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Скопје, 2020

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THE POTENTIAL OF CYCLING TOURISM TO PROMOTE HEALTHY LIFESTYLE HABITS

Abstract

Global development imposes more dynamism in everyday living and working, therefore the need for a healthy living environment becomes an essential issue for every individual, institution, state. There are huge benefits for individuals and for society if we promote cycling and hiking. It has health benefits, reduces congestion and makes the streets more human. Encouraging more people for a cycle is a great way to create a healthy and attractive environment for people and businesses.

Cycle tourism refers specifically to travel between places by bicycle for leisure purposes. Cycling is an integral part of the tourist experience. Basically, cycling tourism is a combination of different types of cycling (biking, mountain biking, sport or other tours, bike events etc.). In this group of cyclists all those tourists, domestic or foreign, who are fully committed to

all-natural beauties, cultural attractions or ethnological characteristics (ethnos villages with locally prepared dishes or specific local ordinances that boosted attraction for visitors).

In cycling tourism, trips allow cyclists to discover important landmarks and enjoy the landscape with a stay of several days. Cyclists tend to choose vibrant and diverse routes but avoiding roads with heavy traffic. The cyclists had the freedom to accommodate in different locations, carrying with them equipment, foods that would enable them to stay for a longer period of time..

Keywords: bicycle tourism, sport cycling, environment activities, health

Main Conference Topic: Tourism, Bicycle tourism, Sport and recreation, Public Health and health customs

Introduction

Numerous scientific researches in the field of physical and mental health in humans indicates the great benefits of cycling, jogging, hiking and other physical activities in urban and adequate zones outside of the city cores. In the WHO European Region outdoor air pollution, largely caused by traffic, results in almost 500 000 deaths

annually, according to new evidence. Road accidents kill 90 000 people prematurely each

year. Exposure to excessive street noise affects almost 70 million people. Transport adds 24% to total greenhouse gas emissions in Europe and North America. When it discourages physical

activity, transport contributes to nearly 1 million deaths per year.

Certainly, one of the important links to achieve a healthy environment and to reduce emissions of harmful gases and particles in the atmosphere is the use of bicycle transport. Cycling is an efficient way of using expensive and scarce space in urban areas, and especially is healthy, clean and cheap transport means. His huge potential is especially perceived when we recognize that almost half of all car trips in cities are at a distance of less than five kilometers. Cycling is also recognized as effective form of active transportation to and from working place. On European level several initiatives that include cycling, were implemented as interventional programs to increase the physical activity level at workplace, increase workers productivity and decrease in absenteeism. Furthermore, countries like: France, Belgium, Luxembourg and Italy also introduced tax breaks for cycling to work or extended existing ones as a manner to motivate their employees to be more physically active (EC report: Physical activity at workplace, 2017).

To date, there are minimal investigations that have utilized bottom-up approaches to highlight built environment effects on bicyclist wayfinding ability. The cycling infrastructure close to the origin of potential journeys and at the destination is, therefore, a key facilitator or potential barrier to encouraging cycling.

Cycle tourism refers specifically to travel between places by bicycle for leisure purposes. Cycling is an integral part of the tourist experience. For the development of cycling tourism, the infrastructure is certainly the primary factor. Well-planned, dimensioned and maintained infrastructure is a prerequisite for attracting cycling tourists. The safety and comfort of cyclists is determined within the framework of a well-technical and engineering standard-built infrastructure for bicycle traffic. Expanding the network of cycling routes depends on the tourist attractions that are in the interest of the tourist offer.

Functional cycling network design is undoubtedly at the top of the agenda of local governments and planners with tends to privilege the analysis of economical and societal impacts of tourist environment. According to Giovannini A., Malucelli F., & Nonato M. (2016) in case of recreational cycling, the leisure and attractiveness

of cycle routes are obviously necessary requirements. The concept of attractiveness is related not only to the particular features of the pathway, but it extends to the appeal of the points of interest reachable along the pathways and to the traversed landscape.

