

# ThinkBike Workshops

Impacts, Outcomes & Legacies



CYCLING FOR EVERYONE

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Celebrating  
10 years of the  
Dutch Cycling  
Embassy.

# ThinkBike Workshops

Impacts, Outcomes  
& Legacies

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# Foreword

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic fundamentally changed the way we look at cities; offering a unique window of opportunity to rethink, redefine, and reallocate urban streetscapes and the way they are used. Everywhere in the world, pop-up bike lanes have been implemented to provide more space for cyclists; offering a reliable means of maintaining mental and physical health, but also to provide an alternative to public transport. However, it is of the utmost importance these changes are thoroughly considered and carefully implemented, to avoid common mistakes and adverse effects. The big question is how to move from temporary solutions to permanent ingredients for successful urban transformation?

An overarching lesson is we learned not to be afraid to experiment: the Dutch tried a lot of different things since the 1970s—willing to overhaul streets and overhaul them again if that didn't work. In this process we also learned that simply copy-pasting treatments from one city or locality to the other can easily result in failure. To overcome these missteps, the Dutch Cycling Embassy offers our help and guidance in implementing Dutch-style solutions; working together to adapt them to your geographical, social, and cultural context. To do so, we organize

tailor-made ThinkBike Workshops® and bring experts from our public-private network to see what solution fits best and how to implement it to gain maximum benefits. In this booklet we provide you with examples of ThinkBike Workshops® we have hosted since 2011 in more than 40 global cities, and the changes for the better they have triggered. From Paris to the Philippines, and from Finland to Santo Domingo, it shows...

The pandemic has shown us cities need more resilient and equitable mobility—not only to weather the COVID-19 crisis, but also to prepare for the climate crisis, and to provide an accessible answer to the deepening inequality in many urban areas. As EU Vice-President Frans Timmermans expressed: the bike has a fantastic and romantic past, but also a glorious future, and can play an important and decisive role in reshaping public spaces. The Netherlands learned first-hand that cycling is not only a very humble mode of transportation but also very powerful transformational tool, which makes cities more sustainable, more safe, more social, more wealthy, more healthy, and more happy places to live!

Lucas Harms  
Managing Director  
Dutch Cycling Embassy

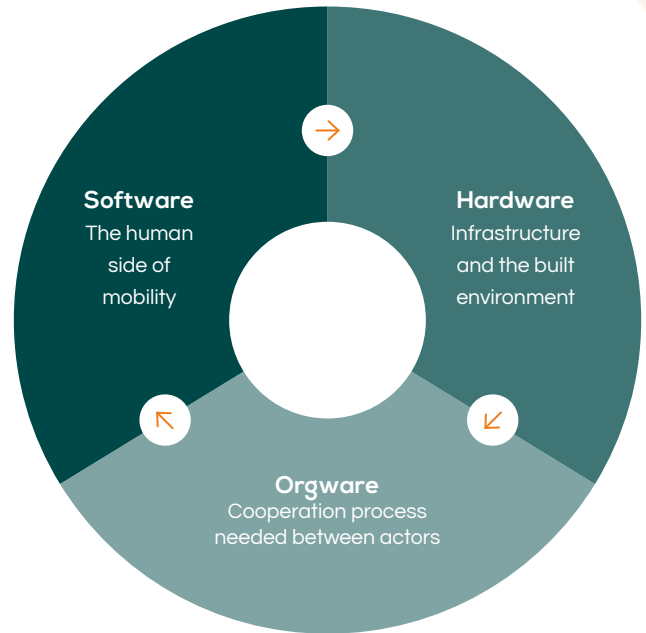
# Content of the Workshops

ThinkBike Workshops address all areas that can help your community become cycling-friendly.

An integrated cycling policy is based on effective hardware, software and orgware. Building hardware (infrastructure) is only one part of a comprehensive, sustainable strategy: Cycling also needs to be encouraged through software (e.g. campaigning and traffic education).

Meanwhile, orgware (capacity building of institutions) is needed to strengthen the strategy on a broader, sustainable basis.

