



## **IMPORTANT: A support structure is crucial for success**

### The Dutch example

The first initiatives were civil initiatives. There was no government involvement at all. The starting point was an absolute commitment to the problem. The problem of unsafe road traffic harming the most vulnerable road users was felt at that time as a direct encroachment on both the personal and social living area.

With the increasing number of vehicles in the early decades of the last century, the Dutch voluntary network was born and in 2007 it celebrated its 75th anniversary!

- Informal local groups unified around single issues, mainly speed (1924)
- The first formal local groups were formed and established membership associations (1928)
- These local groups joined forces to form a national union (1932!)
- For some awareness projects, the association obtained its first financial aid from the government (1948)
- Professional support became necessary and such support was provided (1955)
- After two changes of name, the organization was finally given the name of the Dutch Traffic Safety Association (Veilig Verkeer Nederland) (1972)
- In 2001 the organisation went into a fusion with two other private organisations, one for pedestrians and one specializes in children. A new name was born: 3VO.
- The name Veilig Verkeer Nederland was re-established in 2006, because the name itself was so very well known among most of the public, but its policy changed structural.

The Dutch Traffic Safety Association (VWN) is a national organization divided into four regions with over 3,000 active volunteers, supported by around 80 professionals and over 60,000 members and donors. The awareness of the name (Veilig Verkeer Nederland) among civilians is about 96%!

The profile is that of a nongovernmental organization (NGO) with the legal status of an association. It has a decentralized structure with networks at all levels and volunteer and professional staff (national and regional). Its approach is based on a positive dialogue with all key players in society, in the knowledge that only shared responsibility can contribute to a safe road system.

The authorities at all levels, industry and citizens bear responsibility for reducing the number of road victims and increasing the safe social living area.

- The new mission statement says: Everyone has the right to be able to walk or drive the streets safely. VVN is a societal organization that dedicates itself to that right by inspiring as many people as possible, to stimulate them and involve them actively in road safety.
- The 4 major policy items are: Values and norms, Safe living areas, Driving under influence, Speed.
- Its ambition is based on: Vision zero, equal rights for all road users, sustainability, active roles for citizens, the business community and the authorities at all levels and a key role for committed volunteers.

#### **SPOTTING PROBLEMS, MOBILIZING, SERVICE PROVIDING**

Experiences from the past showed us that we can distinguish some very particular ways to achieve an objective.

One can recognize three distinct avenues of action.

That strategy we call: Spotting problems, Mobilizing and Service providing (SMS). These three core tasks give direction to all of the work involving volunteers. They give direction into the project phases, we already wrote about. This strategy is implemented in all the work both of professionals and volunteers. Professionals (in cooperation with experienced volunteers) are leading by setting the goals and the support of the execution route for every single project. However: the outline plans are discussed by the national council (voluntary board members) and the managing staff.



- [S]** With Spotting problems we have knowledge of a major or important traffic safety problem; we know the background; we know the causes and we are able to support all the evidence we put forward with figures with our own research data or with research data belonging to others (research institutes).
- [M]** Under Mobilizing we know how to involve citizens in actions and campaigns, and at the same time we know how to get through to politicians in such a way that they too will be willing to take up their responsibilities.
- [S]** Service providing is the actual support we give to citizens who decide to take action and is also the support we give to politicians who wish to make use of our knowledge and public image in order to achieve a political (traffic safety) objective. But also all kinds of educational efforts (e.g. schools) are an example of service providing.

#### **THE CURRENT WORK PROGRAM (2009) IS THE FOLLOWING:**

##### **[1] Safety of children**

To increase the safety of children in traffic, over 200,000 children every year take the, not legally based, National Traffic Exam. It is the final test after eight years of traffic safety education at primary school. The reach is 7,500 schools. In more than 2,400 schools there is a Traffic Parent at each school. They organize campaigns in the area outside the schools and bring together other parents to make road safety an important issue in their children's upbringing (setting good examples, lights, helmets, safe bicycles, etc.). In addition, there are 55,000 School patrol members. Every year there are Back to School and On Feet and Bike to School campaigns with a reach of 400,000 children and one million parents and the support of 20,000 volunteers.

##### **[2] Safe living areas**

To achieve safe living areas, VVN is lobbying the national parliament to introduce a 30 km speed limit in residential areas. The organization of the National Street Play Day (2,000 streets with a reach of 175,000 children and 350,000 parents) is supported by 15,000 volunteers. Several Contact points (helpdesks) with over 40 specialized volunteers (some are engineers) and 28 radar gun teams (with 5 volunteers each) measure the speed in over 400 streets with a reach of approximately 40,000 citizens and advise the local community on infrastructure solutions. The central telephone helpdesk collects all the reports of people mentioning unsafe road situations and VVN uses these to influence the national policy on road safety.

##### **[3] The adolescent**

For the most vulnerable road user, the adolescent, the organization provides training for 15 to 16-year-olds on the safe riding of mopeds. But also, for those who have just passed their driving test, VVN contributes to policy groups to increase national legislation. VVN be all for accompanied driving for young people starting at the age of 17 years. A new policy is getting to be developed in order to reach young people and involve them in peer-to-peer approach projects and new media campaigns. Special attention will get the gender differences in road user behaviour.

##### **[4] Elderly people**

For elderly people there are local information meetings. These Information sessions reach about 10,000 elderly people and the number of participants is growing every year. Also growing every year is the number of people above the age of 55 years who take a Driving Ability Test. In 2008 VVN started with an ability test for using scoot mobiles.

##### **[5] Driving under influences**

For almost every age group, the Dutch Traffic Safety Association has had a leading role in the organization of Alcohol campaigns for more than 50 years. Over 1,000 volunteers take part (sport clubs, pubs, streets) and the reach among the different target groups is enormous: 1,300,000 people are directly (more or less personally) confronted with the message. Since 2001 we join the European campaign BOB. It is one the most successful projects ever.

**[6] Businesses, institutions and large companies**

In order to involve the transport sector in the road safety activities, VVN established a Reward system for the safe driving of vans and buses in 1949. There are now more than 1,000 members representing over 25,000 professional drivers.

Other products and services are: Information meetings, Simulation programmes in the workplace, Driving style tests for car drivers, special programmes for little van drivers and awareness programmes for all kinds of traffic behaviour issues. There are great opportunities to interest businesses, institutions and large companies in road safety matters. A sponsor program with large and small enterprises supports the financial need of VVN to stay an independent association with less than 40% maximum governmental financial support. A new development is the introduction of Sustainable enterprise with the focus on safe mobility. More and more large groups are introducing this form of corporate social responsibility. These groups endorse the so-called '10 golden rules for safe mobility' and invest in a change of corporate culture by taking all kinds of measures, e.g. to reduce car use, reward the use of public transport or bicycles, conducting a settlement policy, contribute to road safety projects, prohibit unnecessary driving through residential areas, set the agenda among stakeholders for this new policy on sustainable enterprise, etc. More businesses are interested in getting/earning a certificate (quality or control mark) from VVN. They can distinguish themselves from other companies and realize a positive image both to principals, the government and the public.

**[7] Volunteers**

We currently organize the following courses and training modules for our associated volunteers: Introduction Course for New Volunteers; Basic Road Safety Course; How to Deal with the Media; Work for Child Friendly Neighbourhoods; Lobbying and Marketing. But we also organize feed back days for e.g. our traffic parents, business canvassers and trainers.

Without the contributions from the national parliament, politicians and the authorities at all levels, the police, scientific institutes, businesses, citizens and dedicated people, both volunteers and professionals working together in the Dutch Traffic Safety Association, there would be no Dutch example!