

Walking, cycling and driving to school on the ecological path



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Ilse Buis
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Velo-City 2019, Dublin

2017: Plan to move to Spain for alternative school

- Our lovely walk to the school in Sept. 2017
- 850 m. unpaved path



Ojo de Agua

Alternative school
Orba, Alicante province, Spain

Ojo de Agua is not a school...



...but a:
“child-directed
learning
environment”
(80 children 5 –
18 yrs)

Ilse:

Cycling to school

- Me: Parent and cycling traffic planner (leaving home)



But... experience was not as in Sept.



Many parents drive
the last 850 m. on
the unpaved path

A Path in an ecological park:



Opportunities for sustainable behaviour in a 'conscious' school with attention to sustainability

1. Mess with cars (Halfway)



2. Road safety issues: Small cyclists between cars



And, some cars go fast
(see dust)
Ilse:



3. Not healthy



- Many diesel cars
- And dust when cars go fast...



4. Lack of space

- Children are not allowed to go on the fields



But on the other side
there is a cliff!



Lack of space!



- 2 cars up
- 1 cyclist up
- 1 car down





Traffic on the path, a problem since years:

- After meetings with director he sent e-mails:
 - Priority for pedestrians and cyclists
 - Drive to Ojo only in case of emergency
 - Use car as little as possible on the path
 - No cars between 9.00-9.30 and 13.30-14.00 h.

- But these rules are not respected by many

The ideal: Children walking and cycling safely and undisturbed

Courses have starting times, otherwise children can arrive anytime after 9 am. Ilse, what time you arrive?.....

Walking or cycling to school without stress (video):



Sustainable Mobility Project

Make study and plan together with those most affected

'Course' on Sustainable Mobility

1. Observations, photos, film
2. Traffic counts
3. Children survey
4. Plan for traffic signs
5. Parents survey
6. Mobility Plan for Ojo (next step)

Ilse: “What you liked most of the taller (course)?”

Project with the children!



Google Earth:
Measuring distances



Outside:
Measuring the width

Course in Ojo (school)

- A way to let the children speak and getting involved!
- Ojo: Lot of attention to sustainability (plastic, etc.),
→ Car-use is a blind-spot
- It is not about parents, but about the children that can enjoy the path and learn sustainable traffic behaviour
- Children walking and cycling to school: Fits with child-directed school

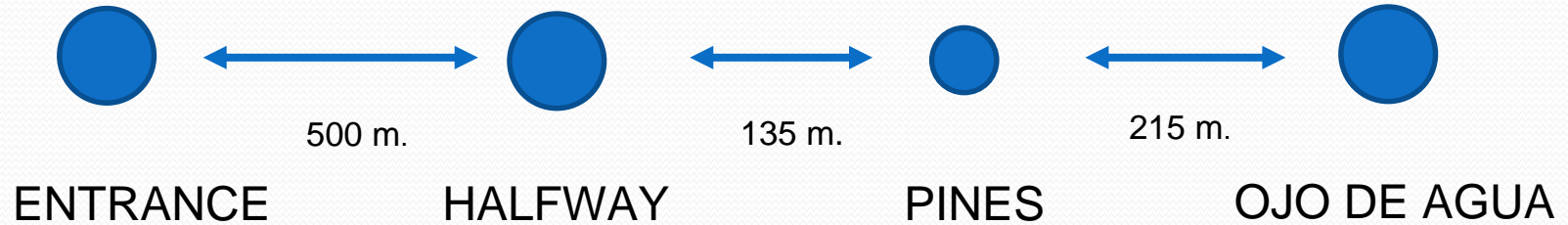
1. Observations

1. Observations

- Most cars do not stop or even slow down, children run away when a car approaches
- We made photos and commented on fast driving parents: Quite some angry reactions from drivers
- Ilse: (honking)
- A parent: “The problem is the bicycles, not the cars”

2. Traffic counts

Three places to park (stop)



Path is 850 m long

Doing the traffic counts



- Duck helps too!

Adding up the numbers

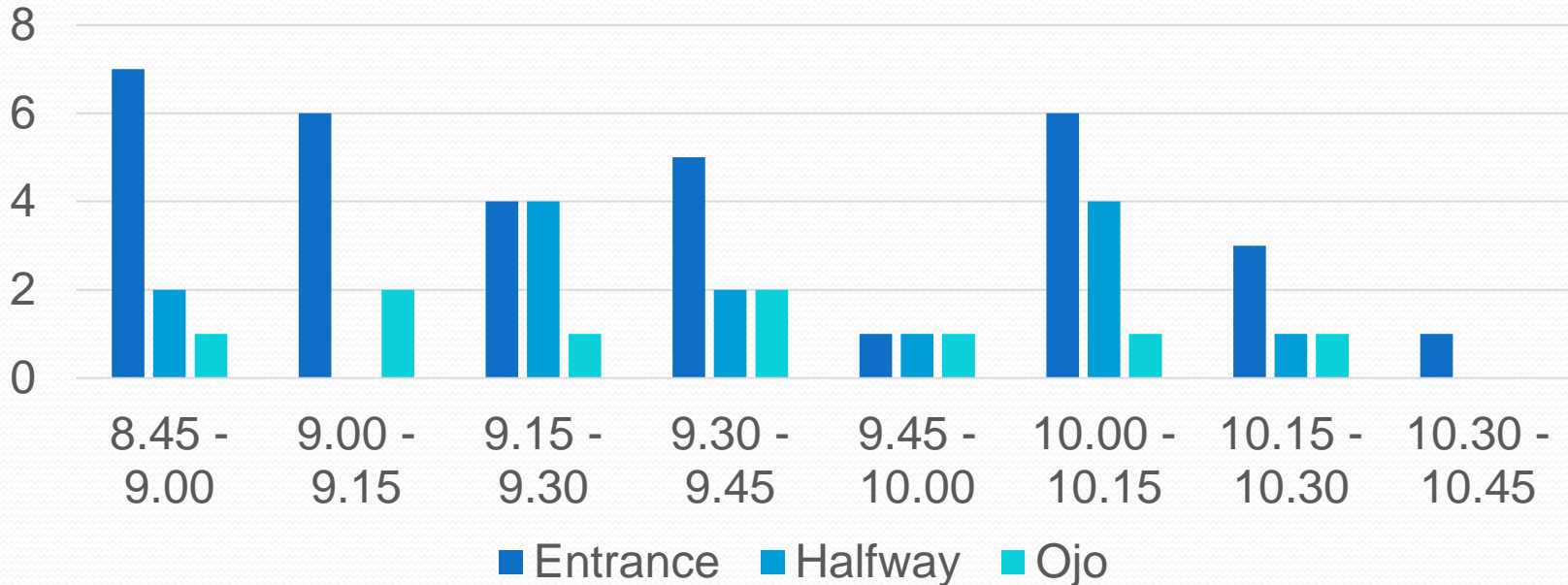


Totals:

