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Multi-stakeholder approaches to road safety

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1. Summary

One of the main problems about campaigning for road safety is the way to reach the individual person who should feel concerned about the message. Traditionally, we try to reach the drivers, the cyclists, the motorcycle-riders, the pedestrians and other more specialised stakeholders. However, an average person sometimes rides a cycle, drives, and walks. This paper discusses chances and problems of addressing road users using their multiple identity as drivers and as pedestrians.

The problem that one person sees traffic in a different way being a pedestrian and being a driver is not new. It is illustrated here: Mr. Walker becomes Mister Wheeler – The Jekyll-and-Hyde-truth on motoring by Walt Disney - Starring Goofy in '**Motor Mania**' (1950).

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mZAZ_xu0DCg (up to the freeway entrance)

2. The Pedestrian as a subject in road traffic

While we drive a car, or while we ride a bicycle we are quite aware that we are participant in traffic and that we should obey certain rules. This begins by wearing the seat-belt before we start the car. However, as a pedestrian, we stroll around, we go shopping or window-shopping, or we rush to reach the train, and we go out for lunch. In these situations, we hardly think of ourselves as being a road user participating in traffic and producing mobility for ourselves. It is like when we breathe: We never think of the air, nor of our lungs, and only if something smells we may have the idea that the air is not clean enough to breathe.

The idea that we participate in traffic comes to our mind only when we cross a street or road. There is a short movie on Youtube which has become a world-wide famous running gag in the Internet, and which illustrates the antagonism between drivers and pedestrians as a classical icon:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-ogrMr4IWc>

3. Reaching the individual with a low-risk message

Besides reaching a public which is not really defined, campaigning for road safety we face the problem that we have a message which is basically not pleasant. It is simply not “sexy” to communicate about what could happen if you don’t watch out while crossing a street, or while you drive towards a pedestrian crossing. No-one really wants to listen, if we want to say how to behave as a pedestrian or as a driver, because everyone is convinced that he knows how to walk and drive. Moreover, those who walk normally don’t endanger the drivers.

To tell people to avoid a risky behaviour is a difficult job anyway. We know that from campaigns against AIDS, against smoking, in favour of avoiding influenza etc. Whatever we want to communicate, we have to use some sort of a trick to keep the attention of the person we want to address.

Let’s be clear: It is against all principles of marketing, to say that a message is for anybody. In any marketing strategy as well as in any businessplan you have to name a target public – the more specific the better. However, in road safety, we have a message that no-one really wants to listen to. Therefore it may be wise not to address “the driver” or “the pedestrian”, but a human being, and possibly not with a message, but with wit, with a feeling, with a joke or with an idea to be carried on by the one who receives it.

One possibility is to try to address a feeling using music, and to try to convince the addressee to choose a better lifestyle than to be nervous and to drive fast. This is what the figure of “**Frankie Slow Down**” does here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s4h0CqCV4vo&feature=related>

4. Campaigning for Pedestrian Safety

4.1 Introduction

In Switzerland, road safety campaigns are not organised by the Government, but by the associations of the different traffic stakeholders or institutions for prevention of accidents. The campaigns are mostly financed by a fund which is fed by a tax on the insurance fees of the motor vehicles. This system has advantages and it has disadvantages.

- The **advantage** of the stakeholders communicating to their “clients” is that the individual person is not approached by the anonymous Government, but by an organisation he or she is member of or feels close to. In turn the organisations (of motorists, of cyclists, of truckers, of pedestrians, of...) get an opportunity raise their profile in the public.
- The **disadvantage** of the fact that road safety campaigning is not part of the public Administration is that there is little competence for road safety campaigning within the administrations of the different levels of government, and infrastructure problems are not automatically approached as part of campaigns, because the Fund for Road Safety is restricted to funding campaigns on behaviour of road users and not on behaviour of Government officials.

The Swiss Pedestrian Association «Fussverkehr Schweiz» is entitled to participate in the bid for subsidies for road safety campaigns, and we have done this quite successfully. The average pedestrian does not perceive himself or herself as road user, unless he or she is crossing a carriage-way. Therefore, the result of a campaign is better if we can approach an individual in all of his/her roles as a road user.

