



BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE

IN OUR REGULAR LOOK AT THE GLOBAL ACTIVE CITY PROJECT, WE SHINE THE SPOTLIGHT ON BUENOS AIRES. THE ARGENTINIAN CAPITAL AND HOST CITY OF THE 2018 SUMMER YOUTH OLYMPIC GAMES FOLLOWS IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF LIVERPOOL AND LILLEHAMMER IN TACKLING THE CHALLENGES OF SURGING URBANISATION, SOCIAL INEQUALITY AND SEDENTARY LIFESTYLES

ILLUSTRATED BY **CELINA LUCEY**



Though it differs in size, structure and culture, Buenos Aires nevertheless faces health and social issues that are invariably similar in nature to those encountered by Liverpool and Lillehammer, the two Global Active Cities previously featured in *Olympic Review*.

These include the chronic inactivity of certain sections of the population; an increase in non-communicable diseases (cardiovascular and chronic respiratory diseases, cancer and diabetes); a rise in mental illness; integration problems; and widespread social and economic inequality. Another major cause for concern is obesity, especially among children. The authorities are also seeking to reduce the historical inequalities that have traditionally existed between the north and south of the city, which has welcomed immigrants for over 150 years and is home to three million people.

Buenos Aires has capitalised on the opportunity offered by hosting the next edition of the Youth Olympic Games (YOG) to embrace the Global Active City project, the development of which is supported and funded by the International Olympic Committee (IOC). This innovative, flexible and multi-sectoral strategy puts people and the community at the heart of a new form of city governance. In taking this approach, Buenos Aires is striving to meet its

Above

Buenos Aires locals take part in a health station exercise group in a city park

‘IN BUENOS AIRES, WE CONSIDER SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AS A TOOL TO IMPROVE HEALTH, SOCIAL HARMONY AND JOY’

LUIS GUSTAVO LOBO, BUENOS AIRES UNDER SECRETARY FOR SPORT

challenges, improve its practices by learning from those of other cities, share its own experiences and create a framework for incorporating its initiatives into an integrated strategy.

Supported by the city council, one of the first phases was the creation of an Active City Board. Comprising representatives from different sectors (health, sport, transport, education, town planning, nutrition, etc.), the board has set out a roadmap allowing the various stakeholders to coordinate their efforts and develop a cross-disciplinary vision of the whole process. The project has been identified and approved by the city's mayor as being strategically important, with its prime objective being to combat childhood obesity.

The city's Under Secretary for Sport, Luis Gustavo Lobo, a former tennis player and an Olympian, believes the Global Active City project ties in seamlessly with the vision and culture of Buenos Aires. ➤



PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES



“Estaciones Saludables” (health stations)

Found at around 40 strategic city locations, the stations promote healthy lifestyles and raise awareness of non-communicable diseases. Locals can test their blood pressure and glucose levels, get nutritional advice, and sign up for one of the many exercise groups in the city's parks.



“Yo amo mi barrio” (“I love my neighbourhood”)

This volunteer-based project aims to bring different communities together at local sports clubs, joining forces to improve infrastructure and create a shared sense of belonging.

One day a year, volunteers refurbish their club's facilities and equipment, while cultural activities and games are laid on for children.



Polideportivos (sports centres)

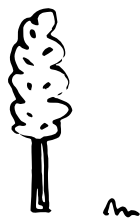
The city has been upgrading its sports centres since 2015. Half of these have now been refurbished, while work on the other half should be completed by the middle of 2018. These centres provide free access to sports facilities and supervised activities for people of all ages. Around 100,000 people use the centres every week.



Juegos Porteños (Buenos Aires Games and summer camps)

The annual Buenos Aires Games comprise competitions for different age groups in 50 sporting disciplines. Held at locations across the city and with more than 10,000 participants, they promote social integration. The city also holds annual summer camps at public sports centres for 20,000 children.

ACTIVE CITIES



“Sport and physical activity are not only a benefit for your body, but an enabler of mental health and social life,” Lobo explains.

“High-level competition helped me to deal with frustration and to remove roadblocks in my daily life. The sport taught me essential values to use outside the tennis courts. In Buenos Aires, we consider sport and physical activity as a tool to improve health, social harmony and joy.”

With the aim of taking a targeted, effective approach and in the absence of hard statistical data, the city council is now looking to gain an understanding of the habits of its citizens, gauge how

much they exercise, and identify and analyse the barriers to playing sport. Aided in this process by Argentinian universities, it also aims to standardise and assess ongoing initiatives and measure their impact on the city’s inhabitants.

The city’s goals are to promote healthy eating habits, amend existing legislation to bring about a culture of change in local communities, and ensure children exercise for at least an hour a day.

The city has launched a number of initiatives in the last few years (see previous page). It is now tapping into the momentum generated by the 2018



THE GOALS ARE TO PROMOTE HEALTHY EATING, BRING ABOUT A CULTURE OF CHANGE IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES, AND ENSURE CHILDREN EXERCISE FOR AT LEAST AN HOUR A DAY

YOG, and the activities resulting from it, to accelerate the transformation of Buenos Aires and link the various initiatives together. A good example of this is the new sports science department set up by the city council to forge stronger ties between sport and health. Its objective is to bring the various stakeholders in the area of health together to enable doctors to prescribe physical activity as a valuable way of improving the population’s well-being.

