

Who, When, and How?

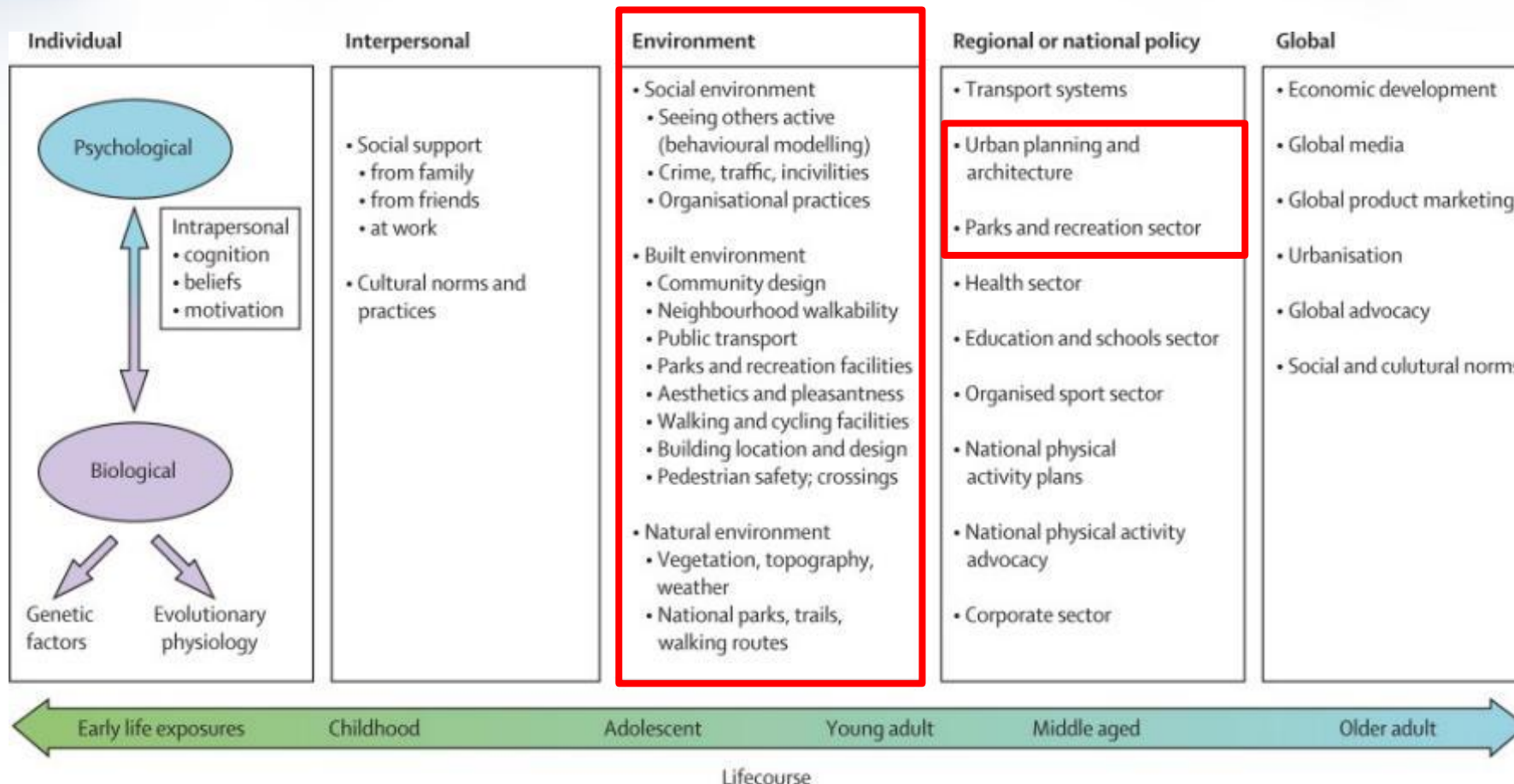
Examining the use of the IPitup® Activity Bench across public open spaces in Leuven, Belgium

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KU LEUVEN

Socio-ecological framework of physical activity behaviour



Public open spaces, such as parks, provide an **ideal setting for promoting physical activity** (Bedimo-Rung et al., 2005)

A potential strategy to encourage more population-based aerobic and resistance training is through the **installation of outdoor fitness equipment** (Jansson et al., 2019)



IPitup® Activity Bench

An **urban sitting furniture** that provides a **wide range of** strength, balance and cardiovascular **exercises**

The main goal of IPitup® is to make it **easier to become physically active in public spaces**, so that it becomes a natural part of daily life again.