- In the morning: Average 32 cars drive up every day
- 162 kms driven on the path each morning (without picking up)

Monday: 33 cars going up in morning

Cars driving up on Monday



Bicycles up:

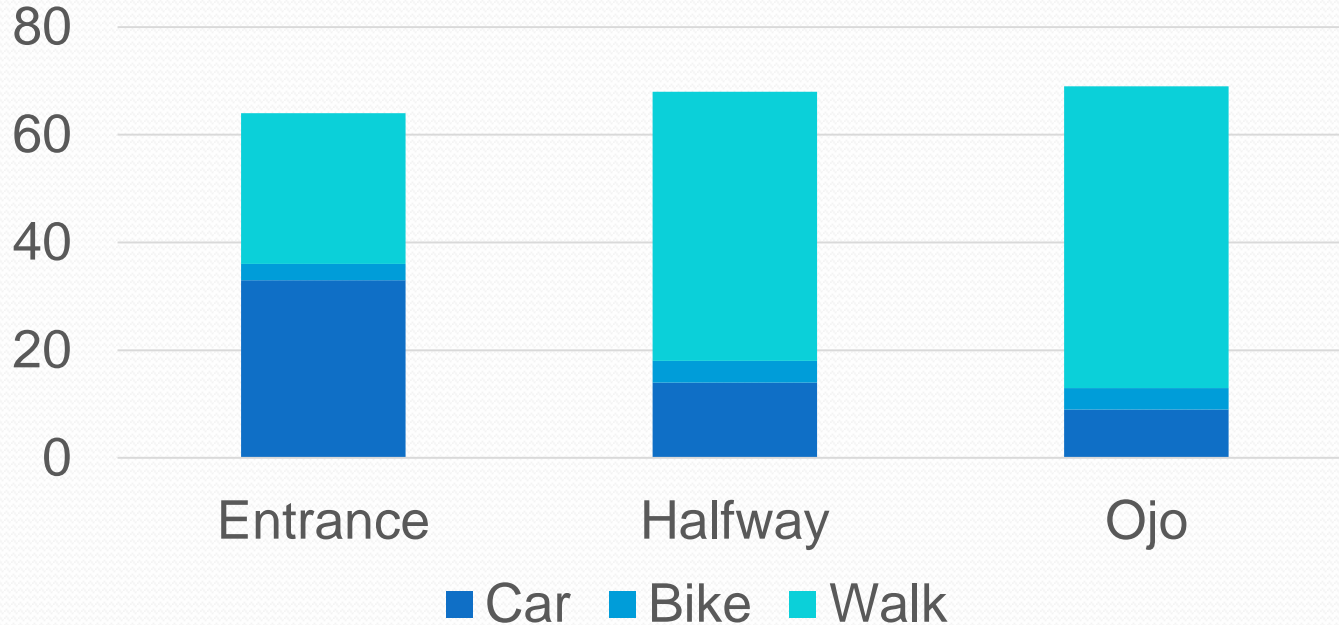
Bikes	Entrance	Halfway	Ojo
Monday	3	4	4
Wednesday	5	7	7
Thursday	6	11	9
Friday	4	0	0
Average:	4,5	5,5	5,0

Bicycles down:

Bikes	Ojo	Halfway	Entrance
Monday	8	6	12
Tuesday	8	8	10
Wednesday	14	14	11
Thursday	9	8	7
Friday	11	10	10
	9,9	9,2	10,0

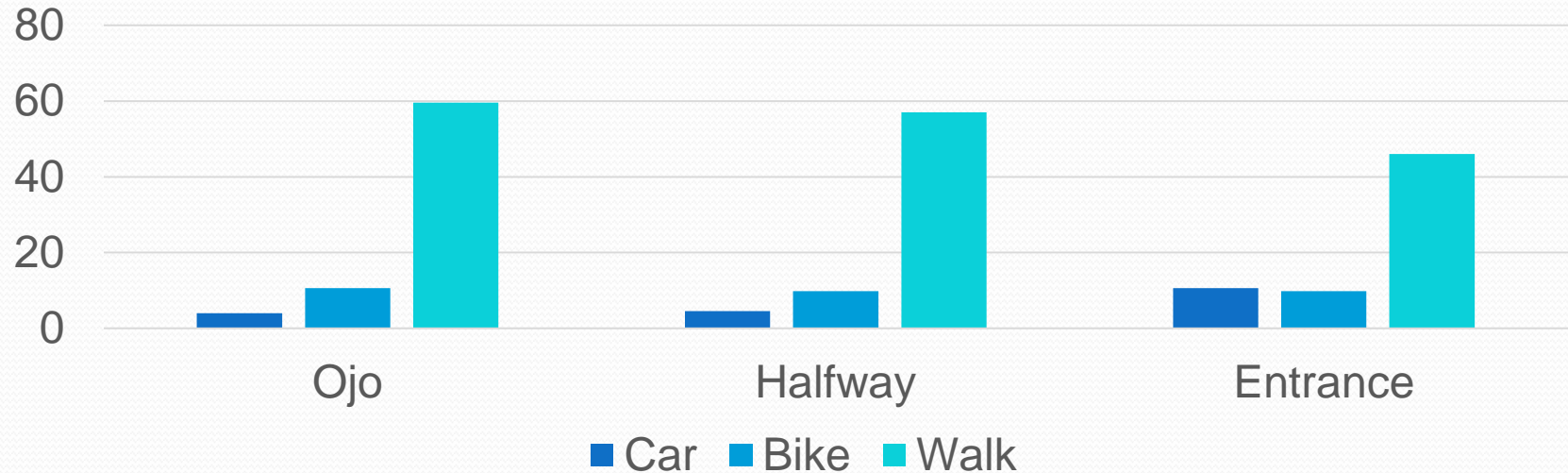
- Twice as many go down (afternoon) as up (morning)
- Parents drop children or pick them up halfway by car
- Parents cycling included (can add or subtract)

