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Cycling Embassy of Denmark

Secretariat for The Cycling Embassy Of Denmark
Rømersgade 5
1362 København K
Phone (+45) 40 70 83 77
Email - info@cycling-embassy.org

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School Pupils as Ambassadors of Cycling

Rune Monberg Dalhof | September 22, 2015

With the participation of pupils this project is striving to improve the [Cookies Policy](#) cyclists in

their daily commute to school. With a strong focus on participatory democracy, the school has derived a comprehensive plan to make the young ones feel safer when biking to school.



Children should feel safe enough to cycle to school. Photo: Mikkel Østergaard

Pupils Working for Safer Bike Conditions

At Skårup School, there is a persistent challenge for the kids arriving at school in the morning. And it is not only because they are tired due to lack of sleep. It is the fact that many parents drive their kids to school, dropping them off at the street in front of the school, resulting in many of the school's cyclists feeling insecure.

A project funded by The Danish Road Directorate's Cycle Fund explores how pupils can act as "ambassadors" for a safer environment for cyclists in traffic. Pupils are actively involved in the project, and their job is to initiate campaigns and come up with creative solutions. In turn, Trafik i Børnehøjde determines the solutions based on our knowledge and competencies regarding traffic issues.

Trafik i Børnehøjde has hosted three workshops with the Pupil Council. As the project is rolled out, the work of the pupils is gradually related to different aspects of the teaching. Towards the end of the project, pupils who participate will be certified as Cycling Ambassadors as a reward for their contribution.

Project Gives Birth to New Solutions

To trigger a constructive dialogue with the people involved, Trafik I Børnehøjde applied what they call an "interim solution"; a traffic construction that can take shape in a traditional form or in more unconventional manner (see photos). Thus, the role of Trafik I Børnehøjde is to take the users' inputs into consideration, set the framework and develop the physical elements in traffic installation in collaboration with pupils, teachers and the children's parents.



Traditional construction: A road chicane to prevent cars from driving fast. Photo: Johan Heichelmann

“Interim solutions” are deployed to test if the installation is efficient in solving a given problem before eventually deciding whether a permanent solution is desirable. In combination with the inclusion of the pupils in the project, the campaign also becomes a physical expression of pupils’ creativity and ideas.

As part of the solution, the Pupil Council has worked with a campaign aiming at encouraging more schoolboys and schoolgirls to bike to school. The pupils have made a slogan for a sticker that has been handed out at the school. On the day when the campaign was launched, the road surrounding the school was closed off and used for a “bicycle-happening”.

“Kids School Track”

At Skårup School the Pupil Council came to the conclusion that parents ought to drop off their kids further away from the school. This would make it more accessible for cyclists to get to school.

In collaboration with the pupils, they developed two “Kids School Track” with drop offs where the older pupils came to pick up the younger ones. The younger pupils painted hens on stones and crocodiles on wood used for the track to make it more fun to walk on.

This was an idea from the Pupil Council, who believed that if the tracks were entertaining to use, pupils would ask their parents to drop them off at these designated tracks, hence leaving more room close to the school for the pupils who arrived by bike.



Unconventional construction: An example of a “Kids School Track”.

Photo: Johan Heichelmann

Benefits from Involving Pupils

There is a prejudice that pupils cannot be integrated in projects carried out by adults. However, Trafik i Børnehøjde’s project at Skårup School has shown that pupils are capable of changing the transport habits of the pupils’ parents, a habit many adults have attempted to change rather unsuccessfully.

The project has been successful because the school has gradually taken ownership of the project and developed new activities that have been initiated after the summer holiday. Furthermore, the school will rearrange the “Kids School Tracks” with new routes every second year.

Based on questionnaires and traffic counts, the project triggered a significant increase in the amount of bikes and a decreasing use of cars as a mean of transportation to and from school. Naturally, the number of cyclists falls between summer and winter. In addition, people tend to fall back into old habits. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that the school takes full ownership of the project and continues to develop new measures to encourage the pupils to bike to school.

DIY

As part of the appropriation from the Cycle Fund, Trafik I Børnehøjde will release an e-book with a detailed guide of their method. The point is that there isn’t a “one-size-fits-all” method, but appropriate solutions are developed in collaboration with the users. The e-book will consist of three projects carried out as a source of inspiration for other schools.

So far, the project indicates that it is crucial that project managers have pedagogical competencies to successfully gain confidence and trust from pupils, teachers and managerial staff. Furthermore, the frontrunners of a project need to be connected to a technical administration unit to take care of the traffic installations.

Written by Johan Heichelmann. Translation by Rune Monberg Dalhof



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Publications



New guidelines "Cities Safer by Design"

The WRI Ross Center for Sustainable Cities, and its EMBARQ sustainable mobility initiative recently published its new guidelines "Cities Safer by Design." This report provides key design principles for cities to make street safer. The publication was qualified during EMBARQ's participation in the Cycling Embassy of Denmark's "Bikeable City Masterclass."

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Mai-Britt Kristensen | August 13, 2015

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New Bicycle Account from Copenhagen

The Municipality of Copenhagen have published their new bicycle account for 2013-2014, and it shows positive results. Almost 50% of those who work or study in Copenhagen arrive by bike.

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Christian Tang Jensen | May 6, 2015



Danish Regional Bicycle Account Now Available in English

The Capital Region of Denmark has made the world's first ever regional bicycle account. 1 in 5 trips is carried out by bicycle, but there are huge differences in cycling mode-share between the city, the suburbs and greater suburbs municipalities. Cycling means fewer sick days The account is based on counting's from 2007 to 2012 [...]

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