

Plenary Sessions

KEYNOTE 1. Healthy Moves: Exploring the Socio-Ecological Approach to Active Transport – How Far Can We Go Together?

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Climate change has underscored the critical need for society to adopt sustainable behaviours – actions that promote health while minimising negative impacts on the planet. Among these, ‘high-impact’ health-related behaviours, such as active transport, stand out for their significant effects on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

The health and environmental benefits of physical activity are deeply interconnected and are reflected in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations General Assembly, 2015). Beyond improving individual health, a society that embraces active transport also enjoys additional advantages: reduced fossil fuel consumption, cleaner air, less traffic congestion, and safer roads. Thus, active transport contributes to public health in at least two distinct ways – by enhancing individual health and longevity, and by improving environmental health, which in turn has secondary benefits for individuals, offering a ‘double benefit’.

An individual’s behaviour is shaped and established within their social environment – family, peers, organisations, and the prevailing social norms. In addition, broader environmental factors, such as infrastructure that supports active transport, play a crucial role in fostering behaviours that benefit both health and the environment.

In response to the UNESCO Sustainable Development Goals and the societal changes driven by climate change, this **presentation aims** to highlight the importance of individual, interpersonal, organisational, and community factors that enable or hinder active transport. The analysis is grounded in a socio-ecological approach, examining factors both within and across the different levels of the socio-ecological model.

This presentation is based on the premise that empowering society to transform is closely linked to human factors and social connections. By manipulating these elements – such as rules, norms, and cooperation – across all levels, including institutional (legislation), organisational, and interpersonal, it is possible to significantly accelerate the shift towards more sustainable behaviours, step by step.