Going up in the morning



Cars park Halfway or at Pines and children continue by bike or on foot

Leaving Ojo (average Mon-Fri)



- 11 instead of 33 cars drive on the path

3. Children Survey

60 surveys on paper

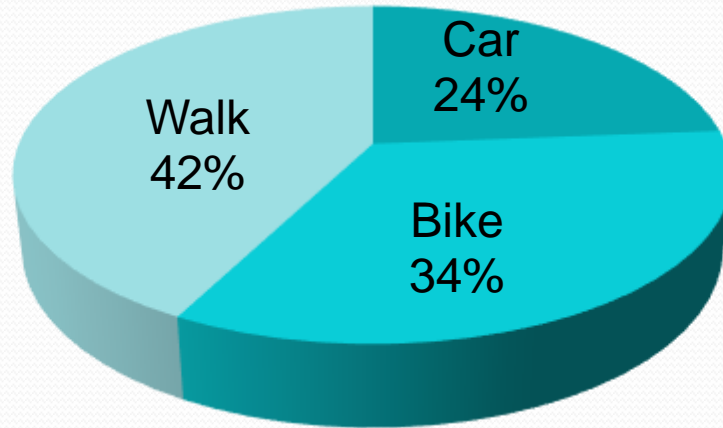
Almost all children apart from kindergarden

Children interviewing children

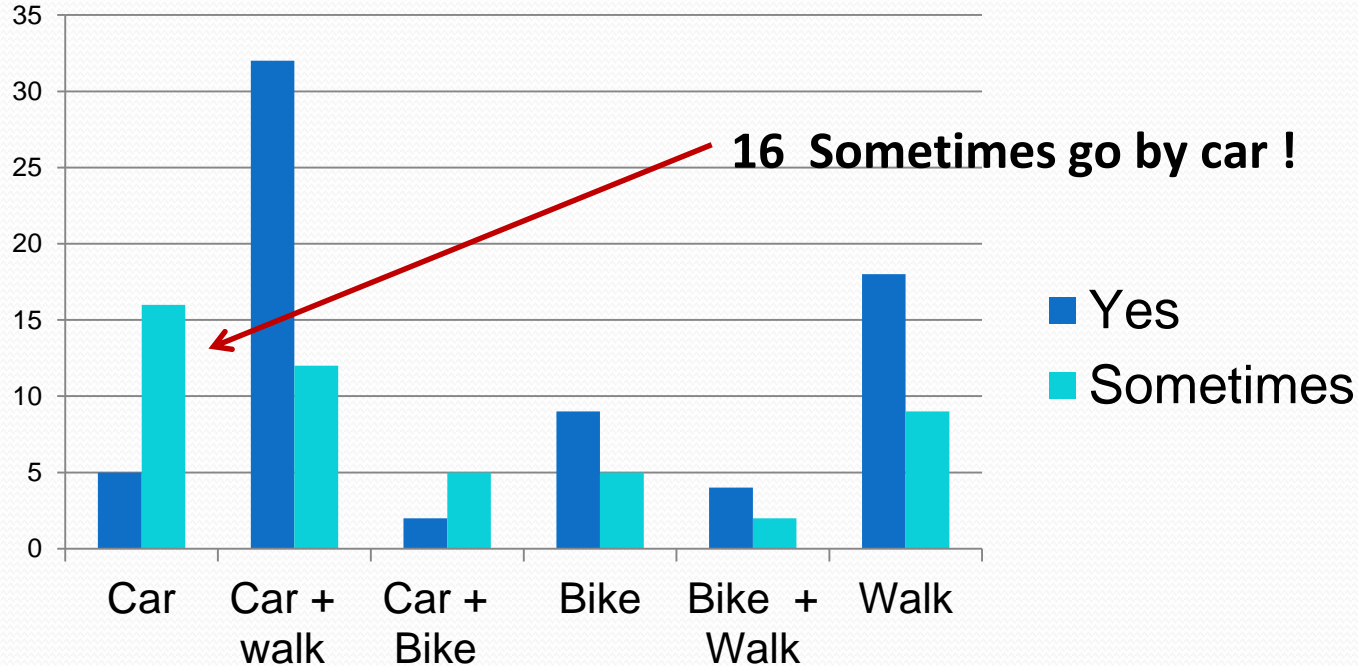


Results: 76% children prefer walking or cycling

What do you prefer?

