

# SCHOOLHOODS

## Safe, green and happy ways to school

**SCHOOLHOODS** is addressing the challenge of school mobility and public space around school locations. Schools are clearly a prime destination for traffic each school day at the start and end of lessons. Pupils are all too often brought to school by private car resulting in a range of negative effects:

- Car traffic heading to schools is too high for the road infrastructure to cope with it in terms of volume and in terms of providing good road safety conditions, especially for pupils being dropped off by car but as well other pupils not coming by car. The problem – and danger – is self-made through parental taxi services to a large share.
- Public spaces, roads, and places close to schools are often made to cope with traffic needs and rarely to meet the needs of children to move independently and safely in public spaces. Residents and stakeholders of the area are affected by this as well since their neighborhood is not well designed to meet their needs of meeting outside, socializing, strolling, cycling, playing, and more leisure-oriented activities.
- The high share of children brought to school by car negatively affects the needed daily dose of physical activity (minimum of 60 min per day according to WHO), which a school trip by walking, cycling, and as well using public transport would support in contrast.
- Children brought to school by car have a clearly lower interaction with their environment and other children, they are less stimulated which negatively impacts their mental development – as is the pure lack of physical activity as well. Additionally, their passive role as passengers prevents children to develop own skills to cope with traffic which impacts the way they move at other times than school as well.
- The above-mentioned lack of attractive public space has additional twofold negative consequences on the neighbourhood: social cohesion levels suffer from the lack of places to meet. And local economy is facing unattractive environments and conditions e.g. people stopping by stores.

**SCHOOLHOODS** wants to address this challenge of school trip mobility of pupils as well as poor public space design and use with a combination of actions addressing

the trip to the school itself and the quality of public space, that pupils and the entire school neighborhood make use of almost every day.

It addresses pupils as one of the most vulnerable groups to road safety challenges, as one of the groups most needing physical activity and social encounters for healthy development, and as the most critical group for future design and use cases of our towns and cities.

**SCHOOLHOODS** extends its work beyond children and teens thanks to the multiplier role of pupils to their families and thanks to addressing the needs of the school neighbourhood's residents and stakeholders taking up today's urgent need to give public space to the use for people instead of orientation to serve motorised traffic to the largest extent.

The focus of the work is mainly placed on primary schools, since:

- its pupils are more often brought to school by car due to objective and subjective road safety concerns of parents.
- addressing the challenge of levels of physical activity and social/environmental interaction is needed as early as possible in childhood.
- primary schools and their neighbourhoods cover a large part of towns and cities in many cases allowing a rethinking of how public space of a city should look like starting in the coming years.

**The Network's partnership consists of the following organisations:**

- Municipality of Rethymno (LP), Greece
- Brasov Metropolitan Agency for Sustainable Development (PP), Romania
- City of Zadar (PP), Croatia
- Municipality of Skawina (PP), Poland
- Guia de Isora City Council (PP), Spain
- City of Turku (PP), Finland
- City of Brno (PP), Czech Republic
- Parma (PP), Italy

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Stay in touch with **SCHOOLHOODS** through our network webpage <https://urbact.eu/networks/schoolhoods>, to learn first about the progress of our work, practices and plans!