Higher Fuel Taxes or Friendly Persuasion

How to Influence the Environmental Thinking and Behaviour of Car Drivers

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Shall it be necessary to use centralised economic, technical and administrative control instruments in order to make traffic environmentally sound and sustainable in the long term? Or is it possible to use information and education as a means of control at the grassroots level to achieve changes in travel habits and travel patterns?

These questions will be addressed in this paper.

The point of departure is a project in progress designated "Environmentally adapted traffic in Vetlanda” which the Swedish National Road Administration (SNRA) is conducting in association with the relevant municipal authorities. This paper is not an evaluation of the project (which will be published in the autumn of 2000 after the completion of the project). Rather, it is

• a description of the fundamental ideas in the project
• an analysis of a process that is based partially on interim evaluations and reports already published (Linderholm 1998, Odelberg 1998 and Jarlbro 1999), as well as the authors’ own experience within the project in their respective capacities as SNRA project manager and expert methodology advisor.

1. The problem – general background

Both Parliament and the Swedish Government have pointed out the direction: society shall develop on a course of long-term sustainability and become more economically, ecologically and socially sound. This goal applies to all sectors of society, including the road transport sector. Today’s road transport system is not sustainable, at least not from an ecological perspective (Swedish National Road Administration, Government Bill 1997/98:56).

The question is whether it is developing in the right direction and at a fast enough pace.

The SNRA has been commissioned by the Government and Parliament to ensure that the road transport system develops in the right direction and at such a speed that we can attain the interim goals adopted in such areas as the environment, for instance (Government Bill 1995/96:131).

What are the SNRA’s possibilities for achieving this? Although the SNRA is indisputably a large public body with solid resources at its disposal, its authority is nevertheless limited to making decisions on 100 000 kilometres of state roads, including how they are constructed and maintained and to a certain extent on the terms on which they are used by traffic.

Despite this, the SNRA cannot, and should not make decisions concerning which modes of transport people are to use, how often they may travel or which roads they may use. Neither can or should the Administration make decisions concerning vehicle design or the fuels that are to be used. All this is determined through individual decisions by road-users and the business community within the framework of a democratically adopted transport policy (Berndtsson 1995).

All the same, it is the sum of these very decisions that determine the environmental situation that will prevail within the road transport system. How then can we influence these decisions?

Basically there are three ways to influence the environmental impact of the road transport system:
• We can use technological developments to improve the system’s environmental characteristics.
• We can travel less often.
• We can travel in a more ingenious way.

We know that it often takes time before technological developments yield results. It will take ten to twenty years before today’s new technology has an impact on the market. Completely irrespective of how well new, more environmentally-sound ways of transportation are developed, the transport system we have today will basically continue to exist for the next thirty years, both in Sweden as well as in the rest of the world. Cars with combustion engines run on fossil fuels will dominate road traffic during that time period (Swedish National Road Administration, 1995). However, it is already possible for us today to travel in a more ingenious way and perhaps travel less (Berndtsson, A & Hedenblad, A 1996). This is exactly what the Vetlanda project is all about: persuading people to travel in a more ingenious way and less often.

Is this possible? How can this be done? How expensive would it be? How efficient is it? And how much better would it be for the environment? Now that we are facing having to make decisions concerning strategical choices about the means of control to employ and the measures suitable, we ought to have answers to as many of these questions as possible.

All aspects of the environmental impact of road traffic are the result of individual or collective decisions made by people. This concerns how we design, develop and build up the road transport system and its components: vehicles, fuels, roads and ultimately our entire society. It is also a matter of how we use this system: choice of destination, mode of travel, type of vehicle and fuel, how we drive vehicles and how we look after them. Basically, it is our own ideas, knowledge, desires and possibilities that form the decisions and determine the environmental impact (Berndtsson 1995). Accordingly, the individual person him/herself should be at least as important a target for change as vehicles, tools, roads and traffic are. However, our knowledge about how this is done is limited, and decision-makers show even less confidence that it is possible.

