

# The County of Sogn og Fjordane, Norway



Application to become a member of the World Health Organization's (WHO) Network of "Safe Communities"



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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The ongoing preventive health efforts in the county have developed on the basis of a fundamental attitude that cooperation across party lines and administrative and departmental borders is necessary if we are to find durable solutions to the challenges which the county has in the areas of injury and accident prevention, and in other prioritized areas pertaining to its citizens' physical and mental health.

The politicians have decided that the reduction of injuries and accidents will be an important part of the county's paramount and long-range people health plan, and they have annually allocated about 4,000,000 kroner during the latest plan period (County Plan 2001–2004) earmarked for these efforts.

## **2. BACKGROUND AND HISTORY**

The injury and accident preventive work started as a project in 1991 and is today being continued in accordance with the Safe Communities concept of the World Health Organization (WHO), in which we try to involve all the municipalities in the county. The municipalities of Høyanger and Årdal are carrying out active projects as part of the municipal service areas, and they have both achieved the status as safe municipalities in the WHO system.

The County of Sogn og Fjordane has been involved in public health issues since 1990, first as part of the Sogn og Fjordane Project, and since 1996 integrated in the County Municipality's areas of responsibility and services. The Chairman of the County Council at that time, Mr. Julius Fure (Cons.), was able to get the support of a unanimous County Council for initiatives in favor of putting health, culture, well-being, and safety issues on the agenda throughout the county. The professional and ideological foundation of the work had been designed by Professor Peter F. Hjort and is based on his extended health concept which states that health is more than simply the absence of disease. It is rather an interaction between body, mind, social life, and each individual's ability to handle everyday life's big and small demands and challenges. The responsibility is placed at the individual level as well as with the political and public systems. The municipalities and the volunteer organizations take an active part in this work.

Together with the project, extensive efforts in the areas of health supportive measures and disease preventive work were started, efforts which today are an integral part of the county organization. "The Accident Project" was the biggest singular undertaking which had Folkehelse (the Public Health, or the National Institute for Public Health, as it was called at that time) as an active partner. Three Ph.D. candidates did research on our municipalities and collected various data, resulting in two doctoral dissertations and a number of research reports written in the late 1990's.

As part of the work the municipal health services and the hospitals recorded all injuries and accidents that were treated in the county between 1992 and 1995. The registration was done by the municipal physicians in 23 of 26 municipalities, and in 3 of the 4 hospitals. The National Institute for Public Health converted all data from the county and returned them to the municipalities as accident profiles that gave a fairly detailed overview of the accident categories each municipality had, their scope, when they occurred, which persons were

affected, the degree of seriousness, and the way the accidents occurred. A profile for the entire county was also developed.

Registered injuries for the county in 1993:

REGISTERED INJURIES. TREATED BY A PHYSICIAN. FOR THE COUNTY OF SOGN OG FJORDANE IN 1993

Age	Woman	MAN	Unspecified	Total
0- 9	301	477	7	785
10-19	452	735	7	1194
20-29	225	854	5	1084
30-39	168	530	2	700
40-49	136	387	3	526
50-59	127	231	1	359
60-69	143	153	1	297
70-79	149	113	1	263
80+	104	50	2	156
<b>Total</b>	<b>1805</b>	<b>3530</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>5364</b>

TYPE OF ACCIDENT	Freq	Percent	Cum.
TRAFFIC	353	6.6%	6.6%
WORK	1195	22.3%	28.9%
SCHOOL	457	8.5%	37.4%
SPORTS	601	11.2%	48.6%
STREET/ROAD – NON-TRAFFIC	360	6.7%	55.3%
HOME	1328	24.8%	80.1%
KINDERGARTEN	117	2.2%	82.2%
SENIOR CITIZENS HOME	38	0.7%	82.9%
OUTDOORS	300	5.6%	88.5%
OTHERS	418	7.8%	96.3%
UNSPECIFIED	197	3.7%	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5364</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

The registration for the entire county was finished in 1995. However, three municipalities—Høyanger, Årdal, and Gloppen—decided to continue the registration for another three years. During this period, registration forms were sent directly to the county's Injury Coordinator, who then returned converted data for these municipalities, enabling the recipients to make use of them in ongoing injury prevention efforts.

In 1994, 14 municipalities started cross-divisional injury preventive groups which made use of injury data in their local work on various projects. The Accident Project supported their work in different ways, such as meetings and assorted information materials. An Injury Catalog was assembled, collecting relevant data and information, the results of ongoing efforts in other municipalities, various check lists, et cetera. The Injury Preventive Forum in Oslo provided the contents of the Injury Catalog and participated in a number of initiatives in the county in 1993 and 1994. Several of these groups are still active.

The experiences we made in the years between 1991 and 1995 allowed us to identify some criteria that need to be fulfilled in order for us to succeed in our long-range efforts. These correspond well with the most important criteria which WHO has identified concerning Safe Communities: efforts based on a plan, cooperation across organizational borders, the registration of accidents, selection of prioritized areas and target groups. For this reason, it makes sense to continue the work in accordance with these criteria, and the countywide

network “Safe Communities Sogn og Fjordane” was established as a permanent forum for municipalities and agencies in the county which have a reduction of injuries and accidents as their prioritized area or area of responsibility. All work in this field is today done in close cooperation between all relevant forums in the county and is a goal-oriented task the County Municipality has given high priority.

In 1996, the County Council passed a Strategic Plan for Preventive and Health Awareness Efforts in the County of Sogn og Fjordane, in which the reduction of injuries and accidents was one of four prioritized areas. At the same time, a permanent position as Public Health Coordinator for the County Municipality was established. The main task of the Coordinator is to continue the preventive work, and at the same time to integrate it in the activities of the County Municipality. In addition, the County Municipality’s own health, environment, and safety activities developed in accordance with the principles and the ideological foundation on which the Sogn og Fjordane Project was based.

Today, the injury and accident preventive efforts and the public health work are generally integrated in the County Municipality plan and in the county’s activity plan. The County of Sogn og Fjordane has been chosen as one out of five beacon counties in Norway to showcase the national efforts to build a durable infrastructure for public health in the country (3.2. page 11).

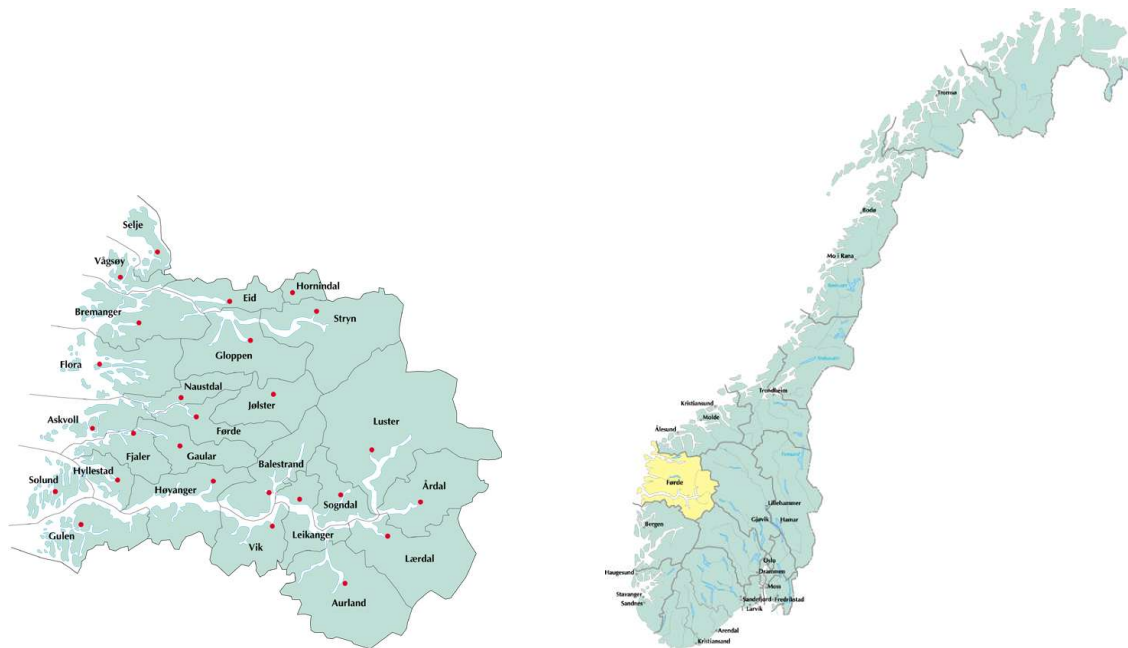
### **3. THE COUNTY OF SOGN OG FJORDANE**

#### **3.1. Demography**

The County of Sogn og Fjordane in Western Norway is characterized by deep fjords, a number of glaciers, and tall mountains. The distribution of heights is different from the rest of the country. The total area is 18,619 square km, but in spite of an abundance of space, most of the area is mountainous and uninhabited. The bulk of the population lives lower than 300 m above sea level.

The Sogne Fjord is the longest (24 km) and deepest (ab. 1,300 m) fjord in the world. The tallest mountain is Store Skagastølstind (2,40 m), while the Hornindal Lake is the biggest lake in Sogn og Fjordane and the deepest in Europe (514 m). The Jostedal Glacier is the biggest glacier—417 km<sup>2</sup> and 80 km long. The glacier plateau is between 1750 and 1950 m, and Lodalskåpa is its highest point (2083 m).

