

**BEHAVIOUR
CHANGE
INTERVENTIONS
IN PRACTICE**

**BIKEmode:
From cars to e-bikes**

Local implementer
CEED Bulgaria



Funded by:



Catalyst project pilots: behaviour change interventions in practice

The Academy of Change is an evidence-based capacity building programme on sustainable behaviour change, designed for leaders working on climate change and sustainability engagement within the NGO sector. The Catalyst programme built upon this by accelerating the integration and use of sustainable behaviour change know-how within NGOs at the organisation level. Participation in the Catalyst was by invitation only, with the opportunity granted to NGO representatives that had successfully concluded the Academy of Change Capacity Building Programme and held the potential to drive organisational change within their NGOs.

The Catalyst programme of tailor-made tools, support for designing interventions and NGO peer exchange concluded with the opportunity for participants to put forward their ideas for pilot projects. The three selected projects received funding and bespoke support from the Academy of Change team to design, implement and evaluate a behaviour change intervention in their organisation.

This series of reports shares the journeys of the pilot projects, through gathering insights and designing their intervention, to evaluating the resulting behaviour change outcomes and impacts. The reports have been written by the pilot projects themselves, in the hope that this can inspire and provide useful learnings for others looking to implement behaviour change projects in their own organisations.

The pilot projects:

- 1.** Increasing e-bike commuting in “BIKEmode: From cars to e-bikes”, with **CEED Bulgaria**
- 2.** Supporting communities to collect fishing data in “Maintaining OurFish app use”, with **Rare**
- 3.** Gamifying water use reductions with students in “Game of Showers: encouraging students to save water”, with **Hespul**

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“The BIKEmode project has been promoting sustainable living and care for the environment by empowering people to choose a greener and more enjoyable way for commuting to work. It planted the seed for achieving behaviour change by leaving the car and switching to BIKE-mode.”

– Nadya Tasheva



“Thank you for giving me the opportunity to learn more about sustainable ways of transportation. After trying the e-bike, I will definitely rethink my daily commute. Congratulations for the great idea, I am happy to be part of a company that was involved in this green initiative towards climate change and beyond”

– Ralitsa Georgieva

BIKEmode: From cars to e-bikes



Image of the intervention in context

Partner

CEED Bulgaria

Location

Sofia, Bulgaria

Date

October 2020 –
September 2021

1. The need for an intervention

The air pollution is a huge problem in Sofia, Bulgaria. It is one of the most polluted capitals in Europe. **60% of the pollution comes from the cars**¹.

It is proved that transport is responsible for nearly 30% of the EU's total CO₂ emissions, of which 72% come from road transportation. Passenger cars are a major polluter, accounting for 60.7% of total CO₂ emissions from road transport in Europe.

Almost every household in Sofia owns at least one car and you can very often to see big cars in the city with just one person in them. This leads to a lot of pollution, congestions and car accidents every day.

Changing this mentality and behaviour pattern and provoking people to be more environmentally friendly is at the heart of our pilot project. **Leaving the car and using cleaner means of transportation**; caring about our health; being informed, choosing the alternatives and promoting them; and becoming responsible for our actions are all desired outcomes of the project.

2. Context in which the intervention took place

The intervention took place in Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria, where the air is most polluted².

In order to change our behaviour, we need to change our habits first. One of the most common daily habits that we all have is driving to work. As we are so used to driving, we do it by default and always think it is faster, more convenient and safer. But is this really the case? During the BIKEmode project, we decided to analyse the barriers to choosing cycling instead of driving.

Being a major part of the entrepreneurship ecosystem in Bulgaria for the past 12 years has given us the opportunity to interact with many companies and business people. This helped us to easily get in contact and involve them to become a part of the project.

Our passion for bikes, healthy lifestyle and clean environment has been a driving force to work hard towards achieving a more sustainable life.

¹ CO₂ emissions from cars: facts and figures | Source: [European Parliament](#)

² Fighting air pollution: there are more cars in Sofia than the average for the EU's largest cities | Source: [European public health alliance](#)

3. Aims of the intervention

The main goals of the intervention were to achieve clean air, healthy and motivated employees, greener companies and culture of sustainable living.

During the intervention we have been popularizing cycling as an alternative to driving for people's daily commute to work.

We created the campaign "Switch to BIKEmode" with main focus of employees **switching their commuter journeys from cars to e-bikes** and creating a culture of sustainable transportation in the city of Sofia.