Basically, cycling tourism is a combination of different types of cycling (biking, mountain biking, sport or other tours, bike events etc.). In this group of cyclists all those tourists, domestic or foreign, who are fully committed to all-natural beauties, cultural attractions or ethnological characteristics (ethnos villages with locally prepared dishes or specific local ordinances that boosted attraction for visitors)..

1. Health and Economic benefit of bicycle activity

Many successful European cities view a vibrant cycling culture as providing a competitive advantage over other cities in attracting new businesses, tourists and key workers, and therefore, have adopted world leading approaches to encouraging and supporting cycling. Due to these reasons, investing in cycling can lead to positive secondary effects on the economy or safety in the city. According to the World Health Organisation's report (World Health Organisation Europe, 2014), if cities increased their cycling shares to the level of Copenhagen, 76,600 new jobs would be created, and 10,000 deaths would be avoided per year(www.euro.who, 2014).

Cycling does not have positive effect only to economy but also has many benefits of health and physical activity level of its users. As an outdoor activity, cycling can be done both in urban cities and in nature. Many study reports for positive effects outdoor exercises has on mental and physical well – being (Asker et al, 2012; Eigenschenk et al, 2019; Mayer et al, 2009) [1, 6, 9]. Positive engagement, better revitalization, decrease of tension, confusion, anger and depression (Eigenschenk, 2019); greater enjoyment, cognitive functioning, better sleep (Biddle & Mutrie, 2008) and improvement of individual well – being (Mayer et al, 2009), were reported when exercising outdoor in natural environment. Outdoor sports, including cycling are also positively related with social benefits,

active citizenships and environmental awareness (Focht, 2009).

From numerous analyzes and expert studies that address health, vitality, activity, and cycling, they point out the numerous benefits of cyclists to other people. According the report of the Brook Lyndhurst’s team (Fell &Kivinen, 2016) cycling among employees has been associated with fewer sick days, improved productivity, and better quality of work. This report scopes many analyses where that regular cyclists take one less sick day per year compared to others (cite Raje and Saffrey, 2015), while Fishman et al (2011) cite Hendriksen et al (2010) whose research in the Netherlands found that whereas non-cyclists took an average of 8.7 sick days during the study year, cyclists only took 7.4.

According the Global health risks (WHO, 2009) physical inactivity has been identified as the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality (6% of deaths globally). This follows high blood pressure (13%), tobacco use (9%) and high blood glucose (6%). In the same source overweight and obesity are responsible for 5% of global mortality, physical inactivity – account for 61% of loss of healthy life years from cardiovascular diseases and 61% of cardiovascular deaths. The same risk factors together account for over three quarters of deaths from ischaemic and hypertensive heart disease. The WHO study, published in the medical journal the Lancet, found that in 2016, more than a quarter (1.4 billion) of the world’s adult population were insufficiently active in

2016, where 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men worldwide did not do enough physical activity to stay healthy. The problem is more pronounced in high-income countries, where levels of insufficient physical activity are more than twice as high as in low income countries. Further, levels of inactivity in rich countries worsened by 5% between 2001 and 2016. The quarter of the globe’s population not sufficiently active in 2016 face greater risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, dementia and some forms of cancers.(WHO report5.

<https://www.who.int/ncds/prevention/physical-activity/Worldwide-trends-physical-inactivity-press-release.pdf?ua=1>

The “one less sick day per year per cyclist” currently translates, on the basis of current cycling levels, into savings to the UK economy of £128m a year from reduced absenteeism. Other research suggests that cycling could save the economy an additional £2 billion over ten years through reduced absenteeism. In addition, evidence from the Netherlands suggests that “an average person who starts to cycle saves his employer some \$3000” – however, this is based on Dutch figures which assume a relatively high baseline physical activity level, and the benefits could in fact be greater in the UK. People would be locally employed in bicycle retail and maintenance, provision of clothing and accessories for cyclists, urban development and new mobility schemes; they would help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and health risks and would support the local economy (Table 1).