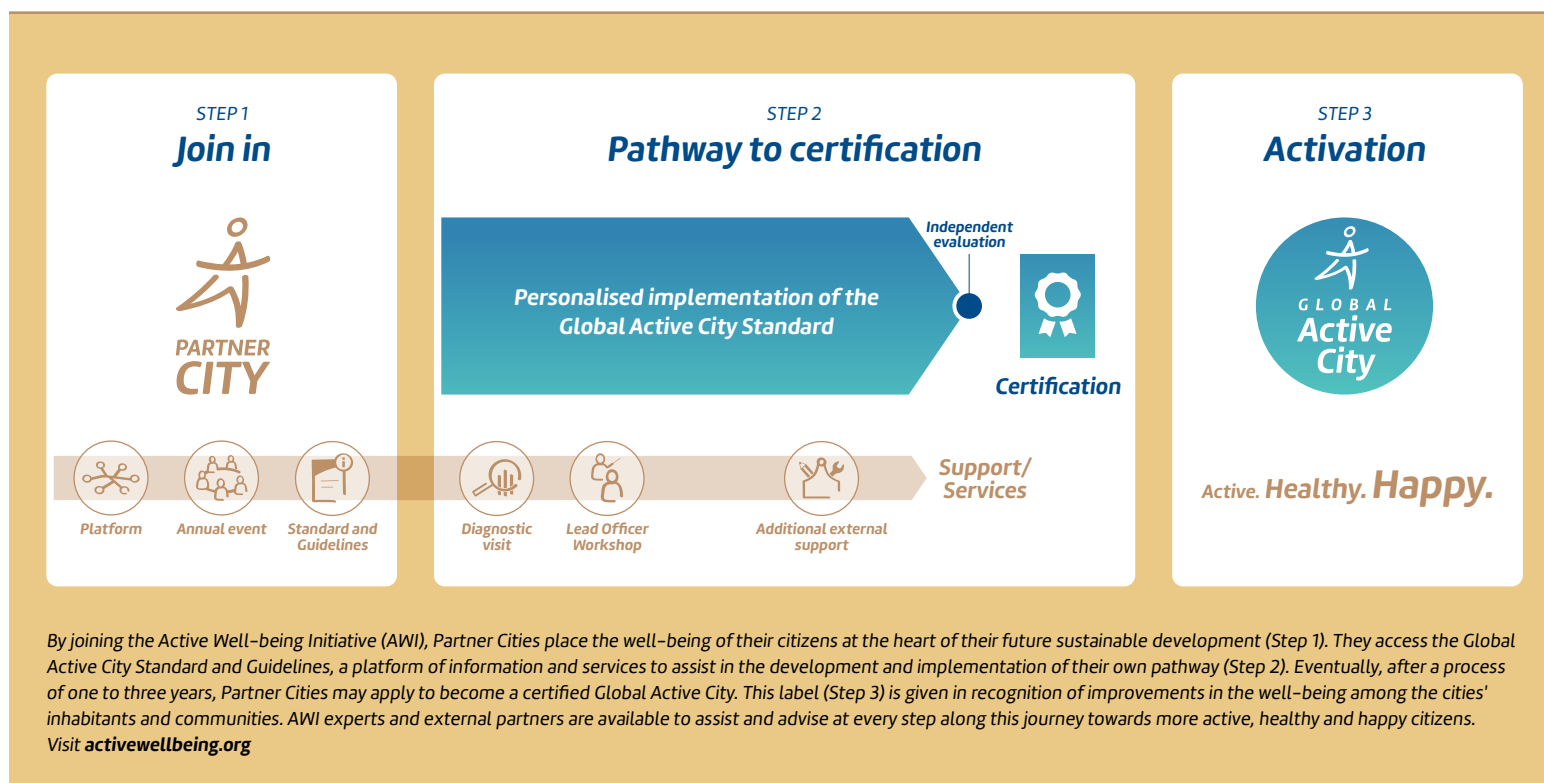
Like Lillehammer, Buenos Aires is a first-class example of a city that has harnessed the potential of an international sporting event such as the YOG to drive the promotion of physical activity, sport and healthier lifestyles.

We will be focusing on one of the other eight pilot cities in our next issue. For more information, contact info@active-cities.org or visit activewellbeing.org





How to become a “Global Active City”



LAUNCH OF THE ACTIVE WELL-BEING INITIATIVE

Organised by the World Union of Olympic Cities (UMVO), in October, the Smart Cities & Sport Summit in Montreal saw the Active Well-being Initiative (AWI) unveil its governance model and visual identity. Based in Lausanne, AWI is a not-for-profit organisation founded by The Association For International Sport for All (TAFISA) and EVALEO, an NGO specialising in the development of well-being and sustainable health. The project is supported by the IOC, with several departments (including Medical and Scientific, Olympic Games, and Sports) having been closely involved in its development.

Through its Global Active City project, AWI offers cities an innovative

governance model developed according to an ISO-compatible standardisation process. It includes the roll-out of a management system founded on physical activity and sport. In meeting the requirements of the Global Active City Standard and showing, documenting and measuring a specified number of good practices, cities can now engage in a certification process that will ultimately lead to the award of the Global Active City label. Guidelines, tools, case studies and compatible modules are also made available to participating cities, which are offered general and more targeted support.

The Global Active City label will be followed by the Global Well-being City

label, which is based on a broader standard encompassing other areas key to individual and collective well-being, such as nutrition, mental health and culture.

Cities faced with demographic growth, an ageing population and ongoing health issues now have access to practical and proven solutions and tools they can use to promote physical exercise and the adoption of healthier lifestyles, leading to enhanced individual and collective well-being. These Global Active Cities will form part of a network through which they can share their best practices and make better use of sporting events to help deliver a sustainable social and human legacy. ■

Opposite

Zumba is a popular physical activity in Buenos Aires