The campaign gave the opportunity to more than 200 people to use free electric bicycles within a month while being constantly motivated by their employers. We have been analysing their barriers and the change in their behaviour in order to scale the effect of promoting sustainability and taking climate change measures.

4. Target audience and stakeholders

The target audiences were the employees of two large companies in Sofia. They are representing the biggest percent of the society who have the capacity to change their behaviour if they are given the information and opportunity.

They:

- Are between 20 and 55
- Already own a driving licence
- Work at a corporation/ big company
- Use their car to go to the office
- Are still part of the generation open to shifting their behaviour
- Are interested in new technologies and healthy alternatives

What we observed about this target group before starting the intervention was that:

- They usually can afford a car and have at least one
- They drive every day – to the office and back
- They want to demonstrate high social status and often own luxury/bigger car

- They drive because they believe it is faster, safer, more comfortable and everyone around them does it
- They often think that if someone doesn't have a car and goes to the office either with public transport or by bike, that it is too alternative/weird/has a low social status

The other stakeholders and partners in our project were:

- Employers, CSR and PR departments
- E-bike companies/providers – Econic e-bikes, Eljoy e-bikes, Elevo.bg
- Producers of sports goods and equipment Furyflow, Industrial

5. Target behaviour(s) and behaviour change tools used

The behaviours we wanted to change are best separated into several circles:

Personal: Attitudes; beliefs about biking; habits; and biking skills.

We wanted to make biking attractive to people, by giving them the opportunity to own a very good electric bike for enough time to feel it, get used to it and to be motivated to use it. We also aimed at changing the beliefs that biking is for the poor, that it is not safe and is slower than the car.



Image of the intervention in context

BIKEmode: From cars to e-bikes



Image of the intervention in context

Another problem that we wanted to solve was seeing people sitting behind the desk all day long and not having the time and motivation to exercise. The mentality that nothing will change if we choose to cycle was also a barrier to people's motivation.

Social: Support from friends, co-workers and employers; perception of bike culture; and how we see other cyclists.

We wanted to motivate companies to understand that if their employees are cycling – that would be a great benefit to both sides. We wanted to make them care and stop being indifferent about building a biking culture in the office.

Community: Incentives for bike commuting and programs for supporting biking.

Our intervention aimed to change the community incentives towards cyclists, accepting them and treating them equally on the road.

The COM-B model developed by Susan Michie lists the three elements capability, opportunity and motivation which need to support individuals to reach a change of behaviours. During the BIKEmode project we provided several employers with free electric bicycles to be used from their employees for a month.

Meanwhile, the companies have been promoting the initiative and motivating and rewarding the employees who participate and who choose cycling instead of driving to go to the office or in their free time. How we adapted the idea of using e-bikes to the e-bikes to the COM-B model:

Capability:

Maintenance of speed with less effort, which helps overcoming barriers such as lack of fitness needed to cycle, hilly terrain, longer distances, lack of time, and lack of end of trip facilities (e.g. changing rooms and showers).

Opportunity:

The company owns and maintains the bikes, so the employees don't need to bother buying or maintaining them. They can rent the bikes at a symbolic price of 2-3 Euro/day. (During the pilot project, they were free of charge.)

Motivation:

Additional benefits from the company, for example: organizing e-bike team-buildings, riding with colleagues etc., taking an active part in the green culture of the company which is cool, exercising and saving money.

6. Intervention process

BIKEmode pilot project aimed to explore the different behaviour patterns with regards to our daily commute to work and removing the barriers to our choice for a more sustainable living. As part of the project, we organized and implemented the Switch to BIKEmode campaign providing an opportunity to several employers to take an active part in the project, supporting their employees to use electric bicycles for free within a month.

During the campaign we:

- Conducted a study on the initial attitudes and barriers of employees to use bicycles and analysed their preferences for commuting to work;
- Prepared an analysis of the results and added specific measures for motivating employees to choose cycling;
- Organized meetings for the employees of the companies to inform and motivate them, as well as to let them test the e-bikes;
- We provided 200+ employees with free electric bicycles for a month to be used for transportation to their workplace, but also for personal use during the week and in their free time;
- At the end of the campaign we examined whether there was a change in the motivation and behaviour of the employees to use bicycles. We measured employees' attitude towards biking in the beginning of the campaign and at the end by providing individual questionnaires to everyone before using the bikes and after.

We decided to focus our project on electric rather than conventional bikes, because we believe they can overcome more barriers such as – physical abilities, difficult terrain such as hills and long distances, worries about the need to change clothes and use shower, etc.