Table 1: Potential results of increasing cycling modal share in major cities

Country	City	Population	Current cycling modal share (%)	Estimated number of existing jobs associated with cycling	Potential number of additional jobs created	Additional lives saved
Albania	Tirana	536 998	3 ^a	73	562	33
Andorra	Andorra La Vella	22 256	3 ^a	3	23	2
Armenia	Yerevan	1 121 933	3 ^a	153	1 175	119
Austria	Vienna	1 721 573	6	470	1 568	106
Azerbaijan	Baku	2 122 300	3 ^a	290	2 223	167
Belarus	Minsk	1 885 100	0	17	2 215	454
Belgium	Brussels	163 210	5	37	156	12
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Sarajevo	305 242	3 ^a	42	320	30
Bulgaria	Sofia	1 170 009	1	53	1 332	195

Canada	Ottawa	1 239 140	2	113	1 354	100
Croatia	Zagreb	792 875	5	181	758	77
Cyprus	Nicosia	55 014	3 ^a	8	58	3
Czech Republic	Prague	1 241 664	1	57	1 413	143
Denmark	Copenhagen	549 050	26	650	0	0
Estonia	Tallinn	401 072	4	73	402	50
Finland	Helsinki	595 384	7	190	515	42
France	Paris	2 234 105	3	305	2 340	174
Georgia	Tbilisi	1 167 600	3 ^a	159	1 223	147
Germany	Berlin	3 501 872	13	2 073	2 073	151
Greece	Athens	655 780	2	60	717	47
Hungary	Budapest	1 740 041	1	79	1 981	298
Iceland	Reykjavik	117 980	3 ^a	16	124	6
Ireland	Dublin	527 612	3	72	553	29
Israel	Tel Aviv	404 543	9	166	313	13
Italy	Rome	2 761 477	0	50	3 219	154
Kazakhstan	Astana	661 700	1	30	753	131
Kyrgyzstan	Bishkek	889 600	3 ^a	122	932	121
Latvia	Riga	650 478	3 ^a	89	681	92
Liechtenstein	Vaduz	5 207	3 ^a	1	5	0
Lithuania	Vilnius	552 008	1	25	628	102
Luxembourg	Luxembourg	99 852	3 ^a	14	105	6
Malta	Valletta	6 221	3 ^a	1	7	0
Monaco	Monaco	36 371	3 ^a	5	38	3
Montenegro	Podgorica	180 810	3 ^a	25	189	20
Netherlands	Amsterdam	1 068 724	33	1 606	b	b
Norway	Oslo	599 230	5	136	573	36
Poland	Warsaw	1 710 130	5	374	1 651	194
Portugal	Lisbon	474 696	1	22	540	45
Republic of Moldova	Chisinau	789 500	3 ^a	108	827	283
Romania	Bucharest	1 937 421	1	88	2 205	132
Russian Federation	Moscow	11 541 000	3 ^a	1 576	12 085	2 912
San Marino	San Marino	4 479	3 ^a	1	5	0
Serbia	Belgrade	1 639 505	1	75	1 866	255
Slovakia	Bratislava	411 884	3 ^a	56	431	51
Slovenia	Ljubljana	272 554	10	124	199	17
Spain	Madrid	3 265 038	1	149	3 717	211
Sweden	Stockholm	864 324	1	39	984	54
Switzerland	Bern	124 381	11	62	85	5
Tajikistan	Dushanbe	704 000	1 ^a	32	801	82
Republic of North Macedonia	Skopje	316 849	3 ^a	43	332	33
Turkey	Ankara	4 890 893	3 ^a	668	5 122	565
Turkmenistan	Ashgabat	637 000	3 ^a	87	667	111
Ukraine	Kyiv	2 772 736	1 ^a	126	3 156	613
United Kingdom	London	7 826 000	3	1 069	8 196	542
USA	Washington, DC	617 996	3	84	647	36
Uzbekistan	Tashkent	2 296 500	1 ^a	105	2 614	197
Total					76 658	9 401

^a Assumed modal share – likely to be an overestimate.

