

# URBACT II

## Analytical case study

*Title : The park bench trail – “Bankerlweg”, City: Weiz, Country: Austria*

*URBACT project concerned: ATN- Active Travel Network*

*Date: JULY 2012*



<p><b>Overview</b></p>	<p><i>The project was launched by the „Tourism Association Weiz“. In the Province of Styria there is the old tradition of people sitting on public park benches: People meet at public park benches and socialise with one another. In doing so the park benches perform a social function which is important for the community life in a village or a small city.</i></p> <p><i>The basic idea was to link this old tradition with an interactive guided tour in Weiz. Tourists and also people living in Weiz should be able to do a guided tour without a tour guide. In addition to that, the people in Weiz should be motivated to walk more in the city and get to know their city from a walker's point of view. The main beneficiaries are local people of all age groups, day – time tourists and vacationers.</i></p> <p><i>There were no main obstacles when planning the project. It was strongly supported by the transport advisory council, the architect responsible for town planning, the town council and the mayor of Weiz. All in all 12 park benches were erected; all the benches were manufactured by local companies. A letter box was assembled to each of these benches. A hand – made book which the park bench users could read was put into these letter boxes. The book contained approximately 30 pages and was written to be interesting for all age groups and different tourists. The head of the „Tourism Association Weiz“ made the basic design and draft of the book. Each book provides information referring to the actual place of location. The benches were erected in the inner city of Weiz so that the users could get to know their city by walking. A plan informing about the places of location of each bench is included in all books. The main idea – to say it once more – is to motivate people to walk.</i></p> <p><i>From the beginning the project was well accepted both by the people and tourists. Unfortunately, very soon a serious problem turned up: vandalism. Many books were destroyed by vandals; new books were made and deposited into the letter boxes. But this did not solve the problem, because also these books were damaged in a very short time. Due to this negative experience it was decided to remove the books from the letter boxes. Information boards were produced and attached to the park benches. On these boards one can find a QR – code which can be entered into smart phones. After doing this one can read the information which used to be in the books on the smart phone.</i></p>
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#### Basic description of the background and setting

<p>Summary</p>	<p><i>The main idea was to get to know the city by walking without doing an organised sight-seeing tour with a tour guide.</i></p>
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Challenges that the practice addresses	<p><i>There is a big demand for guided tours in Weiz. To organise a private sight-seeing tour with a tour guide for only 2 or 3 people would be too costly; moreover, also many local people want to get more information about their city without booking a tour guide. That is why it was decided to launch this project. The main challenge was to produce a coherent text by using different historical sources.</i></p> <p><i>Local people who have personal historical knowledge were integrated to realise this project. In addition to that, the knowledge of people who passed away years ago but left texts and documents about the history of Weiz was also made use of. A scientific quality check ensured that all the historic data are correct.</i></p>
The Context	<p><i>As already mentioned above the citizens of Weiz should be encouraged to walk and by doing so to experience the beauty of the city. Another aim of the project was to make the people aware that Weiz is a city of short distances. This should make people walk instead of using the car in the inner city.</i></p>
Aims and objectives	<p><i>The key aim of the project was to make people walk for short distances. By participating in the URBACT EU – Project ATN the realisation of the project could be accelerated. Other awareness raising campaigns such as „Alles geht zu Fuß in Weiz“ - „Everyone walks in Weiz“- should be strengthened by this additional project and thus increasing soft mobility in Weiz.</i></p>
Social Innovation	<p><i>So far there has been no project of that kind in Austria. The special strength of the project lies in the link of a touristic function with an awareness raising campaign for walking.</i></p>

Case: Concise description and explanation of the practice	
Main components or parts of the practice	<p><i>The key components of the practice were to link the park benches with historical information, entertainment and also fun factors.</i></p>
Timing - Start and duration	<p><i>The planning of the practice took place from 2009 to 2011. The park benches were erected in June 2010, in 2011 the information boards were attached to the benches. It is still an ongoing project.</i></p>
Process - Development over time	<p><i>The key stages of the project were as follows.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1. The head of the „Tourism Association“ came up with the project idea.</i></li> <li><i>2. Next the local architect for town planning was contacted; at the very beginning he was very much in favour of the project</i></li> <li><i>3. Contacts with all the local history experts, graphic designer, text writers and the local historical archive were established.</i></li> <li><i>4. A masterplan and a project budget were produced</i></li> <li><i>5. Local companies for producing the benches, letterboxes, books, information boards etc. were contacted</i></li> <li><i>6. Presentation of the project to the Transport Advisory Board and the Mayor of Weiz</i></li> <li><i>7. Realisation of the project</i></li> </ol>