The aim is to build a cycling network that, as in the Netherlands, is safe and suitable for people of all ages, all abilities and for different types of bicycles. As a result, cycling as a mode of transport becomes accessible to everyone.



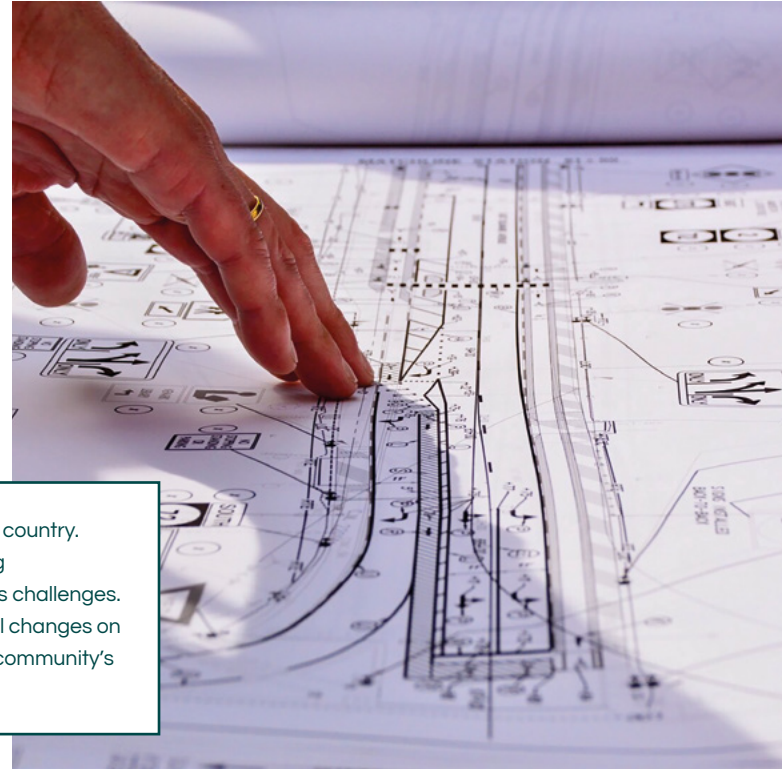
# Adoption of the Workshops

Every country and region is different. ThinkBike Workshops do not impose Dutch solutions onto your community, but help you learn from Dutch experience and best practice in your own geographic, political and cultural context.

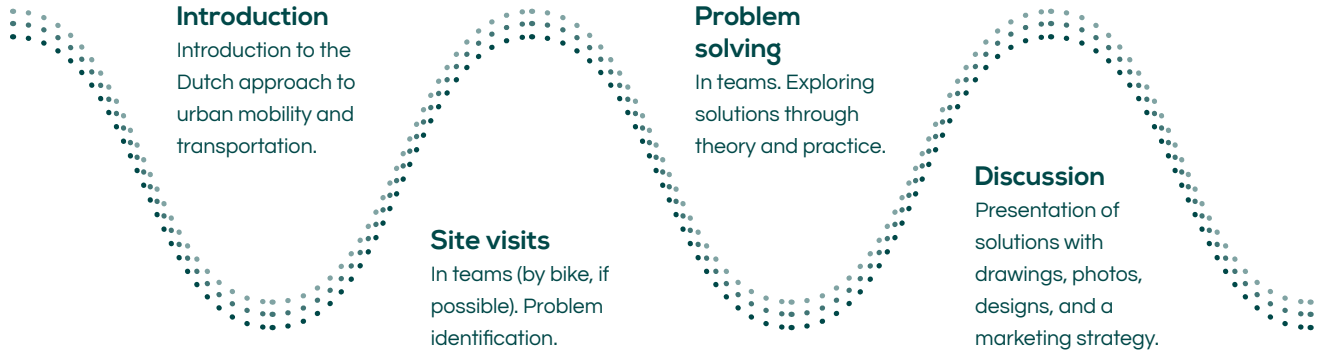
The Dutch Cycling Embassy matches your community needs with the most suitable Dutch experts. Many of our experts speak multiple languages.