This project is also an attempt to find out what can be achieved through appealing to people’s good will.

1.1 The Vetlanda project

In Vetlanda, the last two years have witnessed an attempt to reduce the environmental impact of traffic through primarily communicative means of control. The fundamental idea is that all road-users can do something to contribute. In every situation and when making every decision it is possible to choose an environmentally better alternative, which does not necessarily have to mean any major sacrifice.

Quite naturally, the potential for an individual municipality to deviate from the national transport pattern is very limited. Nonetheless, through creating an understanding about the environmental problems relating to transportation and describing how this can be dealt with, a municipality can be a driving force in the development of an ecologically sustainable society. This is the basis for the project entitled "Environmentally adapted traffic in Vetlanda". The idea behind the project is to conduct a dialogue with the inhabitants in the municipality in order to influence their ideas, at-
titudes, intentions and behaviour, and thereby induce them to choose more environmentally-friendly means of transportation that consume less energy.

The SNRA chose to implement this joint project in Vetlanda for several reasons:

- Vetlanda is quite a normal municipality without any tangible local environmental problems as a result of road traffic. Thus it should be feasible to transfer both the methods used and conclusions drawn to several other municipalities.

- The municipality is just large enough (about 28,000 inhabitants) to make it possible to focus on the environmental problems emanating from road traffic and gain the public attention needed for the project to be successful.

- Vetlanda is a relatively stable municipality that is easy to get an overall picture of, and has an abundance of active recreational clubs and community associations.

- Last but not least, there exists a political interest and desire to support the project and its objectives.

2. Choice of strategy

There are really only two fundamental communication strategies – carpet bombing and organic growth.

Carpet bombing entails bombarding the target group with simple messages conveyed via the mass media for a relatively short and intensive period lasting from between a few weeks and a few months. This strategy is based on American social psychology theories dating from the 1960’s and 70’s (Palm 1994). The task of the public relations officer is to find the optimal media mixture and to make the wording of the message as pregnant and focused as possible. Where successful, the effect will be a rapid increase in the desired behaviour, but also a rapid reversion to almost the same original position.

Organic growth presumes another time perspective – years rather than weeks or months – and is based on interpersonal communication rather than mass communication. The theories behind this strategy are primarily the theory of diffusion (Rogers 1995) and the theory of social learning (Bandura 1986). Both these theories are based on the premise that human beings primarily let themselves be influenced by what other people do – not what they say. The task for the public relations officer is to identify exemplary models and ensure that information about these is spread quickly within the target groups. Instead of being instantaneously rewarding, the desired change is more of a delayed reaction that in extremely successful cases is exponential.

Advertising agencies are specialists in the carpet bombing strategy, partially due to the background and education of their staff, and partially due to the fact that most of their assignments concern market communication, which presupposes this strategy.
2.1 Organic growth

Organic growth is particularly suitable for non-commercial communication. One prerequisite for organic growth as a strategy is that the project management is well-informed about how society – and the local community in particular – is structured and functions, not only in theory but also in practice. Those with this proficiency include not only social scientists such as sociologists, political scientists, etc, but also what could be called ”community specialists”, such as social workers, community nurses, local journalists, municipal civil servants, school directors, leaders of local clubs and associations and community police. These professionals are therefore often more qualified than those with a strictly public relations or marketing background to carry out organic growth projects.

It must be pointed out that it is very seldom that either of these aforementioned types of strategy are applied exclusively. Carpet bombing projects contain elements of interpersonal communication such as through the actions of the “salesman”, and organic growth projects are more effective if they are given support in the mass media at crucial points. Hence, public relations officers also have a part to play (although perhaps not as large as they would like to believe) in projects that are primarily based on personal persuasion.

2.2 Community intervention projects

There are different kinds of organic growth projects all with different appellations. There is no generally accepted terminology for one or the other type of project. The term within the field of communications science that comes closest is community intervention.

