

Title

The Golden Flip Flop – walking initiative

Short description

The Golden Flip Flop Walking Initiative was a practice developed within the overarching CIVITAS ARCHIMEDES project. ARCHIMEDES (2008-2012) was an EU funded project aimed to introduce innovative, integrated and ambitious strategies for clean, energy-efficient, sustainable urban transport and thereby have a significant impact on policies concerning energy, transport, and environmental sustainability. It was implemented in six cities of the EU, namely Aalborg (DK), Donostia-San Sebastián (ES), Brighton & Hove (UK), Iasi (RO), Monza (IT) and Ústí nad Labem (CZ). The Golden Flip Flop was one of the measures undertaken in Brighton and Hove in the UK. It was a walking promotion initiative targeted to young children attending schools in the area. Children were prompted to walk to their schools instead of being driven by their parents. They took part in a reward system based on stickers; the children would award themselves with a sticker every time they walked to school. Every week, their teachers would collect all stickers and send them to the project team. Every half term, the schools with the most stickers would be awarded with “The Golden Flip Flop”, a 2 meter statue of a flip flop to indicate that this school was successful in promoting walking. The practice was successful in increasing students’ engagement with walking, towards a more sustainable method of travelling.

Topic

Moving – Active Mobility

Characteristics (type, level)

Neighborhood – Intervention

Country/Countries of implementation

United Kingdom

Aims and Objectives

The main aims of the Walking Initiative pilot scheme were as follows:

- To evaluate whether the sticker reward scheme has an impact on walking journeys to school.
- To find out from the users of the scheme (teachers, parents, students) whether it was effective. This includes whether it was targeted at the correct age group and whether the length of the scheme and the rewards that were given were appropriate for the children.
- To find out if collecting information in this way was practical i.e. relying on parents to bring the information to school and for teaching staff to collate this information.
- To make the initiative as self-sustaining as possible among the schools.

Target Group

The age group that was chosen for the Pilot phase of the practice was Reception age (4 and 5 year olds) and for the 2nd Round children aged 7-8 years. Their parents were also involved as they are the ones who make the decisions about how their children travel to school particularly at this very young age.

Status

Completed – No Plans for Follow-up

Start and Completion dates

The scheme was piloted in October 2008 and ran for six week periods over the next three half terms. It ended in April 2009.

Following evaluation and revisions, the practice was repeated again (2nd Round) in the first half of the autumn term 2010.

Lifestyle and Behavior Change

This practice actively encouraged parents and their children to walk to school instead of going by car, especially on short trips. The Golden Flip Flop measure implemented a reward system for children who walked to school over the course of school terms. The measure could also potentially encourage children to follow a more active way of travelling, because they learn from a young age the importance and benefits of walking over car use.

Effects on:

Health and Wellbeing	By prompting children and their parents to walk to school, their overall fitness levels will improve, with positive effects for health and wellbeing.
Vulnerable populations	Information is not available.
Environment	By reducing the number of unnecessary car trips, especially for short distances, CO2 levels and air pollutants are expected to drop, with direct positive impact on the environment.

Initiated and/or implemented by

This practice was initiated as part of the overarching CIVITAS ARCHIMEDES EU project, which was a blend of policy tools that introduces innovative, integrated and ambitious strategies for clean, energy-efficient, sustainable urban transport and thereby have a significant impact on policies concerning energy, transport, and environmental sustainability.

Stakeholders and sectors involved

Pilot Phase

Transport Planners from Brighton & Hove City Council.

The 3 schools taking part in the practice:

- St. Andrew's Church of England School, Hove.
- St. Paul's Church of England School, Brighton.
- St. Martin's Church of England School, Brighton.

2nd Round

- Coldean Primary School, Brighton
- Coombe Road Primary School, Brighton
- St Martin's CE Primary & Nursery School, Brighton
- Fairlight Primary School, Brighton
- St Barts School, Brighton

Financial support

Funding for the Golden Flip Flop initiative was provided as part of the overarching CIVITAS ARCHIMEDES EU project.