The experts, with your input and through the ThinkBike Workshop, will help translate concepts, solutions and examples to your context to overcome the particular challenges facing the bike-ability of your community.

**i Good to know:** The Netherlands was not always a bicycle-friendly country. The cycling revolution only started from the mid-1970s. Transforming the Netherlands into a cycling nation required overcoming numerous challenges. Our experts have contributed to the redesign, rebuilding and cultural changes on the streets of the Netherlands, and are happy to help you with your community's cycling transformation.



# Structure of the Workshops



**Good to know:** The final discussions and presentations of solutions can take place in the presence a range of stakeholders, for example elected officials, politicians, local police, leaders and members of cycling associations, press and anyone interested in the future of sustainable transportation in the city.

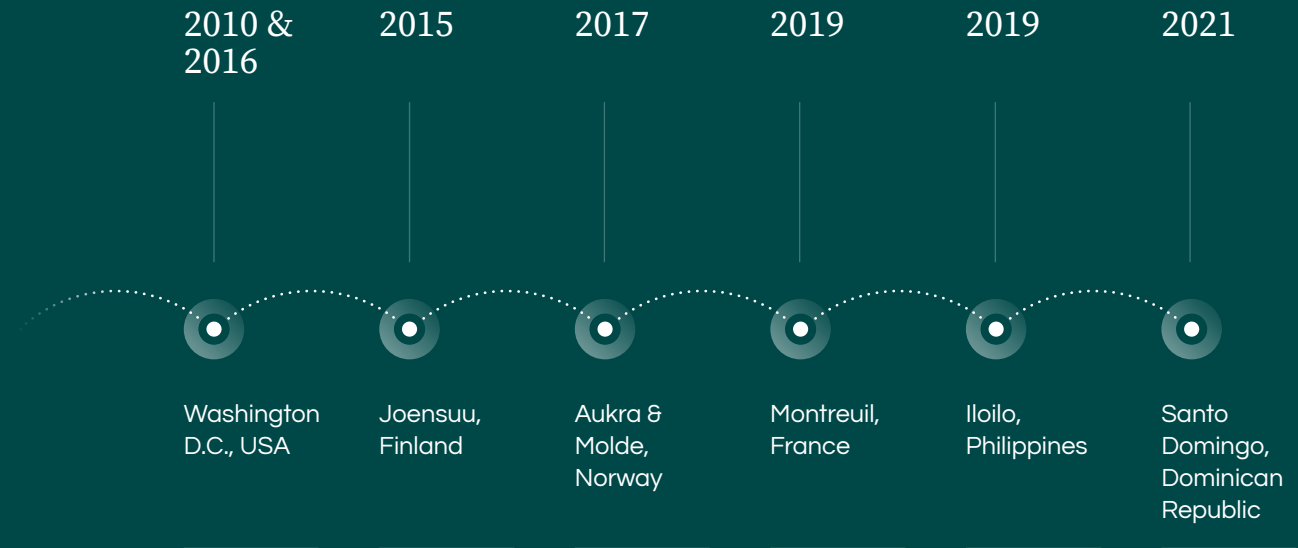
# 8 ThinkBike Workshops



Over 45 ThinkBike Workshops have taken place since the DCE was founded.

# Case studies

In the following pages, we present a selection of workshops and their impacts.



# Washington D.C., USA

2010 & 2016

Washington D.C. has hosted two ThinkBike Workshops. The first was held in 2010, shortly before the DCE was formally founded. The second was held in 2016.

Since these workshops, Washington D.C. has built about 65 kilometres of cycling paths. An increasing number of them are protected bike lanes. The modal share of the bicycle for work trips has more than doubled. And a mindset shift in urban planning has taken place.

