

ACTIVE CITIES: WHY INNOVATION MATTERS, AND HOW TO DO IT

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By today it has become common sense that physical activity, “sport for all”, is the key to health, self-efficacy, and quality of life. It is similarly well proven, yet less discussed, that cities providing an active lifestyle sharply decrease sickness-related costs and increase the quality of living.

But how to become a truly active city? And, even more importantly, how to maintain an environment stimulating physical activity across all ages and social and cultural groups? One opportunity is building an active city with off-the-shelf concepts and components. This makes a lot of sense because usually these have been thoroughly developed and evaluated, are rather matured and pose little risk to the decision-makers. On the other hand, however, they likely already address interests and opportunities from the past and are certainly not best adapted to a city’s specific challenges nor make use of its respective possibilities.

This is where Active City Innovation comes into play. With a systematic approach to determine and then develop and realize those solutions that are most effective, efficient, and best address the challenges and opportunities of their environment cities will make the best use of their resources and create unique instances to foster a new quality of life and to boost city marketing. In this contribution, the storyline above will be animated as a brief introduction. Building upon this, examples of Active City Innovation from around the globe will be introduced, derived from experimental work within the International Sports Innovation Network. In a conclusion, the cornerstones of a systematic approach toward Active City Innovation will be introduced and means to apply this methodology highlighted.