

Towards a Sustainable Mobility: A Safe Journey from home to school in Castelo Branco (Portugal)

Journeys from home to school represent a significant part of the urban mobility.

Such journeys have a relevant impact on urban environments, family life and children's activities.

Castelo Branco is a small sized city, where distances to (and from) school are short; so, it is expectable that scholars would make sustainable choices, in terms of mobility. Those choices, however, are predominantly motorized, using the private car.

The Portuguese Agency for the Environment (“*APA*”), responsible for the implementation of the national environmental policies, has proposed a Sustainable Mobility Plan at local (municipal) level, which highlights the necessity to review journeys to (and from) school.

So, the responsible institutions, taking into consideration the various impacts on urban environment (pollutant emissions, noise, accidents, traffic jam, delays, etc.) have decided to develop a Project named “*Towards a Sustainable Mobility: A safe Journey from home to school in Castelo Branco*” (Portugal), involving students, parents, relatives, friends, teachers and safety partners.

This said project started in April 2010 and will proceed until November 2011. The initial diagnosis has evaluated mobility patterns of scholars on their way to school, aged from 6 to 14, in a total of 3554 students.

The project aimed at promoting sustainable mobility, as well as the use of an active mode in those journeys to (and from) school. The Municipality and the local transport operator (*TRANSDEV*) acted as partners; the project was financially supported by the *Calouste Gulbenkian* Foundation.

Activities developed to implement this project comprise:

1. Production of awareness material and participation in local events, such as radio, conferences and workshops, publication of articles in the media and use of Information Technology. A “*Walk to school*” soundtrack video was also produced;
2. Workshops and Conferences with the scholar community (parents, students and teachers) about sustainable mobility;
3. Scientific and technical approach: Diagnosis of scholars' mobility and study of mobility alternatives;
4. Improvement of sustainable travel choices and public transportation, penalizing individual travels (geometry, pavements, traffic control and traffic devices, road safety, etc.)
5. Support to the development of school projects, namely, about sustainable mobility in urban environments (noise, air pollution and road safety);
6. Organization of events: Mobility Contest (Mental Map to school, cartoons, flyers and drawings), Mobility Games, Mobility Day to School (Walk to school / Car Free Day), Mobility Week for the scholar community (Walk to school/ Car Free Day); <http://www.transportesemrevista.com/Default.aspx?tabid=210&language=pt-PT&id=3616>
7. National Seminar on the Project and various scientific events;
8. Submission of papers and articles to technical and scientific Magazines (national and international);
9. Guidelines and technical recommendations;
10. Reports on the Project.

Further information is available at following website: <http://www.est.ipcb.pt/mobilidadeescolar/>