Overcoming challenges	<i>The most serious set back was the damaging of the books by vandals. This obstacle was overcome by providing the information using smart phones after entering a QR code.</i>
Transnationality	<i>The German project partner from Norderstedt has also established a thematic walking trail called „Alsterrundweg“ ( trail around the river Alster ). Information about this trail was provided in one of the first working sessions of the ATN project. This project motivated us to carry out a similar project integrating the Styrian tradition of sitting and chatting on park benches. Therefore, it can be said this transnational exchange helped us in developing the project.</i>
<b>Key actors</b>	
Main actors involved	<i>Once the project idea was put forward by the head of the Tourism Association it turned out to be a teamwork project integrating different local players: town planning architect, the Mayor of Weiz, the local historical archive, text writers, local experts and people from the Local Support Group. With the exception of the graphic designer and the companies the project can be truly called a civil society project especially regarding all the historical knowledge which came from local people.</i>
Coordination mechanisms	<i>The dynamic between the actors was a very good one right from the beginning. The main coordination work was carried out by the head of the Tourism Association.</i>
Participation	<i>Working groups consisting of local experts were formed to produce all the necessary background information for the different chapters of the book. In this way local residents could be successfully involved in the action.</i>
<b>Supporting programmes and funding sources</b>	
Total cost and Sources of funding	<i>Total project costs were € 40.000,00</i>
EU financial contribution	<i>The basic project draft was granted by the URBACT EU- Project with € 2,000,00.</i>
Annual budget in Euro	<i>Basically, after realising the project there is no further budget necessary; nevertheless, it should be mentioned that every three years some maintenance regarding the park benches is to be made. Estimated costs for doing this job are approximately € 2,000.-.</i>
<b>Immediate and lasting results</b>	
Overall impact	<i>Before the project was carried out guided tours in Weiz could only be made in groups with a tour guide. The absolute added value of the project is that now everyone can do this trail using a smart phone. Another added value is that all the information is free of charge and motivates people to walk in the city. People who do not have a smart phone can borrow it from the tourist office without paying a fee.</i>
Beneficiaries	<i>The main beneficiaries are the people in Weiz and tourists.</i>

Concrete results	<i>It is obvious that jobs cannot be created with projects like this one. But it should be said that local companies being involved benefitted from it. The long term impact might be a slight reduction of traffic in the inner city of Weiz, people who prefer walking instead of using their cars for short distances thus also decreasing the amount of PM and other emissions being produced by cars.</i>
Impact on governance	<i>The project sparked off another project of a similar kind. The local secondary modern school “Musikhauptschule” in Weiz realised a project in which pupils can get information about the town by walking it is called “Weiz on the move”. Educational sheets with quizz questions about the history of Weiz were developed. Pupils equipped with these sheets go from one place to another and have to answer the questions that refer to that particular location. The project was designed by local teachers of English in this school. Since the educational sheets have been written in English, they are a good tool in the teaching of English for the pupils in Weiz.</i>
<b>Lessons to be learnt</b>	
Success factors	<i>From the very onset this project was carried out in a very professional and well -designed way. Just to mention an example: in the book all pages were laminated to make them weather – proof. The letter boxes were made with special holes so to make the rainwater flow through it. The benches were made with heavy material to prevent from getting stolen. Also, the places of location of the benches were well considered bearing in mind that they could only be erected on places where interesting and entertaining information could be provided.</i>
Barriers, bottlenecks and challenges	<i>The main obstacle the project encountered was vandalism. No one had expected in advance to what extent vandalism on public places does exist in Weiz. To avoid these pitfalls the information for each place can now be received by smart phones. Unfortunately, the exclusive uniqueness which one got by reading these carefully designed books has been lost.</i>



Future issues	<i>It is hoped that additional projects will be carried out in the future making people aware of walking instead of using the cars for short distances.</i>
Transnationality	<i>The transnationality exchanges were very helpful and encouraged all the players involved to carry out similar projects in the years to come.</i>
Duration	<i>The project is ongoing during the next years. One lesson which was learned from this project was the use of modern media, for instance smart phones. Hiking trails around Weiz will be equipped with GPS guiding systems and a cycling track planner using modern communication means for the local area is being developed.</i>
Transferability	<i>The project can be transferred to other cities although it has to be adapted to the respective situation in these cities.</i>
Expert opinion	<i>Thematic walks are an excellent way of integrating people with the positive effects of reducing traffic, motivating them to more physical exercise and getting to know the history of a city better. This might result in more public participation of the citizens in their communities.</i>
Stakeholder opinion	<i>All stakeholder groups profit from this project. Old – established citizens get to know their city better, tourists get much information about Weiz in an interesting and entertaining way and also children can get information about Weiz in a kind of playful way.</i>
<b>Information sources</b>	
Name of the initiative	<i>Active Travel Network</i>
Country/region/city etc.	<i>Austria/Styria/Weiz</i>
Administering organisation(s)	<i>Tourism Association Weiz, Mrs Edda Meraner</i>
Contact details of administering organisation(s)	<a href="mailto:Edda.meraner@weiz.at">Edda.meraner@weiz.at</a>
Interviewed persons	<i>Mr. Wolfgang Enthaler, city architect Mrs. Kropac Susanne, Head of the city archive, Mr. Herbert Kampl, journalist</i>
Other documentation sources	<i>Mr. Hans Ritz: Book about a famous legendary citizen of Weiz, called Trifter Sepp; Prof. Farnleitner Leopold and Prof. Franz Hauser Books about the History and Stories of Weiz</i>
Website URL	e.g. <a href="http://urbact.eu/project">http://urbact.eu/project</a>
Main author of the case	<i>Town Councillor Oswin Donnerer Mrs Edda Meraner LP Barbara Kulmer</i>

