Walking, cycling and driving to school on the ecological path

Jeroen Buis
Ilse Buis
25-06-2019
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
No priority for sustainable behaviour
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

ENTRANCE 500 m. HALFWAY 135 m. PINES 215 m. OJO DE AGUA
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

- 8.45 - 9.00
- 9.00 - 9.15
- 9.15 - 9.30
- 9.30 - 9.45
- 9.45 - 10.00
- 10.00 - 10.15
- 10.15 - 10.30
- 10.30 - 10.45

- Entrance
- Halfway
- Ojo
Bicycles up:

- 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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bikes</th>
<th>Entrance</th>
<th>Halfway</th>
<th>Ojo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average:</td>
<td>4,5</td>
<td>5,5</td>
<td>5,0</td>
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Bicycles down:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bikes</th>
<th>Ojo</th>
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<th>Entrance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
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Average: 9,9 9,2 10,0
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 kindergarten
Children interviewing children
Results: 76% children prefer walking or cycling

What do you prefer?

- Walk: 42%
- Bike: 34%
- Car: 24%
Ilse: How do you go to Ojo in the morning?

16 Sometimes go by car!
Afternoon: How do you return?

- Car
- Car + walk
- Car + Bike
- Bike
- Bike + Walk
- Walk

- Yes
- Sometimes

25/06/2017
More people walk back

Ilse:
How was it before in the afternoon?
What do you like about going by car?

- Less Effort: 8
- Sleep in car: 2
- Rain: 1
- Cold: 1
- Goes faster: 1
- Sometimes I don't: 1
- Listen to music: 1
- I am not tried: 1
- Fast to school: 1
- I can arrange my stuff: 1

25/06/2017
What do you **not** like about going by car?

- Rather being outside
- Dizziness
- Pollution
- Too hot
- Lack of exercise
- Fear to harm someone
- Damage nature
- Traffic jams
- Tiring to go by car

Child of parent that drives very fast on the path (answer was not in survey)

25/06/2017
What do you like about cycling?

[Bar chart showing preferences]

- Being outside: 3
- Faster: 8
- No pollution: 1
- Good for health: 5
- Going with friends: 4
- Like to be the first: 1
- Do Jumps / Fun: 2

25/06/2017
What bothers you when cycling?

Cars main complaint (8x)
What do you like about walking?

Social activity!
Ilse: “What do you like about walking?”
What bothers you when walking?

- Bikes (go fast and too close)
- Cars pass fast (dust)
- Have to stop if a car passes
- Pollution
- Few space to stand
- Stones
- Afraid of cliff and torns
- Cold
- Afraid of falling
- Sun and heat
- Friends go slow

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”

- Better for the environment and teaches...
- Better for their health
- Makes them independent
- I don't damage my car on the path
- I save time by driving less
- Does not apply, I walk or cycle with them
- Does not apply, they go with me by car
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?