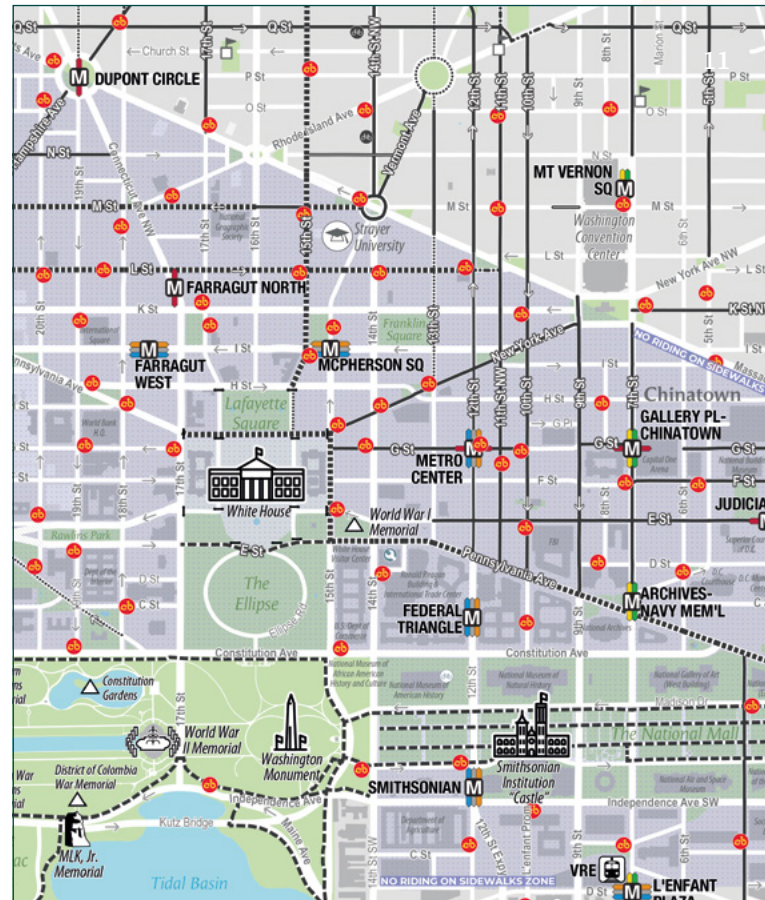


## The ThinkBike Workshops were able to give Washington D.C.'s cycling planning a significant boost of knowledge, experience and enthusiasm.

Although the city already had favorable cycling conditions due to the population density, an interconnected grid of streets and a renowned park system, cycling planning had not been effective prior to the early 2000s. Budget cuts meant that there was no Bicycle Coordinator between 1992 and 2001.

The ThinkBike Workshops took place during major phases of cycling infrastructure growth. The 2016 Workshop focused on the Foggy Bottom area west of the White House.

Several important institutions with a high number of existing and potential cycling commuters, such as George Washington University, the World Bank and the IMF, are located in Foggy Bottom. Despite that, it was a cycling infrastructure desert. Even so, the 2016 Workshop, four out of five cycling corridors for the area have been completed or are in late-stage planning. Modal share of cycling has increased to an estimated 20% of all trips. It has reached 6-8% for work commutes, up from 3% in 2010.

