

Ciclovías de Medellín

Promoting healthy lifestyles among city residents through the use of dedicated city spaces and transport infrastructure for cycling, running, walking and other physical activity

To encourage a culture of sport and physical activity within the City of Medellín and to promote the environmentally sustainable use of public spaces by its citizens.



Location	Medellin, Colombia
Organisation	Medellin's Governmental Agency for Sports and Recreation – INDER Medellín
Start-end date	1984 – ongoing
Target group	Residents of all ages in the greater urban area
Reach	54,000 local residents per week
Partners	National Police Service, Secretary of Transportation, Secretary of Public Spaces, Valle del Aburra Metropolitan Area
Key facts	<p>Three times a week, over 42km of public roads and pathways are restricted to vehicles and are reserved to the practice of physical activity, sport and recreation. In any given week approximately 68 cumulative hours of Ciclovías, or group cycle and participation events, take place. This includes 8 hours of nightly Ciclovías.</p> <p>The main focus of the initiative is centred on 5 routes across major city thoroughfares within the City. A further 6 routes are located in local suburban neighbourhoods which also participate in the programme. One route is specifically reserved for new participants so that they can learn the basics of how to cycle, run or otherwise.</p>
For inspiration	www.inder.gov.co



Summary

The “Ciclovías de Medellín” was born with the aim of ensuring adequate, free and safe spaces that can contribute to adopting healthy lifestyles for citizens through sport and physical activity.

There are 5 central city thoroughfares dedicated to the programme for the benefit of all citizens. Every Sunday, on public holidays and on Tuesday and Thursday nights, over 42 kilometers of cycle routes are made available. Vehicles are not permitted on these roads during this times. Instead the roads are open to all members of the public who wish to cycle, run, walk or engage in other forms of physical activity in a safe and secure environment.

Ciclovía’s activities are complemented by targeted initiatives aimed at stimulating a deeper culture of sport and physical activity amongst residents. Rumba classes, aerobics, yoga and other different forms of physical activity are operated to cater to the varying tastes of the Medellín population. This includes tailored programmes throughout the year that promote the use of bicycles and highlight the benefits of active and healthy lifestyle choices around the city.

Keys to success

Timing

The Ciclovía routes and the timing of their public opening took into account the time resources of participants as well as the needs of normal route users. By restricting vehicles on the road during on weekends and weekday nights, there is minimal disruption caused to normal traffic. It is also during these times that participants are more likely to be free to take advantage of the amenity.

An inclusive attitude

While the initiative is well suited to specific types of activity, most notably cycling and running, there is no limitation on how citizens can use the space available. Often entire families including their pets will use the pathways simply as a free space to enjoy each other’s company outside of their normal environment.

Concurrent activities

There is a host of activities that have now sprung up alongside the core Ciclovía offering of typical exercise space. Aerobics, rumba, yoga and others are practiced along the route without restriction. This ensures that the citizens see Ciclovía as a fully inclusive space for all and feeds into the culture of physical activity and healthy lifestyle. It helps to communicate the message that there is something for everyone and that healthy lifestyle choices are not excluded to anyone. The organisers also run a special once-off Ciclovía in the rural areas surrounding the City every year. This helps to maintain a connection between the City and the surrounding areas and places a heavy emphasis on the nature of the local countryside.



Sport for All objectives

Improve public health and well-being

The Ciclovía and its associated initiatives and activities are all part of the larger strategy for the promotion healthy living and reduction of sedentary practices amongst the Medellín population. The direct consequence of this approach is the prevention of cardio-vascular illnesses and other non-communicable diseases.

Support active societies

The vision of Medellín is one where sport, recreation and physical activity can be used as a constructive tool to shape the fabric of a city and improve the everyday lives of its inhabitants. The programme has been seen as a “Trojan horse” in which these tools are transported via sport and put to use to build a more social, healthy and vibrant community. The success of this strategy has been achieved thanks to the institutional presence of Ciclovía throughout the territory.

Provide equal access to sport

While the programme strategically targets the promotion of certain activities, there are no restrictions on who can use the space and for what. Participants can engage in any form of activity once it is in line with the tone of healthy, outdoor living. Cyclists and runners practice alongside yoga and palates classes and even entire families who are simply enjoying the open space and positive environment.

“For me Ciclovía is where I can participate in sport at my own leisure in a safe and secure environment. I regularly attend with peers as I feel it is best enjoyed with others. And best of all, it is completely free!”

Participant

How is the programme communicated?

The programme is communicated to city residents through the official programme website, social media networks and by word of mouth.

How is the programme evaluated?

The main method of evaluation is through measuring the number of residents that interact with the spaces and initiatives provided. The development plan for the municipality stipulates that there must be 11 routes open at all times and this is permanently maintained by organisers. Furthermore, the organisers frequently take on qualitative studies into the social effects of the initiative amongst participants across factors such as city perception, sense of community, etc.





Join the sporting society!

Globally, 1 in 4 adults is not active enough and more than 80% of the world's adolescent population is insufficiently physically active (World Health Organization). Let's reverse the trend and get moving.



Promote sport and physical activity

Recent changes in leisure and work practices, diet and a host of other trends has led to an increasingly sedentary lifestyle amongst the world's population. Sport for all programmes aim to promote sport and physical activity to mitigate the negative effects associated with these developments.



Improve public health and well-being

Sport and physical activity plays an important role in making societies healthier, happier and safer into the future. Successful sport for all projects help to stimulate these common benefits across entire communities.



Support active societies

Active societies involve many stakeholders such as parents, coaches, schools, local clubs, sports organisations, event organisers and grassroots activities, to name but a few. They can all be hugely influential in promoting healthier lifestyles within a community. Programmes that support and reinforce their efforts are vital for the encouragement and promotion of active societies around the world.



Provide equal access to sport

Every member within a community should have equal opportunity to live an active and healthy lifestyle. Effective grassroots programmes place a heavy emphasis on ensuring that all of their participants can enjoy this opportunity regardless of physical condition, race, gender, social conditions, geographical location or otherwise.



Foster Olympic legacy

The Olympic Games provide a source of inspiration and a vibrant expression of the Olympic values of excellence, friendship and respect. This unique power can energise communities to develop projects enabling and inspiring people to become and stay physically active into the future.

Become a key player in your community

A useful platform has been designed for organisations across the Olympic Movement that are managing Sport for All programmes, providing them with the knowledge, understanding and tools needed to improve existing programmes worldwide, as well as to create new ones.

Get inspired by more than 45 projects around the world

Learn more about best practices with our toolkit

Create your project based on proven academic research and experience of organisations

Share your experience and lead the way to inspire more projects

Connect with a vast network fueled by inspired partners

Find more information

-  Sports and Active Society Programmes
-  A Guide to Implementation
-  www.olympic.org
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