The county consists of 26 municipalities and is generally divided into four regions: Nordfjord, Sogn, the Coastal Region (referred to as the HAFS municipalities), and Sunnfjord.

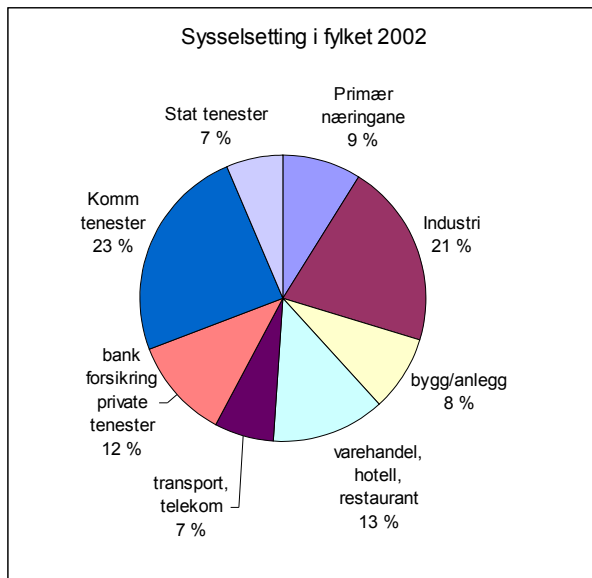


### 3.2. Industrial Structure

Sogn og Fjordane is a typical manufacturing area, with an especially large number of people employed in agriculture. Compared to the rest of the country there are few people working in specialized service industries. Manufacturing is characterized by high productivity, which, however, is low in agriculture and service industries.

The county has a structural problem caused by young people's tendency to move to the big cities. This results in a low population growth, an increase in the percentage of older people, and a lack of balance between the sexes. Paradoxically, this problem decreases in times of economic recession. In the year 2002, the population remained the same as the previous year. The end of 2002 clearly indicated that we are in times of pessimism in various industries, with growing unemployment. Traditionally, Sogn og Fjordane has a low unemployment rate. When economic indicators are negative, unemployment is, as a rule, less noticeable in this county, due to the fact that cities have a higher number of people employed in commerce and other service industries, which tend to be more vulnerable in times of economic recession.

The Association of Norwegian Municipalities (Kommunenes Sentralforbund, KS), the Governor of Sogn og Fjordane, and the County Municipality have given Professor Jørgen Amdam of Møre Research (Møreforskning), the task to consider what makes the County of Sogn og Fjordane unique in terms of economic structure and how its special features can be used in development projects. The local communities and the small labor markets are the county's most characteristic features. People's identity is first and foremost tied to their village, then their municipality, and finally the county, while it is poorly tied to the region. Professor Amdam's advice is to create a development strategy in which flexible specialization and cooperation are the response to the prevailing ideology of big units. Specialization in the various regions will be necessary, and a systematic use of partnership agreements will be a good method, he says.



### 3.3. Population and age distribution

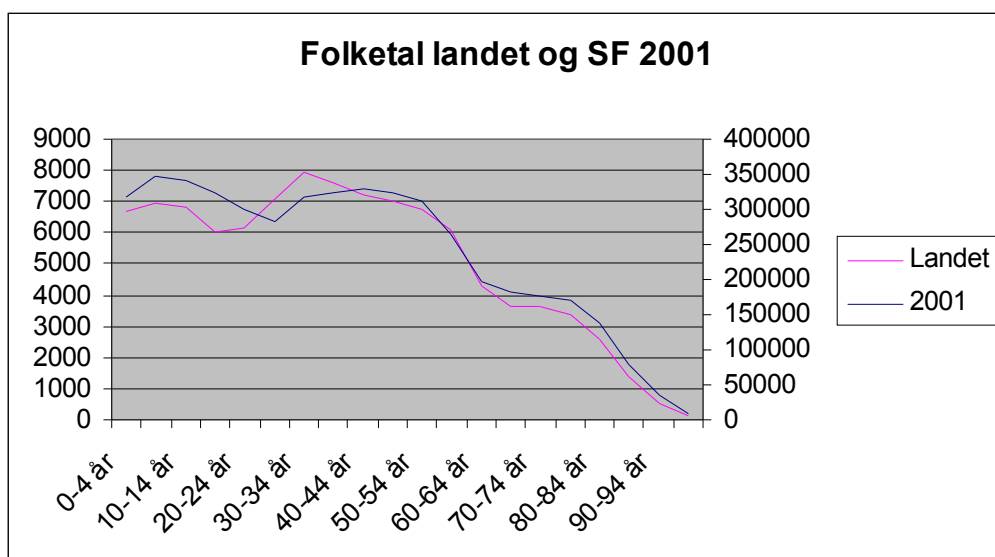
At the end of 2002, the county had 107,200 inhabitants living in 26 municipalities. As the table shows, Flora is the biggest municipality with 11,392 inhabitants, Solund the smallest with 904. Many municipalities are experiencing depopulation and an increase in the percentage of older people.

Pop. Jan. 1, 2002- 2003			
Both sexes	2002	2003	Change
14 Sogn og Fjordane	107280	107274	-6
1401 Flora	11323	11392	69
1411 Gulen	2473	2450	-23
1412 Solund	921	904	-17
1413 Hyllestad	1528	1537	9
1416 Høyanger	4632	4579	-53
1417 Vik	2915	2901	-14
1418 Balestrand	1506	1505	-1
1419 Leikanger	2199	2193	-6
1420 Sogndal	6604	6680	76
1421 Aurland	1807	1781	-26
1422 Lærdal	2178	2180	2
1424 Årdal	5709	5661	-48
1426 Luster	4968	4926	-42
1428 Askvoll	3344	3314	-30
1429 Fjaler	2935	2927	-8
1430 Gaular	2824	2797	-27
1431 Jølster	2978	2974	-4
1432 Førde	10765	10906	141
1433 Naustdal	2751	2731	-20
1438 Bremanger	4093	4077	-16
1439 Vågsøy	6385	6349	-36
1441 Selje	3037	3046	9
1443 Eid	5758	5762	4
1444 Hornindal	1197	1195	-2
1445 Gloppen	5716	5739	23
1449 Stryn	6734	6768	34

Førde, Sogndal, and Flora had a noticeable population growth from 2002 to 2003, whereas there was an even decrease in population in most municipalities.

The Counties of Nordland, Finnmark, and Sogn og Fjordane are the only counties in the country with a population decrease.

There is a shortage of women in the age group 20–39 which is higher than in the rest of the country. The female proportion has gone up from 86.3% in 1981 to 91.5% in 2002. The average for the entire country is 96.8%. The shortage of women is approaching that of the country average, which may be caused by the fact that men move out.



Ill.: Population in the entire country and Sogn og Fjordane

As the age distribution table shows, the county has nearly the same overall pattern as the rest of the country with one exception: more children per woman are born in this county.

## **4. THE COUNTY MUNICIPALITY OF SOGN OG FJORDANE – INTRODUCTION**

As a democratically elected and administrative unit, the County Municipality was established by the adoption of the Law of Municipal Councils in 1837, which is also the year the municipalities were established. The representatives of the County Executive Board (Amtsformannskap, later fylkesting) were until 1964 elected by and among the representatives of the municipal councils in all rural municipalities in the county, one representative from each municipality.

In 1964, the urban municipalities joined the organization, and the representation reflected somewhat better the population in each municipality. In 1976, the County Municipality left the status of secondary municipality to become a primary municipality, alongside the municipalities. This was expressed through direct election of representatives of the County Council, direct taxation, and a separate County Municipality administration. The office of the Chief County Executive was separated from the Office of the County Governor. As an administrative unit, the County of Sogn og Fjordane has existed since 1763.

The County Municipality is an organized cooperation in Sogn og Fjordane to find solutions to common tasks. The main tasks are within the fields of education, dental health care, culture, communication, industrial development, energy policy and planning.

Many of the County Municipality's tasks are a result of laws and regulations passed by the central government. In addition, the County Municipality can take on any task that by law has not been given other authorities. The most important thing for the County Municipality is that it takes care of tasks that are important for the people of Sogn og Fjordane.

The central government has given the County Municipality the task of being a regional development initiator. What this function entails is currently under development. In addition, the County Municipality is an important vendor of services which we all need. As a service provider, the County Municipality is a major entity with an annual turnover of NOK 1.2 billion and more than 1,300 employees, which corresponds to 1,100 man-years.

The County Municipality is the administrative level between the central government and the municipalities, governed by those who live in the county through its own political bodies. In that way, the County Municipality is a tool for the people of Sogn og Fjordane in their efforts to develop the county as they want it—and a tool for the Storting (the Norwegian parliament) and the Cabinet in carrying out national missions.

### **4.1. Main political bodies of the County Municipality**

The County Municipality is governed by the people of Sogn og Fjordane—and they do it by electing County Council representatives. The County Council elects a Chairman of the County Council, a Deputy Chairman of the County Council, the County Executive Board and the principal committees, and it decides who is to sit on the principal committees. The Chairman

of the County Council is the County Municipality’s highest political and legal representative. His signature means a commitment on behalf of the County Municipality. The County Council is the highest political body of the County Municipality. Typically it convenes three times a year. The County Executive Board, which, as a rule, convenes once a month, corresponds broadly speaking to the municipal executive board of a municipality.