## Illustrations

Pictures showing the opening event of the park bench trail



Visitors sitting on the park benches and reading about the history of the city



Opening event of the park bench trail with actors wearing historical costumes



The logo of the park bench trail

With the help of the QR map and a smart phone everybody can read about the history and stories of the city



Code fotografieren



Entschlüsselung



Bankerweg Guide lesen

**Wie benutzt man einen Quick Response-Code?**  
Sie benötigen eine Reader-Software (QR-Reader), die es Ihrem Handy ermöglicht, den Code zu entschlüsseln. Viele Reader-Apps sind im jeweiligen appStore kostenlos verfügbar. Oder Sie installieren die kostenlose HEROLD QR-App: Senden Sie eine leere SMS an 0800 580 580\* und folgen den Anweisungen.  
\* SMS-Kosten sind Dienstleistungsgebühr laut Ihrem Handyvertrag



**STATION 1 - HAUPTPLATZ**

## Wie statt der Pferde der Trifter Sepp die Kutsche gezogen hat...

**Warum er sie gezogen hat und wohin?**

Das und vieles mehr lesen Sie in unserem Online-Guide – mit alten Stadtansichten, historischen Details, amüsanten Anekdoten und lustigen Seiten für die Kleinen.

Einfach den QR-Code mit Ihrem internetfähigen Smartphone fotografieren und schon haben Sie den Guide für den Hauptplatz auf Ihrem Handy.

*12 rote Bankerl in Weiz – der Bankerweg!*

**HIER GRATIS WLAN!**

**Erlebnis Innenstadt**



Weiz Tourismus / Bankerweg in Weiz - Microsoft Internet Explorer bereitgestellt von Stadtgemeinde Weiz

Adresse: <http://www.tourismus-weiz.at/bankerweg-weiz.html>

- Station 6 - S-Estel-Gasse
- Station 7 - Europa-Allee
- Station 8 - Birkfeldstraße
- Station 9 - Bahnhof
- Station 10 - Flamingogasse
- Station 11 - Gieseler Straße
- Station 12 - Radm-gasse
- Kulturelle Rundgänge
- Historische Rundgänge
- Erlebnis-Rundgänge
- Verkehr & Parkplätze
- Souvenirs aus Weiz
- Stadtmaking
- Branchenverzeichnis
- St. Ruprecht
- Oststeiermark
- Einkaufsstadt Weiz

**Sommerabend Stimmung, 12. August**  
Die Betriebe des Weizer Kunsthausareals laden Sie sehr herzlich zur „Sommerabend Stimmung“ ein.  
[Details / Informationen](#)

**Stoitisches Kammermusikfestival**  
A. Egger und E. O. Hutterer zeigen am 12. August was denn nun die Macht der Musik ausmacht.  
[Details / Informationen](#)

**Sommer in the City**  
Unsere Open-Air  
[Details / Informationen](#)

**Die 12 Stationen**  
zum online-Matzen bitte anklicken:  
1 Hauptplatz  
2 K&K Passage  
3 Weberhaus  
4 Blumenplatz  
5 Radmannsdorfgasse  
6 Siegfried-Estel-Gasse  
7 Europa-Allee  
8 Birkfeldstraße  
9 Bahnhof  
10 Flamingogasse  
11 Gieseler Straße  
12 Radmannsdorfgasse

[die Stationen im Überblick](#)

**WEIZ LAN**  
Innenstadt verbindet  
Kostenloses WLAN in der Weizer Innenstadt!

**Veranstaltungswichtige**  
[Infos und Fotos zu den letzten Veranstaltungen!](#)

**Pedelec Radvoelf**  
Mieten Sie ein Elektrofahrzeug!  
[Weizers Info](#)

Der Nutzen: entsprechend unserem URBACT EU-Projekt "Active Travel Network": weniger Verkehr und Motivation der Bevölkerung für körperliche Aktivität.

