



THE DECADE TO CHANGE:

Steps to Deliver the 2030 Agenda
for Sustainable Development



#Walk21Ireland | Walk21Ireland.com

Conference Conclusions

The focus of this year's event was on delivering action. COVID responses had proven change could be delivered quickly, with minimum budgets and was valued by communities. Nearly 100 actions were proposed by the Youth Forum to improve walking for people in Ireland. A further 30 were added over the following days to ensure the strategic goals for improving equity, road safety and sustainability could also be delivered through investments in walking anywhere.

Ireland taught us that we need good evidence, policy, and budgets to deliver community walkability but that these are most likely as an outcome of joined up thinking across government departments.

Politicians at a national level, from three different parties, as well as three different Ministries, demonstrated the demand for better walkability is fundamental to life quality and a common goal for better transport, climate, sport and health outcomes. Universities proved valuable too, for upskilling teams, accumulating a library of resources, and making sure government policy is evidence based and able to be evaluated independently for impact.

Countries, like [Scotland](#), reminded us that it can be helpful to fund advocates at a community level to ensure government funding for walking gets spent where it's needed locally. [The Irish Pedestrian Network](#) has the potential for ensuring the detail that is being demanded gets delivered and should inspire other advocate groups to ask. Public transport catchments that are walkable for women; pedestrian crossings that are safe for people with disabilities; and schools that have footpaths connecting to residential areas, are all logical community demands that were highlighted in Ireland and priorities that any country should deliver.

The tenfold increase in the budget for Active Travel (from €30 million to €360 million) at the Department for Transport is a good indication of the scale of investment required for walking from national governments, to deliver the foundation of a sustainable transport paradigm and is an inspiration to other departments and countries.

The 'Decade to Change' theme stressed the urgency to deliver at a pace and in parallel to a change in mindset from designing urban spaces, systems, and networks around cars to people. We were reminded that the shift has been in a generation, to an Ireland where most children are driven to school, students are driving to college; and older people drive to the park to go for a walk. Many, if not most of these trips could easily be walked. What changed and what now needs to change?



THE DECADE TO CHANGE:

Steps to Deliver the 2030 Agenda
for Sustainable Development



#Walk21Ireland | Walk21Ireland.com

To make walking safer, more secure and sustainable and help deliver the Sustainable Development Goal commitments by 2030 the following actions are of specific note from the 130+ listed during the conference:

1. Broaden the view of transport beyond male dominated commuting patterns.
2. Include women of all ages in the planning and design of public space and delivery of infrastructure and public amenities.
3. Empower girls and women to be equal users of public space.
4. Provide more education for boys around women's safety fears and harassment.
5. Invest in walkability to tackle the growth of social violence so that women, children and older people feel welcome in streets and public space.
6. Young people ask especially for: better, wider and more footpaths, more shortcuts, better lighting, more enforcement of traffic speeds, parking on footpaths and design for safety, and more places to go and safe places to hang out.
7. Give priority to pedestrians first as a solution to road danger. Focus on accessibility and permeability, comfort, capacity and maintenance.
8. Manage traffic with legislation, taxation and enforcement, in parallel to making the pedestrian experience better.
9. Invite citizens to map their experiences to understand existing barriers and any differences by income, gender and in rural townlands especially.
10. Legislate rights of way to secure long term community access.

The 2023 conference in Kigali, Rwanda should focus on women and walking; the finance mechanisms for funding investment in walking; and how walkability can support the achievement of the Paris climate goals.