^b No additional jobs or lives saved are projected for Amsterdam, as its cycling modal share is already higher than that of Copenhagen.

Individual businesses are making investments to be bicycle friendly to attract customers, enhance employee wellness programs, create an appealing identity, and accrue the economic benefits, too. Many Bicycle Friendly Business program, especially in domain the entrepreneurship recognizes the efforts of companies to promote bicycling — and the response has been impressive. China and Taiwan produce the majority of the world’s bicycles, responsible for 87% of global production. China alone exported 59.1 million bicycles in 2012. Most of these bikes ended up in the United States, Japan, and Indonesia. However, China and Taiwan are encouraging domestic consumption of bicycles as well. Between China and Taiwan, their bike sectors are quite distinct, and each has different specialties within the bicycle industry. While China exports low-end recreational bikes that usually retail for less than \$100 in places like the United States, Taiwan focuses on high-end racing and mountain bikes, which usually sell for over \$400. (<https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/all-about-the-bicycle-industry.html>).

According to the National Sporting Goods Association NSGA, 36 million Americans age seven and older were estimated to have ridden a bicycle six times or more in 2015. This number was up slightly compared to the previous year. The peak participation year was 1995, with 56.3 million participants. It should be noted that the age limit on this number eliminates millions of young people who ride bicycles with wheel sizes 19” and under. It also does not count those who rode a bicycle fewer than six times in the year. While the number of cyclists has declined since the peak, much of that is attributed to declining youth participation, and the overall trend for the last decade has been flat.

Bicycling is popular across America among all types of people. Communities that have fostered that popularity by providing bicycle infrastructure for transportation and recreation have seen considerable economic benefits by attracting businesses, tourism, and active residents. New research in 2015 from People For Bikes used a different methodology and parameters to assess cycling participation. By this measure, over 100 million people rode a bike at least once in 2014,

ages 3 and above. This research projects higher participation numbers than the NSGA with its distinct definition and can be accessed at PeopleForBikes.org.

According the U.S. National bicycle dealer’s association in 2015 U.S. bicycle industry shared with direct effect sales of \$6.2 billion, including retail sales of bicycles, related parts and accessories, through all channels of distribution. This compares to \$6.1 billion in sales in 2014. (<https://www.nbda.com/articles/industry-overview-2010-pg34.htm>). Bicycle sales are accomplished in this country through five primary and distinct channels of distribution — specialty bicycle retailers, mass merchants, full-line sporting goods stores, outdoor specialty stores, and “other,” which is comprised of a mixture of retailers (including Internet sales).

Today, the bicycle industry in USA has a much stronger foundation and much greater variety, with an estimated 2,000 companies involved in manufacturing and distributing cycling products to retailers, and approximately 150 different bicycle brand names to choose from. A wider variety of product is being sold to a wider range of consumers than ever before. Since the “boom,” no part of the bicycle has remained unchanged, with fundamental improvements in design and materials being the norm throughout the industry.

Today’s quality bicycles are more comfortable than ever before, the components more function-specific and reliable, and new and exciting features are introduced regularly. This allows professional retailers many options to match the right bike to each consumer — male or female, big or little, frequent or infrequent rider, status-conscious or not.

The European Bicycle Industry generates more than 90,000 jobs in the Union market with over 800 SMEs working in 20 of the 28 Member States. This makes cycling one of the largest green employers in Europe.

2. Potential of Cycle tourism

Cycle tourism is growing all over the world. Cycling is among the most sustainable activities

in sports, recreation and tourism. Bicycle is popular as a means of transport in sports-recreation and as an everyday alternative mode of transport. There are several types of cycling separated by the users' intent, the nature of cycling and the type of bicycle (Rotar, 2014).

Types of cycling

- Daily (commuter) cycling
- Sports cycling
- Sports-recreational cycling
- Trip cycling
- Bicycle touring
- Mountain biking
- Tourist cycling
- Family cycling

The profile of a cycle tourist is determined by the type of bicycle on which they spend their cycling holidays.