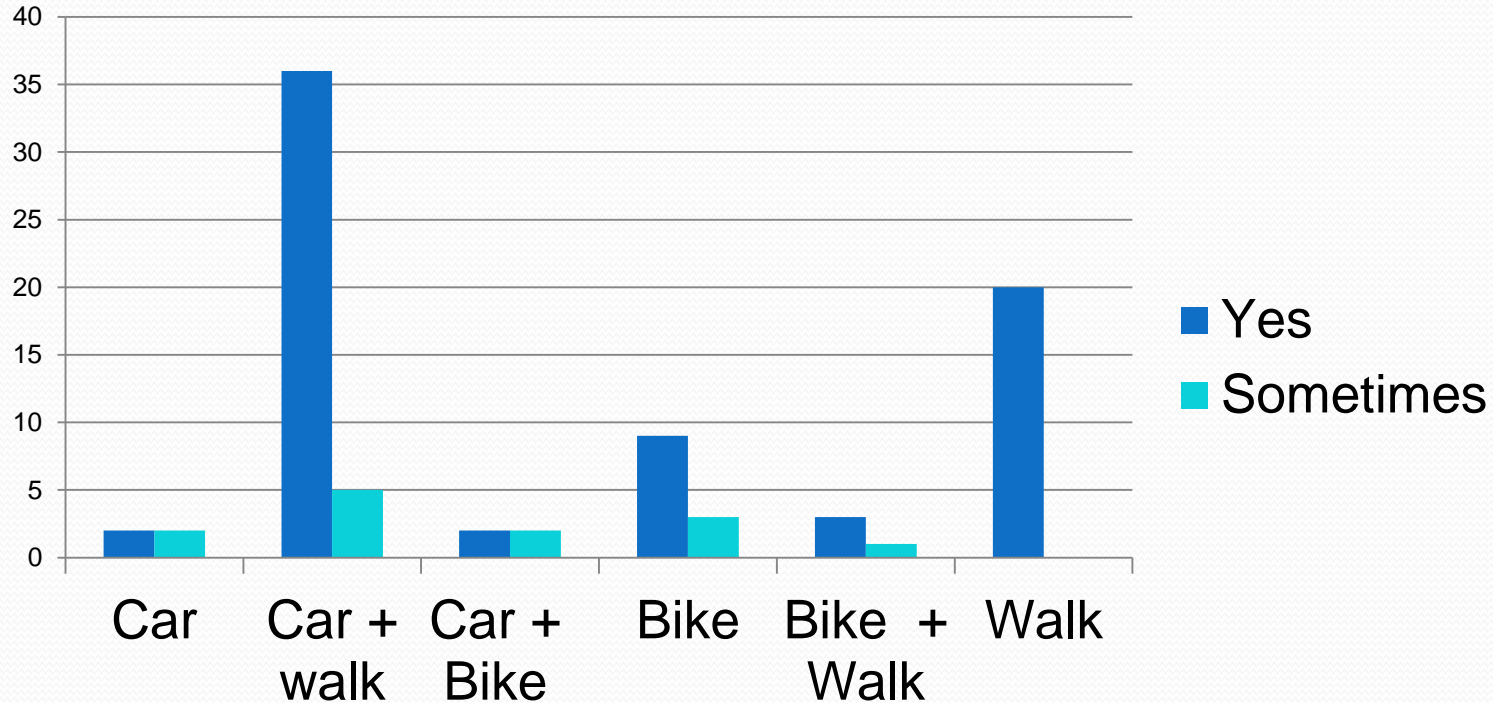


Morning. How you go to Ojo?



Ilse: How do you go to Ojo in the morning?

Afternoon: How do you return?