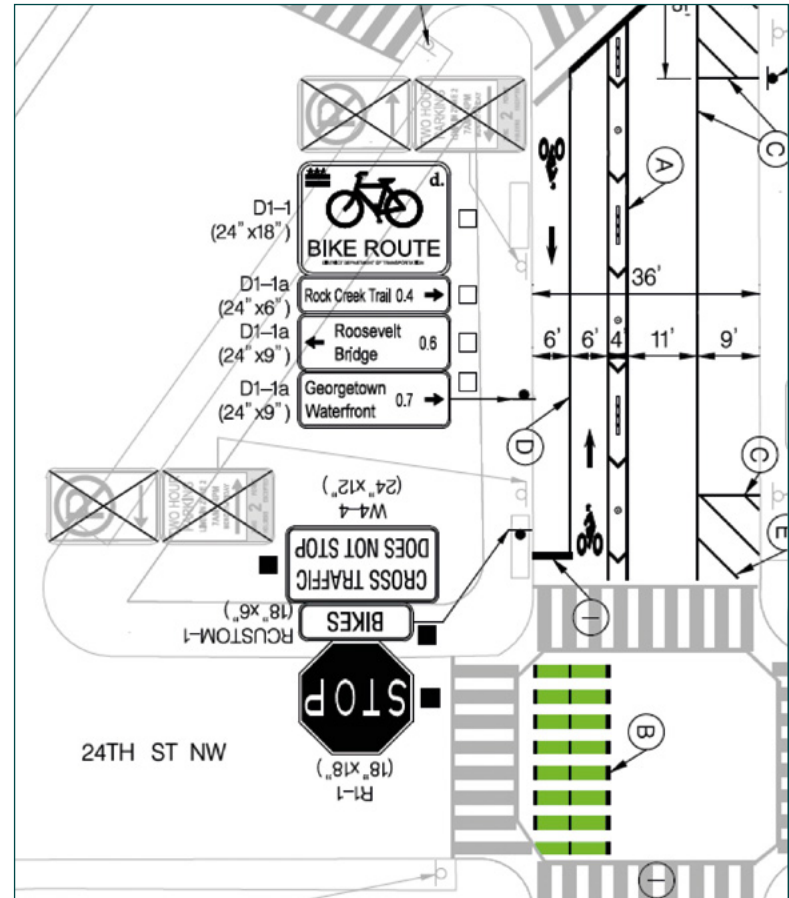


## Better quality bicycle infrastructure need not be expensive.

The city's department of transportation managed to limit costs by creating bike lanes with materials that were already in stock, such as concrete wheel-stops normally used on parking lots, which can be deployed from the back of a pick-up truck. The costs amounted to about \$160,000 per mile. More permanent measures such as changing sidewalks can be implemented later on.

## Hardware, software and orgware are interlinked. The ThinkBike Workshops not only facilitated the construction of high-quality cycling infrastructure, but impacted software and orgware too.

- Washington D.C. has accomplished its 20x20 plan, building 20 miles of cycling paths by 2020. It has now designed an ambitious plan for carbon neutrality by 2050, and a Vision Zero goal: zero traffic fatalities and safe, accessible streets by design, inspired by Dutch design
- The city will aim for more Dutch-style protected bike lanes in the future, to attract less confident road users to the bike too,



- The speed limit for local roads has been lowered from 25 mph to 20 mph, roughly equivalent to the European standard of 30 km/h.
- Long-term projects will consider different approaches to separating pedestrians, cyclists and cars completely.
- The ThinkBike Workshop also seeded the idea that transformation can happen faster, and at an increasing rate. The Netherlands, which was similarly car-dominated in the 1970s, served as an example of the possibility of transformation.
- According to one Bicycle Program Specialist for the local department of transportation, the ThinkBike Workshop changed the way planners look at streets.
- They no longer aim to widen streets to relieve congestion. Instead, they see that the problem is that people are choosing to use their cars over other modes of transport. Therefore, road space for cars is now being reduced, and space for cycle lanes and bus lanes is being increased.
- The mindset shift has resulted in other related programs, such as “streateries” in Georgetown, where restaurants can use parking spaces on the road to build a seating terrace (pictured above).



Photo credit: Georgetown Business Improvement District

# Joensuu, Finland

2015

Joensuu welcomed Dutch experts for a ThinkBike Workshop in 2015. It was the third Workshop in Finland, after Helsinki and Tampere, and would be followed by further workshops in Turku and Espoo.

Our Dutch experts noted that the city already had well-developed cycling infrastructure. The ThinkBike Workshop was nonetheless able to help solve some hardware challenges, but also helped improved orgware significantly, locally and nationally.



Photo credit: Sampo Kytömäki

## Different communities are at different points on their journeys to becoming cycling cities when they request a Workshop.

