

Action Planning for More Cyclists in Odense

The National Cycle City of Denmark

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1. Introduction

The Traffic Ministry of Denmark has selected Odense as Denmark's National Cycle City. With a total budget of 3,5 million Euro, we are now experimenting with new enterprises to get even more people to use a bicycle.

By monitoring other cycle cities around the world the general pattern seems to be divided into three steps:

1. Establish rights for cyclists, e.g. by allowing cyclists to cycle in both directions on a one-way street.
2. Make room for cyclists, e.g. by building new cycle paths for the cyclists.
3. Take action to heighten the awareness for cycling, e.g. by launching campaigns for childrens' mode of transport.

Not all cities are following the above order of the three steps, but it looks as if only a few places have succeeded in implementing them at present.

To get a more complete strategy we chose to divide the entire project into these five (plus one) elements:

- *Home:* This is where the journey is planned and where it starts. It includes the physical surroundings.
- *Man:* This is the person who decides where to go, when and by what. It includes your family and your neighbours.
- *Horse:* This is the means of transport that brings you from A to B. It includes the quality of the bike and what kind of equipment it has.
- *Road:* This is the infrastructure which is provided for your journey. It includes the cycle facilities and the rules made for cyclists.
- *Field:* This is the workplaces and the institutions of education. It includes the conditions which the employer offers the cyclists.
- *Information:* This is a complete strategy to communicate the experiences from the project to the citizens and to other cities with interest in the subject.

Action Planning is the key word of our strategy. We are working towards establishing a close contact to citizens in general, and especially to employers and employees. People need to be

directly confronted with the issue of cycling. Brochures are not enough to change daily transportation habits.

2. The Cycle City Project

The Cycle City Project is divided into 62 different sub-projects. In the following text a few of the sub-projects are underlined as good examples of action planning for more cyclists in Odense.

2.1 Cycle Trailers for Children

Trailers for children are well-known in Denmark, although only a very few people have yet tried it themselves. Trailers give good training for the parents and show a good role model for the children to become cyclists too. New statistics from the university hospital of Odense show that there has only been registered one single traffic accident with a trailer for children during the last four years. This accident happened without other road users involved, and the child only fell out of the trailer because she wasn't fixed with the safety belt. So the trailer is a healthy and a safe offer for new parents. An extra advantage is that you can carry two children plus some luggage without major problems.

That is the reason why we are offering all parents with children in kindergartens to borrow the trailer for free for one week. This involves in total 7500 parents. 10 trailers were sponsored by the manufacturers, and each trailer goes to a kindergarten for 2-3 months in turn. One employee is responsible for instructing the parents. All work concerning moving the trailers from one kindergarten to another and repairs is taken care of by a team of young people from a job creation project. Parents who might want to buy a trailer afterwards are being offered a supplementary gift from the cycle shop.

2.2 Cycle Arrangements

To encourage cycling in general, various arrangements are held for the citizens. The topic is usually about cycle holidays, which is a very popular theme. There have been five lectures with full house. The arrangements are all free and people are offered snacks, etc.

Furthermore, there has been one guided tour to a nature district where free roast lamb was offered! We are planning more guided tours in the coming years.

2.3 The Annual Bike Festival

Each year a bike festival is held at the town hall square. Normally, it is on a Saturday in May. The purpose is to show the public good examples of new quality bikes. Only bikes costing a minimum of Euro 400,- are allowed at the festival. Besides normal bikes, also special bikes are invited on the day.

The arrangement is marketed by advertising and by a contest among the shop owners. They are encouraged to include the bike in the show window the week before the arrangement. The best exhibition is given a prize.

Everybody who comes to the festival takes part in a contest to win 8 bikes.

In the long term we hope that more people will buy a bike. And we hope that in general it will be better quality bikes. Because, as with cars, good and new bikes might be used more frequently than old ones.

2.4 The Bike to Work Campaign

This year the national campaign "Bike to Work" will be launched in Denmark for the third time. It is held in a three week period in the Autumn where people are supposed to use their bike to work at least half of the time. There must be at least 4 participants on each team. Your chances of winning the prizes depend on how many participants you are and how many trips you are travelling by bike. In that way the campaign is encouraging you to cycle more.

In Odense we have made a special local effort to have more participants. Second to Copenhagen we are now the most active city, and the number of cyclists in the contest has increased from 4000 the first year to over 6000 the second year. This year, we hope for even more cyclists.

Locally we have advertised, sent direct mails to 2000 workplaces with at least 5 employed, and sent posters, etc. Last but not least we have made special pins for the cyclists to wear. A special pin patrol was sent out to search for these pins on the streets and in the workplaces. All cyclists found wearing this pin were given gifts!

After the campaign, people could propose somebody who they felt should be the cyclist of the year. The winner was pleased to receive flowers and a brand new bike.

2.5 Road Maintenance

It is very important for cyclists that the roads and the cycle paths are maintained well. Interviews conducted amongst Danish cyclists show this as being one of the most important issues in order to encourage more cyclists and to keep them happy as cyclists.

As one initiative we decided to turn the complaints upside down. We organized a contest calling for the worst cycle path in town. The winner got a new asphalt layer on the path and a free holiday for two to the Provence - on bikes. We got 150 proposals and one happy winner. The bad story turned into good news.

2.6 Direct Marketing

It is very important for the whole project to become visible in the daily life in Odense. That's why marketing is an important element, which has to be included at every possible opportunity.

The first important step was to get a nice, clear logo to profile the project. It is now in use in several situations. Letters from the Park and Roads Administration are now written on the special stationery, no matter what the subject is. Every household has been sent the new cycle map, and each of the annual 5000 new inhabitants in the municipality will receive a

map as their first welcome.

The press is treated with special care to ensure that every story gets as much publicity as it deserves. Main stories are planned to be "sold" to the national news.

Cycle equipment with the logo printed on is used a great deal as gifts in the project, such as cycle lights, t-shirts, sweets, etc.

3. The Future of the National Cycle City

The project is now in the second of the four year project period. When all the sub-projects end it is important that all the experiences are documented and distributed to the relevant partners. Furthermore, our ambition is to provide a solid base for the best initiatives. For that purpose there is already established a private non-government organisation mobility centre to take care of some activities. Other parts are planned to be run by the Chamber of Commerce, the cycle branch, kindergartens, etc.