

Promoting healthy places and cities

The experience of Barcelona Provincial Council

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Background

The importance of green spaces for human health and well-being is well documented:

- ✓ Green spaces allow to be in contact with nature, promoting recovery from stress; to have a positive impact in mental health and to help to improve children's behavior and attention.
- ✓ Green spaces help to moderate the microclimate in city squares and streets, as well as to reduce air and noise pollution.
- ✓ Green spaces encourage people to be physically active.



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Background

- ✓ People living in areas with abundant greenery are more active and have 40% lower probability of being overweight or obese. (Study in eight European cities. Ellaway 2005).
- ✓ Schoolchildren having access to natural environment, or even only having the view of it, show better attention capacity (Velarde et al. 2007).
- ✓ People living in urban areas with more green spaces tend to report less anxiety and greater welfare. White et al. 2013.



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Background

- ✓ As well as greenery is important for health, there are **other factors** related to urban design and maintenance that have a relevant influence to health:
 - Connectivity
 - Use of land
 - Housing and facilities
 - Public transport
 - ...
- ✓ There's enough **scientific evidence** of the close relationship between health and physical places where people live and work.



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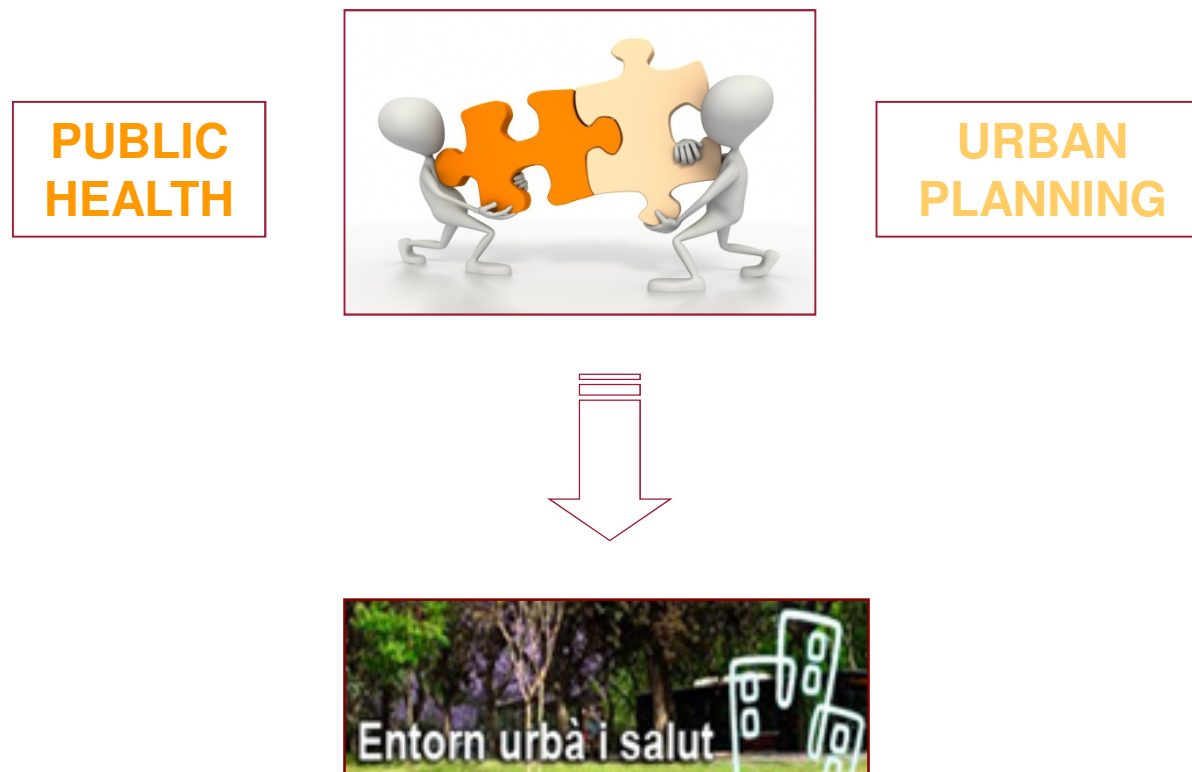


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The opportunity



A project to integrate public health and urban planning

The Aims



Main objective

To promote urban spaces and places that encourage people to live healthily, while minimizing environmental factors that may constitute a risk to health.

Specific objectives

- To make proposals and recommendations to incorporate the health's perspective on urban environment planning and management.
- To compile and disseminate best practices in urban planning and architecture at local level.
- To encourage improvement processes in municipalities to build healthier places and cities.

Team of the project



- **49 people involved** (from 14 offices and services of Barcelona Provincial Council)
- **A transversal team:**
 - Sport
 - Environment
 - Gender equality
 - Diversity and Citizenship
 - Commerce
 - Urbanism
 - Facilities and public space
 - Housing and Urban Improvement
 - Public Health
 - Social welfare
 - Education
 - Youth
 - Markets and fairs
- **A real crosscutting work:**
 - Engineering
 - Sociology
 - Educational Sciences
 - Environmental Sciences
 - Health Sciences
 - Law
 - Psychology
 - Architecture

Stakeholder involvement



University field:



UNIVERSITAT POLITÈCNICA
DE CATALUNYA
BARCELONATECH

Càtedra Unesco de Sostenibilitat

Professional field:



Institut d'Estudis de la Seguretat
FUNDACIÓ PRIVADA



Research field:



Practitioners from the municipalities (different disciplines)

Results

Training courses:

- Two editions of a course for technicians working in different areas, mostly related with the design, management and maintenance of places, green spaces, public buildings, facilities and urban planning.

➡ Organized by the Public Health Service

- Three new courses are ongoing this year

➡ Organized by the Department of Territory and Sustainability



Results



Guide with proposals and recommendations



<http://www.diba.cat/en/web/entorn-urba-i-salut>

Next steps



1. Implementation of the recommendations in specific projects:



Next steps (2)



2. Health impact assessment in three specific projects:

- Master plan of Copons municipality
- Housing vulnerability
- Temporary use of vacant space in Molins de Rei

3. Broadcasting the Guide's recommendations and the HIA methodology among the municipalities in Barcelona Region.

Conclusions



- **Health and urban environment** (in the broadest sense) are strongly **interrelated**.
- We must think about **citizens' needs and interests** when it comes to design a city, a neighbourhood, a public space...
- Thinking about **health** is thinking about **quality of life** and making daily life easier for everybody.
- To make a **healthier city** means, implicitly, to make it more **sustainable**.
- Most of all, crosscutting work is rewarding, despite the difficulties and the fact it may seem a slow way.



Thanks for your attention

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