

Bike Pal project, ESRC, 2014

Cycling safety in 30 kmph zones

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The project wanted to evaluate the increase in perceived and real cycling safety caused by the implementation of a 30 kmph zone. Its study design consisted in measuring before and after safety condition for cycling in 30 kmph zones. This study was supposed to provide qualitative (surveys) and quantitative (speed, number of cyclists) information about perception of risk and real risk of cycling accidents.

It was crucial then to find a case study in which the implementation of 30 kmph zones was going to be done during the time span of BikePal project. This was unfortunately not possible, as it will be explained, in spite of the engagement and enthusiasm of the most important stakeholder identified: the provincial administration Diputació de Barcelona.

With the objective of finding a feasible case study, right after the BikePal training in Brussels in March 2013, the search for the most relevant stakeholders for the study begins. Several municipalities are contacted individually and then, umbrella stakeholders such as the Servei Català de Trànsit (SCT, Catalan Traffic Agency) and Diputació de Barcelona (Province of Barcelona administration) are contacted and meetings with them are arranged.

Although at a regional level there was no possibility of selecting local-level case studies, SCT thinks that the project is very interesting and offers their support for the dissemination of the results.

The Diputació gathers 311 municipalities around Barcelona and none of these were going to implement 30 kmph zones in the 9 months (from March 2013 to January 2014) time span of the project. This was mainly due to budget constraints, even though many of them had scheduled the implementation of 30 kmph zones in their SUMP or in specific plans.

In parallel, research about 30kmph zones is undertaken. Phone interviews with transport officers of the Spanish cities of Vitoria and Montcada i Reixach are undertaken and reports about other case studies are compiled (El Prat, Murcia, Madrid, Zaragoza and Oviedo are some examples). Vitoria is a very interesting case study because they had recently changed their local regulation to establish 30kmph zones and add cycling mobility to this network. A campaign was launched with the implementation of the new 30 kmph zones¹ and this would be the model for a similar campaign to undertake in parallel of the possible BikePal case study.

¹ More information here: http://www.vitoria-gasteiz.org/we001/was/we001Action.do?aplicacion=wb021&tabla=contenido&idioma=es&uid=ff70b65_13ed4f91c37_7faf

In December 2013, Ilyas Daoud (ETSC) visits Barcelona for the follow-up of the case study and we meet with Diputació de Barcelona. The problem of not finding a feasible case study is discussed and found to be a dead end, by the dates in which this is occurring – too late to wait or search any further. After that meeting with Diputació de Barcelona Ilyas and Esther decide a plan B on the situation. Plan B would consist on doing research and gather existing evidence to produce a leaflet and organize a training webinar for the local authorities of the province. This was then proposed to the Diputació and they were opened to make dissemination to the municipalities in their area.

Shortly after deciding this change of strategy, Esther was awarded a PhD grant and she had to focus on preparing both her Masters' Thesis and the moving to London, where she is now doing doctoral research for Imperial College. This meant that she didn't have time to undertake the plan B strategy of BikePal and once moved to London in mid-February, she did not have time to carry on with BikePal project.

Also note that this BikePal project was carried out only by one person instead of two, Esther did not manage to find a project partner although she tried and a student of the Geography Masters in UAB was available to collaborate with the survey and data analysis in case the case study in Plan A was taken forward.

ANNEXES

- Presentation integrating the modifications of the expert board at the BikePal training session. (Presentacion_v.6_AFTER)
- Presentation "Work in progress" as the search for case studies was becoming more difficult. (BikePal_BCN_work in progress)