- Cycle tourists are mostly classified as:
- Cross-country mountain bikers (using a mountain XC or all-mountain bicycle)
- Road cyclists (using a road bicycle)
- Touring cyclists (mostly using trekking bicycles)
- Downhill mountain bikers (using downhill and free ride bicycles).

In cycling tourism, trips allow cyclists to discover important landmarks and enjoy the landscape with a stay of several days. Cyclists tend to choose vibrant and diverse routes but avoiding roads with heavy traffic. The cyclists had the freedom to accommodate in different locations, carrying with them equipment, foods that would enable them to stay for a longer period of time. In this context, analyzed

Lately, family cycling is increasingly being promoted. Family cycling is an important type of cycling because it enhances family ties, undermines mutual understanding and harmony, and promotes a healthy lifestyle among family members. For these reasons, families with children are looking for safe and easy cycling routes. Due to different desires, needs and time available, it is reasonable to prepare different programs for different types of families.

In recognition of its potential many countries are adding to and improving their cycle networks.

There are an estimated 2.3 billion cycle tourism trips in Europe every year with a value in excess of €44 billion, according to a 2012 study commissioned by the European Parliament. 20.4 million cycle tourists stay one or more nights in route, and these ‘overnight’ tourists spend around €9 billion annually. If EuroVelo is fully developed as a European transport and tourism network by 2020, the study estimated that it would see 60 million trips made every year, generating a total of €7 billion in direct annual revenue (The European Cycle Route Network EuroVelo’, 2012).

Table 2: Cycle tourism demand bands. Source: Weston et al. 2012: p.35

Demand band	low	Low-medium	Medium	Medium-High	High	Very high
Share population with cycling as main mode of transport (The Gallup Organization, 2011)	≤2%	>2-5%	>5- <8%	8-12%	12-20%	>20%
Expert estimate share of	0.5%	1%	1.5%	2%	3%	3.7%

cycle holidays of all holidays (%)						
Countries attributed to demand band	Turkey**/** * Bulgaria Luxembourg Portugal Malta** Cyprus Spain	Romania Lithuania Serbia**/** Norway*** Croatia**/** Macedonia**/* ** Italy Estonia Ireland Greece UK	Latvia Czech R. Sloveni a France *	Slovaki a Poland	Hungary Denmark Sweden Belgium Germany Finland Austria* Switzerland*/**	Netherlan ds

*Austria, Switzerland and France have been moved up one demand band in order to compensate a lower daily usage share of cycling with demonstrated high shares of incoming cycle tourists (see Table 2). **These countries could not be included in the estimate for Europe due to missing background data. ***These countries do not feature in the modal split data of The Gallup Organization (2011). They have been attributed a ‘cycling as main transport mode’ share based on other, similar data on bicycle usage (see Figure 1) and the shares of neighboring countries.

Factors were generated from cycle tourism data in countries (where they are collected) and allocated to each of these bands. These were then applied to overall tourism demand to generate an estimated demand for cycle tourism in each country. The demand for day cycling trips was multiplied by €15.39 and the demand for overnight stays by €439 (average spend per trip); these figures were estimated for the EuroVelo network from survey data.

Studies across the world have found that cycle tourism contributes hundreds of millions annually to Scotland and US states like Wisconsin, Oregon and Michigan. In a 2009 survey of tourists 78% reported that Portland’s bike friendliness was a factor in them choosing to visit the city. New Zealand has made its bike trails core to its tourism and jobs strategy. Between 2009-2014 the percentage of tourists that cycled in Australia increased by 25% by visitor number and 16% by visitor nights. In 2014, more than 2.9 million tourists in Australia cycled. In 2014, 1.1% of all Australian visitors participated in a cycling activity during their trip, while 5% of international visitors cycled.