Community intervention means, in short, that both existing formal and informal networks within a region or a municipality are used for the purpose of the project as well as newly created constellations.

A distinction is usually made between three different kinds of community intervention (Rothman 1995): locality development, social planning/policy and social action. The SNRA project in Vetlanda comes closest to locality development.

The most well-known international example of this kind of project is the Nord Karelen project in Finland which aimed at influencing the dietary and exercise habits of the local inhabitants in order to reduce mortality rates caused by cardiovascular disease (Backer, T E, Rogers E M & Sopory, P 1992). Swedish examples of locality development projects are the Norsjö project, the aim of which was similar to that of the Nord Karelen project, and the Gotland project, which focused on abortion prevention (Palm 1994). Information expertise did not play a prominent role in either of these projects, but they were successful nevertheless.

2.3 Locality development projects and social marketing

Locality development is not an unequivocally obvious strategy for attaining the goals in the Vetlanda project. In all likelihood, the carpet bombing strategy would have been chosen five to ten
years ago. This might have been more effective, but since we do not have the key, the answer will always elude us.

However, as far as social marketing is concerned, – road safety, public health, the environment, emergency and disaster prevention, etc – the trend over the past few years has been an increase in projects based on personal persuasion through formal and informal local community groups at the expense of carpet bombing projects.

2.4 Actors and stakeholders

That which characterises a carpet bombing project is one-sided target group thinking. All communication is on the terms of the sender.

There must be target groups in locality development projects as well, but there must also be groups that are defined and treated as actors and stakeholders.

Actors are bodies that work to create opinion regarding the subject at hand. Important questions from the actor perspective concern how different groups act to mould opinion in order to achieve their objectives, and which groups work in partnership and which are at counter purposes. (Palm, L & Windahl, S 1996) From this perspective, the SNRA and Vetlanda municipality represent two of many actors.

The actor perspective is of major significance in the Vetlanda project. The issue addressed in the project is not uncontroversial, and at the national level there is hard opposition between the National Environmental Protection Agency and the environmental movement on the one hand and the Swedish Road Federation, the Association of Swedish Automobile Manufacturers and Wholesalers, the Swedish Petroleum Institute and the automobile organisations on the other concerning the environmental adaptation of traffic. There has been no such opposition in Vetlanda due to the fact that the groups that could have been assumed to object to the message in the project (taxi companies, automobile associations, car dealers, city merchants, etc) were won over at an early stage as collaborators in the project.

Stakeholders are groups that consider they have a right to engage in a dialogue with those running the project. Important questions from the stakeholder perspective concern their conception of the motives, competence and plans at the SNRA and Vetlanda Municipality, and the extent to which these motives, competence and plans coincide with their own. Emphasis is placed on satisfying the need for information rather than on producing an impact through information. The SNRA and Vetlanda Municipality on the one hand and the different stakeholders on the other are basically seen as equal parts in the communication process.

The stakeholder perspective has also been taken into consideration through contacting people through organised groups such as sports clubs, non-profit making and religious organisations, adult education organisations, trade-unions and at companies and businessmen associations.

The communication has thus been more symmetrical, with an emphasis on dialogue, than if every individual in these groups had been contacted individually (Grunig, J.E. 1992). These activities have also proven successful. Nonetheless, there probably is still a great latent potential left within associations and companies which could be cultivated in the future, depending on staff resources available within the project group.
3. Objectives and target group analysis

A careful analysis of the objectives and target groups increases the probability of the project succeeding and leads to better cost-effectiveness.

A rough analysis, which has implicitly guided the course of the project, and which could be refined even further, is as follows.