>600 IPitup® Activity Benches are currently installed across 13 different countries

(<https://www.ipitup.be/en/references>)



Aim of the study

This study aimed to describe the use (**who, when, how**) of the IPitup® Activity Bench across multiple public open spaces in Leuven, a medium-sized city in central Belgium (population, $n \sim 105,000$)



Methods

- **Observation period:** March-May 2025 (Spring)
- **12 predetermined observation areas** which included the IPitup® Activity Bench and a section of the adjoining walking / cycling paths
- Each location was observed over **one weekday** (Wednesday) and **one weekend day** (Saturday).
- Each day was divided into **4 observation periods**: morning (07:00–09:00), midday (12:00–14:00), afternoon (16:00–18:00), and evening (19:00–21:30)
- **Observation tool:** modified version of the System of Observing Play and Recreation in Communities to assess Resistance Training using outdoor gyms (**SOPARC-RT**) (Jansson et al., J Phys Act Health, 2026).

Methods

Observer name	
Location	
Observation day and date	
Observation period	07:00-09:00 // 12:00-14:00 // 16:00-18:00 // 19:00-21:30

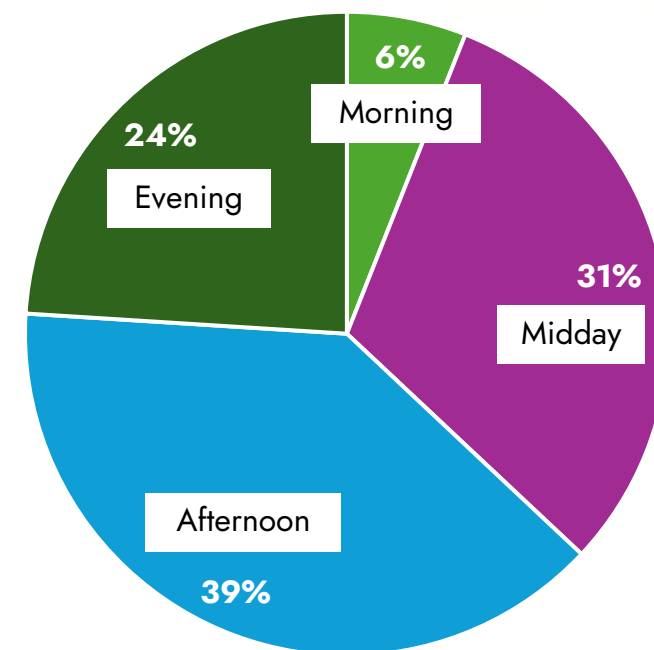
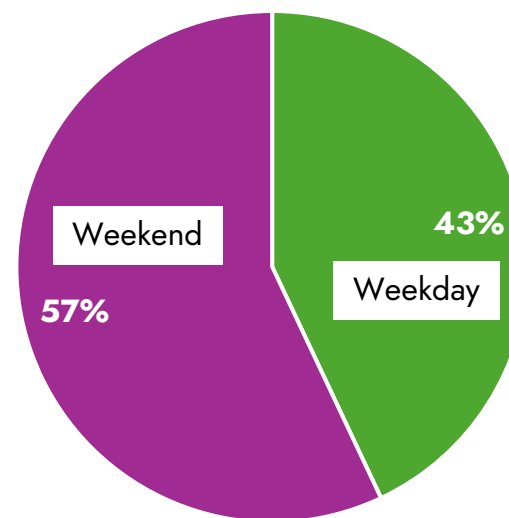
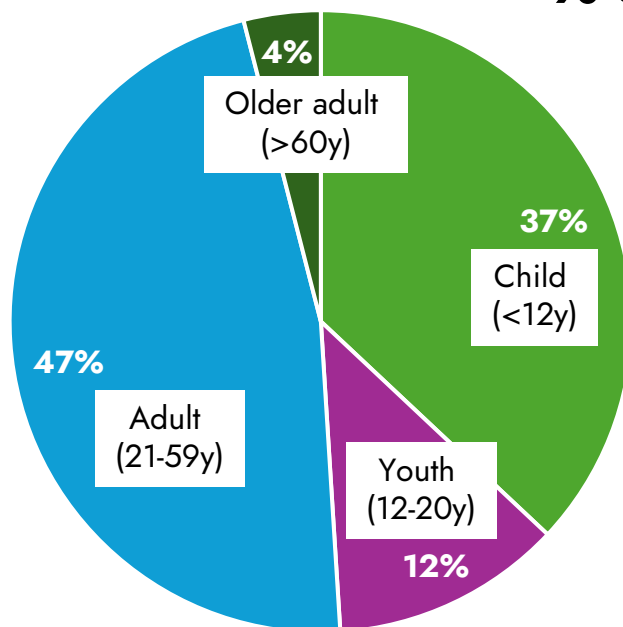
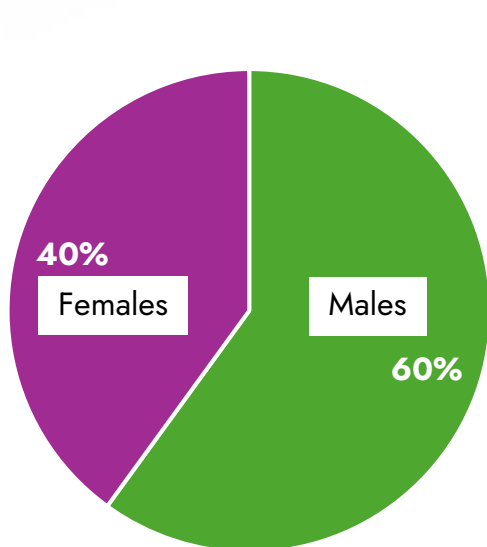
	Child (<12 years)	Youth (12-20 years)	Young-to-middle-aged adult (21-59 years)	Older adult (>60 years)
Moving through the observation target area				

