

Workshop: Providing Knowledge and Experience

Tu3/F2: Training and Networking in Bicycle Participation Schemes in five Municipalities in Barcelona Province

Ferrando, Haritz; Anaya, Esther; Sabaté, Xavier (ES)

Bicicleta Club de Catalunya (BACC)

Carrer de la Verneda, 16-22, 08018 – Barcelona, Spain

haritz.ferrando@bacc.info

Introduction

The Barcelona Provincial Council (Diputació de Barcelona) and the Bicicleta Club de Catalunya - BACC (NGO of bicycle users) have carried out a study to improve bicycle participation schemes. In the Barcelona region this participation is usually developed by the so-called bicycle commissions. A bicycle commission is a participation scheme organised and coordinated by the local government with the objective of discussing cycling related issues. After some years of observation and monitoring some areas for improvement were detected in the operation of these participation instruments:

- The way in which the bicycle commissions were working was very varied.
- There was a lack of unity in the campaign policies adopted by the 5 cities.
- It was believed that the efficiency level of each of the 5 commissions was relatively low and could be improved.

1. Objectives

This study aimed to improve the results of bicycle commissions with innovative formulas, thereby reinforcing them and contributing to their effectiveness.

The final goal of the project was to consolidate an effective framework from which to implement campaigning policies for cycling on a local scale. This was to be done by improving the quality of stakeholder participation and implementing the exchange of experiences between the bicycle commissions.

2. Parts of the study

The study is composed of three parts: diagnosis, research into good practices and proposals for improvement. At the end there is a chapter on conclusions and proposals for the future.

2.1 Diagnosis

A diagnosis was carried out of 5 bicycle commissions in the medium-size cities of Terrassa, Sabadell, L'Hospitalet, Sant Feliu de Llobregat and Badalona. 6 aspects were studied for every one of these participatory instruments:

- Context and administrative organisation
- Operation
- Contents
- Participants

- Communication
- Problems and Future

Research has been carried out in the following way:

- Collecting information produced by local commissions (statutes, meeting minutes, results, etc.)
- Carrying out interviews and questionnaires with coordinators and other commission members.
- Writing reports on the condition of the 5 bicycle commissions, where elements such as shared qualities and areas for improvement were assessed.

This part of the project was completed with the appraisal of and proposals for each of these 6 aspects, this table shows the most interesting observations:

2.1.1 Context and administrative organisation

All the municipalities have participation instruments relating to environment, and some have instruments relating to mobility. All of them have a Bicycle Plan.

Planning and participation context for the bicycle commissions

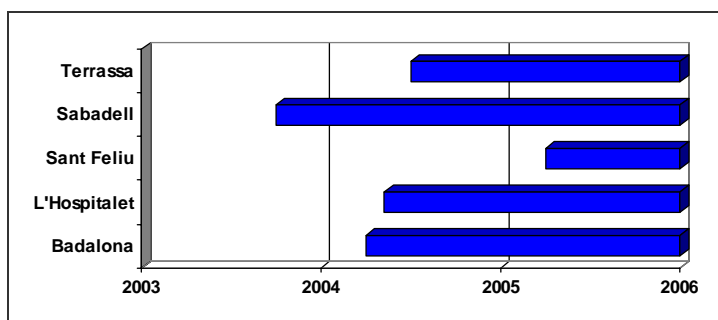
Bicycle Commission	Bicycle Plan	Parallel Participation Processes	
		Environment	Mobility
Badalona	X	X	
L'Hospitalet	X	X	X
Sant Feliu	X	X	
Sabadell	X	X	X
Terrassa	X	X	X

In relation to this aspect, it is particularly important that experiences of participation processes should be exchanged. Also, planning instruments should be linked to public participation, not only in the initial write up stage, but also when they are implemented.