Figure 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavioural objectives</th>
<th>Target groups</th>
<th>More carpooling to work and recreational activities</th>
<th>Bicycle, bus etc instead of car for work-related and recreational journeys</th>
<th>&quot;Thrifty&quot; driving</th>
<th>Fine-tuning of vehicles</th>
<th>Subscribe to environmental declarations, secure environmentally friendly procurements</th>
<th>Active participation in discussions on the various interim goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Long distance car commuters at major places of employment</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short distance car commuters at major places of employment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Parents of young children engaged in sports activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Motor vehicle enthusiasts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Businessmen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Opinion makers</td>
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</table>
4. Communication objectives

Communication objectives in such a locality development project should be achieved in the following order:

1. Road-users are made aware of the purpose and principle ideas of the campaign.
2. They learn why (environmental reasons, private finances) to change their behaviour and thereby develop a positive attitude to environmentally adapted traffic.
3. The exemplary behaviour of individuals and groups is used to influence the intention of road-users to change their travel behaviour.
4. Behavioural changes are triggered through HOW information. (Palm 1994)

This order does not necessarily mean that the next communication objective may not be introduced before the foregoing one has been achieved. It is more a case of the relative significance between the objectives changing as the campaign progresses. It can be necessary to bring the awareness objective to the fore again a couple of times during the course of a multi-year campaign.

Figure 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Early stage</th>
<th>Later stage</th>
<th>Late stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Awareness objective</strong></td>
<td>Very highly important</td>
<td>Quite important</td>
<td>Less important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge and attitude objective</strong></td>
<td>Less important</td>
<td>Highly important</td>
<td>Less important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intention objective</strong></td>
<td>Less important</td>
<td>Very highly important</td>
<td>Highly important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Triggering objective</strong></td>
<td>Less important</td>
<td>Quite important</td>
<td>Very highly important</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The potential within the Vetlanda project is that the longer the project is in progress, the greater the chances that the intention and triggering objectives will be achieved.
4.1 Adapting the message to the situation and target group

Initially, the communication in the project dealt a lot with WHAT and WHY. Since the autumn of 1997 there has been a greater opportunity to work with exemplary models, which has meant being able to start achieving the intention objective in earnest.

The kind of information that has the greatest chance of catching the interest of the target groups and influencing their behaviour is that which is based on their daily transportation problems. WHY should not only deal with better air and less carbon dioxide; it should also deal with better general health and better private finances, preferably expressed in monetary terms. If engine service reduces fuel consumption by 5-10%, this means a savings of between SEK 600 and 1200 for someone who drives 15,000 kilometres per year. The same reasoning can be applied as far as a conservative style of driving and engine heaters are concerned.

That cycling is less expensive than driving a car is well known. However, perhaps it is not as well known just how much is saved by cycling between home and work, or how many kilograms of emissions are lost through replacing the car with a bicycle for a three-month period.

It is also important to remember that the decision one is trying to elicit from the target groups should not be a once and for all transition to a new mode of transportation, but rather a decision to at least try it once.

Most people have a strong mental block against trying something new. This opposition must be won over, both through the new behaviour being as simple as possible, and more so that it is presented as being as simple as possible.

4.2 Correct mixture of factual and emotional arguments

It can be tempting for anyone who is knowledgeable and involved in environmental issues to over emphasise the factual arguments. The following explains the risk in this.

- An effective argument that can be used in favour of an environmental adaptation of traffic concerns the short-term impact on health. Fortunately, air pollution is not a problem in Vetlanda. The short-term negative impact on flora and fauna is also rare, if not to say non-existent. The strongest arguments at the expert level address the long-term impact, such as the greenhouse effect. However, the reasoning around this is often too academic and abstract to arouse deep commitment.

- Anyone against the project can steer the discussion towards statistical arguments and keep it there through questioning "what does it matter what we do in Vetlanda (Småland, Sweden) when emissions in Germany, Poland, USA, Asia, etc are a million times greater?" The environmental aspects end up in a stalemate of entrenched opinions.
Arguments that deal with important values – primarily a sense of individual responsibility – should be stressed instead. The strongest argument is that “Somebody has to start – we all cannot wait until someone else takes the initiative”.