3. Potentials of North Macedonia for promotion of cycling tourism and cycling as a manner of healthy and active lifestyle

The Republic of North Macedonia is a country recognized by natural beauties and landmarks ideal for development of tourism including sport tourism. The landscape of the country that is dominantly hilly and mountainous, where mountains that cover nearly 81% of the territory of the country with average altitude of 829 meters, creates conditions for various outdoor activities and sports. Macedonia has hidden treasures for all those who seek adventure, up to recreation with kilometers of mountain trails ideal for hiking, walking, mountain biking, for mountain climbing, skiing, snowboarding, horse riding and many other sports (Dimitrov, Popeska & Ristova, 2018). Cities are also popular places for urban outdoor sports, providing possibilities for cycling, running, rollerblading etc.

The Republic of North Macedonia has many potentials for promotion of cycling. It can be practiced everywhere around the country and in every environment: road, hilly, mountain, urban, rural, recreational, cycling tourism, etc. The Bicycle Federation of Macedonia is responsible for development and promotion of cycling in Macedonia including competitive and recreational forms. It integrates more than twenty clubs from Skopje, Bitola, Veles, Kumanovo, Shtip, Prilep, Ohrid, Strumica and other cities. During the year, several competitions are organized in various places, including cycling competitions on Pelister, Bistra and other mountains.

Considering the nature resources of Macedonia for cycling, the Agency for promotion and support of Tourism in Macedonia promoted a Proposal for National network of mountain track of Republic of Macedonia (2016). This proposal includes 44 different hiking and cycling track covering all mountains in the country. The marked tracks have different length, starting from 1.2 km (Kopanki, located on Pelister) up to 212km (First Macedonian Transversal, covering west part of the country and finishing in Ohrid). For each track following elements are defined: starting and finishing point, altitude on start and finish, length, approximate time for passing the track, short description and touristic facts and information. One of the last projects related to promotion cycling is the Project for Mountain cycling tracks supported by the Agency for promotion and support of Tourism (<http://tourismmacedonia.gov.mk/2018/08/06/pla-ninski-velosipedski-pateki/>). It includes creation of network of cycling tracks all over the country, their adaptation for use, marking, design of informational boards, signposts as well as guidebook and promotional materials. So far, the network includes 6 mountain cycling tracks. Furthermore, last few years, there are many citizens organization and sport foundations that also work on marking different mountain biking and extreme biking trails that are becoming more and more popular especially between young people.

When identified and marked, the next important thing required for promotion on mountain cycling tracks is their placement on sport tourists map. This can be done on different manners that includes: organization of promotional events, sport camps, sport competitions etc. In order to provide positive sport tourist experience that can also have economical and promotional impact, its important to integrate several elements. Some of those elements are safety, security and attractiveness of destination (Perić, Đurkin & Vitezić, 2018). According the authors, when indicated to participate in some outdoor sport event, people are mainly motivated by the intention to experience and merge nature, destination as whole (including tourist offer), environment management that includes actions to protect the nature and environment as well as safety of participants.

In the last few years, there is increase interest for urban cycling as well. As a result of different initiatives, there is a positive trend of increased

used of bikes as a form of recreation for all generations, manner of active transportation but also a manner to enhance personal health and protection of environment. As a result of actions in different sectors of public leaving (public health, environment protection, urban living etc), the number of cyclists from all age periods is increasing. This is also supported by increased awareness of local communities in providing facilities for cycling such as marked cycling trails in urban city zones, connecting different part of the city, signalization for cyclists, cycling parks, parking zones for bikes etc. Although these initiatives do not cover all places within the cities and all cities within the country, yet starting such projects for velo awareness is one step forward in its promotion and implementation as everyday life habit among the citizens.