2.1.2 Operation

Different operational aspects have been evaluated, some of which can be quantified and represented, but others are conceptual and observations and proposals are described as follows:

- Implementation period



- Frequency of meetings

The way each commission functions requires meetings of greater or lesser frequency. Commissions that provide a more informative function meet less often whilst commissions with active work groups meet with greater frequency.

Bicycle Commission	A month or less	Two months	Annual
Terrassa			x
Sabadell	x		
Sant Feliu	x		
L'Hospitalet	x		
Badalona		x	

- Meeting guidelines: In order to maintain continuity and favour attendance at meetings, it is recommended that they be held at local government buildings, outside of working hours and for up to two hours.
- Related documents: Some commissions didn't keep a record of meetings. It is highly recommended that minutes should be written up as they provide a register of the issues discussed at meetings.
- Exchange of ideas between different participation processes: Interchange of information between the different participation instruments on bicycles has to be carried out periodically.
- Coordination: The coordinator of the bicycle commission must work in the local authority, preferably as an official. He or she must perform the minimum functions necessary to allow the correct management of the commission, such as: transversality, communication, organization, writing up minutes, management of information, etc
- Transversality: This refers to the communication between different figures that work with the same subject within the different departments of the local authority, and other local organisations affected by and able to affect the issue at stake (eg. the local police).

2.1.3 Contents

The subjects discussed in the commissions are those concerning the use of the bicycle as everyday transport in the cities. Evidently, if the municipality has green spaces, the subject broadens to a more recreational concept of the bicycle, but never forgetting its connection to the city environment. Most common subjects are:

- Promotion of the bicycle as everyday transport in the city: campaign design, organisation of events, etc.
- Recreational concept of the bicycle in the city: connection with green spaces, the sea and riverside or rural paths, etc.
- Improvement of existing infrastructures: focusing on problem areas, maintenance, bad management, etc.
- Programming of new infrastructures: cycle routes, bike parking facilities,
- Writing or implementation and monitoring of planning: bicycle, mobility, environment or urban planning.

2.1.4 Participation

The coordinator usually selects the participants of a bicycle commission. The coordinator must select not only organisations related to the bicycle but also those organisations or groups affected by the subjects

discussed in the commission. The selection will be highly affected by the number of associations existing in the city. Cities with no organisations representing bicycle users will need bigger associations and the local authorities (who can help to create or fund organisations) to make an effort to find local representatives willing to participate in the commissions. In addition, in line with the practise of some commissions, experts should be invited to the commission in order to explain certain subjects from an external point of view. Another good practice detected in the commissions is field work and visits to places or organisations related to the issues in question, e.g. visiting problem areas in the cycle network in order to propose solutions.

2.1.5 Communication

This aspect looks at the ease with which people may make contact with the commissions and also how available information about these groups is, e.g. office contact details, news about events, web pages, etc.

Evidence shows that very little contact information on bicycle commissions is available. Sometimes there are on-line forms for Agenda 21 participation processes and there is a link to the bicycle commissions.

	Badalona	Hospitalet	Sant Feliu	Sabadell	Terrassa
Information about other participation processes	X	X		X	
Information about participation organizations	X	X		X	
Web forums (Consensus)	X		X	X	X
Information about bicycle planning	X		X		X
Information about bicycle commissions		X		X	

As can be seen in this table, some municipalities still lack information about bicycle participation and planning.

Making information about the bicycle commissions available on the internet and through other means (e.g. by phone) is fundamental in order to publicise and transmit the commission's knowledge to all, including potential participants. This could help to attract new participants to commissions with few member organisations. Information about bicycle commissions must be related to other participation processes and planning, in order to generate a synergetic effect that benefits the participation network.

2.1.6 Problems and future

The biggest problem in a bicycle commission can be the lack of participant motivation. This problem can have different causes:

- Change of issues; in between concluding a big issue that has taken up a lot of attention, and the search for a new one, there can be a lull in participants' interest.
- Lack of participation from local organisations: this can happen due to a lack of local organisations (because they do not exist) or when organisations are not motivated to come to the commission. In the first case, individual participants must be attracted to the commission. In the second case municipality and organisations must be put in contact and organisations must be compelled to involve their members in the participative process by showing how they can contribute to improve the bicycle facilities in their city.