**4.2. The principal committees**

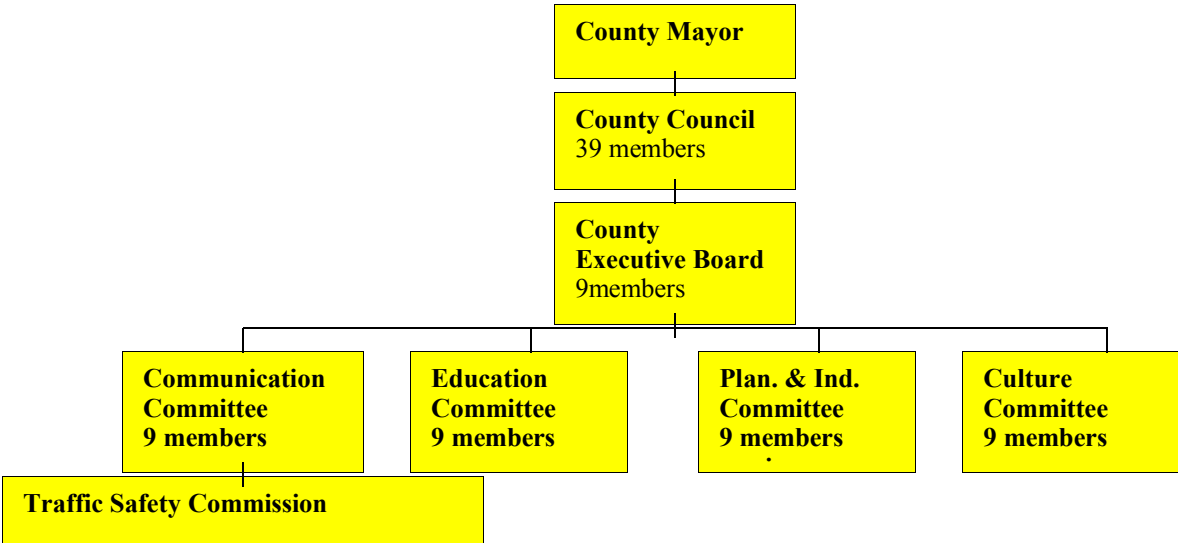
The County Municipality of Sogn og Fjordane has four principal committees of which each has its own area of responsibility. The principal committees can partly make final decisions, partly give advice to the County Council or the County Executive Board. The four principal committees are: the Committee for Education, the Committee for Cultural Affairs, and the Committee for Communication.

The Committee for Education is the County Municipality’s principal committee in the educational sector. The Committee for Planning and Industry is the County Municipality’s Committee in cases involving planning and industrial development at the county level. The Committee for Cultural Affairs is an advisory body for the County Municipality in cultural matters. The Committee for Communication takes care of matters pertaining to traffic and communication.

**4.3. The County Traffic Safety Commission**

The County Traffic Safety Commission is a subcommittee under the Committee for Communication and has traffic safety as its special area of responsibility. The Commission consists of 5 county politicians representing three different major committees: Communication, Culture, and Education. In addition, the Commission has consultative professional members from, among others, the police, the State Road Works, the association Safe Traffic, the schools, the driving schools, and the health and social department of the County Governor’s office.

The Commission works in accordance with 4-year activity plans in which traffic safety initiatives are coordinated. The activity plan is adopted by the County Council. In the present plan (2002–2005), measures in the upper secondary schools, traffic control and surveillance plus local transport initiatives aiming at getting young people safely home from for example events are prioritized tasks. The work for the 2006–2009 period has just started.

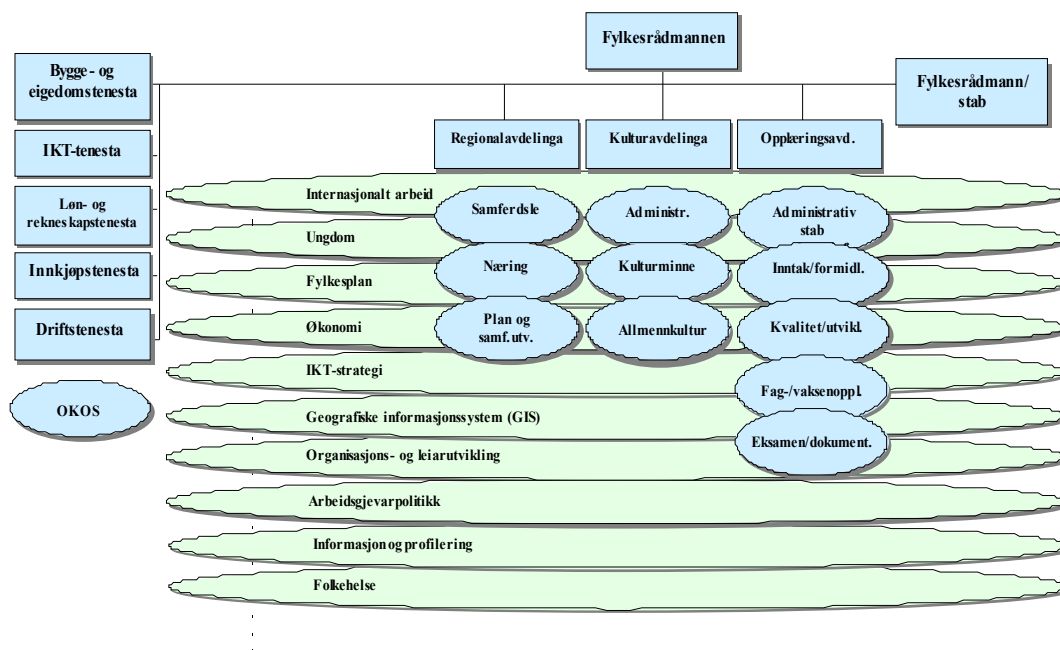


III.: Map of the political organization

#### 4.4. Administrative organization

The Chief County Executive is the chief executive of the county municipal administration. He prepares issues for the County Council, the County Executive Board, and the principal committees, besides overseeing the work of the entire county municipal administration which comprises the departments of regional development, culture, and education, plus a staff department. Until January 1, 2003 the County Municipality also had a health department, but at that time, the responsibility for hospitals was transferred to the central government, and since January 1, 2004 the county child protection agency and the alcohol prevention agency were taken over by the central government. Today the county municipalities are responsible for community planning, communication, industrial development, general culture, the operation of cultural institutions (art museums, music therapy), cultural heritage protection, and the upper secondary schools. In Sogn and Fjordane there are 15 upper secondary schools.

The departments are divided into base teams in which those assigned to the same areas coordinate their work. A handful of cross-divisional teams have been established to coordinate activities that cross divisional borders. One of these teams is responsible for public health issues.



Organisasjonskart per 01.01.2003

III. 3:

Organizational map of the County Municipality of Sogn og Fjordane

#### 4.5. Tasks

The County Municipality of Sogn og Fjordane is to be an active regional initiator for development and cooperation, and it is to take care of and further develop the county's common interests. This work is to be done within the framework of the national community

aiming at achieving a sustainable development.

The county municipalities are responsible for developing county plans. This is warranted in the Planning and Building Code of 1985 and consists of coordinating the activities of the central government, the County Municipality, and the municipalities in the county. The County Plan is developed in close cooperation with the municipalities, the central government, industry, organizations, schools and colleges, and other partners. The County Municipality has no governing power over the municipalities in matters pertaining to prevention and health supportive measures, but it can stimulate and motivate them. One of the County Municipality's most important tools is the County Plan, which identifies the prioritized areas for the entire county and is to guide policies at the municipal level. Another important tool is financial support and the supply of competence and networks. Partnerships for public health give the county municipalities new and improved possibilities for cooperation with the municipalities and ability to influence municipal prioritization and local work.

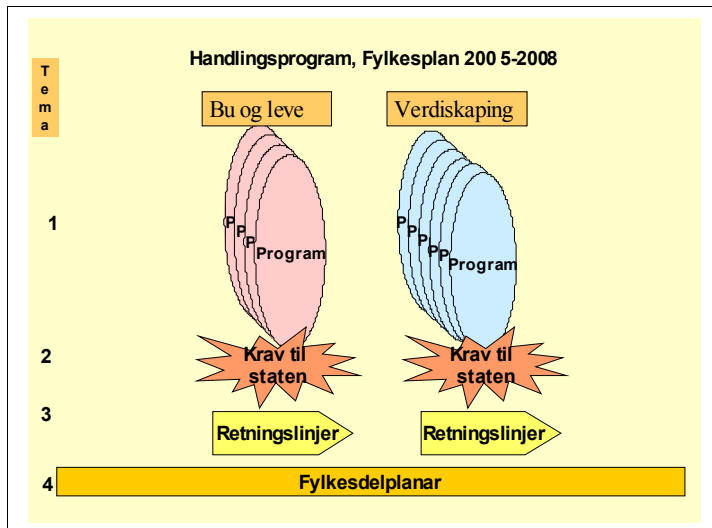
In the upper secondary school system, there are about 4,200 young people aged 16 to 19 who get basic training in either general or vocational subjects. The general subject branch is a three-year study and gives the students the right to apply for admission at colleges and universities. The vocational subject branch programs qualify students for various trades and are 4-year studies: 2 years in school, and 2 years in a business, factory, or plant. About 40% of the students have to live outside their homes, in a room that they rent on their own or in rooming houses, as they cannot live at home when attending school. The transition from home to a room can be tough for many.

