

Providing for pedestrians

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About five years ago, in ICTCT and my office at the Ministry of Transport, the idea was borne to capture the state of the art of knowledge about pedestrians in public space. Zuzana Simonova, Hector Monterde, Dago Antov and me wrote a pamphlet for the 2005 ICTCT workshop. It appeared that almost all of them wanted to join. So, we decided to do an even wider call for participation, and propose a COST action. COST accepted and the COST 358 Pedestrians' Quality Needs - **PQN** – project was launched in November 2006.

And now: here we stand with a book of results, made by extremely dedicated participants, stemming from very inspiring discussions, where mutual respect, friendship and great fun are the key words for the productive, effective and efficient PQN group. Their success is the main reason that we now have our conference here in The Hague.

Can the PQN partners please go on stage?

Unfortunately, due to medical reasons, Jacek Malasek, Iris Mühlenbruch, Dragana Bazik and Olaf Czogalla could not be here...



3 My presentation is about the PQN outcome. First I will tell you why we dreamed up a Systems Approach. Then I will give you a glimpse of the report, which I just delivered to Michèle Blom. Next I will reveal some general conclusions and recommendations. Tomorrow my colleagues Hector Monterde, Ralf Risser and Daniel Sauter will give you more detail. Furthermore, in the Breakout-sessions a selection of articles from the report will be presented.

4 One of the reasons for the PQN project was the limited effect of current approaches to promote walking and sojourning in public space, that are mainly confined to solving very concrete problems on highly localised sites. As a group we thought that we should be able to do better.

We decided to take a comprehensive perspective towards the issue and consider observable characteristics of walking and sojourning, stakeholder's opinions **and** how the conditions evolve over time.

5 In Transport safety, Environmental policies and Health nowadays system approaches are the state of the art. Here the aim goes beyond just solving problems. The idea is to improve quality to such an extent that foreseeable problems are prevented to a very large degree. Our systems approach does not only cover the **content** regarding the quality of life for pedestrians, but also the **process** towards better conditions and the impact of changes in walking and sojourning on the outside world.

6 In our systems approach we start from three simple principles: start with the pedestrian, analyse the system comprehensively and use a multi-layered integral policy approach for improvement of the system: the Cascade principle. In the Conceptual Framework report we describe the system and what steps need to be taken to improve it.

7 As Jan Gehl years ago said: there is more to walking than walking. Walking and sojourning is a complex, exciting and challenging issue.

Walking and sojourning relate to a number of activity levels. On the **Lifestyle** activity level preconditions for behaviour are determined. It matters what life stage one is in, where one resides, what job one has, what vehicles one owns and what attitudes toward walking one has. These things set the stage for day to day **strategic** decisions about where to go, when, how, with whom.

On the **tactical** level one decides what route to take, where to cross a street, level of attention, intentions regarding other persons while walking, using iPods and mobile phones and so on.

At the most concrete level there is **operational** behaviour, like taking steps, stopping for traffic, talking to others, crossing the street, running, avoiding collisions, which is mostly a reaction to actual conditions.

Steg and Vlek learned us what the main, interacting factors behind walking and sojourning behaviour are: needs, opportunities and abilities. Needs and abilities together form the 'demand' side of the equation, while opportunities form the 'supply' side. Abilities and opportunities set the stage for the satisfaction of the needs.

There are many stakeholders. Without walking, other kinds of traffic are not possible. Shopkeepers depend on pedestrians in the street. People feel safer if there are pedestrians around. Local authorities provide opportunities for walking. They depend on what central government offers. Practitioners are asked to improve conditions. Politicians need contented pedestrians as voters.

8 The impact of walking and the severity of deficits of the system relate to a number of factors. First of all: a problem is only a problem if someone perceives it as a problem. Rumar showed that there are a number of orders of problems. First order problems are obvious at first sight, like reported accidents and citizen's complaints. Second order problems, like car speeds, appear only once one looks at an issue more carefully. Third order problems, like failing management and dysfunctional guidelines, although very real, are however hidden, and can only be found out if systematically studied.