Needless to say, arguments focusing on the individual’s financial situation are also effective. An environmentally-aware type of behaviour generally goes hand in glove with cost awareness, and it is most likely that the cost factor means more to most people than the environmental factor.

5. Work at the local level

The project is run in Vetlanda under the leadership of a project manager who has been assisted by a fluctuating number of colleagues employed short-term and some 80 “resource persons”, i.e., people at their places of work, active in various organisations, etc.

Work on the project has been carried out as an integral part of the municipality’s Local Agenda 21 programme. A project group has been created to manage and direct the project and consists of representatives from the SNRA, the municipality, the local business community and the local environmental movement.

The main task of the resource persons has been to involve members in their own network. It could be said that the resource persons are the real nucleus of the project: an environmentally interested employee of a company or member of an association in the community or someone else who otherwise believes in working for increased environmental thinking. The resource persons are thus a kind of environmental ambassador and a link between the project and the company or association. Resource persons have been given the opportunity to attend the project group’s information meetings, but without the right to vote. Many resource persons have also been active in all the different sub-projects that have been conducted within the Vetlanda project.

The project has developed in several stages.

- **The first period**, November 1996 until April 1997 was largely devoted to building up a project organisation and planning the work in the local community. Contacts were made with resource persons, ideas for the project were collected, goals and objectives were set up and baseline studies were conducted. The evaluation of the results was later analysed in relation to these baseline studies.

- **The second period**, from the inauguration of the project in April until the onset of autumn, was the time when the project was brought to public notice and marketed. This was done through the press, radio and television, information meetings, exhibitions and special events such as farmers fairs, etc.

- **The third period** included more concrete co-operation between the project and other organisations. This aspect became increasingly important during the autumn of 1997 and has come to dominate the project more and more. During the first year, a total of some thirty activities and sub-projects were conducted, involving different networks in Vetlanda municipality.
• **In the fourth period**, which started in 1998, bicycle activities were arranged in co-operation with different places of work in the municipality and a public health project "health pedalers" was launched, in partial co-operation with the local newspaper, the “Vetlanda Post”. During 1998, the project was featured in 15 promotional articles. (Jarlbro 1999).

6. Interim results

After the first year, the project had become established and a project organisation set up. The project became known in Vetlanda municipality. Two-thirds of the inhabitants were aware of its existence after six months of overt activity, and equally as many thought that the project was important for Vetlanda, and that the project funds were used sensibly.

Travel habits changed as well. Cycling in the municipality increased by almost 5%. Trips to and from work were divided between many different travel modes; i.e., there was less of a dominant mode of travel. However, the most obvious result was the increase in public transport passengers. (Linderholm 1998)

- The percentage of those who often travel by bus increased from 39% to 50%.
- The percentage of those who often cycle increased from 13% to 16%.
- The percentage of those who often carpool increased from 43% to 50%.
- The percentage of those who often take their own car decreased from 14% to 10%.

An evaluation of the activities in 1998 is being conducted.

7. Conclusions and knowledge gained

The initial contact with Vetlanda municipality was made in 1995 when the project was presented to the municipal planning committee. In 1996 a contract was signed with the Municipality and Lund University and by the autumn the project was launched. It has now been in action for two and a half years. Getting people to change their travel habits takes time. Our conclusion is that it is possible to persuade people to travel more intelligently – and that the change implied is environmentally beneficial. In order to succeed, there are a few things that should be thought about:

7.1. Meet people on their own ground

The attempts made to attract people to information meetings, exhibits, courses on road traffic and the environment were only moderately successful. On the other hand, the result was much more successful when the work related to the environmental problems associated with road traffic was linked to people’s own work and recreational activities.
7.2. Win the easiest conquests first

It is those who are most motivated who will set the good examples. Working with them at the beginning sets the project off to a good start. Aiming the work at the greatest problems and at those least interested can be exciting, but also fatiguing. Success is needed in order to be able to cope with adversity.