## **5. AN INFRASTRUCTURE BASED ON COMMUNITY COOPERATION, HEADED BY A CROSS-DIVISIONAL GROUP RESPONSIBLE FOR SAFETY AWARENESS IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

As previously mentioned, the position of Public Health Coordinator was established on a permanent basis in 1997. The main task of the Coordinator is to continue the preventive work and integrate it with the activities of the county. The premises were put forward in the Strategic Plan for Preventive and Health Awareness Efforts, which was adopted by the County Council in 1997. The main focus has been injuries and accidents, culture and health, children and adolescents, besides the linking of volunteer and public resources.

However, the public health work was as early as 1993 integrated in the Pink Book chapter of the County Plan with the following main goal: "The County Plan is to contribute to a high life quality among people through holistic thinking and preventive work." The County of Sogn og Fjordane was the first county to do this in Norway and its efforts were praised by Ms. Grete Knudsen, the Minister of Health at that time.

In the present County Plan (2005–2008), the public health work is part of the topic "Living conditions" and is one of 7 prioritized program areas.

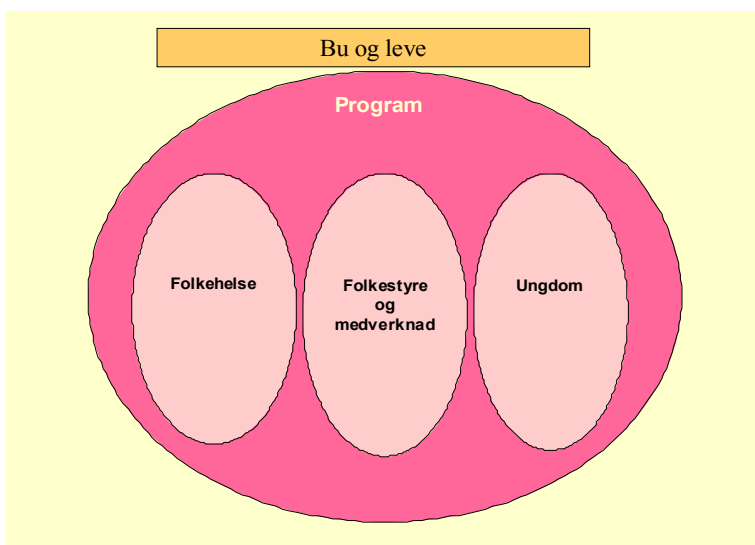


### 5.1. Organization of the activity program

The injury and accident preventive work is rooted in a structure based on plan affiliation and activities/measures which are carried out within the framework of programs in tandem or cooperation with other agencies at the regional and local level.

As most of the County Municipality's development work is the public health work integrated with the activity program of the County Plan. That means that injuries and accidents get strategic and action oriented attention, like other important development tasks that the County Municipality has.

The County Plan for the period 2005–2008 features two topics: "Living conditions" and "Creativity". "Living conditions" has 3 prioritized areas: "Public health", "Democracy and participation" and "Young people".



"Safe local communities," "Safely home for 50 kroner", local transport arrangements, "Safe senior citizens," "The Senior Ride," "Abuse prevention" are examples of work that has been

included in the program. The other ideas that have been implemented in the traffic safety area are follow-up activities of the activity program of the County Traffic Safety Commission.

## **5.2. Vision and goals in the County Plan for 2005-2008**

### **Vision**

Based on good local communities, Sogn og Fjordane is to be an exciting, challenging, and internationally oriented county.

### **Program goals**

The development of active public health work based on cross-divisional and cross-professional cooperation. The prevention of health injuries and factors that are important for public health are prioritized tasks.

### **Goals concerning injuries and accidents**

Motivate and assist municipalities to work in a goal-oriented way and actively to reduce the number of injuries and accidents involving at-risk groups in the population on a cross-divisional basis, in which volunteer organizations and industry take an active part. Implement national mission goals.

## **5.3. Connection with other prioritized tasks at the national and county level**

The work is continually examined in accordance with national and regional strategies and guidelines. At the regional level, this takes place through the developmental process of the County Plan every 4 years and in the activity programs, cf. section 2 about basis and organization.

In addition, the County Municipality is involved in ongoing work in areas that are relevant in this context through the Regional Agenda 21 (RA 21) and in the development of urban centers and the structuring of centers. In the latter, the physical layout of urban centers, increased use of public transportation, safety on roads used by school children, and access for everyone are areas that have been given high priority. The County Municipality has also joined the Fredrikstad Declaration to work for a sustainable community through Regional agenda (RA 21).

The Norwegian Government's national activity plan for the prevention of accidents in homes, schools, and leisure activities (1997–2002) has been a key element in our work. The same goes for the national follow-up of proposals made by the World Health Organization (WHO) and criteria of the idea of safe local communities. The establishment of the national secretariat for safe local communities has thus been important for the follow-up of the accident preventive work in Sogn og Fjordane.

### **5.3.1. Partnership for public health**

The Storting White Paper No. 16 (2002-2003) "Recipe for a Healthier Norway," encourages in chapter 8 the county municipalities to take responsibility for the coordination of public health chains and partnerships with the central government and the municipalities. The County Municipality of Sogn og Fjordane was in June 2004 chosen as one out of five beacon counties in the national plan for the establishment of an infrastructure for public health, and has now joined binding agreements with 12 municipalities concerning plan affiliation, coordination and implementation of local initiatives in exposed areas. The reduction of injuries and accidents is one of 8 prioritized areas which are part of the partnership work. All municipalities have employed a public health coordinator in either 30 or 50% positions. These will lead the local work together with a local public health council consisting of the municipal

agencies, central government agencies represented in the municipalities, and volunteer organizations. The municipalities that have signed agreements with the County Municipality are Balestrand, Sogndal, Årdal, Luster, Lærdal, Eid, Hornindal, Selje, Gloppen, Jølster, Høyanger, and Førde. There will be agreements with more municipalities in 2005.

Together with the regional partnership, the County Municipality is to assist the municipalities in their efforts (cf. 5.4). A cooperative forum has been established where municipal representatives meet with each other and regional representatives, together with several different networks: The Professional Forum for Alcohol Abuse Prevention, Safe Local Communities Sogn og Fjordane, and the Resource Group Against the Use of Tobacco. The Forum for Physical Activity was started in the spring of 2005.

The partnership work is to turn public health issues into a lasting and important municipal task, both at the political and administrative level. The volunteer organizations will play a key role here; their contribution is an important and regional premise. This way of working strengthens our possibilities to exert influence on municipalities and make them include health and injury preventive measures in their work.

#### **5.4. Cross-professional cooperation**

In Sogn og Fjordane cross-divisional and cross-professional cooperation groups have been established at the program and activity plan level. "The Health Forum" is a regional partnership group consisting of the County Municipality, the County Governor, Helse Førde HF (Førde Hospital), the Association of Norwegian Municipalities, the Social Security agencies, the College of Sogn og Fjordane, the Political Committee for Young People, the police, the Sports Associations, the National Association for Public Health, and the Outdoor Activity Associations. This group will coordinate its preventive work at the regional level, in addition to playing an important part in the policy development process. Furthermore, the group will assist the public health coordinators in the municipalities, hold meetings and gatherings, and contribute to the solution of any problems and challenges concerning the implementation of measures in exposed areas, and see to that health issues become a part of the superior planning processes in the municipalities. Today, all municipalities, for example, develop a municipal sub plan for traffic safety and a municipal sub plan for sports, physical activity, and outdoor activities.

In the Safe Local Communities Sogn og Fjordane network, there are representatives of the municipalities of Årdal, Leikanger, Høyanger, Safe Traffic (Trygg Trafikk), the Norwegian Public Roads Administration, and the County Traffic Safety Commission. The County Traffic Safety Commission is politically appointed and reports to the Committee for Communication and works together with the Norwegian Public Roads Administration, the police, the municipalities, traffic schools, bus companies, the associations of the taxi industry, Safe Traffic, the County Governor, and others.

As the statistics from the Norwegian Public Roads Administration have shown that the majority of injuries and casualties in traffic accidents affect young drivers and passengers, the County Traffic Safety Commission has initiated cooperation with sports associations, soccer clubs, traffic schools, motor cycle clubs, and the associations of the taxi drivers and owners. Various measures have been initiated in order to reduce the number of accidents (cf. 6).

Several upper secondary schools have as their goal to prevent traffic accidents by offering their students traffic knowledge as an elective. Furthermore, the schools initiate after-school leisure activities for the students on the school premises. Schools have also seen it as their

task to assist students who live away from their families help overcome social and practical problems, giving their activity coordinator an important role in this work. At some schools student dorms are given special attention. Students who do not show up in class have been contacted and taken to school, and a close cooperation with the school health services has been established to help individual students.