Many people did not know what it feels like to ride an electric bike because they had never tried. One of the main reasons is the high price for rent and purchase. This project enabled more than 200 employees to benefit completely free of charge and to overcome these barriers.

Timeline and steps

October 2020

Prepared a plan for the intervention process. Tested the project with Creative Assembly Sofia– providing them with free e-bikes for 2 weeks.

November – December 2020

Identified several companies to be invited in the pilot intervention and contacted their HR/PR departments (these had to be companies that were enthusiastic about the idea and that would commit time, resources and ideas - Coca Cola Bulgaria, Creative Assembly, Software Group, Generali)
Prepared a survey to gain more insights into the current behaviour of the wider target group. (Planned when and how to disseminate it)
Prepared a list with partners to participate and disseminate the campaign.
Identified a specialist to create visualization/ branding for the initiative – logo, slogan, website, teasers, other marketing materials.

January – February 2020

Developed a FB group, website, initial visualization of marketing materials.
Gathered followers in the fb group and posted some teasers.

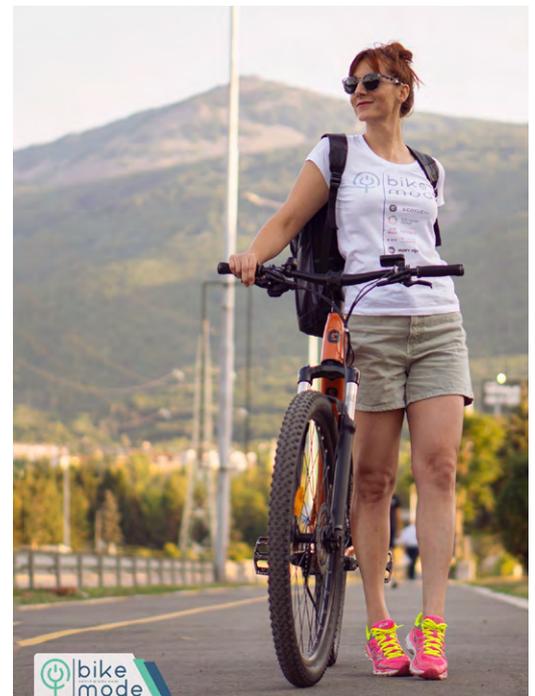


Image of the intervention in context



Leave the car, switch to BIKEmode



Image of the social media campaign

Established initial contact with all the partners informing them about the pilot project and inviting them to take part. Introduced them to the initiative by showing them the website and the fb group.

March – April 2021

Attracted more partners, followers, enthusiasts, volunteers.
Conducted the initial survey on the attitudes and the barriers to cycling and gathered 300+ respondents.
Prepared an analysis with the results and shared it with the Academy of Change team.

May – June 2021

Communicated with the bike providers.
Designed the materials: T-shirts, stickers.
Produced marketing materials and gifts for the participants – t-shirts, stickers, questionnaires.
Prepared the questionnaires for the participants in the campaign.

July – August 2021

The pilot intervention took place.
Marketing campaign – the partners posted updates about the ongoing initiative.
Took photos and conducted interviews with some of the participants.
Survey conducted – questionnaires filled in by each participant.
Post-marketing campaign. The partners and the BIKEmode team posted information about the initiative.

September 2021

Final report, closed the pilot intervention project, analysed the results

7. Evaluation

The evaluation was based mostly on personal interviews with the people using the bikes, as well as written questionnaires that each participant in the campaign had to fill in before and after the intervention.
The results were based on comparison of their attitudes before and after using the e-bikes as well as on measuring their future intentions to use bikes and the possibility to switch to cycling, at least for some of their journeys.
The survey consisted of very simple and short questions in order to make it easy for everyone to take part. Some of the questions that we asked people before using the e-bikes were:

- Do you own/drive a car?
- Usually how do you commute to work?
- Do you own a bicycle?
- If yes, how often do you use it?
- In case you prefer to drive, what are the main reasons:
- Have you ever tried an e-bike?
- Do you exercise?
- What would motivate you to choose to cycle to work?



Image of the intervention in context

The main questions after the intervention were:

- **Did you like the experience with the e-bike?**
- **Do you think that you can use an e-bike instead of your car?**
- **Would you use it regularly if your employer provides it to you for free?**
- **What you didn't like in your experience with the e-bike?**
- **How can this be improved?**
- **What positive sides do you find in using an e-bike instead of a car?**
- **Would you pay to have access to an e-bike?**
- **What else would motivate you to switch from a car to e-bike?**

We also asked the people how far do they live from the office in order to calculate the CO₂ emissions that they saved.