7.3 Bring the subject to the fore

An environmentally adapted transport system is as little a ”sexy” subject as road safety. It is abstract and difficult to give concrete shape to and has little relevance to the individual. The environmental impact of an individual’s behaviour is not felt personally and lies in the remote future. For those people who are not particularly committed to environmental issues from the outset, the economic gains acquired from their behaviour in traffic is more interesting than the environmental impact.

Within the mixture of mass communication and personal influence that comprises the Vetlanda project, mass communication has its primary justification during the introductory phase of the project when it is a matter of bringing the subject to the fore and making it seem interesting.

There were insufficient funds in the Vetlanda project to allow for traditional publicity in the form of billboards, advertisements, etc. Moreover, it is doubtful whether this would have been cost-effective.

Publicity in the local media, primarily in the local newspaper and via regional television and local radio was relied on. The publicity was extensive, but given at random, which has meant that the process perspective has been less clear to the mass media consumer. The more continuous coverage by the local newspaper in particular, could at least describe the project as an on-going tale, describing its successes and setbacks, ups and downs, struggles and intentions.

7.4 Avoid moralising ”us-and-them” attitudes

A pervading theme in the project has been that ”everyone can take part”. Even small changes in behaviour are worthwhile – for example it is not necessary to park the car for good, but carpool at least some times during the week, and on a bright and sunny Saturday walk to the town centre if it isn’t too far away, or at least give public transport a try, etc.

Vetlanda is the largest municipality in Småland, at least geographically, and many of those living there are dependent on their cars for getting to work or their recreational activities. One cannot reasonably expect them to cycle dozens of kilometres or wait hours for local buses. However, what they could do is maintain and drive their vehicles in an environmentally-sound way.

One valuable element in the campaign has been the availability of advice, presented as printed pamphlets as well as in talks given at public meetings by a motor magazine journalist, ”the car doctor”, explaining to motorists about how they could reduce their fuel consumption through
proper engine service, by avoiding erratic speeds when driving and, in certain cases, by choosing more environmentally-friendly kinds of fuel, etc.

Apart from the purely pedagogical effect, the activities conducted by the "car doctor" have tacitly implied that it is legitimate to drive a car and that motorists are also part of the project.

One interesting piece of evidence confirming this is the environmental declarations signed by several enterprisers, mostly owners of small businesses. Just as the motivation of private individuals to act environmentally responsibly is stimulated by economical arguments, the motivation of companies is fostered by good will arguments.

7.5 Encourage opinion leaders to communicate with others

The major portion of the financial resources for a campaign like this one must be put into teaching, activating and motivating opinion leaders and those who set the good examples.

It proved to be remarkably easy to get people to volunteer as resource persons. Those who were approached felt flattered and accepted readily. Resource persons were labelled as approved opinion builders.

Getting the resource persons to work actively on behalf of the project did not prove to be quite as easy. Of the some 70 resource persons, it is perhaps only about 30 who come to the project meetings – although different people attend different meetings. Even fewer actually do anything substantial for the project.

However, in the spring of 1999 there are signs that the ball has got rolling. A growing number of organisations have been in touch, wanting to help.

It is probably counterproductive to put too much pressure on resource persons. At worst, the resource persons organisation could collapse. One optimistic forecast is that one good example leads to another – slowly but surely.

7.6 Personal feedback

Both the resource persons and others living in Vetlanda who are doing something for the project should be rewarded for their efforts. Although baseball caps, tee-shirts, etc are appreciated, their cost is probably more than their return, unless companies and public authorities can be persuaded to purchase them for their employees as a reward for environmentally-friendly travel behaviour.

One can assume that the symbolic value is greater than the material value; i.e., even stickers, badges, decals and other inexpensive "give-aways" function as a reward.

Purely symbolic rewards such as praise, encouragement, support, etc are of exceedingly great value. First and foremost, all resource persons must be made to know that their efforts are of value (even when they aren’t). Hence, the newsletters and minutes distributed after meetings can be effective.