Joensuu was already implementing Dutch design principles. However, the ThinkBike Workshop, which focused on the roundabout pictured to the right, was able to give local planners the confidence that they were making the right design choices. The Workshops in Finland also helped improve orgware in a number of ways:

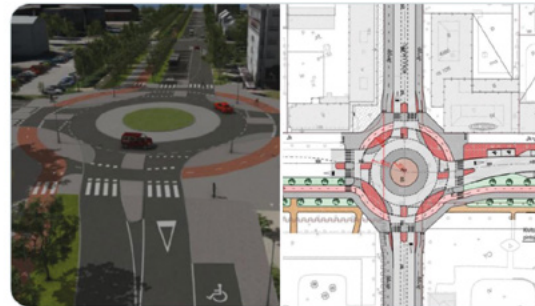
- Our Dutch experts were able to advise and strengthen the national cycling federation, which in turn organised itself better.
- As a result, they were able to lobby for changes in legislation:
  - Cycling streets are now legal. The first one in Finland, pictured overleaf, was built in Joensuu.
  - Separation between pedestrians and cyclists became the aim of infrastructure planning.
  - Red colour asphalt was officially chosen for cycling paths.
  - Cycling planning has become more structured, like in the Netherlands.
- There were positive impacts on orgware too: the Workshop in Tampere was the first time politicians



Finnish Cycling Embassy  
@Finnish\_Cycling

City of [#Joensuu](#) is planning some improvements for [#cyclists](#): The first [#Dutch](#) style roundabout in Finland is under planning.

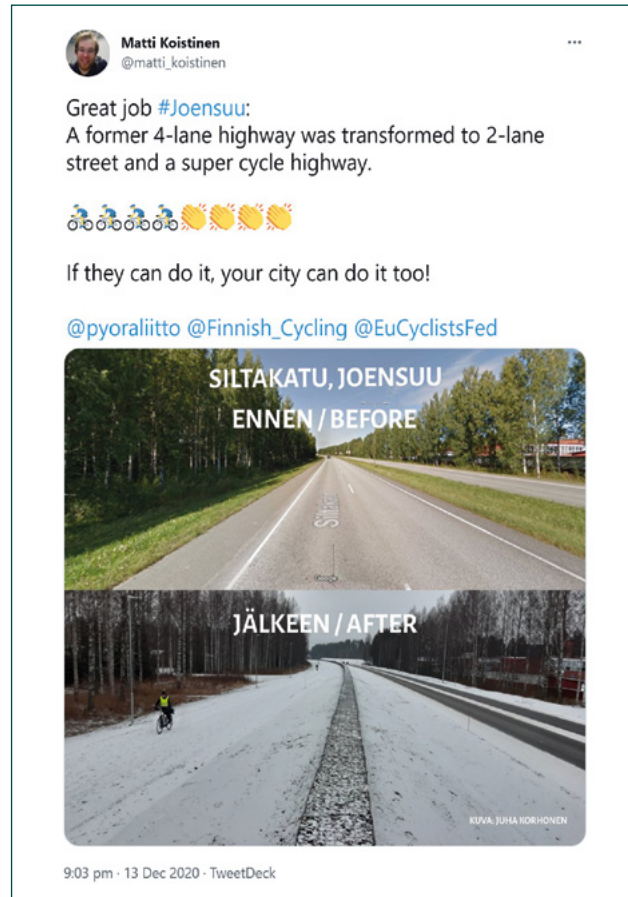
ThinkBike workshop by [@Cycling\\_Embassy](#) was in Joensuu 2015 and now we see how it effected! Thanks for it!



6:33 PM - Jan 23, 2019 - TweetDeck

talked so directly to cycling activists, thanks to the Dutch approach of including and mixing everybody up for open dialog on infrastructure planning. Although it took some time to discuss all complaints, the results were very productive.

- There was positive publicity for cycling infrastructure in many newspapers across the country.
- Our experts stayed in touch with the Finnish cities, remaining available to answer follow-up questions.
- Joensuu and the other Finnish cities have made further improvements independently since the workshops, for instance the cycle superhighway pictured left.
- Joensuu has built a reputation as one of the best winter cycling cities in Finland, and as winter cycling expert in its own right.