[illegible]

Results

		Leuven (12 locations) 180 hours of observation	
		N	%
Individuals moving through the observation target areas		8196	
Individuals using the IPitup® Activity Bench (mean ± SD duration of use: 12 ± 15 min)		237	2,8%

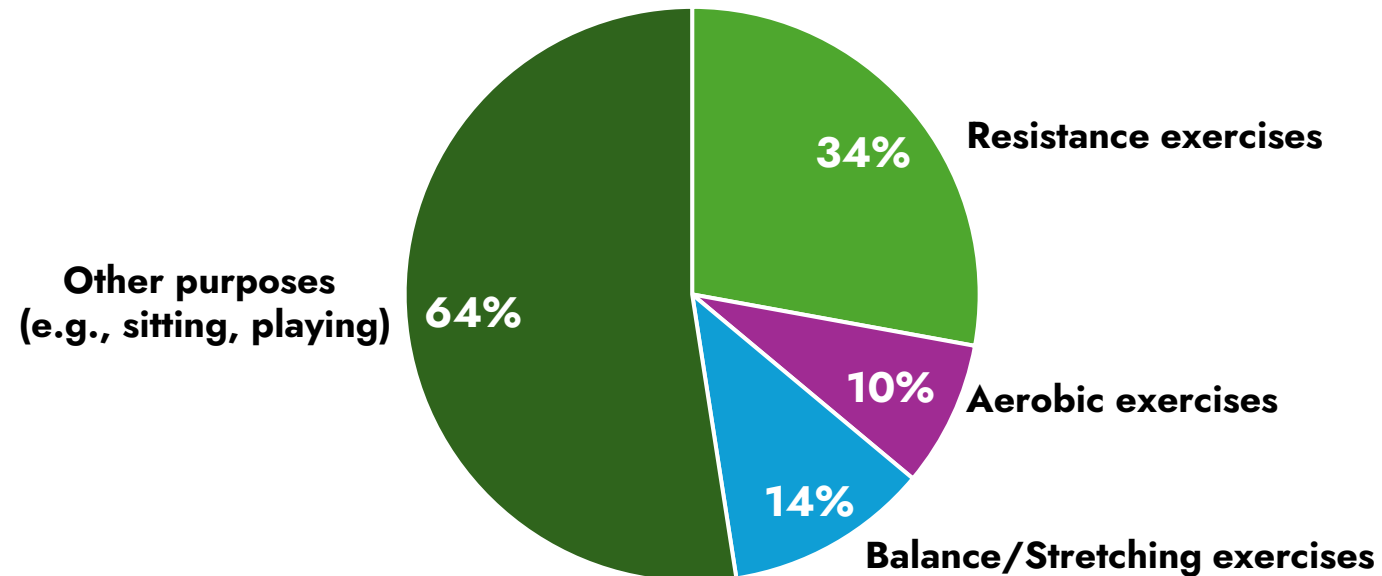
% of users



Results

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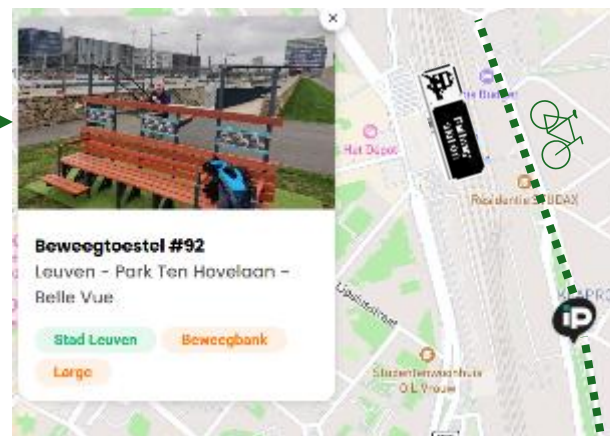
Type of observed use (% users)



Conclusion

High number of individuals moving through the observation target areas (> 8000)

- Benches located **near cycling and walking paths** which creates **visibility**
- Passers-by can easily **observe others using the activity benches**, encouraging **future participation**



Conclusion

- Over the 2-month observation period, **IPitup® Activity Bench** was **used by 237 individuals** (~3% of total observations)
- **Males (60% of users)** were more likely to be observed using the equipment than females (40%) and there were more **young-to-middle-aged adult users (47% of users)** than children (37%), youth (12%) and older adults (4%)



% of use + user characteristics were comparable with ECOFIT studying the use of outdoor gym equipment in New South Wales, Australia (N users = 112; ~3,8% of total observations) (Jansson et al., 2022)

Conclusion

IPitup® Activity Bench **not only used for exercise purposes** (e.g., sitting, playing, climbing) (**~ social health**)