Traffic safety has become the responsibility of people working on transport issues. It is here that the responsibility for the implementation of the campaigns "Safely home for 50 kroner," "Senior Citizen Transport," and local transport offerings is. The work on these measures is the duties of several people. The same goes for staff working on urban development, environmental issues, physical activity, and general public health issues.

As the various measures that have been started show, the County Municipality has broad contact with many groups in the area, in addition to schools and municipalities. We use different methods to reach out to the target groups, and we establish alliances with those who implement the activities. In many ways, the task is to show that things can be done differently, or new initiatives for action can be taken, within existing structures, instead of building new ones. Thus, we talk about integrating safety work and safety awareness at different levels.

The municipalities of Årdal and Høyanger have a good grasp of their safety work and they are both looked upon as models for the other municipalities. The fact that they have been chosen as "safe municipalities" in the WHO system, gives them a certain status. An example is the deviation registration routine implemented at the homes for senior citizens at Høyanger, which other municipalities also have adopted.

The County Municipality serves as a facilitator and a mediator for the exchange of experiences and sees to that the experiences obtained by these municipalities are given to others. Conferences, gatherings, and web sites are channels for such exchange of experiences, and this will also be an important part of the partnership with the 12 previously mentioned municipalities.

## **6. LONG-RANGE SUSTAINABLE PROGRAMS FOR BOTH SEXES AND ALL AGE GROUPS, COMMUNITIES, AND SITUATIONS**

The County Municipality of Sogn og Fjordane has identified injury and accident preventive work as one of many prioritized areas. In case 0017/03, the County Council made the following decision:

- 1 The County Municipality will apply for status as a "safe county" in the worldwide Safe Community network of the World Health Organization.
- 2 The County Municipality intends to further develop its long-lived work to reduce injuries and accidents among its citizens in general and among at-risk groups in particular.

The County Municipality has thereby adopted the WHO criteria. The work is to a modest degree based on project-oriented measures, but has integration and systemic change as its

most important device. Structures and networks have been built to enable a follow-up of this on a permanent basis (cf. 3.4).

The practical work is carried out along two lines: 1) As measures that the County Municipality implements for all 26 municipalities in the county; and 2) as assistance to individual municipalities like help and support to organize, plan and carry out its local injury and accident preventive work. This is particularly the case through the network “Safe Communities Sogn og Fjordane.”

“Safe Communities Sogn og Fjordane” has existed on an informal basis since 1995, and was formalized in the year 2000. Through this network the County Municipality tries to help and support municipalities that are actively engaged in a systemic reduction of injuries and accidents. We also try to stimulate and motivate other municipalities to give priority to injury and accident preventive work in their community service areas. The network holds an annual conference at the county level on accident related topics and has network gatherings with the exchange of experiences in practical injury preventive work.

Through the network, the County Municipality, every second year, arranges group travels to the Nordic Safe Community Conference (cf. 8).

To enable the municipalities to initiate such accident preventive measures, the County Municipality of Sogn og Fjordane also allocates money that is meant to support measures to make traffic safer and other general injury preventive measures. The municipalities, institutions, volunteer organizations, professional groups, et cetera, can apply for this money. The municipalities are supported financially in their efforts to make school roads safe, to safety measures like guardrails, publishing of information brochures, and the like. The County Municipality wants these means to support initiatives in the local communities to prevent accidents involving at-risk groups like children and senior citizens.

## 6.1. Traffic safety for 0-14-year-olds



Students at Fardal School, Årdal



Safe Traffic's reflector tag campaign

### 6.1.1. Measures to increase the use of helmets and reflector tags

The volunteer association Safe Traffic (Trygg Trafikk) is active at the national, regional, and local levels to reduce the number of traffic accidents. The association receives financial support from the County Municipality of Sogn og Fjordane for its work for increased use of helmets. Many campaigns and information activities are meant for schools, like the distribution of reflector tags. Safe Traffic cooperates with the social and health department of

the County Governor's Office to make more children use their bikes to get to schools, among other things. In this effort, too, helmet use is given high priority.

The County Traffic Safety Commission has for the last 5 years allocated about 150,000 kroner annually for the production and distribution of reflector tags among students at the county's schools and colleges. In this area, the County Traffic Safety Commission has several partners: the County Municipality (transport team), Safe Traffic, the taxi industry, bus companies, the police, student associations, the Political Commission for Young People, and the Norwegian Public Roads Administration. All first-graders in elementary schools are given reflector tags, the same goes for third-graders, for whom the police have a special program. There are also programs for upper secondary school students, and bus companies and representatives of the cab industry run their own campaigns. Young people take an active part when reflector tags are designed and distributed, and we realize the importance of acknowledging their use. Commercials for movie theaters, posters for secondary school cafeteria walls, and media attention help information about the reflector tag campaign reach the target groups.

### **6.1.2. Local transport**

Insufficient communication makes it difficult for young people to get home in a safe way after leisure activities. The County Municipality has set aside 1 million kroner which the councils for young people in cooperation with their municipalities can apply for. Transport services have to be purchased from those who are licensed for passenger transport. In 2003 and 2004, 23 municipalities made use of this for the transportation by bus or taxi to slalom hills, concerts, movie theatres, or other cultural events at which young people want to attend in their municipality or region.

### **6.1.3. The School Road Campaign**

"The School Road Campaign is a national arrangement offering financial support for the physical improvement of school roads to eliminate dangerous traffic spots, like the place where school buses stop. This arrangement is administered by the county municipalities. In previous years, financial support for the improvement of school roads was earmarked in the national budget. At the end of the 1990's the central government decided that each municipality had to develop its own traffic safety plan in order to apply for financial support. In 2000, the government began giving each county municipality financial support earmarked for traffic security, instead of to each municipality. As a result, several county municipalities reduced the amount of money that went to the improvement of school roads. However, the County Municipality of Sogn og Fjordane continued to maintain support at the previous level and even increased it for the present budget period.

## **6.2. Traffic security for 15-24-year-olds**

### **6.2.1. The "Report it" campaign**

"Report it" is an attitude campaign developed by the County Municipality's road office in the early 1990's, targeting young passengers of motor vehicles. The young are encouraged to use car belts and to report it if someone wants to drive under the influence or if the driver disrespects speed limits. According to research results from the Institute of Transport



Economics (Transportøkonomisk institutt) from 1999 (report no. 425), the "Report it" Campaign has led to a 30% reduction of the number of injured or killed car passengers aged 16 to 19 in Sogn og Fjordane. The "Report it" campaign is now a well-established activity and has been expanded to the entire West

Norwegian region (the Counties of Sogn og Fjordane, Hordaland, and Rogaland).

As a continuation of the "Report it" campaign, the County Municipality of Sogn og Fjordane has started the "Safely home for 50 kroner" arrangement.

### 6.2.2. "Safely home for 50 kroner"



This project is a safety awareness measure developed by the county and targets young people between 16 and 24, the group of people that are most often involved in accidents (cf. 6). The project is focused on the part of the week with the highest accident rate: the weekend. The County Municipality has contracted owners of taxis and developed a system of bus lines

in the night between Saturday and Sunday from most urban centers that have an upper secondary school. Bus lines to the adjacent villages have also been established. These are not traditional bus lines, and the aim is to offer young people in the region a safe trip home by means of public transport for a sum of money comparable to what young people in big cities pay for a ticket with the night bus, subway, and the like. In this way, we can eliminate young people's need to be passengers in crowded, old, and unsafe vehicles driven by inexperienced drivers.

Young people in the county make extensive use of "Safely home for 50 kroner." In 2003, the number was close to 7,000 individuals.

The County Municipality allocated 1 million kroner annually for this project in 2002 and 2003. Since 2004, "Safely home for 50 kroner" has become a permanent arrangement in the county. The Institute of Transport Economics is currently evaluating the arrangement for the State Road Works, considering the effects it may have if expanded to the rest of the country. The result will be ready in 2005. Today, several counties have initiated "Safely home..." projects after the Sogn og Fjordane model.

In order to increase their competence in some important areas pertaining to the transport of young people, taxi drivers have been offered training developed by the Sogn og Fjordane chapter of the Association of Norwegian Driving Schools. The course contains theory, minibus driving, driving on icy roads, accident site management in combination with police, fire exercise together with firefighters, and First Aid training given by the Red Cross. An evaluation of the training is expected in the spring of 2005.

### 6.2.3. Traffic awareness as an elective in all upper secondary schools by 2005

The County Municipality's action plan for traffic safety has the goal of making traffic awareness an elective at all upper secondary schools. The Association of Licensed Traffic Schools (Autoriserte Trafikkskolers Landsforbund), Sogn og Fjordane Chapter, has designed a plan for the theory part of the traffic instruction which has been implemented at some of the upper secondary schools in the county. At the same time, the Norwegian Public Roads

Administration (Statens Vegvesen) of Western Norway has expressed the desire to adopt a new traffic instruction plan to improve the instruction among young drivers. These measures are designed to complement each other.

By taking this elective, the students commit themselves to a theory course, plus a certain number of driving lessons at a driving school and with their parents. They sign a contract with their schools detailing this the first year. At Firda Upper Secondary School there are 120 students that participate, and traffic has become the biggest elective in the school. The school is responsible for the theoretical part of the course, whereas the driving schools provide the practice part (the driving lessons). The important thing is to start the traffic training at an early stage. 16-year-olds get a training/practicing period of 2 years in order improve their ability to drive in a qualified way. The feedback from the driving schools is that those who take the elective are more independent and show more ability when taking the driving test than those who do not take part in the training.