When speaking about racing the awareness for benefits of cycling for personal health and the effects that it has on environment protection and urban living, education and educational institutions have essential role. Schools are the place where students should learn the bases for how to ride a bike, what are the safety regulations, how to be a responsible participant in the city traffic etc. Therefore, pre – school and primary school curriculum integrates different contents that help students to be a responsible cyclist and create life - long habits. Particularly, contents related with driving a bike are implemented in curricula from Physical and Health education starting from first to nine grades in primary education (PHE curriculum, Bureau for development of education, 2007). Cycling is implemented as a part of optimal thematic union named driving (bicycle on two or three wheels, trotted, rollers, rollerblades etc). It is realized in cooperation with parents and based on facilities in schools. Its mainly realized in school yard or in park near the school and supported by parents. The main goal of these activities with children in first two grades in primary education is to learn how to drive; to improve their driving skills; develop motor abilities such as balance, coordination, spatial awareness; learn about safety issues etc. In second phase of primary education (6th to 9th grade) it is not included in the curriculum but different activities are organized in coordination with teachers that teach Technical education and representatives from Ministry of Internal Affairs (sector for traffic). These activities are mainly focus on safety issues and regulations for participation in the traffic.

Some schools also organize competition for students for knowledge for cycling regulations and cycling skills. Similar initiatives are organized in secondary education as well. In addition, from the aspects of promotion of physical activity of children and facing with limited material facilities, new trends in physical education are oriented toward promotion of outdoor sport activities, including cycling as well (Klincarov & Popeska, 2019).

From the point of education and raising awareness for active transportation and environment protection, universities also can promote cycling. These can be done in frames of sport programs that are delivered with students at all faculties or as different initiatives and projects. Such activities are organized at Goce Delcev University in Stip. Namely, initiated by the University sport center and supported by National Cycling Federation and local community, few years in a row an event named "With bike at university" was organized. Its aim was to promote cycling as a manner of movement and physical activity, to motivate students and employees to be more physically active and this way to improve personal health and wellbeing; to use cycling as a form of active transportation to and from university; to facilitate movement between campuses and to highlight the importance of personal actions for environment protection. Each year, the event gathered more than 300 participants – students, employees, children and athletes. As a result of this, some study conducted with students, reported increased interest of students for outdoor physical activity and increased interest for cycling as a form of physical activity (Popeska, Sivevska & Ristova, 2019; Sivevska et al, 2017). Students also confirmed that Macedonia has great natural resources and potentials for development of outdoor extreme sports, including mountain biking (Popeska et al, 2019).

Based on presented actions taken in different segments related to promotion of cycling and cycling tourism, we can note some positive steps and activities. Yet, there are many aspects that should be improved and developed in the future. In order to do so, future actions should be multidimensional, including benefits on personal, corotational, community and state level.

Personal level means actions that will emphasize health benefits and changes in physical activity level as a result of implementing cycling in daily

routine; improved personal and emotional well-being and working productivity. These can be done by implementing cycling in PHE curricula, implementation of different extracurricular activities and/or sport events that include cycling, family & school cycling days, days without cars etc.

Corporation level means actions that emphasize positive effects that companies could have if their employees implement cycling in their daily routines. This is expected to bring greater productivity of each employee, less sick day, greater effectiveness of the company as well as recognition as a socially responsible organization. These can be done by different intervention programs implemented by the companies, team building events, corporate campaigns that raise the awareness for active movement, health promotion, environment protection; community support of building infrastructure for cycling etc.

Community and state level actions mean support in building infrastructure for different forms of cycling activities (cycling tracks and signalization, community bicycles for rent, cycling tours to certain tourist attractions within the city, organization of cycling events, support for companies that use cycling in their working routine, increase employment rate etc).

Conclusion

Today, in the growing offer of various tourism products in the global market, cycling tourism with its friendly position fully justifies the needs for promoting healthy and sports habits.

But it must be borne in mind that the development of cycling tourism is not an easy and simple task at all, as it involves many actors with different institutional competencies: individual awareness, participation of the entire local community, regional integration, as well as international cooperation.

Well-developed bicycle tourism can be an important component of the tourism industry, which will help enrich and promote the local environment and provide a higher employment rate. Synergies created by different actors and activities will provide significant benefits. Both as customers and consumers, tourist cyclists are interconnected and complementary.

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