



Best practice bicycle safety – improvement fact sheet

Social inclusion

Overview

The bicycle can be key to **reducing social inequalities**. It provides an **affordable transport option**, creates additional opportunities for **social interaction** [1], contributes to the quest towards full **gender equality** and helps in the generation of additional **jobs**.

Positive Effects

The yearly costs for owning and using a bicycle only amount to around 5% or 10% (for electric bicycles) to the costs for owning and using a car. By providing a **cheap transport option**, cycling can help to **create jobs** and make **participation in social life** more accessible to disadvantaged groups. In the United States, the lowest-income households — Americans earning less than 20,000 dollars per year — are twice as likely as the rest of the population to rely on bikes for basic transportation needs such as getting to work [2, 4, 5].




Research shows that **women tend to benefit more from higher cycling levels**. For example, since they are still taking care of most of childrens' and older adults' mobility in families, they gain more free time if the children and elderly can undertake journeys by bike **independently** and do not need a lift by car. More people cycling and walking in streets increases social control, which can help to deter criminals and **create a higher level of perceived security** [2, 6].

As stated by [3], cycling provides following social benefits:


- » Bike riding provides **affordable and independent travel** for those who might otherwise have restricted travel options.
- » Bicycles offer **increased mobility** to many groups of the population with **low rates of car ownership**, such as low-income earners, unemployed people, seniors and those under 18 years of age.
- » Construction of shared bicycle riding and pedestrian facilities also creates **benefits for pedestrians and people with disabilities** by providing an increased network of paths and improved road crossings.
- » More people riding and walking provides additional **opportunities for social interaction** on the streets which can greatly enhance a **sense of community and connection**, improving mental wellbeing.

Cycling has the potential to **reduce economic inequalities** between different parts of a city. This is done, in part, by mobilising people who suffer from transportation disadvantages. The bicycle **empowers those, who have not been able to move effectively** around their communities by foot or other transit, to contribute to the economy in their own neighbourhood or in the surrounding areas. By acting as either consumers or employees, these people are better able to stimulate money flows that eventually can lead to economic equity on a larger scale [7].

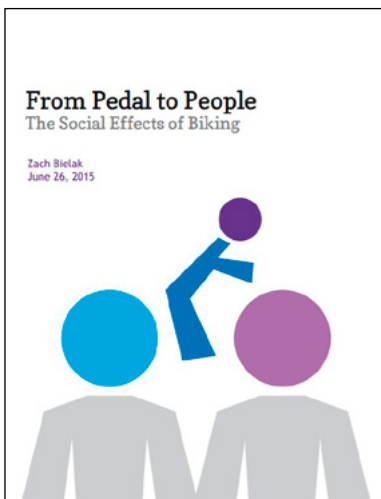
Benefits

	<p>Lower yearly costs for people using a bicycle instead of a car</p>
	<p>Improved gender equality and health benefits</p>
	<p>Higher level of perceived security on the streets</p>

Issues

	<p>Cycling measures aiming to tackle social issues might not be highly transferable and might depend on specific factors, even at city level.</p>
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Examples



From Pedal to People - The Social Effects of Biking concluded that the best social impact of cycling occurs when people stop considering themselves as “cyclists,” but rather just people trying to get from Point A to Point B who happen to be using a bike. Only a few societies on this Earth have achieved such a state, but most other societies are not terribly far behind [7].

References and links

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4. *Intelligent Energy Europe/Together on the move project (2012). Costs of owning and driving a car.*
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**SABRINA: No fears
about safety on
two wheels.**

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