## Facts and figures:

- In Joensuu, the share of trips made by bicycle is now 18 %, which is much higher than the national average of 8 %.
- More than half of all cyclists cycle year-round.
- 35 % of wintertime trips to work and school are made by bicycle.
- 61 % of year-round commutes to work and school are made by bicycle.



Photo credit: Mark Wagenbuur

# Aukra & Molde, Norway

2017

The commune of Aukra and Molde held a ThinkBike Workshop in April 2017. The focus was on a road (pictured left) between the towns of Molde and Aukra. Although the conditions on the road were harsh, more and more people – including children – were choosing to cycle on it.

The communal manager for planning and development, Geir Gönçz, decided to tackle the challenge of creating a safe, inclusive cycling path by organizing a ThinkBike Workshop.



## A wide range of participants were invited to the workshop:

representatives and planners from Aukra and Molde, the regional government, national infrastructure and environmental authorities, representatives of cycling associations and also of a neighbouring municipality.

- The national infrastructure authorities were initially sceptical about the workshop. However, the workshop design managed to win over all of its participants.
- for instance with success stories from the USA.
- Participants noted that they highly appreciated being encouraged to think outside the box of their current local practices and habits, and to think about the future of cycling infrastructure and culture in Norway.

## Following the success of the event, reports on the ThinkBike Workshop were spread widely:

- They appeared on television as well as in regional media.
- The national cycling organisation of Norway also wrote an enthusiastic article about it.
- The national department of infrastructure received a



copy of the outcome.

- Additionally, a regional interest organisation became involved and lobbied the regional government for implementation of the project.
- Participants of the workshop still speak about it today.

**Although the project is still awaiting funding, the workshop has been highly impactful socially, culturally and politically.**



# Montreuil, France

2019

Montreuil, France, hosted a ThinkBike Workshop in January 2019. Montreuil is located in the eastern suburbs of Paris. With a population of about 110,000 and a density of 12,000 people/km<sup>2</sup>, it is the fourth most populous suburb of Paris.

The workshop focused on hardware, but included a public screening of the film *Why We Cycle* and a public panel discussion with the Dutch experts to encourage community participation in the infrastructure development process.



The COVID-19 pandemic hit before Montreuil implemented the hardware which was designed in the workshop. However, the workshop put the urban planning staff in a highly prepared position to implement 6 kilometres of provisional bike lanes immediately following the first lockdown. The city staff felt confident enough to experiment and solve problems as they went along.

The provisional bike lanes have all become permanent. Montreuil has measured a considerable increase of bike traffic at key crossings (e.g. in the graph pictured above). The city will continue to expand its bike lanes following the 2020 re-election of the mayor. This will include building the bike lane designed in the ThinkBike Workshop. Montreuil is also implementing the first Dutch-inspired quiet neighbourhood in France.



Photo credit: Gilles Delbos

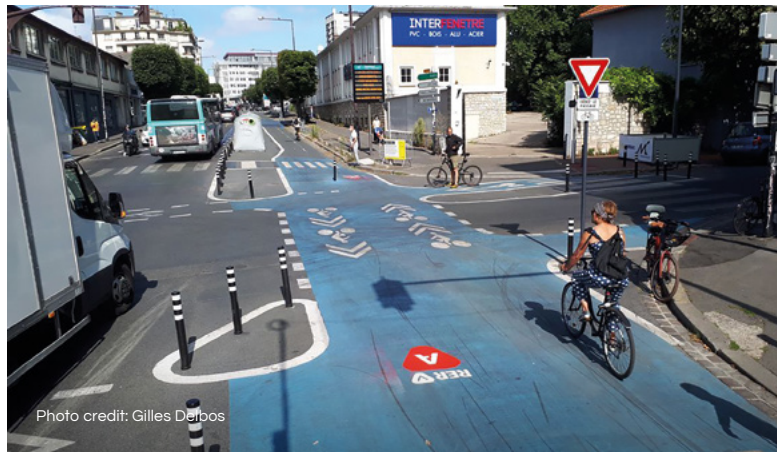


Photo credit: Gilles Delbos

# Iloilo, Philippines

2019

The City of Iloilo, home to about 460,000 inhabitants, organised a ThinkBike Workshop in 2019. The workshop brought together members of civil society organizations, the private sector, and the technical government unit.