Unfortunately, because of the COVID-19 situation, many people were not working from the office and so these calculations couldn't be exact. We managed to set the data tracking on the e-bikes and to see how many km were the journeys of the participants. Approximately they were riding around 30 km each.

8. Outcomes and learnings

Overall outcomes

The intervention had a very positive impact resulting in 100% of the people riding the bikes stating that they liked their experience. We were happy to see 80% of the people saying that they would use an e-bike instead of a car for at least some of their future journeys. We believe we wouldn't achieve this result without using the COM-B model and if we were testing the intervention with conventional bicycles. Another key thing was the motivation by the employers which we believe was very important for the positive result of the project as the people were being recognized and personally greeted for their efforts towards more sustainable transportation.

Climate impacts

The average cycling distance per person has been around 30-40 km. There were 43 participants who cycled approximately 1300 km altogether which is 300 kg CO₂ emissions saved for just a month.

Just as important to add is also the facts that there were 43 cars less in the traffic and 43 more people exercising and feeling healthier and happier.



Image of the intervention pilot's branding

BIKEmode: From cars to e-bikes



Image of the intervention in context

Successes and improvements

The project gained a lot of popularity in Sofia, and we believe that the website and the Facebook page helped a lot for that. Using Facebook for disseminating the information reached the young people and now the name BIKEmode is recognized by many. We have almost 400 people following the Facebook page and for some of the posts we have reached 15K+ people with 1.5K+ engagement according to Facebook stats (using paid ads). The careful selection of the partners and the companies taking part in the project has secured very good communication and coordination which helped for the success of the campaign.

Regardless of the COVID-19 situation, we managed to reach to the people and motivate them to be active and to use the e-bikes. An interesting challenge to share was that at one point we realized how difficult it was to reach the people who are not bike enthusiasts and to motivate them to participate. During the initial survey, we observed that most of the people taking part were bike enthusiasts who had already chosen to cycle.

Evaluation learnings

Having a dedicated person in each of the companies to be responsible for the e-bikes and for gathering the feedback and instructing the people how to use the bikes has been of great help.

If we didn't have such persons, it would have been a big challenge gathering all the questionnaires and coordinating the people.

Another great decision was preparing a shared schedule for reserving the e-bikes. As a result, everyone who wanted to reserve a bicycle could see which days they are available. This created additional motivation among the people as they could see the interest of their colleagues.

Organisational learnings

This pilot project has given CEED the opportunity to communicate closely with three big companies participating in the interventions – Creative Assembly, Software Group and Generali.

We learned a lot about the processes and the policies in these companies and how difficult it is sometimes to initiate and implement new approaches, it requires a lot of approvals and negotiations with the right people.

We learned that no matter how much effort we put in a campaign, if the companies don't motivate their employees, our good work and intentions won't be enough.

Building good partnerships, the trust and the efficient communication with the companies have been key for the positive results of the campaign.



Image of the branded bike

Imprint

The Academy of Change is a non-profit initiative of the **Collaborating Centre on Sustainable Consumption and Production (CSCP)**, **Behaviour Change** and the International **Civil Society Centre (ICSC)**, funded by the **KR Foundation**.

You can find more information on the initiative on its website <http://aochange.org>

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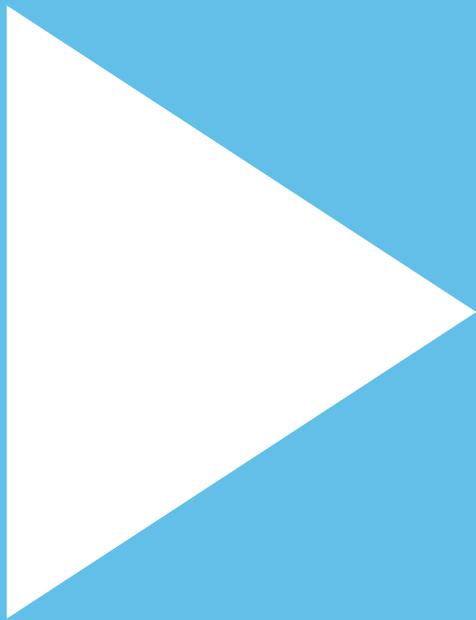
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