The total number of participating students from 8 upper secondary schools is about 400. Some schools cooperate with the police, traffic stations, the Red Cross, insurance companies, and the fire brigade. Among the measures that are included is awareness training among students who graduate from upper secondary schools and who tend to engage in excessive partying the last months of their final school year, First Aid, traffic safety measures in the school's neighborhood, etc.

#### **6.2.4. Traffic awareness as a mandatory topic in the lower secondary schools through Safe Traffic projects**

This is a cooperative effort currently under development. Several of the county's lower secondary schools have had theme days and projects. Teachers have been trained to treat the topics in class. Similar training will be further developed and offered in the future.

#### **6.2.5. The Norwegian Public Roads Administration's information meetings on driver training in cooperation with the municipalities and the traffic schools**

The Norwegian Public Roads Administration holds meetings in secondary schools and attends parents meetings to inform about driver and guardian training. The goal is to better motivate and qualify guardians or parents to perform volume training together with the person who is going to take the driver's license examination. Another goal is to make people become interested in traffic behavior and not just concerned with passing the test and getting the driver's license as quickly as possible.

#### **6.2.6. Cooperation with the Soccer Association of Sogn og Fjordane**



The traffic safety sign



One of the teams involved in the safety work

The Soccer Association of Sogn og Fjordane will, through its activities, further traffic safety efforts, good traffic culture, and the ideas behind the 0 vision (i.e. 0 killed and 0 injured) among its clubs and their about 12,000 members throughout the county. In the period 2002-2005, the Soccer Association will focus on safe transport to and from soccer matches, and a cooperation agreement has been signed with the County Traffic Safety Commission, the Public Roads Administration, the police, and Safe Traffic concerning safety. The parties issue an annual activity plan and a list of measures combining information, demonstration, and traffic controls. Traffic safety will permeate all their activities, and models have been designed to show how transport to training and game sites can be carried out, among other things. Furthermore, they have announced that they will check if drivers use seat belts in connection with major events, and reflector tag campaigns and contests among clubs for the best traffic safety project have been held.

Children, teenagers, and adults participate in campaigns for specific age groups:

- "Reflector tags when going to training and home" for children aged 7-12.
- "Report it" for teenagers 13-19 years old.
- "Public transportation and the use of seat belts" for adults

In addition, the Soccer Association has highlighted traffic safety issues on its web sites, in brochures, and elsewhere. Representatives drop by tournaments and distribute information materials and reflector tags and reach out to about 300 teams for children aged 7-10. This corresponds to about 65-75 % of all the children in these age groups. Contests are held at the club level on the topic "Our Club and Safe Traffic."

Coaches, referees, and club leaders are trained on issues like:

- behavior in traffic
- 0-0 on the road is also a victory

What is a traffic safe soccer club?

Who is responsible for your team in traffic?

Guidelines for safe transport practices

In 2003, the Sogn og Fjordane Soccer Association was awarded the County Municipality's traffic safety prize for its commitment, initiatives and civic attitude.

### **6.2.7. Annual Traffic Safety Award**



The Traffic Safety Commission of the County Municipality of Sogn og Fjordane has, for the last eight years, awarded an annual prize for traffic safety. According to the guidelines for the prize, it can be given to institutions or individuals who have made an extraordinary effort for

traffic safety. The prize consists of a diploma and NOK 25,000. It is awarded at the County Municipality Hall in October and has become a high status prize.

In 2003, the prize was given to the Sogn and Fjordane Soccer Association, and in 2004 to Firda Upper Secondary School.

### **6.2.8. Meetings with motorcycle enthusiasts in cooperation with the police, Safe Traffic, and the Norwegian Public Roads Administration**

Annually, we try to have a meeting with motorcycle enthusiasts' MC Forum. The number of motorcyclists is growing and they are frequently involved in accidents. For that reason, the MC Forum gets financial support when it has theme days for its members to focus on traffic safety for motorcyclists.

### **6.2.9. On-site traffic inspections in the municipalities**



Ill.: Traffic inspection at the main bus stop in the municipality of Hyllestad

As part of their work the County Traffic Safety Commission and the Norwegian Public Roads Administration have on-site traffic inspections in the municipalities. This is unique for Sogn og Fjordane and was started in 1997 because knowledge on how to approach minor and major traffic dangers varies from municipality to municipality. On the County Traffic Safety Commission's initiative, the Norwegian Public Roads Administration has designed a regular inspection scheme, according to which experts from the Norwegian Public Roads Administration, every 3 years, visit each municipality, often together with representatives of Safe Traffic and others, depending on the needs of the individual municipality. Traffic dangers and concerns of the municipality are discussed, and recommendations are made. One is particularly concerned with the needs of pedestrians and cyclists, like safe school roads. Professional advice and suggestions concerning the financial part of practical solutions are presented.

Three years later, a follow-up meeting is held to assess to what extent issues have been addressed and which issues still require attention. In this way there is continuity in the work and minor issues that tend to be passed among divisions and local community organizations are sorted out. At the same time, these routines show what problems can be solved at the local level at very little cost and which measures require increased financial support or other possible actions in order to be implemented.

The picture shows the main bus stop at Hyllestad, which was renovated in 2003. The municipality was given financial support from the County Traffic Safety Commission to make raised pedestrian crossings and introduce 30 km speed limit zones. The Norwegian Public Roads Administration supported the purchase of traffic signs so that the project could be completed.

#### **6.2.10. Bike and pedestrian paths in the financial plan**

The lack of bike and pedestrian paths creates dangerous situations and discourages people who want to be physically active. The political bodies of the County Municipality of Sogn og Fjordane have given this issue high priority, and the goal is to increase the funding for the improvement of bike and pedestrian paths by 2 million kroner each year.

#### **6.2.11. Information campaign, public debate about the 0 vision**

The County Traffic Safety Commission works in accordance with the 0 Vision principle. It has been a prioritized task to inform the public about this principle in the county traffic safety plan. The development of an information campaign, planned for 2004 and 2005, has begun.

### **6.3. Mental health**

It is important to look holistically at the preventive work. The prevention of problems in exposed areas like mental health, alcohol and drug abuse, physical activity, nutrition, and so on, is important because these are problem areas which the County Municipality has chosen to give priority to, but also because this work supports the accident preventive efforts.

#### **6.3.1. The establishment of informal meeting places in the local communities**



upanger in the Municipality of Sogndal

The number of places where the youngest teenagers can meet in their leisure time is constantly being reduced as more and more cafés and similar businesses where people get together are licensed to serve alcoholic beverages. The meeting place can then become the street, the gas station, and the like, without any influence from adults. This may lead to the development of gangs and adverse behavior among the young. Local meeting places for positive activities independent of organized activities are important measures to prevent the youngest teenagers from drifting idly around at night. The County Municipality gives financial support to municipalities and organizations which establish informal meeting places for young people aged 13 to 18. This may be a municipal youth club, an Internet café, or a place where young people can engage in various activities without being exposed to any pressure to spend money. If those responsible for the establishment want to apply for financial support, the young have to take an active part in both the planning and implementation processes.

### **6.3.2. The prevention of bullying and racism in all upper secondary schools**

Following a tragic death in 1999 which was racially motivated the County Municipality's Educational Division started active efforts to improve the atmosphere at all upper secondary schools in the county. Teachers and students were invited to a conference in 2000, which, besides highlighting the topic through interesting lectures, was also the first step in the development of activity plans for each school. The student councils have taken an active part in this work. The schools have received check lists to ascertain the follow-up and the quality of the measures that were launched in 2001. The goal is mainly to strengthen the social climate at the schools.

### **6.3.3. Environmental coordinator at all upper secondary schools and the position of ombudsman for students**

A plan has been adopted for the hiring of environmental coordinators at all upper secondary schools in the county. Today 11 out of 15 schools have such positions. Through these jobs the schools will take care of the students' social needs and see to that they enjoy the time they spend in school and their leisure time. Besides environmental coordinator positions, the students' academic and social well-being will be the focus of a new position as student ombudsman for the county.

### **6.3.4. A better school health service / the health clinic for young people**

The health department of the county governor's office is responsible for carrying out this project, which is funded by the County Municipality of Sogn og Fjordane. The upper secondary schools are given financial means to initiate measures together with the school

health service. Examples of measures that are under way are more time for the health services during school hours, the establishment of a health clinic that is open for young people at night, and efforts to increase the competence among teachers to discover problems among individual students.

#### **6.3.5. Mental health guidance and information in upper-secondary schools**

Focusing on guidance and information on mental illnesses among young people, the project (called the VIP Project) is meant to make the students better prepared to take care of their mental health and raise awareness of what can be done when someone has a mental problem or illness. The aim is to demystify the students' relationship to mental problems and trivialize them. Teachers, guidance councilors, and health personnel in the schools are to be given more possibilities to detect problems among students at an early stage and to address them in a proper way.

Through the VIP Project, the schools get ready-made manuals and are taught how to make use of them. Health professionals are also involved, giving guidance and follow-up on an individual basis. 6-7 upper secondary schools take part in the project involving about 1,500 students.

