

## Personal meetings increase walking and cycling among University of Ljubljana staff (Slovenia)



**Author:**  
Jan-Willem Van Der Pas

**Region:**  
Eastern Europe

**Country:**  
Slovenia

**Topic:**  
Urban mobility planning  
Public and stakeholder involvement  
Walking and cycling

### In brief

In Spring 2014, employees of four faculties of the University of Ljubljana were invited to one-to-one meetings to discuss ways that their daily commute could be improved - a process known as personalised travel planning (PTP). Participants carried out a short interview with an adviser and received a customised package of information materials, leaflets and incentives to help them test alternative modes of travel. Through the PTP, the University saw an increase in walking and cycling, and also raised the number of staff members considering a reduction in their car use.

The activities were implemented by the Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia as a part of the IEE-Steer project PTP-Cycle.

### Context

The four faculties of the University of Ljubljana, the target group for the PTP project, counts around 1 000 employees. The main focus area was a large campus near the ring road on the edge of the city. The area has low rise, modern buildings set into the landscape. As the campus is surrounded by green spaces, the site provides spacious free parking areas, encouraging employees and students to commute by car.

Although the location is accessible by other forms of transport, such as buses and bicycles, the existing cycling and pedestrian infrastructure is not of high quality. The nearest bus stops are situated about a 5-10 minute walk away.

### In action

A baseline survey was carried out shortly before employees were asked to take part in the PTP activities. It showed that for short distances (up to 2 km) more than 90 per cent of employees already travelled on foot or by bicycle. The share of cyclists for distances of 2 - 5 km was around 30 per cent, while the number of car drivers over this distance was almost 40 per cent. The modal split of cyclists fell to 13.9 per cent for distances of 5 - 10 km. The share of car drivers reached almost 80 per cent over 10 - 30 km and 93.3 per cent on distances longer than 30 km.

All employees within the four faculties were targeted during the initial stage of the project. First contact was made by email, with management sending a message through the internal mailing list. Following this, all employees were contacted by phone to arrange a face-to-face meeting. Up to three phone call attempts per participant were made. The project established contact with a total of 674 employees, mostly using the phone, though some of the employees responded to the email. 126 people arranged a personal meeting and received travel advice in person (14 per cent of the target group, and 18

per cent of the established contacts).

## Results

Though the response rate of the employees was much lower than expected, the project still garnered significant results. 92 per cent of employees who received advice and materials were pleased with the service, and about 10 per cent of employees who received materials tested the suggested alternatives as a result of the personalised conversation.

A short term evaluation of the results showed that walking had increased by 5 per cent and cycling by 27 per cent, while car use had fallen by 6 per cent. The evaluation survey was carried out six months after the activities, and another survey will be carried out 12 months after the baseline survey using the same conditions and technique, allowing for an accurate appraisal of the long-term effects.

The project contributed to a notable change of attitude to car use - the share of those not considering alternative transport modes decreased from 19 per cent to 10 per cent, resulting in the percentage of those contemplating a reduction in their car use increasing from 28 per cent to 43 per cent.

## Challenges, opportunities and transferability

The project posed a number of challenges. An implementation plan was developed following the original project methodology, but it was untested in the Slovenian cultural environment.

The main problem faced was the data protection act, which is very strict in Slovenia. Employers are not allowed to forward any personal data on their employees to third parties, meaning only publicly available data was available to develop the database of contacts. The second barrier was the act of 'knocking on the door' (which was part of the original methodology). This was not an acceptable approach for Faculty Management because of the potential disturbance to work. The method was adapted in order to overcome this barrier, but the new method used (an email, followed by a phone call, then pre-arranged meetings) was time consuming and provided a lower response rate than expected.

The implementation did, however, produce numerous positive outcomes. The advisers mostly reported high-quality conversations, with those receiving advice interested and engaged. Once a personal conversation was initiated, the approach provoked good results in both modal shift and in attitudes to transport. Advisors found that people enjoyed sharing their stories and experiences with different modes of transport, which gave them a solid basis for personal interaction. A very high proportion of employees were satisfied with the information materials provided, and as a result the response rate increased once the first packages were delivered and employees shared the positive benefits with their peers.

## In Depth

- [PTP-Cycle website](#)

Image: [University of Ljubljana \(photo on Flickr\)](#) by "Ramón", licensed under [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)

---