The Swiss Pedestrian Association “Pedestrian Mobility”, for which I work has the task to educate the pedestrians. From all I have said so far, it is clear that this is a mission impossible. Of course, we can drill small children, as long as they are impressed by parents, teachers or police uniform. But to educate an adult pedestrian we have to address a situation like in this campaign on the behaviour at a zebra crossing which is aimed at the same time at walking humans as well as at driving humans:

4.1. Behaviour at the Pedestrian Crossings

(For car drivers and for pedestrians)

Most people walking in the street have a drivers' licence in their pocket. Therefore it makes sense to address the public in a campaign on the correct behaviour at the zebra-crossing as both, as pedestrians and as drivers. For this campaign our small pedestrian association «Fussverkehr Schweiz» has paired up with one of the largest organisations of the country which is the Touring Club TCS.

Our campaign was called “Action Yellow Zebra” (in Switzerland, zebra crossings are marked with yellow stripes). The main features of this campaign you find on these websites:

www.gelbeszebra.ch (German / French / Italian)

(unfortunately, no English website, yet)

Along with the safety-recommendations (with the pictures of the campaign), the pragmatic collaboration of two very different organisations is an important point. The Touring Club of Switzerland has 2 Mio members, the pedestrian association has about 2000 members, i.e. the TCS is about 1000 times as big. Yet, the collaboration was excellent, because road safety was the focus, and it was clear to us that with our name we cannot communicate recommendations for drivers, and to the TCS it was clear that if they would try to tell the pedestrians how to behave, this would provoke a lot of bad reactions against the TCS by militant pedestrians, even if the wording would be as it was.

We have had a very good echo in the media, but the number of casualties has not dropped significantly as a result of this one campaign. Of course, this could be an important point of the discussion.

4.2. On foot at a high age

A recent campaign addresses the elderly people, their relatives and the personnel of institutions taking care of the elderly. The campaign was not in collaboration with a drivers' association, but the Swiss Organisation for the prevention of accidents was involved. Together with the well-established organisations of old age, and with the support of the most known comic of Switzerland (“Emil”) it was clear to anyone that we as organisation of pedestrians could address the drivers at the same time to make them aware of the by far most endangered persons in our streets.

Websites of the campaign:

<http://www.fussverkehr.ch/unsere-themen/zu-fuss-im-alter/>

(German / French / Italian)

4.3. Learning how to drive and how to walk

The children in most European countries are taught in a highly disciplined program how to behave while crossing a road. When they grow up and become teenagers no one will tell them that the strict rules of the childhood don't apply any more, and that a different behaviour is appropriate for adults. Therefore many young adults try out a no-rule-behaviour on the carriageway, and they endanger themselves as well as others. The campaign which will be a joint action of the Pedestrian

Association with the Association of the Driving Teachers (SFV) will have the youngsters who are learning how to drive. The medium shall be in the format of short videos, which are found on Youtube, and the general theme is the change of role from pedestrian to driver and back to walking. Different topics will be shown such as

- pedestrian coming from the left side / cars coming from the right side (which is a major risk),
- parking cars on sidewalks / Walking on carriageway,
- traffic lights green for cars / at the same time green for pedestrians

In order to make young people forward the Internet-link to their friends, the style of these short films should witty like this film which starts with one sort of stakeholders (the skateboarders), and switches over to a driver and a pedestrian in the film mentioned above.

Our short films will communicate a more constructive message but we hope to be able to make them just as funny. (This project will be started in public in 2011, and has no website, yet)

5. Conclusion

Trying to improve the pedestrians' behaviour on the road, it makes sense to approach the pedestrian as a person who walks and drives. This way it is possible to induce a person to understand that while walking in a street (or crossing a road) it is crucial to behave in a manner that a driver can react adequately – and vice-versa. The collaboration between organisations of different stakeholders improves greatly the acceptance of road safety measures in the public.



*Even Advertising has discovered that humans are multi-stakeholder beings.
(Lausanne, Switzerland)*

If time is left, let's see the rest of Mr Walker & Mr. Wheeler:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mZAZ_xu0DCg

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1991-2000 Research projects on ecological action and transportation,

Since 2001 scientific collaborator (including pedestrian safety) with «Fussverkehr Schweiz»,
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