Promoting Walking and Cycling to Football Stadia in Europe

Michael Viggars, Project Manager, European Healthy Stadia Network
• Healthy Stadia is an NGO with over 10 years experience in the cross-cutting areas of sport, facilities management, public health & research

• Provide guidance & training for clubs and associations on adoption of health promoting policies & practices at stadia; shares examples of good-practice across Network

• Key partnership with UEFA Social Responsibility for 2017-2021 cycle & delivery partners at EURO 2016, 2020 & club competition finals
Why Stadia?
• Used by millions across Europe: fans, staff, corporate events, volunteers

• Many stadia are located in areas of high deprivation

• Traditionally provide food and drink of a low nutritional value & sports brands used to market high fat, sugar and salt products (HFSS), gambling services and alcohol

• Many European stadia still allow smoking in open stands

• BUT... Club brands and stadia have great loyalty amongst supporters & local community – point of influence
Healthy Stadia are... those which promote the health and wellbeing of visitors, fans, players, employees and the surrounding community...

A holistic and integrated approach to developing sports stadia as ‘health promoting settings’... plus clubs & NGBs as health-promoting organisations (fans, community, staff)
How are stadia and clubs able to impact positively on public health?
Healthier Matchday Environments
No Smoking Policies

Promoting Active Travel

Healthier Catering
Welcome to the tobacco free 2018 FIFA World Cup™
Добро пожаловать на Чемпионат мира FIFA 2018™, свободный от табачного дыма
Community & Fan Interventions
Promoting Walking and Cycling to Football Stadia in Europe
Active Travel Guidance
Private Vehicles, Air Pollution & Congestion
Our societies have come to rely more and more on the private car, even for short trips – older generations may have walked to school but now parents regularly take their children to school in their cars.

Often the car feels like the automatic choice, especially when travelling to unfamiliar places – as is often the case when travelling to an away fixture.

This can be problematic for stadium operators and local authorities trying to manage thousands of travelling home and away fans – thousands of fans = thousands of cars.
Pollution is also a growing area of concern to the public and politicians and the use of private vehicles plays a significant part in air pollution in urban environments.

Nitrogen oxide (NO$_2$) and particulate matter (PM$_{2.5}$) emitted from motor vehicles are invisible to the naked eye and represent a threat to public health.

There are strong associations between air pollution and major diseases that pose a great health and economic burden, including:

- Coronary Heart Disease
- Stroke
- Lung Cancer
- Childhood Asthma
- COPD
- Dementia
Physical Activity, Health & Active Travel
Physical inactivity is a major risk factor for chronic illnesses such as cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, various forms of cancer as well as mental health and wellbeing.

Lack of physical activity is also one of the critical components that has contributed to the current epidemic of overweight and obesity.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that nearly 600,000 deaths per year can be attributed to physical inactivity in Europe.
• According to WHO, adults aged between 18 – 64 years old should do a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity

• This is the equivalent of 30 minutes brisk walking on at least 5 days a week

• Children and young people aged 5 – 17 years old should accumulate at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity daily
Benefits of Encouraging Walking and Cycling to Your Stadium

• Help fans and staff achieve recommended levels of physical activity
• Reduce congestion
• Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality around your stadium
Active Match App
Healthy Stadia was commissioned by partners at World Heart Federation and UEFA to develop and pilot an active travel programme promoting walking and cycling to host venues at UEFA Women’s EURO 2017 in the Netherlands.

The programme was based on a smartphone App that used GPS technology to track walking and cycling journeys to venues on a matchday.
Active Match App

• The App provided mapping, route planning and information on cycle parking for fans and staff

• Individual and aggregate data relating to distance covered, calories burned and CO₂ emissions saved by walking and cycling journeys were recorded

• Supporters travelling to host venues on foot or by bike were entered into a competition to win tournament final tickets and match balls
The Active Match App was promoted to fans through the UEFA website, Women’s EURO 2017 website, ticketing portal and via social media.

Healthy Stadia also worked in conjunction with the tournament’s fan zones and host cities to encourage fans participating in the fan walks to download and use the App.
Results

Number of downloads (Android & iOS) 1788
Total distance travelled (km) 2122
Total calories burned (kcal) 80370
Kilograms of CO$_2$ emissions saved by walking & cycling 255
Active Match App 2.0
Healthy Stadia has worked as part of UEFA’s tournament delegation to assess host venues in terms of their current provision for active travel.

It is anticipated the Active Match App API developed during UEFA Women’s EURO 2017 will be integrated into UEFA’s main tournament App.
Key Challenges

Routes and Wayfinding
- Identification of suitable safe walking and cycling routes from key city centre locations to stadia
- Routes will need to be signposted appropriately
- Availability and location of city bikes schemes need to be identified

Cycle locking storage
- Any existing cycle locking facilities located inside the security perimeter of stadia cannot be used owing to security issues
- Temporary locking facilities will be need to be erected for the tournament outside of the main stadium perimeter

Fanwalks
- Integration of Fanwalk information into UEFA’s tournament App
Potential area for temporary cycle locking facilities

Existing dedicated cycle lanes

Existing dedicated walking path

Existing cycle locking facilities

Closest city bike hub to stadium

Metro Station
Case Study
KAA Gent + Ghelamco Arena

- KAA Gent based at 20,000 capacity Ghelamco Arena (average attendance 18,500)
- 2838 permanent cycle locking stalls
- 600 mobile stalls
- An average of 2000 KAA Gent supporters using bicycles each match during the course of a season
- +15% of KAA Gent supporters travel to Ghelamco arena on their bicycle, significantly reducing congestion
• Communications and Promotion of Activities
  • Detailed information on website and via social media

• Monitoring and evaluation
  • Regular feedback from cyclists to improve safety and access

• Club departments involved
  • Operations & Safety Manager / Mobility Manager / Community Manager

• Partner Organisations
  • Ghent Bikers Foundation / Supporters Federation KAA Gent / Local public transport providers / City Council
Active Travel Workshop
Consider the ... 

STRENGTHS
WEAKNESSES
OPPORTUNITIES
THREATS

... to promoting walking & cycling to your stadium?
**Strengths**
- Strong cycling culture in Belgium
- Political will to stimulate change
- Leadership from community and operations staff

**Weaknesses**
- Poor finances / high level of debt
- Poor infrastructure

**Opportunities**
- Conditional financial help from city council
- Open stadium fund – funding for social initiatives in sports stadia
- Potential for additional commercial activities at new stadia e.g. conferences etc.

**Threats**
- Issues in Belgian football – declining spectatorship, hooliganism, bribery scandal, lack of perceived success on international stage
- Investment potentially perceived as unwarranted
Consider the **STRENGTHS**

**WEAKNESSES**

**OPPORTUNITIES**

**THREATS**

... to promoting **walking & cycling** to your stadium?
walking and cycling culture
tackling pollution
tackle congestion
promoting physical activity
traffic restrictions
public transport
seasonality
feedback and surveys
partners
air quality
funding
combi-tickets
CSR
signage
CSR
wayfinding
locational stadium
cycle locking facilities
cycling lanes
multi-modal travel
road infrastructure
local authority / municipality
social media
legal issues
security
parking issues
communications campaigns
improve public transport
involving different departments
involving different departments
leadership
fan groups
funding
 CSR
feedback and surveys
partners
public transport
seasonality
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