- Lack of political engagement: issues presented to the commission must have an assigned budget, or at least, there must be a will to carry them out in the future. The concept of participative budgets should also be applied to bicycle commissions.

2.1.7 Benefits for bicycle commission participants

- Synergies with other participative processes: mobility pacts or the Agenda 21 also deal with bicycle promotion. Uniting forces can help the decision making process within local governments as well as increasing pressure to demand increases in government budgets to support cycling.
- Updating planning: one of the issues that the commissions deal with is the revision and updating of planning instruments. This allows the adaptation of planning, keeping it up to date with the current situation.
- Authorization of local government decisions: consensus is not always possible, but co-decision is and it legitimates the decisions that are publicly presented by local governments. Bicycle Plans developed in collaboration with bicycle commissions receive unanimous approval by all political groups in the local government. This shows that decisions made in participative processes are highly valued by politicians.
- Transparency: participative budgets allow priorities to be established; the commission decides which action needs to be carried out first. In this way the commission can keep informed about the municipality's level of commitment, thereby increasing trust in the local government.
- The contribution of information: bicycle commission participants are daily cyclists and this provides them with extensive knowledge about cycling and their city. This knowledge is transmitted to local government officials and improves the quality of their management.
- Meeting point: commissions gather together stakeholders. This enables local governments to coordinate them in such a way that promotes team work and joint decisions.

2.2 Good practices

The second part of this study was to collect together national and international good practices related to participation and bicycle promotion.

The good practices identified in the study can be divided into three different types of experiences: participation schemes, participation instruments and networks. The experiences have been studied and registered as case studies in a series information sheets, as can be seen in the following example;

0 Comissió Cívica del Vianant i de la Bicicleta de Barcelona		
Tipus d'iniciativa	Àmbit d'actuació	
Organisme de participació	municipal	
Àmbit geogràfic		
Espanya	Barcelona (Catalunya)	
Agents impulsors		
Ajuntament de Barcelona	Mobilitat	
Persona de contacte: Francesc Robredo		
Adreça contacte: Plaça Sant Jaume s/n, 08001 Barcelona		
Tel: 934027504	A/e: froredo@mail.bcn.es	
web: www.bcn.es/bicicleta		
Període d'implantació	Periodicitat de reunions	Nombre de participants
1996 - actualitat	quadrimestral	30
Agents implicats		
BACC, Amics de la Bici, Equips tècnics de les àrees de Medi ambient, Policia local, empreses de consultoria, comerciants de bicicletes		
Descripció		
Òrgan creat per debatre les polítiques de promoció de la bicicleta a la ciutat de Barcelona i elaborar propostes en aquest sentit. L'integren tècnics i polítics municipals, i representants d'associacions d'usuari de la bicicleta i de sectors privats		
S'han creat 3 grups de treball: 1) Promoció, que organitza campanyes i esdeveniments; 2) Infraestructures, que dissenya i implementa els carrils bicicleta i 3) Gestió, que supervisa la senyalització, l'aparcarment i les estacions de l'ús de la bicicleta		
Des de 2000 la Comissió es va dotar de pressupost, es va integrar a les comissions del Pacte per la Mobilitat de Barcelona i es van començar a realitzar campanyes i estudis. Al 2000 també es va integrar el vianant, com a aspecte a tractar en la comissió.		
Actuacions executades		
S'han creat uns 150 km de carrils-bici i uns 30.000 objectes circulen cada dia per la ciutat. S'ha elaborat el Pla estratègic de la bicicleta 2008-2012, per promoure i consolidar l'ús de la bicicleta, amb un pressupost anual de 1.000.000 €.		
Més informació		
Agenda 21: www.bcn.es/agenda21 Amics de la Bici: www.amicsdelabici.org Barcelona Camina: www.barcelonacamina.org Bicicleta Club de Catalunya – BACC: www.bacc.info Pacte per la Mobilitat: www.bcn.es/infotransi/pacte/catala/pacte.htm		