Participants were divided into mixed teams to work on bicycle lane network mapping for Iloilo. The focus of the workshop was the integration of key crossings and the university cycling route into the wider network.



## The ThinkBike Workshop resulted in a number of orgware improvements:

- The city government has integrated bike lanes into its updated Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP).
- As a result of the knowledge exchange, urban planners shifted their approach to designing the cycle network from on-demand, reactive construction to a more systematic, proactive approach based on a hub and spoke network, allowing for better commuting from all directions.
- For example, bridges that connect the north and south parts of the city were opened up to cyclists, and some, such as the Iloilo/Taytay Diversion Bridge, were integrated into the cycling network with protected two-way bike lanes (pictured on the previous page).
- The mayor participated in the workshop, helping to raise awareness and prestige of the project amongst politicians and a wider range of stakeholders in the city.
- Thanks to the collaboration with the Dutch Embassy in Manila, further projects are being organized; for instance, a series of workshops was held for the League of Vice-Governors of the Philippines with sponsorship from the World Bank.



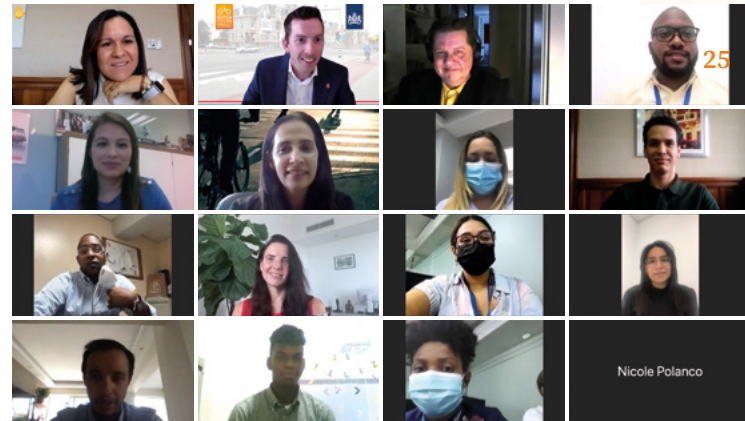
# Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

2021

The Dutch Cycling Embassy joined forces with the Dutch Embassy in the Dominican Republic to organize one of our most recent digital ThinkBike Workshops in February 2021.

The ThinkBike Workshop in Santo Domingo provided a range of stakeholders from the city with information on Dutch Cycling strategies. The aim was to support the Santo Domingo in its journey to become more bicycle-friendly, especially for cycling as a daily means of transport.

The digital format fully embraces the interactivity of an intensive, hands-on multi-day workshop with all the added possibilities of having a computer at each participant's fingertips. Group work and discussions, for instance, benefit from the wealth of available information and the possibility of using in-house/customary mapping software.



# Interested?

To organise a ThinkBike Workshop for your location, get in touch with our friendly team at [info@dutchcycling.nl](mailto:info@dutchcycling.nl).

After our conversation with you, where we will assess your needs and current situation, we will send you a draft proposal. This will help you select a focus for your workshop—along with local stakeholders and decision makers. You will also receive a draft timetable for the workshop.

Then, we will select the best Dutch experts for your needs and language requirements. The experts will assess your situation and requirements in more depth, for instance via case studies and background information that you may send us. The experts may provide a preparation document for the workshop participants in advance.

Preparations such as mode (digital or in person), travel plans (if necessary), a final workshop schedule and a financial overview will then be arranged.

Once you are happy with the arrangements, a final proposal is signed to formalise the contract.



# ThinkBike Workshops



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