### **6.4. Alcohol and drug abuse; violence**

#### **6.4.1. The prevention of alcohol and drug abuse**

The County Municipality of Sogn og Fjordane offers financial support to municipalities that initiate measures to prevent an early alcohol drinking debut age and to reduce the use of alcohol and drugs among young people. The County Municipality tries to encourage the municipalities to approach their preventive measures in a holistic way. In the spring of 2003, we held a county-wide conference at which cooperation and coordination of resources in favor of municipal and local measures was the topic. The seminar on the preventive measures against the use of alcohol and drugs given by the Foundation Bergen Clinics (Stiftelsen Bergensklinikkene) was in part financed by the County Municipality. In addition to offering financial support to municipalities, the County Municipality has entered a partnership with the Nordfjord Regional Council concerning preventive measures against the use of alcohol and drugs in 6 municipalities. The Sogn Regional Council has also given these measures high priority in its action program. Both regions receive financial support from the County Municipality to carry on this work.

A group of 20 students and contact persons from three upper secondary schools have participated in a course entitled "Exchange from teenager to teenager." The students who have taken the training are supposed to be positive role models for the student group and motivate others to make their own positive choices and possibly resist pressure from friends and peers to get drunk or use drugs. If this project produces what is intended 12 other upper secondary schools will be offered similar programs.

In October 2004, the County Council (case 044/04) decided to give more priority to alcohol and drug abuse measures, in upper secondary schools and in tandem with the municipalities (cf.. 3):

”As owner of the upper secondary schools in the county the County Council will take the main responsibility for awareness campaigns and drug and alcohol abuse preventive efforts in schools, and wants the Educational Committee to develop a set of measures in this area. The project should also be based on the County Plan program for public health. Within the framework of the County Plan program for public health, the post-treatment work should also be put on the agenda.”

#### **6.4.2. Coordination of crime preventive efforts**

The Police District of Sogn og Fjordane is one of the police districts in the country with the lowest per capita crime rate. There is reason to believe that good preventive police work, at various levels, is one of the reasons why this county is one of the police districts with the country’s most law-abiding citizens. A decentralized police force, with sheriff offices in each municipality, where the sheriff is visible as a person of authority, is part of the picture. Being close to the communities and having knowledge about crime and unwanted incidents enable the police to think holistically, plan, and implement the right initiatives, alone or together with others.

The superior goal is to create safety and reduce crime by revealing and going after the reasons for crime development and thereby prevent unlawful incidents from taking place and reoccurring. One of the strategies the police make use of in their preventive work is to contribute to the introduction of the SLT model in each municipality in the county. This model emphasizes local and cross-divisional cooperation involving all agencies dealing with children and teenagers. At the municipal level a cross-divisional group is to be established which, together with an appointed coordinator, is to link the various municipal measures together. The police have a superior responsibility for this coordination work. At the end of 2004, 18 municipalities ( Selje, Vågsøy, Bremanger, Førde, Naustdal, Fjaler, Gaular, Askvoll, Hyllestad, Høyanger, Balestrand, Vik, Leikanger, Sogndal, Luster, Aurland, Lærdal, Årdal) have decided, at the political level, to participate in SLT, and most of them have already made some progress in organizing the work. Another three municipalities are about to make political decisions to participate (Gloppen, Jølster, and Eid). In Årdal and Høyanger, SLT is an integrated part of the Safe Community work.

#### **6.4.3.”Young people at risk” – initiatives for young people in the danger zone**

The County Municipality and the County Governor of Sogn og Fjordane cooperate on a 2-year project intended for at-risk 16-19-year-olds. The primary target groups are young people with extensive absence from school, foreign background, and young people living on their own. The goal of the project is an improvement of the follow-up and coordinate the services offered to students, apprentices, and others, and strengthen the cooperation between the upper secondary school and follow-up services in educational, health and social areas of the municipality, in which the school is located. Leisure activities reaching out to these groups will be given priority. The project start is January 1, 2005, and the municipalities have recently been invited to participate. In the municipalities that have joined a partnership for public health with the County Municipality, the public health coordinator will be responsible for the coordination of the application of the municipality.

## **6.5.**

### **65+ year-olds**

The oldest senior citizens are particularly exposed to accidents, as they often are physically inactive, eat very little, tend to be mal-nourished and have little social contact with others. In Sogn og Fjordane, the County Municipality, other public agencies, and volunteer associations given this group high priority for several years. The goal is to try to reach the younger senior citizens, and some of the measures are listed below.

#### **6.5.1. "Safe Senior Citizens"**

The County Municipality of Sogn og Fjordane has – at the local, regional, and national levels -- taken part in a national campaign for safety among senior citizens initiated by the Injury Preventive Forum. The County Municipality participates in the campaign council and the managing committee at the national level, and has through this work defined the premises for and provided resources for the development of a nationwide project to reduce accidents affecting the elderly, particularly thigh bone fractures.

In Sogn og Fjordane we have started a trial project within the framework of this campaign in cooperation with three municipalities, a project that aims at reducing accidents, especially falling accidents, among senior citizens older than 65. At the regional level, we have had meetings with municipalities and volunteer organizations to encourage them to initiate measures at the local level.

The project is partly funded by the insurance company Gjensidige Nor and has as active partners volunteer organizations at the regional and municipal level. Steering committees have been appointed for the municipalities of Årdal and Høyanger, which have integrated the work in their Safe Community efforts. Examples of actions run by the organizations are hiking groups, dances, the development of brochures, home visits, distribution and replenishment of sand, pole hiking, securing of accident sites, health stations for the elderly, campaigns, and various other measures.

Another three municipalities (Fjaler, Gloppen, and Eid) are considering their participation. Two of these are partnership municipalities which have established a public health council in which volunteer organizations are represented. The County Municipality tries to expand the group of participating municipalities by informing all partnership municipalities about the project.

#### **6.5.2. Training of and information for older car drivers**

Traffic is constantly changing. New signs, traffic lights, and roundabouts are new phenomena if you got your driver's license many years ago. It is not that easy to keep pace with the development. In cooperation with the Senior Citizen Association of Sogn og Fjordane, seminars are given on the theoretical and practical part of traffic issues for car drivers that are older than 65. In recent years, the Senior Citizen Association of Sogn of Fjordane has received financial support to offer members refresher training for older drivers, based on the same principles. These seminars have been very attractive and are now offered throughout the

county. In many cases the Central for Volunteer Work, in cooperation with the Senior Citizen Association, takes care of the practical issues

### **6.5.3. "The Senior Ride"**

"The Senior Ride" (Seniorskyssen) is transportation in a cab van in the neighborhood, making it possible for a senior citizen to be picked up and brought back when he or she wants it. This has emerged as many bus lines, shops, and post offices have been closed. Many elderly do not have a driver's license, and some need special transportation devices to do their businesses or meet with other people. This is also a good option for those who are unable to drive their own car because of illness or weak eyesight.

The County Municipality has an adapted plan in 10 municipalities (Førde, Gaular, Vågsøy, Gloppen, Balestrand, and Leikanger) in cooperation with senior citizen groups, senior citizen councils, the cab industry, and the municipalities. A single ride (one way) costs 10 kroner for the passenger, and the County Municipality covers the difference. Besides driving, the cab driver has a wider role. He picks his passenger at his or her home, supports him or her if needed, and helps carry goods and bags. In some municipalities those who want to are taken to day centers offering a whole range of activities. In Førde the Senior Ride is an important part of a program under the auspices of the College of Nursing and the Day Center, where the elderly can participate in various hobby activities, engage in physical exercise, and get information on nutrition.

The Senior Ride has become very popular among the elderly in the various municipalities, and more municipalities in the county want to participate in the plan. The County Municipality holds meetings in the individual municipality and designs a plan adapted to the needs of the individual municipality.

### **6.5.4. Equal rights for everyone, handicapped people, and the United Nations**

In June of this year, the County Council decided that the County Municipality of Sogn og Fjordane is to work in accordance with the United Nation convention on equal rights for everyone. The European Union has a similar document on this issue. The County Council has decided to develop a survey on the status in this field in the buildings owned by the county and how bus and ferry lines and cultural activities can be arranged to secure access for everyone. When this survey is ready we can start prioritizing among the tasks needed to comply with these conventions.

## **6.6. Physical activity**

### **6.6.1. Physical activity for inactive people**

Together with three other county municipalities, the County Municipality of Sogn og Fjordane has been involved in a Ministry of Culture trial project on increased physical activity in the population. The Ministry identified three prioritized areas: 1) children's outdoor playground as an arena for physical activity, and 2) the establishment of activity options for groups, particularly children and teenagers, who do not find anything satisfactory in the activities offered by organized sports groups.

The County Municipality of Sogn og Fjordane has especially focused on young people aged 13 to 19 who are not active in any associations, an effort that has been made in close

cooperation with the municipalities, upper secondary schools, the College of Sogn og Fjordane, and sports associations. Untraditional activities, dancing and the self-initiated development of neighborhood facilities, financial support to the municipalities, participation at conferences, among other things, have been some of the measures.