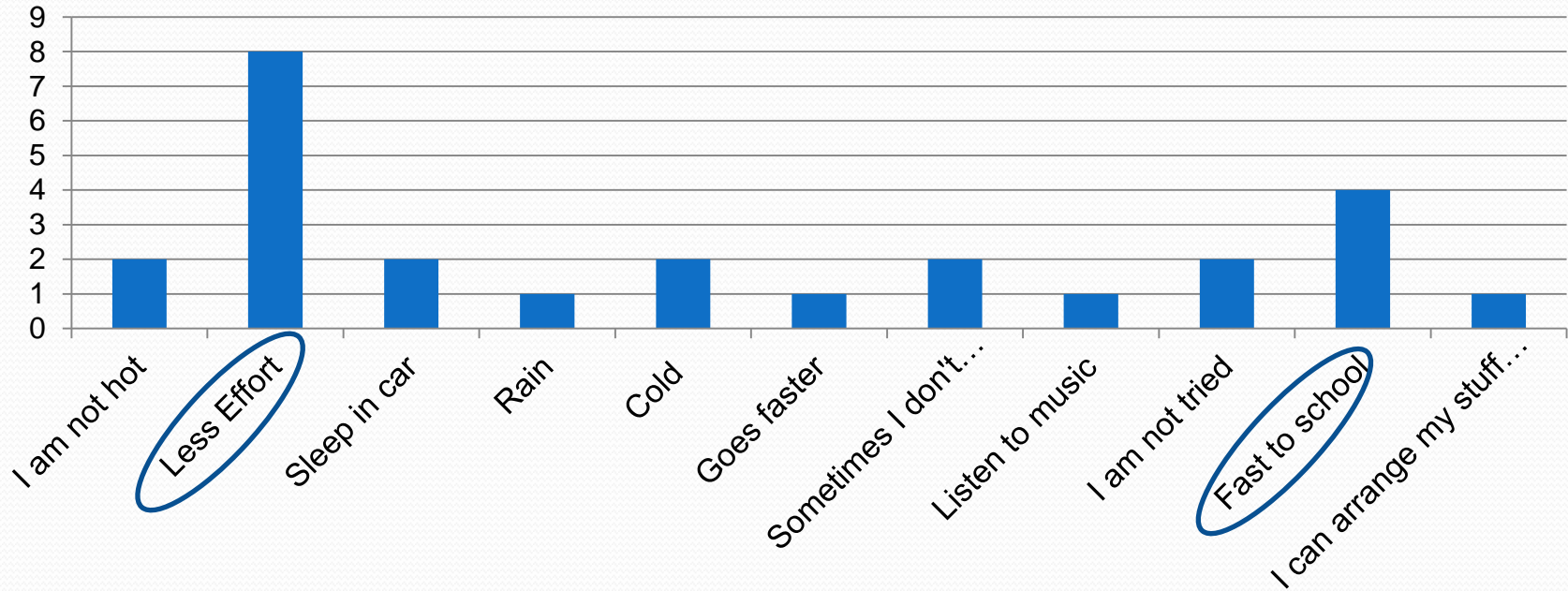
More people walk back



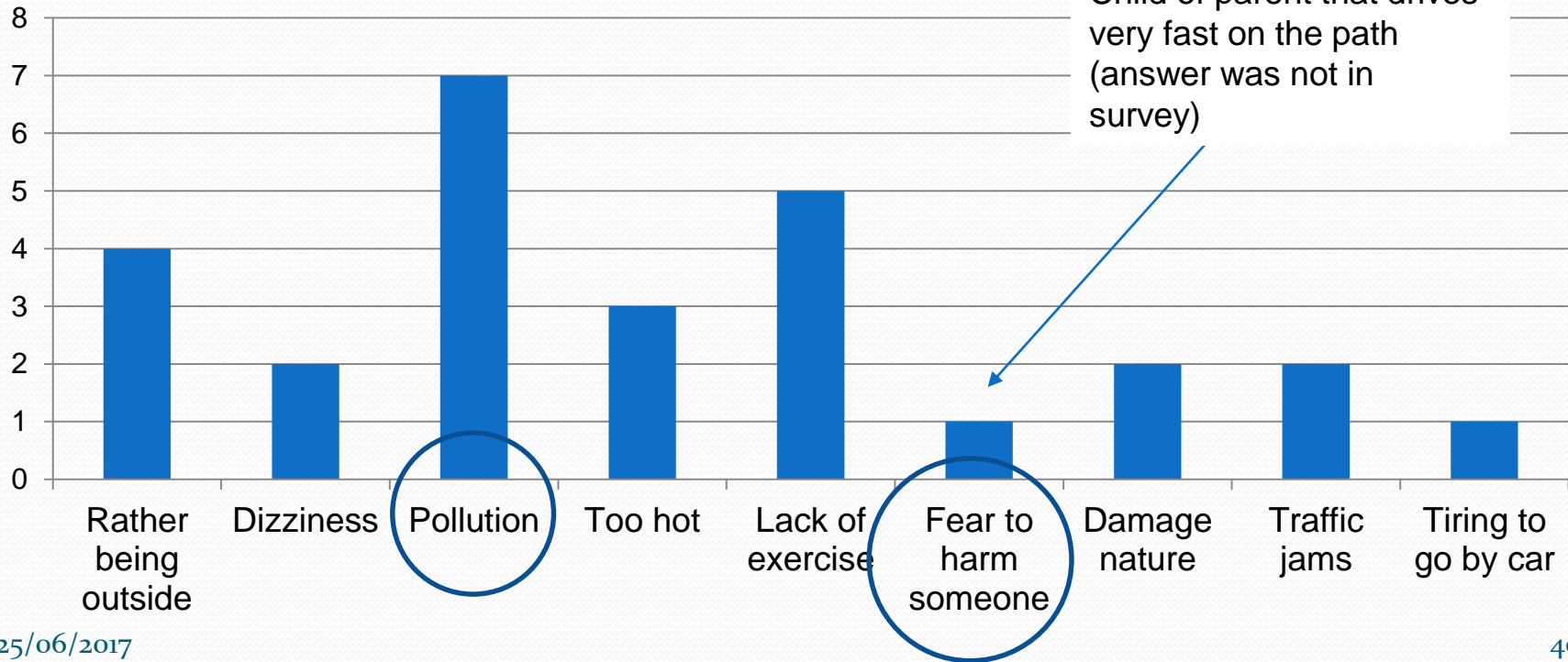
Ilse:

How was it before
in the afternoon?

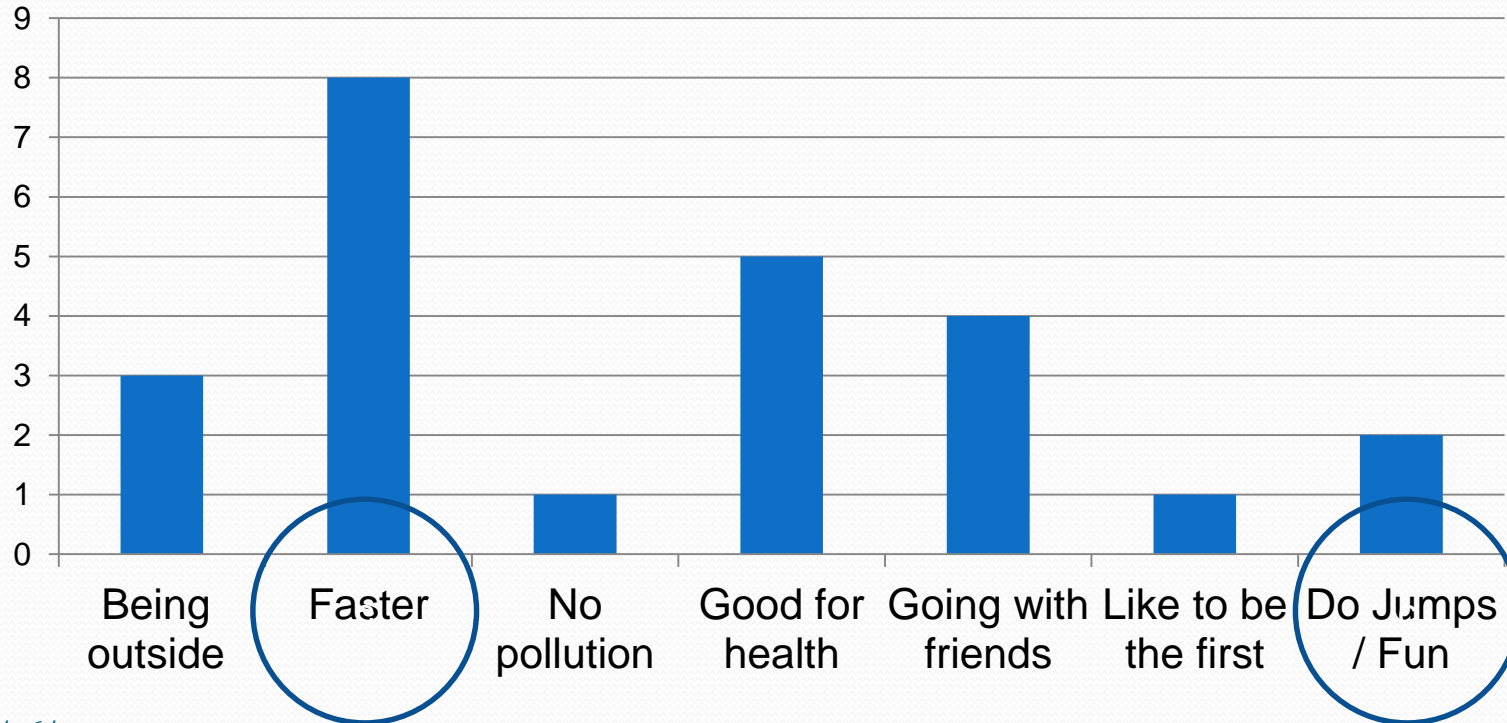
What do you like about going by car?



