their daily commute from Monday to Friday between the 12th and 23rd of May. Each journey was rewarded with two stickers, one for the individual cycling passport and the other to the inter-class poster. The parents, children and school staff all responded with great enthusiasm.



The success of the campaign was really huge and the results overwhelming. 39% of all schoolchildren chose a bike as their main means of transport. In the class with the most cyclists executed cycling trips was at the level of 72%. Many of the pupils



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decided to cycle to school despite bad weather conditions and made a commitment to continue this new way of commuting even after the end of the competition. All 1700 active participants were awarded with cycling bells or journey counters, whilst the most active classes won free entry to the leisure, science or cultural centre. The Mayor of Gdansk, presented a trophy - a self-service cycling station - for "The best cycling school of 2014". The campaign results - were presented to the City Council and just two weeks after its conclusion the campaign was awarded with a prestigious cycling trophy- Silver Spoke .

The event attracted significant involvement from stakeholders and Gdansk authorities and a serious level of media interest. Eight of the local science, leisure or cultural centres supported the event and provided sponsorship for free entrance for the winning classes. Moreover, the organisers have been able to dedicate extra budget for the purchase of cycling accessories for pupils.

The project's awareness raising campaign appeared to be a fantastic way to get more kids on their bikes and generated big interest in the CycleCities project.



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