7.7 Collective feedback
Community residents who participate in some type of pioneer activity want to know how things are going for them, what progress is being made and if they are better than their neighbouring community. It is therefore advisable to design simple measurement instruments that can be converted to indicators in the form of barometers, etc that show how more people are cycling or carpooling or taking the bus to work, to soccer practice or are signing environmental declarations, etc.

Such barometers most probably have enough news value to warrant attention in the local media. Other forms of exposure include posters on municipal notice boards, such as at the town square, the library, the town hall, etc.

**7.8 Imparting good examples**

Even if the spreading of environmentally adapted traffic behaviour is moving along in the right direction, it can be hastened through imparting good examples. Obviously, the local press is the most effective media for this through regularly proclaiming "environmental heroes".

Such collaboration between the local project management and the Vetlanda Post is under development.

Other channels are meetings held at work, in organisations and in residential areas, etc. An endeavour should be made, as far as possible, to find a "twin target group" for every target group that could function as a model. In other words, a workshop within the manufacturing industry with 50 employees should be compared to a similar place of work where an increasing number of people are making the transition to cycling to work; a sports club should be compared to another sports club where parents carpool to practices and matches; and a residential area 10 kilometres from the centre of town and the major places of work should be compared with another residential area where demands have been made on public transport services, etc.

It will undoubtedly be impossible to find twin groups for all the various target groups during the first year of the project. However, the possibility of building up a supply of "good examples" will increase with time.

**7.9 Adapt objectives and messages to the target groups**

When working with members of a motoring club, a sports club or employees in an office or workshop, one must think about the results desired from each group and the prerequisites for achieving them. Applying methods on one target group that work well with another can be tempting, but ends up in poorer adaptation to the relevant target group.

**7.10 Gain support for the project in the municipal organisation**

The municipal administration reflects essentially all aspects of society. The more individual politicians and local government officers can be inspired to believe in the project, the faster it will spread throughout the community. This can occur through chief councillors monitoring and discussing the project, but first and foremost through the project management actively visiting the
different municipal departments in order to convince the staff that the project concerns them as well and that they also can contribute to its achieving good results.

7.11 Give the project the time it needs

Introducing new ideas, attitudes and ways of behaviour is a laborious and slow process. Results come in little by little and perhaps not at the speed one would have desired. However, a network process belongs to its members and must be implemented according to their prerequisites and on their own terms. In order to attain lasting results, it is important that the results are achieved through the endeavours of the target groups themselves and not through the enthusiasm of those working on the project. The experience of others has shown that it takes many years of work before lasting results are achieved in processes of conscious change.

7.12 A stable local project organisation is needed

At the beginning of the project, the various actors in the municipality must become actively engaged. This demands a team of many co-workers within the project. These persons should be employed temporarily for the project in order to create a stable base from which to work. As the project progresses, the need for this employee organisation gradually decreases.

8. Concluding comments

There is, however another effect of projects such as this one. The SNRA also has a governmental commission to formulate a national strategy on how we shall attain the interim goals for the environment and road safety. When we met representatives for other actors in the road transport system we enquired about such things as the obstacles they felt lay ahead. A very large number of those asked were of the opinion that there was a lack of courage to make necessary decisions – especially amongst our politicians.

A representative from one of the municipalities wondered why this courage was lacking. A possible explanation could be the absence of a dialogue between politicians and citizens about what was expected of society. Many surveys have also confirmed that politicians feel very uncertain about what direction citizens want transport policy to take, just as citizens are unsure about what politicians actually want.

Implementing a project like this one is also a way to establish that missing dialogue, a way to formulate our common future and a way to give politicians the courage to make the necessary decisions.

References


Regeringens proposition 1997/98:56. *Transportpolitik för en hållbar utveckling*

Regeringens proposition 1995/96:131. *Vägverkets sektorsansvar inom vägtransportsystemet mm*