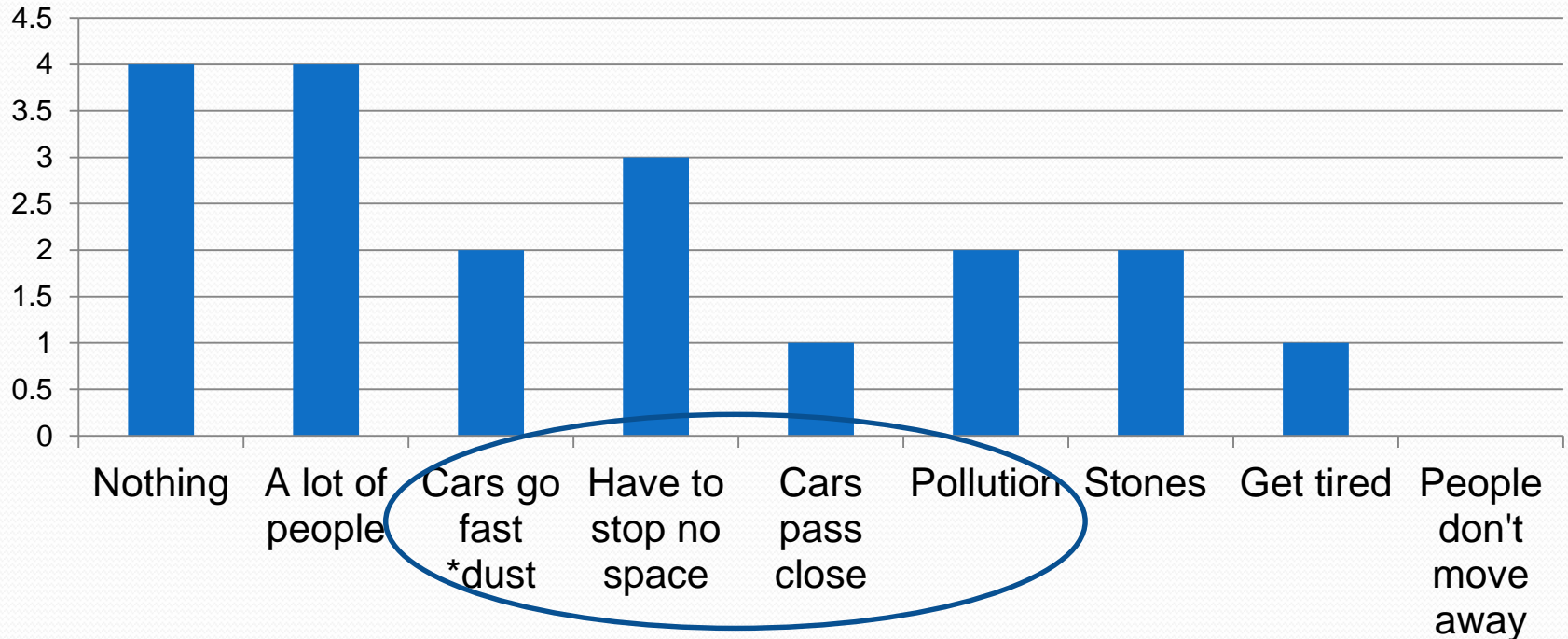
What do you **not** like about going by car?



What do you like about cycling?

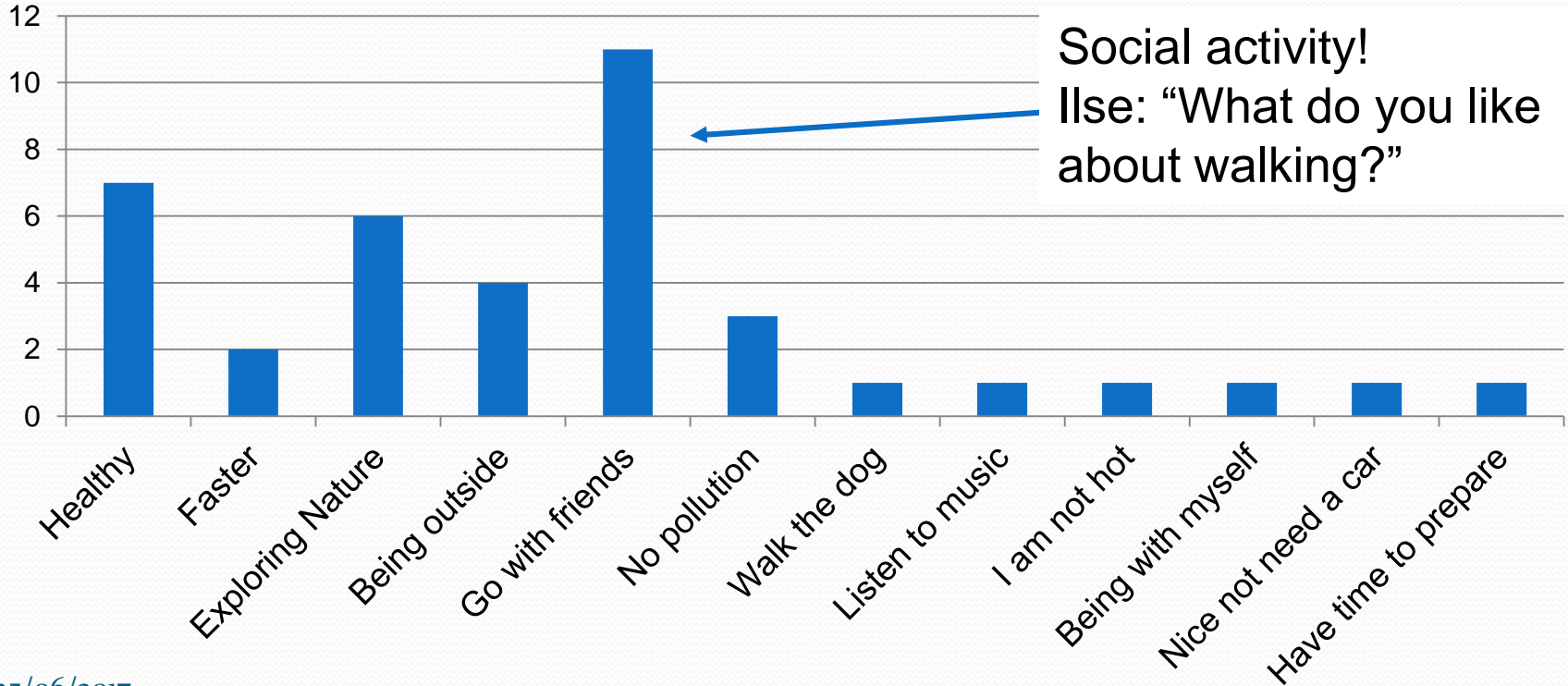


What bothers you when cycling?

