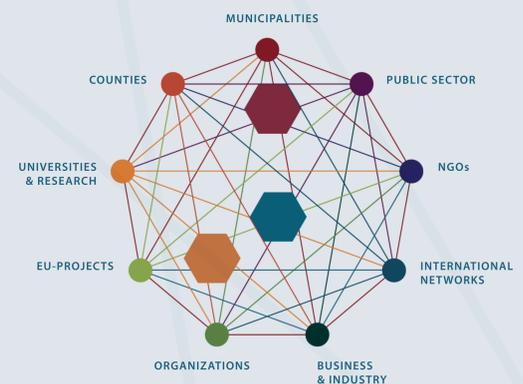


Establishing an infrastructure for safety based on local preconditions, national policies and global visions

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BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Norwegian Act of Public Health states that municipalities shall promote the population's health and well-being, contribute to the prevention of mental and somatic illnesses, disorders or injuries and contribute to the protection of the population against factors that may have a negative impact on health. Preventive efforts are given broad attention. The same focus is echoed in other laws and regulations. This gives Norway a supportive framework for safety work on community level.

But public health work is mainly focused on lifestyle diseases and the prevention of these. Much less interest is put into injury prevention and safety promotion, although life lost due to injuries is a major cause of death up to 45 years of age and caring for injuries is costly for national health services. We need to increase awareness about the scope of injuries, causes of injuries and the potential for injury prevention and safety promotion.

MUNICIPALITIES PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE

The Norwegian municipalities are obligated by the Act of Public Health and other laws and regulations to prevent accidents and support safety. The municipalities also have special responsibilities as owner of nurseries, schools, sport centers, homes for the elderly etc. As a large employer of many different professions; teachers, nurses, doctors, officials, technicians etc they have employers liability to promote safety and work with health, safety and environment.

METHOD

To promote a local infrastructure for safety and support the municipalities NSF has developed a national program for community safety based on local challenges, Norwegian laws and regulations, global WHO visions and Safe Community experiences. The program is developed to meet the specific political and administrative demands put on Norwegian municipalities and will guide them towards better practice based on multisector, and inter-sector cooperation. The eight step program promotes systematic, long term, evidence-based safety efforts. NSF offers advice and guidance, networks and seminars.

KEY RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

With a supportive National legislation and framework and Norwegian Safety Forum as a driving force a useful and motivating national model for community safety has been developed. The model is a valuable tool for municipalities turning global visions and national policies into local realities. It is described, endorsed and recommended in the in the National Program for Public Health and the National Plan for Road Safety.

NORWAY FACTS & FIGURES

- Population, 5.3 million people
- 600 000 persons need treatment for injuries every year
- 2.000 deaths related to injuries every year
- 550 suicides
- More than 9.000 hip fractures annually – one every hour
- 29 communities are designated as Safe Communities, in all 50 communities take part in the network

NORWEGIAN SAFETY FORUM (NSF)

- A non-profit organization
- A national advocate for safety supported by the Norwegian Ministry of Health
- The mission is to prevent home and leisure accidents
- National center for Safe Community-work
- Activities on three levels: Lobbying and policy work on national level, projects and activities on local level, partner and contributor on International level

ACTIVITIES

- Website – newsletters – Facebook
- Seminars and conferences
- Networking and meetings
- Hub for information
- Activities, tools and recommendations

MEMBERS AND PARTNERS

- Ministries, counties, municipalities, universities, research institutions, NGOs, schools and health institutions etc.
- The work is supported by the Ministry of Health and the major insurance companies represented by Finance Norway

NORWEGIAN PATHWAY TO SAFER COMMUNITIES

- Plans for safety integrated in the political vision
- Plans and activities anchored locally
- Systematic safety work involving different sectors
- Knowledge based activities
- NGOs invited to participate
- A life span perspective

Turning global visions and national policies into local realities.