Evidence-base

The Evaluation report for various Travel Plan measures undertaken in Brighton and Hove provides information of car use in the area prior to the implementation of the measure.

In the UK, 41 per cent of all trips are less than two miles and nearly a quarter of all car trips are less than two miles and 56% are less than 5 miles which make a large proportion of the journeys transferable to foot, cycle or bus. During peak times commuter traffic contributes significantly to congestion on many of the main routes throughout the city.

In 2005 approximately 35% of all journeys to and from all schools in the City were made by car. This meant that many of the vehicles on the road during peak travel times in the city was 'school-run' traffic.

Main activities

All of the activities both during the Preparation and Implementation phases dealt with Communication and Involvement. Contacts were arranged with school staff in order to inform them about the project and prompt them to take part in the practice. During the implementation phase, the project team was also contacting the schools to receive their feedback on the progress of the practice.

As for the practice itself, the aim was to see what impact the incentive scheme would make on the travel habits of the families at the schools. The scheme rewarded children for walking to school by using a sticker system. A sticker was given to the child each time they walked to

school. The system was managed by the parents and their children by keeping a chart at home and adding the totals up every week.

The class teacher/teaching assistant was asked to add up the scores from each child at the end of each half term. As well as the sticker reward at home, the students received other rewards (a certificate and a Golden Flip Flop magnet) that were presented in their class once they had achieved a certain number of days of walking.

Students also received a “trophy golden flip flop” with a white space where the teachers could add their students’ names whenever they performed well at the practice. Finally, a competition between the 3 schools was completed on every half term period, with the reward being the “Giant Golden Flip Flop” (2 metres high), where the winning school could put it on display.

Evaluation

“Hands up” Surveys: Baseline measurements of student’s modes of transport on particular days.

Collation of walking results: Students would award themselves a sticker whenever they walked to school. At the end of the week, teachers would collect all stickers for collation.

Feedback sessions with teachers and children: Written questionnaires with teachers and responses from students were gained by the teacher asking the students for their views.

Main results

For the 2nd Round of the scheme, the average ‘walking’ figures (number of journeys on foot including scooting and bicycle) across the five schools before the start of the practice was 59%. This had increased to 91% by the end of the competition.

Key success factors and barriers

One of the main success factors was a quantifiable difference in the number of children who preferred to walk to school than be driven by car. Another factor was the overall satisfaction of the participants with the practice.

Barriers Included:

- **Involvement / Communication.** Contacts within schools and businesses. It was very hard to “sell” the concept of sustainable travel particularly to businesses unless there was an existing contact. It is very time consuming to “cold call” businesses, this was defined as not successful.
- **Financial.** Too much dependency on public funds. In some cases, particularly with businesses, the organisers tried to secure some financial commitment to support the implementation of a travel plan. In the increasingly challenging economic climate this was difficult.
- **Political / strategic.** Politicians conflict over local sustainable travel policy which, in some circumstances, led to delays in the completion of travel plans.
- **Organisational.** Schools are often overwhelmed with demands from outside agencies. Even with a reliable contact within the school, collecting feedback from teachers once a scheme has been delivered can be unreliable.
- **Cultural.** Initiatives in schools often have a life span. Both children and adults enjoy new ideas. It is a good to deliver initiatives for a certain length of time and then introduce something new.

INHERIT Perspective

This program was chosen for inclusion for its capacity to address all three targets of the INHERIT program through promoting active mobility in young children, reducing automobile presence and traffic thus reducing carbon emissions, as well as providing an educational component to foster awareness about sustainable and safer forms of travel. This promotes inclusivity and allows citizens across different socio-economic strata to participate in healthier, safer, and more environmentally-friendly modes of transportation. The competitive aspect of this program is proven to yield greater participation and incentive for school-age children and their guardians to participate in sustainable travel initiatives.

More information

[Golden Flip Flop Walking Initiative Pilot Scheme Evaluation](#)

[Travel Plans in Brighton & Hove](#)

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