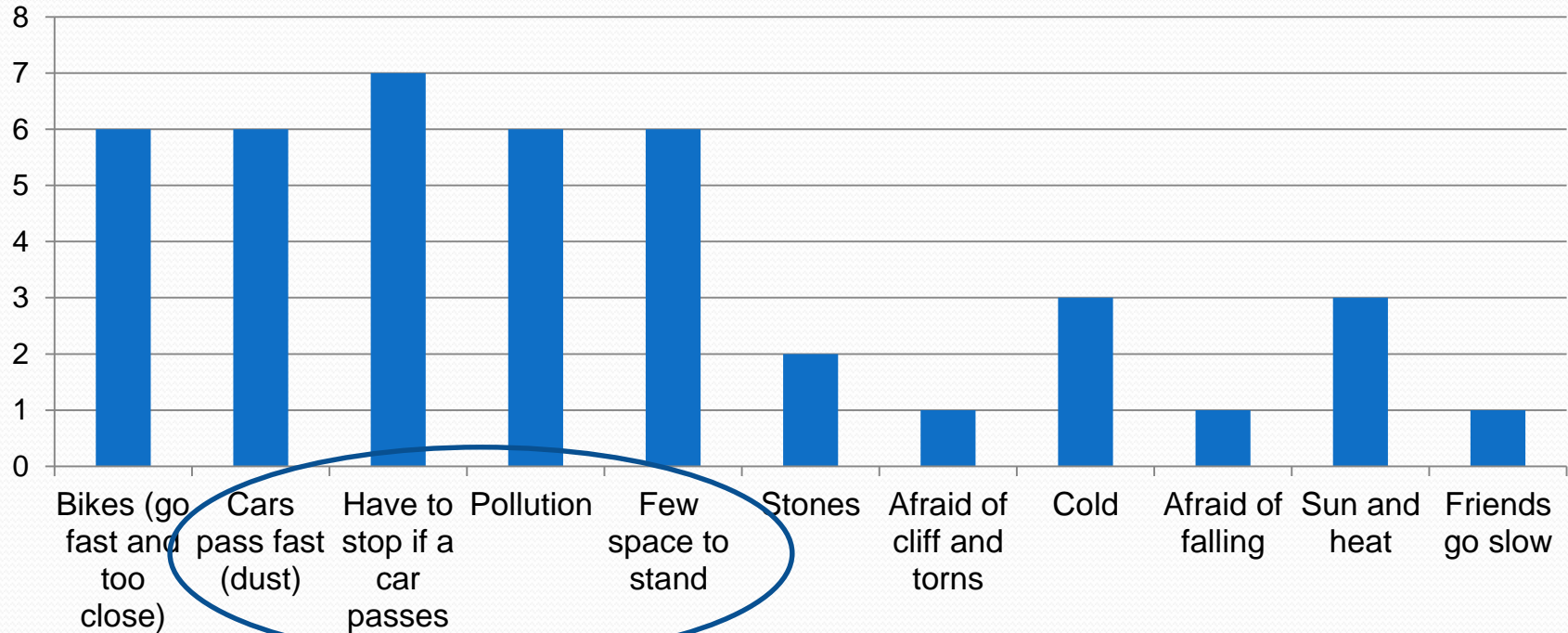


Cars main complaint (8x)

What do you like about walking?



What bothers you when walking?



Cars main complaint (25x)

Quotes from children

- “I like to walk, but they take me by car”
- “I come by car because I am used to be brought everywhere by car”
- “Let’s throw a grenade to the cars”
- “We cannot do this, because they (parents that drive) will get angry”

4. Traffic signs

Deal with cars speeding and pressuring pedestrians and cyclist

We met the mayor of Orba (2500 inh.)

Sign on the path

- 10 kph
- Priority pedestrians and cyclists (not understood by all drivers)

