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## **Eberg, Trondheim, Norway – a story of a successful cycle training field in Norway.**



### **“The use of cycle training field in traffic education for children – what are the effects?”**

The first cycle training field in Norway (and so far the only one) was established in Trondheim in the year 2000, with the aim of teaching children traffic behaviour. The training field is miniature of the real road network, and the children will experience different traffic solutions and situations without the risks within a real traffic environment. The idea is to give children a realistic education and training and preparing them for real traffic. (NB! This can not at all be considered as a “playground” as tried in other countries and often evaluated as failures).

All the primary schools in the region get an invitation to bring the children at the 5<sup>th</sup> grade (10-11 years) to have a half day on the training field. During the learning the pupils have theoretical traffic education, both before and after the visit to the training field.



We have asked SINTEF to assess the training field. The aim was to get more knowledge about the influence the field training has on the children's knowledge about traffic, their comprehension and insight into different traffic situations. Additionally, the assessment gave knowledge of how the establishment has affected and how traffic is taught. Has the cycle training field been a success?

## Method

The evaluation is divided into 4 surveys:

### 1. The School Survey

- The frequency of cycling to school
- How traffic is educated in primary school
- Traffic skills amongst the teachers
- How much parents participate in the traffic education
- The use of the training field

### 2. The Pupil Survey

- The frequency of cycling
- Who taught the children to ride a bicycle
- Skills in traffic rules and traffic signs
- Categorize the pupils into groups in order to indicate their personality as cyclists

### 3. The Parent Survey

- Characteristics of cyclists
- The parents comprehension of their children's skills on a bicycle
- What sort of traffic situations will the children be able to handle

### 4. The User Survey (one survey for the teachers, and one for the pupils)

- Where did they get to know the training field
- Teacher's satisfaction with the introduction course
- What sort of preparations were done in the class before the visit
- Teacher's and pupil's satisfaction with the visit
- What sort of supplementary work was carried out after the visit
- The use of helmets when riding a bicycle

The School, Pupil and Parent Survey were carried out in year 2000 and in 2004. The User Survey was done in year 2004. Comparison has been done between the studies when possible.

The assessment of the cycling training field can be summarized in the following main points:

- The cycle training field has had a successful first 3 years
- The cycle training field has led to more systematically traffic education
- Teachers and parents find the cycling training field very positive and they would like to use it more
- The pupils find the cycling training field entertaining and the get new knowledge when visiting.

In other words:

- The results show that the cycle training field has had a good effect on how the primary school focuses on traffic in the education.
- Both teachers and pupils seems to agree that visiting the training field gives new and important knowledge to the pupils, both theoretical and practical.
- The survey also shows the pupils knowledge to different traffic issues has increased.
- The other aspects of these surveys show so positive results that we, without any doubt, consider the whole project as a success.

Why has the cycling training field in Trondheim become a success – in difference from almost all other training fields?

This can be a difficult question to answer, but I think the following points are very important:

- The cycling training field is rather big – more spacious than other training fields I know of both i.e. in Denmark and in Switzerland. It covers an area of more than 15.000 m<sup>2</sup>. The length of the streets/roads is 600-650 meters. All elements are built in half size – the width of the roads, roundabout, traffic lights and so on. The investments in 2000 were approx. 800.000 Euros.
- The education is based on analysis divided from accidents typical for cyclists. The exercises which the pupils do – they cycle several different routes during the day – are learned in forehand. For more information see [www.trafikkkgarden.no](http://www.trafikkkgarden.no) . Unfortunately the page is available only in Norwegian so fare.
- The education plan (which many different professions did contribute to), says that the pupils must have specific traffic education both before and after the visit to the cycling training field. The plan also involves the parents in a great extent and many of them have to take part at the cycling training field as well. The education plan required in 2000 an investment of approx. 200.000 Euros.
- All teachers go through a day's course in advance. The advantages of the course were considered so valuable that the teachers themselves made it mandatory. So fare approx. 250 teachers have gone through this course, which of course is free.
- Through the years 2001 until 2005, more than 8.000 pupils have visited Eberg Cycling Training Field.



**Eberg, Trondheim, the first cycling training field in Norway, has been a success.**