**ACTIVE TRAVEL**  
all together

**Kontakt**  
Servicecenter für Tourismus und Stadtmarketing Weiz  
Hauptplatz 18

[http://www.tourismus-weiz.at/lebensbilder/05/05997\\_3.jpg](http://www.tourismus-weiz.at/lebensbilder/05/05997_3.jpg)

Description of the park bench trail on the website of the office of tourism

Article in the local press



## Weizer BANKERLWEG eröffnet

### Der neue Bankerlweg führt durch Weiz

Das Bankerlsitzen hat eine alte Tradition. Unter dem Motto „Sitzen bleiben und lernen“ lädt der neue Bankerlweg ein, in die Vergangenheit einzutauchen. An zwölf Stationen steht es, das rote Bankerl. Und bei jedem Bankerl findet der Besucher einen Briefkasten, der ein Buch beinhaltet. In diesem Buch findet man geschichtliche Streifzüge, Geschichten vom Trifter Sepp, von der Schöckl Everl und von weiteren Weizer Persönlichkeiten. Ein Teil wurde speziell für Kinder aufbereitet, damit auch die kleinen Besucher die Möglichkeit haben, in dem Buch zu schmökern. Nach zweijähriger Projektlaufzeit, initiiert und ausgeführt vom Tourismusverband Weiz, wurden Ende Juni die Bankerl aufgestellt.

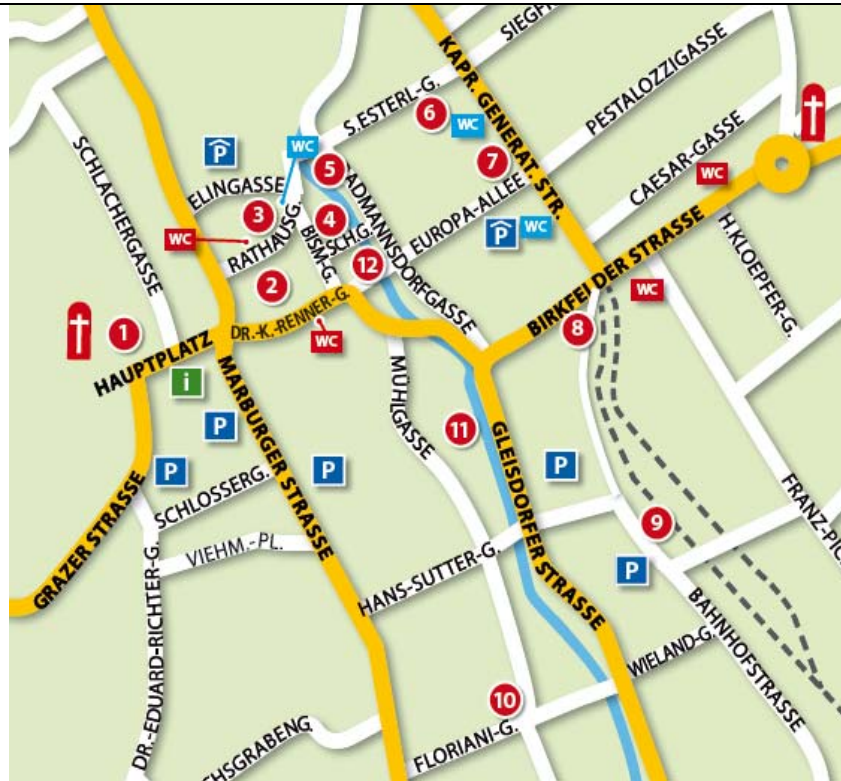
„Wir hoffen sehr, dass viele Besucher sitzen bleiben und lernen und viel Freude haben an der Geschichte und den G'schichtln“, so Edda Meraner, Geschäftsführerin des Tourismusverbandes Weiz.



Connecting cities  
Building successes



## Map of the stations of the park bench trail



- 01.) Hauptplatz
- 02.) K & K Passage
- 03.) Weberhaus
- 04.) Bismarckplatz
- 05.) Radmannsdorf Gasse
- 06.) Siegfried Esterl Gasse
- 07.) Europa Allee
- 08.) Birkfelderstraße
- 09.) Bahnhof
- 10.) Florianigasse
- 11.) Gleisdorferstraße
- 12.) Radmannsdorf Gasse



Connecting cities  
Building successes



## URBACT II

**URBACT** is a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development.

It enables cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges, reaffirming the key role they play in facing increasingly complex societal challenges. It helps them to develop pragmatic solutions that are new and sustainable, and that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions. It enables cities to share good practices and lessons learned with all professionals involved in urban policy throughout Europe. URBACT is 181 cities, 29 countries, and 5,000 active participants

[www.urbact.eu/project](http://www.urbact.eu/project)