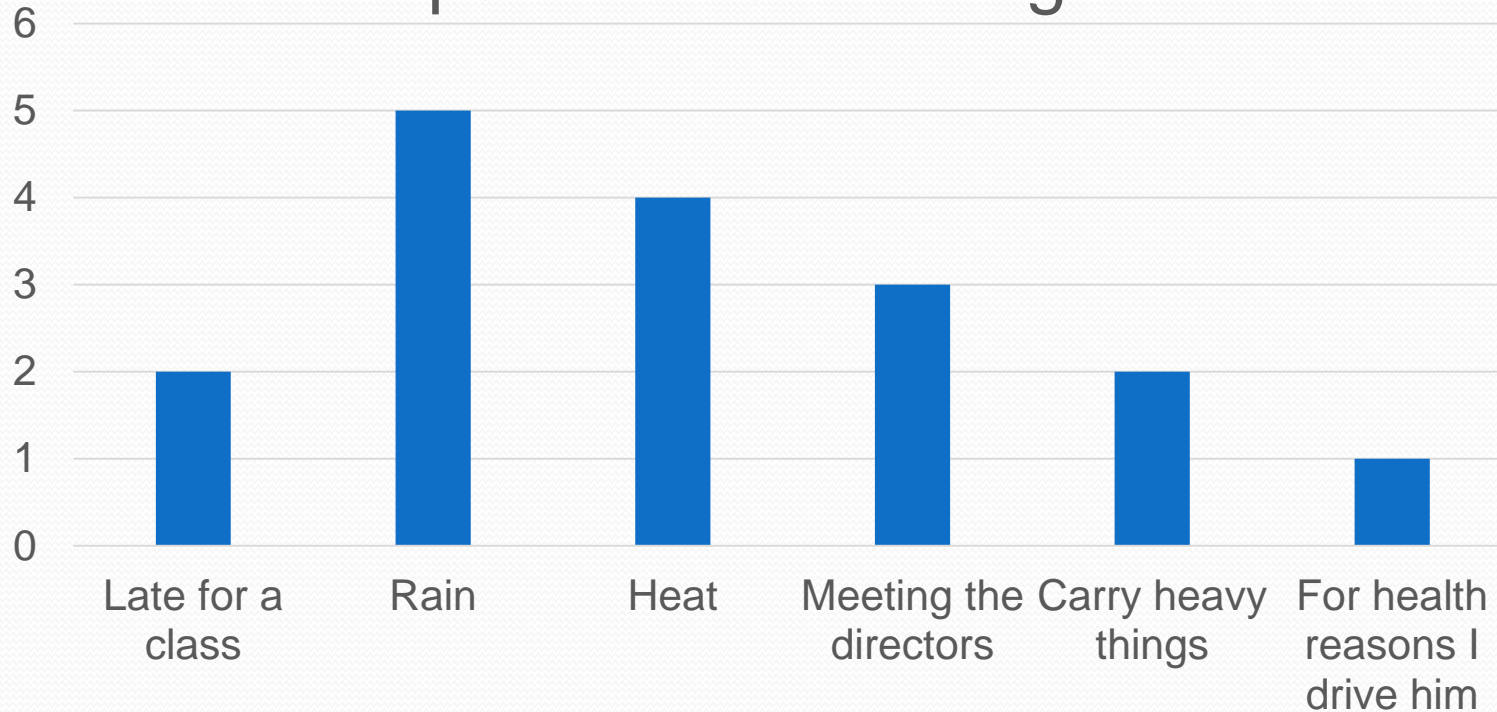


5. Parents survey

33 responses out of 120(?) parents

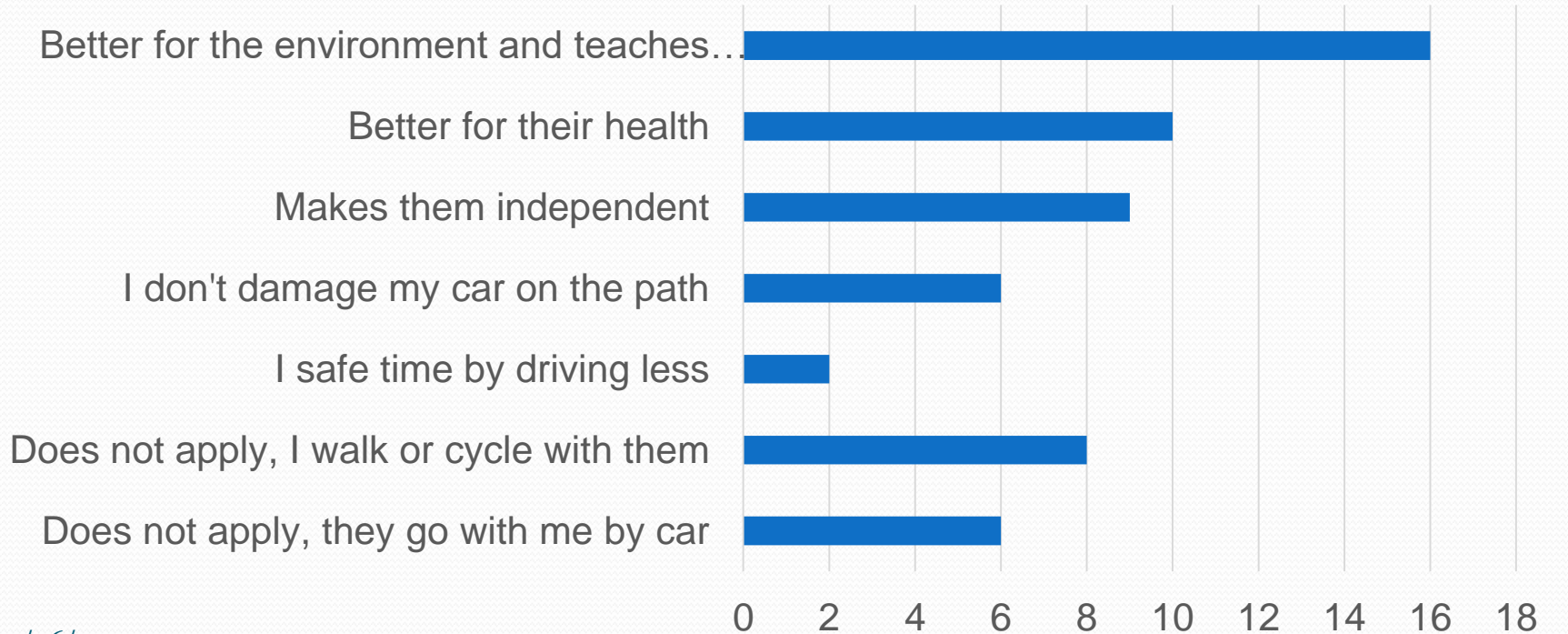
Parents of children 5-16 years old

Why do you sometimes drive on the path in the morning?



... but
normally
not

“I like that my children cycle or walk alone”



Recommendations & comments:

- Request that “cars drive slower”: 7x
- Request that “pedestrians respect cars”: 3x
 - Pedestrians should not stay in the middle of the path
Ilse: “Why should you walk in the middle?”
- “Clear rules as are there everywhere in Ojo”

6. Current situation and conclusions

After counts and children's survey: Fewer cars, and more respectful behaviour towards cyclists and pedestrians:
(Video 2.14 min)

After meeting mayor:

- Old tarmac: Not requested, but possibly asked by neighbor

Ilse:.....





Conclusions - Discussion

- Car-culture: Also children not used to walk
 - Ilse, “How you notice it is a car-culture?”
 - 850 m. considered too far for 4 or 5-year old
 - Priority for pedestrians and cyclists is not understood
 - Many drivers do not understand difficulty to walk and cycle on uneven terrain (they never walked the path)

Conclusions – Discussion (2)

- Child in charge: “I do not want to walk”. So parent drives
- Social factor: Kids walk down, not up
- “Qué calor”: Spanish complain about heat (not walk) – Ilse: “Do you think it is too hot to walk?”
- Ecological school, but car is holy

Next steps

- First of all: there has been a positive change
- 1. Communicate the new traffic signal (placed this summer holiday) and explain priority
 - Cars to stop to allow bikes and pedestrians pass
- 2. Make a clear policy/guidelines for use of the path promoting cycling, walking and road safety
 - Time window without cars on the path
 - Idea: Carfree day

Final good news

We now have a back entrance (5 min. walk from road at other side)

These parents no more drive on the path



Thank you!



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Questions (for Jeroen or Ilse) and suggestions?