SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY IN SANTIAGO
Chile is a country with high level of urbanization: 88%

Its economy has grown constantly during the last 3 decades.

Poverty levels have been significantly reduced.

Source: CASEN 2015
But Chile still needs to confront social inequality issues. The Gini index estimates inequality in Chile to be the worst of the countries in the OECD.
This is Chile, its capital is Santiago
- We are a country of 17 million inhabitants, just under 7 million of whom live in Santiago.

- The city of Santiago is divided into 35 municipalities. Santiago Municipality is the old quarter of the city, its main historical, political and urban center.

- It has 411,000 inhabitants, but an influx of 2 million commutes cross the municipality every day to work, study, buy things, run errands or simply to have fun.
When I was Mayor of the Municipality of Santiago we set to work on the basis of one premise:

The urban center of the Capital of a highly urbanized country with grave social inequality problems must take steps to bring about a more equitable society.
We knew that, in the city of Santiago, people with lower incomes made half of their daily trips on foot, 32% on public transport and only 12% in private cars.

By contrast, 57% of those in the high-income bracket used privately owned cars instead of walking or public transport.
We also knew that commuting on foot, by public transport or by bicycle contributes the most to sustainability:

- It pollutes less
- It's cheaper
- It's healthier
We designed policies that prioritize pedestrians and public transport commuters (who are the vast majority of the population), and promote the bicycle (even if it’s the least used it is still advantageous).

How to approach this?

- Improve infrastructure for prioritized mobility modes
- Redistribute street space
- Quality services and enhancing security for historically unattended modes
- Education to change people’s habits and paradigms
We put into practice the inverted pyramid of mobility in 4 plans:

1. Pedestrians First (Peatón primero)
2. Downtown Plan (Plan Centro)
3. Pro-bike plan (Plan pro-bicicleta)
4. Educational strategy (Estredegia educativa)
1. The Peatón Primero Plan (Pedestrians First Plan) notably improved sidewalks in 4 years, exceeding the investment of entire decades.
Improvements that included:

- pedestrianisation of streets
- inclusive accessibility at crossings
- re-paving of deteriorated sidewalks
- LED street lights
- security cameras
- modernization of the urban cleaning service
- and recovery of sidewalk gardens
2. The “Plan Centro” (City Centre Plan) set out to change the design of downtown’s main streets restricting the circulation of private cars during the daytime.
Thanks to this we were able to reduce road space and gain space for sidewalks by approximately 20%.
We improved public transport stops.

We adopted inclusive accessibility standards.

We introduced LED technology in public lighting.

And took steps towards designing safe public spaces.
In addition to this, Plan Centro covered several measures in favor of sustainable public transport:

- Increasing reserved road lanes for public transport
- Pilot plans to promote electric mobility in buses and taxis
- And free system of electric tricycle taxis
3. Our “Plan Pro-Bicileta” (Pro Bike Plan) sought to install the use of bikes as a valid mean of transport and not as just a leisure or sports activity.

A standard for bicycle lanes was designed by the municipality. Later the whole country adopted the same model.
A network of interlinked bike lanes was implemented. In 4 years we managed to double the existing cycle path network.
A public bicycle system coordinated with 14 municipalities was established.

Financing of such programs depended largely on advertising. The poorest municipalities are not attractive to advertisers, therefore, the 2 boroughs that were profitable for sponsors, Santiago was one of them, agreed to participate on condition that the system be extended to include lower-income boroughs. After a year of negotiation, we were able to establish an intermunicipal and socially inclusive system.
4. Finally, an educational strategy was adopted set upon the assumption that sustainable mobility is only possible if we change the cultural paradigm.

Our message was that the car, as a symbol of success and object of desire, should be replaced for the dream of an integrated city.
A private car whizzing through the streets is totally disconnected from its surroundings.
That fantasy needs to be overcome...

By a vision of intermodality, with moderated speeds.

Considering coexistence, inclusion, safety and empathy.

Thinking in diversity of people, with different needs.

Focusing on children, because a city that is good for kids, will be good for everybody.
We started off by educating children through different initiatives in schools, playschools and neighbourhoods.

The objective was to teach kids to be intermodal citizens and to feel enthusiastic about it.
At the same time we devised an awareness campaign for adults about coexistence in streets.
In a nutshell:
There was a lot of resistance and criticisms from multiple fronts. Despite this, we were able to make the necessary changes and the fruit of our labor was quickly noticed.

In a short span of four years:
• The travel times of public transport in the intervened areas with the Plan Centro were reduced by 50%.
• The circulation of pedestrians in those same streets doubled.
• Traffic accidents decreased by 45% in the area.
• The use of the bicycle increased by more than 300% in four years in our Municipality. Today, in the city of Santiago 7% of trips are on bike.
And even though there was a change in the municipal administration, and the momentum of these policies isn’t the same anymore, there are signs that sustainable mobility is appreciated not only in Santiago but in the whole country.

2 signs:

1.- Recently, Congress rejected a bill that lowered urban speed limits (from 60 to 50km/h), but citizen complaints made congress and the executive reconsider this decision.
2.- In the heart of Santiago the current municipal administration built a pedestrian promenade conceived as a transitory intervention. Its unexpected success is making the authorities seriously evaluate its continuity.
In conclusion, the move towards sustainable mobility is not a cosmetic change or a technical nuance, it is a considerable political transformation.

To make that transformation possible, the greatest strength of sustainable mobility is that as it generates less pollution, more savings and better health, it creates a virtuous circle that foments greater social equality.
The main requirement is a change of the current paradigm, a cultural leap that installs a dream of a city different from the one we have become accustomed far too long.
Therefore, when we cannot do everything, when we cannot move fast, when we do not have resources or time, we must prioritize. Prioritizing children is the best way to ensure that this paradigm shift will be a reality.
THE END