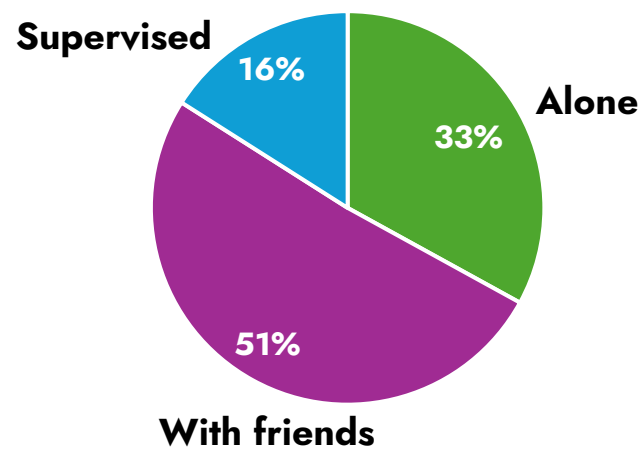
Next steps

Why individuals are using or not using the IPitup® Activity Bench

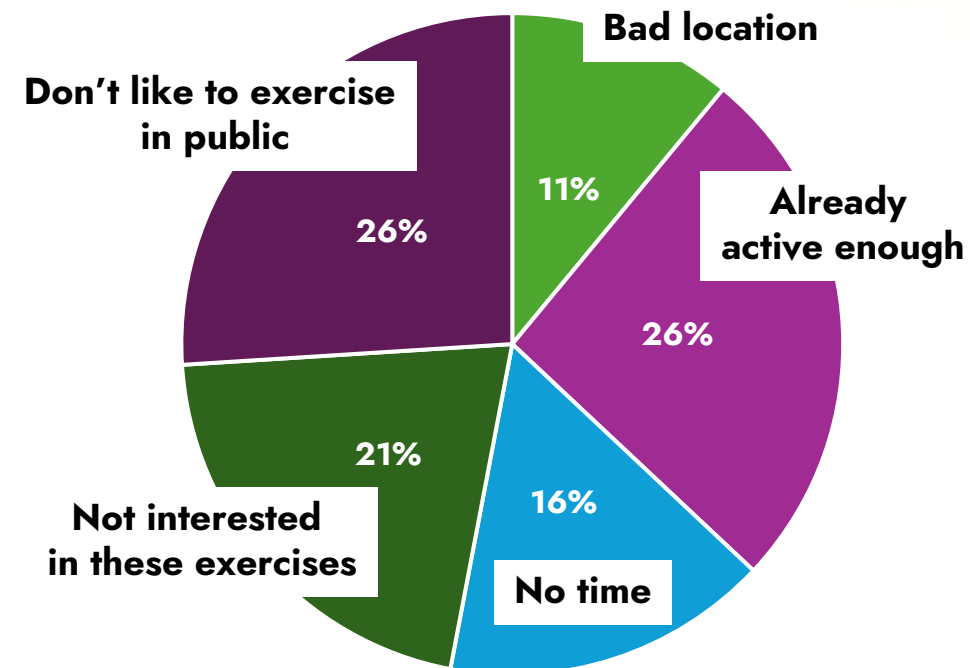


Pilot data in Leuven (~ 2 weeks data collection)
CDK installed at 3 activity benches

With whom? (69 responses)



Why not? (19 responses)

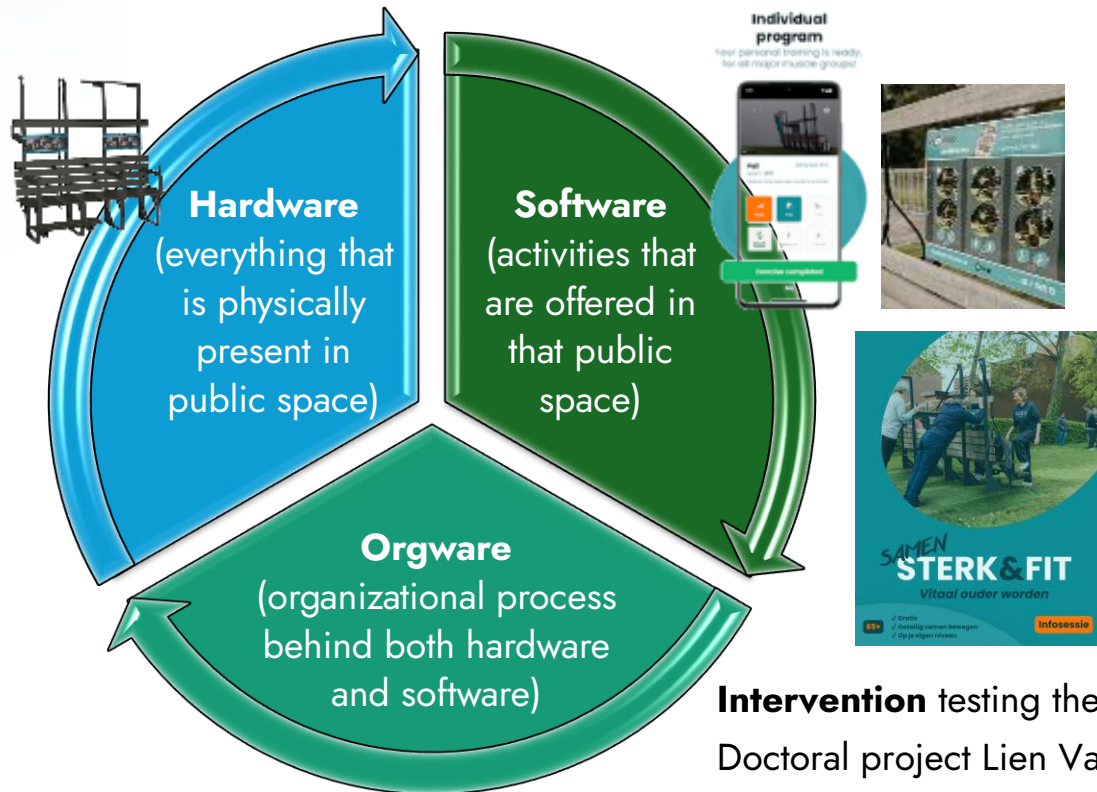


Citizen Dialog Kit (CDK)

a wireless survey kit to gather the **opinions of people**

Next steps

How to increase its (active) use, particularly among older adults?



Intervention testing the effectiveness of **peer-led small group sessions vs. individual use**
Doctoral project Lien Valepyn (KU Leuven, 2025-2029)

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION