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Getting Florianópolis into Cycling:

The essential role of VIACICLO and UDESC

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IT SEEMS THE CYCLING INDUSTRY and trade is aware of the fact that investing in markets and high-quality expos related to all kinds of cycling related businesses will generate a better ROI when combined with support to grassroots civil society organisations, say cycling advocacy groups. Already in 2005 Interbike, the leading US bike trade show (www.interbike.com) sponsored the Bicycle Leadership Conference, the National Bike Summit, and the Bicycle Friendly Communities program in the USA. "Just a couple of years ago, the idea of mixing industry with pressure groups was unheard of – at least in the cycle world. Now, all work together to get people in a different mindset about cycling", states Lance Camisasca, Interbike's Show Director at the time (Combining advocacy and business, Bike Europe, 14-09-2005).

When referring to developing countries, it is even more important to highlight the necessity of supporting the process. In these countries the advocacy for bike use gains a higher profile and stands for an inclusive mobility tool to

facilitate the accessibility for all, by reducing poverty and creating a sense of citizenship.

The same recognition of the value of cycling advocacy has to be envisaged by international incentive cooperation programs aimed at sustainable mobility. It is clear that decision making, technical and academic solutions have no power if the citizen does not support the political process.

Rather than seeing developing countries as poorly explored markets, with huge expanding capacity for technical level consultancies regarding cycling infrastructure, international incentive cooperation programs for sustainable mobility must bring on board funding schemes to support the local growth of the knowledge and the strategies and activities of different actors, considering cycling advocacy cost as social investment in a continuous process.

Although the disconnected activities from the different actors in beginner cities might seem a waist of talent and direction to the investment by the industry and trade sector, for social sciences understanding this is a net of small little dots that when connected increase leverage of cycling policies. This is the case of the city of Florianópolis, Southern Brazil, where the recent process of integrating cycling into the transport and mobility agenda of the city saw the participation of local actors that were empowered by different international actors and incentive cooperation programs for sustainable mobility.

Contacts made by cycling advocates at Velo-City conferences, organised by the European Cyclists Federation (www.ecf.org), and Velo Mondial conference (www.velomondial.net) led to the participation of Florianópolis in URB-AL network number 8, Urban Mobility, coordinated by the city of Stuttgart. This process started in

The Picture shows Florianópolis city-centre Cycling Infrastructure:



— Executed or under construction — Projected Mainland - - - To be projected Mainland

the year 2000. Both, the city (government/technical) and the cycling advocacy (union/university extension program) were involved in the process. The contribution of the international actors has continued via Mobilization program (www.mobilization.org), coordinated by International Bicycle Consultancy (www.cyclinginfo.nl); Locomotives and Bicycle Partnership Program, coordinated by Interface for Cycling

Expertise (www.cycling.nl) and Cities-for-Mobility network (www.cities-for-mobility.net). With the participation of the municipality of Utrecht (www.utrecht.nl) and the University of Stuttgart (www.unistuttgart.de). The main local actors are the Urban Planning Institute of Florianópolis (www.ipuf.sc.gov.br); Viaciclo, the cycling advocacy union of the great Florianópolis (www.viaciclo.org.br) and UDESC, the State University of Santa Catarina (CicloBrasil group www.udesc.br/ciclo).

Strategies and activities of different actors and different programs include: research, creation of campaigns, videos, technical seminars, training courses, workshops, advocacy and community meetings.

Results of strategies and activities of different actors and different programs include: the empowerment of the cycling advocacy movement in the city, more technicians and advocates trained, cycling infrastructure, a growing social community of actors that back-up each other to fight for cycling friendly environment.

Even though Florianópolis is still a beginner, the success of the long enduring efforts of the local actors in including cycling in the agenda have been acknowledged by international actors involved in the process, giving the city a pivot position as a theme coordinator of non motorized transport in Cities for Mobility Network.



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