Case studies are listed below:

Participation schemes
1. Pedalibre (Cyclist organisation based in Madrid) (Spain)
2. Gent Intelligent Travel Club (Belgium)
3. Cycling in Darlington (United Kingdom)
4. Cycling in Sefton (United Kingdom)
5. Rennes Cycling Work and Information Group (France)
6. Lund cycling work group (Sweden)
7. Koprivnica – Town On The Move (Croatia)
8. Bicycle observatory in San Sebastián (Spain)
9. Regular meeting program on cycling in Strasbourg (France)
Instruments
10. Bicycle Account of Copenhaguen (Denmark)
11. BYPAD - Bicycle Policy (Europe)
12. Cycling policy for the citizens of Malmö (Sweden)
13. Mr. Bicycle - Bike commissioner (France)
14. Bicycle Friendly Community (International)
15. Cycling festival “tous a Vélo” (France)
16. Bike pact for Andalusia (Spain)
17. Windus Streets for People in London (United Kingdom)
Networks
18. Associazione Italiana Città Ciclabili (Italy)
19. Club des villes cyclables (France)
20. Les Départements cyclables (France)
21. Cycling England (United Kingdom)
22. Cycle Campaign Network (United Kingdom)

Case studies have been discussed in order to present improvement proposals and viable alternatives for local experiences.

2.3 Proposals for improvement

The third part of the project consisted in proposing measures for improving bicycle commissions. Proposals for improvement are made with reference to both management and policy.

This chapter includes management guidelines for bicycle commissions, based on the research and evaluation carried out in the previous chapters of the project. These guidelines are perhaps the most important output obtained from this project, because it is a very useful tool and facilitates the establishing of bicycle commissions.

With regard to cycling policies, the project focuses in two kinds of proposals: those relating to knowledge management and those related to evaluation or auditing. Knowledge management is understood as the resources or means to obtain certain knowledge or information. A knowledge manager could help provide bicycle commissions with the advice and information they need. Knowledge management tools could be internet databases such as Velo.Info or the Spicycles project.

It is recommended that local authorities that have a bicycle commission also apply evaluation or auditing tools to their bicycle policies. These auditing processes can be carried out through BYPAD (Bicycle Policy Audit). BYPAD is a European project that has developed a specific methodology for auditing bicycle policies in local areas.

2.4 Conclusions and Proposals for the future

Bicycle commissions need to be encouraged. This stimulation process consists in providing these entities with technical assessment, monitoring, information about other bicycle commissions, management guidelines, etc. Until now, these tasks have been performed by members of our organisation, but it is believed that there is a need to invest more resources and delegate this task to a specialised organism. Therefore a proposal for the future is the creation of a city network. This network could be composed of cities with bicycle commissions or, in a more general approach, cities committed to cycling promotion.

The proposal to create a network of bicycle commissions or *Cycling Cities* is completely new in Spain. Learning from the experience of other countries like France, Italy or Germany included in the research would help to establish this network. Some of this network's objectives would be particularly linked to bicycle commissions, like:

- Exchanging information about local bicycle policies.
- Good practices in bicycle promotion databases.
- Availability of common resources like manuals, bibliography, meeting spaces, courses for coordinators, etc.

This could help homogenize the management of the bicycle commissions, thereby optimizing efficiency.

Networks should also be created as participative process, so that commissions can express their needs or expectations for the future network. Once the network has been established, the municipalities interested in taking part must have at least a basic bicycle policy. This network could help improve the management of bicycle commissions and moreover it could help promote cycling in cities.