Unfortunately many important pedestrian issues are hidden. We found that some important misunderstood facts are:

... about half of all walking is the unnoticed walking to and from other modes; the other half is visible door-to-door walking. The total takes up 25% of our time in traffic.

Sojourning is important: on average some 300 hours per person per year. Amenities of public space are mainly perceived by pedestrians. Children play. People meet each other in public space. We wait for the bus. Vendors and street musicians earn their living. Democratic rights are demonstrated in the street.

There are four to nine times as many pedestrians admitted to hospital after injuries from **falls** as there are from collisions with vehicles. These accidents are a heavy burden on public funds and therefore very relevant for public authorities that provide and manage public space.

Furthermore, very little is recorded on the critical issues of security and satisfaction.

9 Knowing how the system works is crucial for getting things improved. Design for All and the Cascade Principles should be leading principles. Design for All starts from the needs of persons that do not have a choice *but* to walk, and from persons that have serious difficulties walking and sojourning. Products, services and environments must be usable by as many people as possible, regardless of age, ability or situation.

In short the Cascade principle is: the most effective solutions can be found in the **context** of walking conditions. The policy fundament must be good. Practitioners should be informed and competent. They must have the tools to realise improvements. They must be granted enough time to do their jobs.

Decisions about walking depend on the offered opportunities. Proximity, adequate information, a pedestrian friendly atmosphere are vital pre-conditions.

The next step is to deal with tactical level behavioural opportunities, particularly latent problem causes. Safety risks, missing links and bad patches in the network should be prevented.

When favourable conditions are assured, as much as possible, it is time to focus on the operational level: the site design and management, traffic behaviour, deviant behaviour, enforcement and operational aspects of traffic and sojourning behaviour.

10 PQN produced about 1,200 pages of project results, of which only the short summary version is available here in print. On the slide you can see the content list of the complete works. Part B1, 2 and 3 will be presented tomorrow. Hector Monterde will deal with Functional Needs, Ralf Risser will present the Perceived Needs part and Daniel Sauter will tell you about perspectives, trends and vision about the future of Walking. On Friday we will take the discussion on this subject even one step further in the panel discussion.

All PQN products are included as PDF on the CD-ROM in the back of the printed summary report, and will be available on our website.

11 In the report on the Policy process, we substantiated some basic policy development steps: first the development of a reference vision, next the evaluation of the actual state of the system, then the exploration of improvements and lastly the decision making process regarding intervention programmes.

12 As the project concerns 4 years of work of more than 70 participants, and we are dealing with a rather complex matter, the PQN conclusions and recommendations will cover several slides: 5 slides on general conclusions and another 4 slides on recommendations.

A key message is: there is more to walking than walking. The PQN project delivered comprehensive insight in the system and options for improvements. Strong arguments for developing a walking policy on all governmental policy levels are Mobility, Safety, Health, profits and prevention of societal costs.

13 All change starts with knowledge and awareness. Measuring walking is therefore of vital importance: To inform policies and to allow the assessment of their outcomes. No data, no indication that something is wrong, and: no political reason for doing something.

Measurement needs to be comprehensive, focused on the characteristics of walking and adhere to international minimum standards. Currently most data on walking and sojourning are a by-product of other data collection processes, resulting in bias.

14 It appeared that there are serious gaps in our knowledge that need to be dealt with. On the slide you can read some very important gaps in knowledge that prevent real improvements in quality of conditions for walking and sojourning: biased statistics, lack of insight in opinions about walking conditions, missing practical tools for decision makers and practitioners and: experience with implementation of system approaches.

15 For the future we can expect dramatic changes in needs of pedestrians. Demographic changes, particularly ageing of the population, will cause higher quality demands. Another dramatic change concerns increasing car dependency and its spatial consequences. Solutions are needed regarding the **proximity of essential services** for non-car owners, like supermarkets, medical services, inter-modal connectivity and crossing facilities. If you ask any pedestrian what he needs, he or she will say: dedicated space for walking, without intrusions and obstacles, and safe places to cross the street.

16 A system approach offers best chances of success, balancing out requirements regarding context, content and process:

- It puts walking and sojourning in right context
- It deals with all relevant issues, that is 'content', in an integrated way
- It integrates policy interventions in a logical sequence, providing structure and effective and efficient treatment. That is using the most opportune process.

Based on the results of our studies we developed recommendations for National governments, local authorities, practitioners and for Non Governmental Organisations.

17 National Governments we recommend:

Firstly, to stimulate knowledge and awareness. This includes giving due attention to data and information availability, promoting and initiating knowledge development and management, and of course to take care that practitioners are properly educated.

Secondly we recommend offering guidance and a policy framework, preferably a National Pedestrian Plan. Local authorities need a stimulating and supportive policy context for policy interventions. They need opportunities, competences and tools. It is important to join forces between ministries and agencies, both horizontally and vertically. Legislation and process rules should promote the support of **systematic** attention to walking and sojourning in public space.

A **third** recommendation to national governments is to facilitate providers of walking and sojourning facilities. Give them state of the art guidelines, provide a practical organisational structure, supply databases, financial opportunities and establish a platform for exchanging experiences and coordination of interventions.

Our **last** recommendation is to monitor and benchmark progress made: are they all doing the right things, do the activities really help. It also includes the promotion of adjustments; sharing and highlighting learning experiences and successes.

18 Local authorities we recommend:

First of all: seize opportunities provided by national government and public support. National policy notes can provide inspiration and motivation. Make use of subsidies, legislation, knowledge and data that can help putting walking and sojourning on the local political agenda.

Secondly, and too often neglected: ensure good pre-conditions for successful implementation of measures. Allow the practitioners a reasonable amount of time to evaluate the walking and sojourning conditions and potential remedies. It is important to improve the organisation's competences, and to ensure communication within and between sectors in the organisation. It is also important to have dedicated budgets and tools for improving walking conditions. Integration from the start *seems* best, but too often leads to substandard solutions.

Thirdly we recommend integral planning and implementation of pedestrian facilities. That means including organisational precondition improvements, developing multiple level strategies, using all available resources and competencies, implementing proven measures, and ensuring and reacting to citizen's support.

Fourthly we recommend joining forces. Support, input, competences and power of all relevant sectors together will produce the best results: team up infrastructure, public space, health & welfare, economic affairs departments, as well as external parties.

Lastly we advise to *monitor* offered qualities and facilities. Successes must be shared. They help making progress. One should also learn from failures.

19 We feel that practitioners are the motor and the constant factor of the improvement of the system. We recommend them to use State-of-the-Art knowledge and information. Check dedicated websites and (inter)national experts. Put the walking and sojourning issue in its *wider* context. Look at the *complete* system and what supports or degrades walking and sojourning performance. Use data wisely and be aware that many issues are hidden.

When you know what is wrong, try to start to change the context first, then focus on the system structure, like land use patterns and network patterns, then look at the design of the hardware and software (facilities, rules, education, enforcement priorities) and lastly behaviour management.

Our third recommendation is that you to seek support and co-operation from relevant disciplines, particularly Human Factors input. Share experiences and successes: Within your office, within your community, regionally and nationally, actively feed available platforms!

20 To conclude we also have some recommendations for non-governmental organisations.

Firstly: build awareness by making hidden pedestrian issues clearly visible, informing authorities and using the media wisely.

Secondly: analyse and monitor developments. But do it objectively, indisputable, and produce reproducible information

Thirdly: Seek support from like-minded organisations and negotiate alliances in knowledge, position and power.

Lastly: actively support favourable local initiatives.

21 To conclude: now we know about What, Why and How: let's get to work!

Thank you for your attention!