Dancing has been one of the activities that have attracted young people in 24 out of 26 municipalities. Instructors have been trained in all these municipalities, and they have received support and assistance in their efforts to establish local dance groups, which have reached especially many girls. The project has also involved a leader seminar at which 18 teenagers were trained in organizational work and project planning, and were taught how to look upon themselves as leaders. They have been co-responsible for several major events like the Wintercamp offering downhill facilities open round the clock, paintball, and various contests. These camps have gathered more 300 young people from the entire county. There have also been summer camps with activities for that season: glacier hiking, canoeing, climbing, et cetera, to make young people try activities that are exciting and that can inspire them to be active on their own or join a volunteer association.

In 2002, 6 municipalities (Høyanger, Hornindal, Solund, Stryn, Gloppen, and Fjaler) applied for and were awarded the status of Physical Activity municipalities. They also received financial support to carry out their own projects for unorganized youth aimed at integrating them in the municipality's leisure activities for this group.

The Physical Activity project (FYK-prosjektet) was concluded in 2004, but the County Municipality continues the work by employing a person responsible for some of the measures, including the physical activity work among the young and inactive. This will be an important part of partnership for public health.

### **6.6.2. Adapted physical activity for persons with double diagnoses within drug abuse and psychiatry**

The Psychiatric Ward of Helse Førde is responsible for the project "Physical Activity as Treatment for Patients with Drug abuse and Mental Problems," in cooperation with the Sports Association of Sogn og Fjordane, resource persons in the community, the municipal health and social services division, and medical specialists. The goal is increased life quality by using adapted physical activity in the post-treatment phase and policlinic treatment of patients having both drug abuse and mental problems. Contact persons responsible for exercise activities have been trained in 24 of the county's 26 municipalities, altogether 170 persons who have got the competence needed by the exercise contact persons. These will be valuable resource persons in the municipalities' rehabilitation work, where they help not only patients with drug abuse and mental problems, but also people with other illnesses.

The Psychiatric Ward of Helse Førde works closely with the health services in the municipalities which make most frequent use of the exercise contact persons. The ward has also established its own cooperative project with the municipalities of Førde, Jølster, Naustdal, and Gaular (cf. enclosure). In addition to exercise programs in each municipality, there are joint exercises and group activities at Førde for all of them.

Financial support from the central government has enabled the Psychiatric Ward to try out intensified integration in this project in two municipalities: Høyanger and Førde. In these municipalities, the ward has made agreements with the Hiking Club of Indre Sunnfjord, the Kayak Club of Sunnfjord, the Climbing Group of Høyanger, the Orientation Group of Førde

Sports Association, and Anga Soccer Club. Some members of these teams are trained as exercise contacts and participate at activities like climbing, orientation, and so on, together with patients.

The project "Physical Activity as Treatment ..." can document good results as for the patients' health is concerned. The number of people joining these activities is high. Many patients want to participate, and the municipal health services want to make use of the exercise contact persons and hold local events. Besides, many people want to become exercise contacts.

## 6.7. Low threshold activities for seniors older than 65



Both photos were taken at a senior event at Studio Eid

### 6.7.1. Senior dance and pole hiking

The Sogn og Fjordane Chapter of the Association for More Exercise in the Population and in the Workplace (Sogn og Fjordane Mosjons- og Bedriftsidrettskrets) is very active in the field of physical exercise for senior citizens and offers county-wide seminars for senior dance instructors, activity leaders and training in pole hiking. The instructors start their own groups in the municipalities they come from, and today the entire county has been covered. The project manager for the physical exercise activities among the elderly works in tandem with the Sports Association og Sogn og Fjordane and receives financial support from the County Municipality for his projects.

### 6.7.2. Osteoporosis

Idrettssenteret AS is a corporation that has an idealistic mission and is owned by Sogn og Fjordane Sports Association and Sognahallen AS in Sogndal. The College of Sogn og Fjordane is represented on the board of directors. Its main goal is to create a resource center that is able to increase the sports-related and scientific knowledge and competence level in the county. The prioritized areas are physical exercise for everyone (sports for all and gymnastics), seminars and training, research and development projects to increase the competence within athletics and sports, physical activity and health among various target groups, and medical services within preventive work, curative activities and rehabilitation.

Idrettssenteret AL provides, on a regular basis, supervised physical exercise for patients with rheumatic illnesses and heart problems. Osteoporosis skulen (The School of Osteoporosis), which is also affiliated with Idrettssenteret, follows up patients who have been diagnosed with osteoporosis. In addition, the school offers seminars and lectures for health and social service personnel in the municipality and neighboring municipalities, and has training and contact

with physicians and physiotherapists in the region and students at the College of Sogn og Fjordane (health and athletics branch of study).

### **6.7.3. Adapted studio exercise**

Studio Eid is a physical exercise center run by a physiotherapist, a physician, and a chiropractor. In the fall of 2003 and the spring of 2004, it offered, in cooperation with the Senior Citizen Club of Eid, groups of up to 30 seniors adapted exercise including, among other things, a seminar on nutrition. This has become very popular, and the goal is to expand the work to include more groups in cooperation with the psychiatric services and the general municipal health services.

### **6.7.4. Adapted exercise in the athletic club**

Breimsbygda IL is known as "Idrettsklubben" (the athletic club) at Byrkjelo, where various athletic and social activities are combined (TV, card games, waffle frying) and has managed to gather young people who have never participated in athletic events and athletes and adults. This has given young people, volunteer organizations, parents and grandparents in the village, a place of meeting which includes at-risk teenagers.

### **6.7.5. Marking of mountain hiking trails**



Torvund Athletic Association in the Municipality of Høyanger reports of a noticeable increase in the number of hikers who want to reach the 17 peaks in the Lavik area. In the fall of 2003, the athletic associations, financially supported by the County Municipality, started a major collective effort of marking the hiking trails. Signs have been made and mounted on poles, and stones, flags, and markers have been painted. When hiking trails are clearly marked both adults and children can more easily find their way in the terrain and go to peaks they have not reached before, and the mountains become more accessible for everyone. Improved marking also makes it possible for people to hike all by themselves, if they so wish. More exercise is good for everyone. It may, among other things, get children away from the computer or TV set for an outdoor activity instead of sitting inside all the time. Torvund Athletic Association has registered a significant increase in the number of hikers this year.

## **7. PROGRAMS INTENDED FOR AT-RISK GROUPS AND PROGRAMS IMPROVING THE SAFETY AMONG EXPOSED GROUPS**

The accident registration showed us that children, teenagers, and senior citizens are the groups that are most often involved in accidents with the exception of work related accidents. By focusing on traffic safety on a broad scale and by encouraging initiatives in the local communities we try to increase the safety for these groups.

After having given public health initiatives high priority for years we now work on a broad basis, providing initiatives in several areas that are, from a public health point of view, clearly at risk. These are either accident preventive measures, or they are measures supporting the injury and accident preventive work. It goes without saying that it is impossible to list all the activities in the county in this field, but a whole range of concrete measures have been presented in part 4.

Several of the measures listed here are meant for the most exposed groups, for example "Young people at risk," SLT, the School of Osteoporosis, Adapted physical activity for persons with double diagnoses in drug and alcohol abuse and psychiatry, FYK – physical activity for inactive teenagers, the Senior Ride, "Safe Seniors," and others.

In addition, the County Municipality provides the funding of a whole range of other preventive activities administered by municipal agencies and volunteer associations in the local communities, activities designed and intended for the handicapped, the mentally retarded, immigrants, and people with mental illnesses. These consist mostly of physical activity, but also various cultural events and activities promoting integration and cooperation among people of different groups and nationalities. "Colorful Førde" is an example of an event gathering more than 20 nationalities very year, a cooperative and annual event offered by the Volunteer Center at Førde, together with the Red Cross of Førde, Førde Asylum Seekers Home, and the County Municipality of Sogn og Fjordane.

However, equally important as individual initiatives are the organizational and plan-related basis which public health work has achieved. As a result of this, preventive and health furthering work and strategies are emphasized and prioritized in important forums where policies are created and implemented. As we have attempted to express, there is an extensive and well established cooperation in the county in this area.

The implementation of the County Plan 2005-2008 and partnerships for public health with the central government, regional authorities, and municipalities are very important when it comes to giving preventive work a secure and future oriented role with regional authorities, in the municipal system, and in the volunteer organizations.

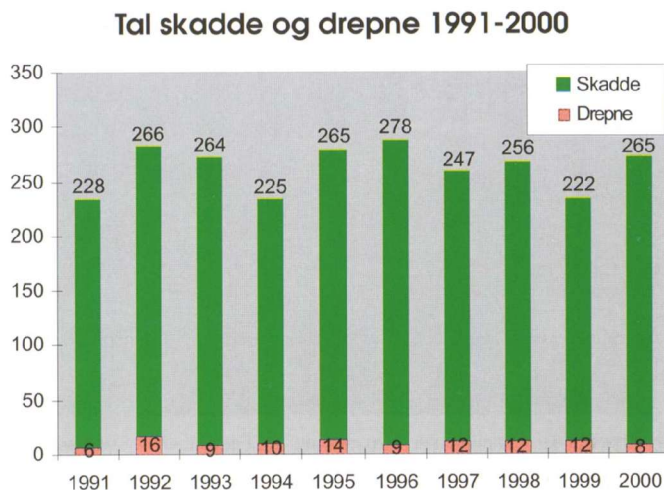
In order to succeed it is of course very important that the target groups participate in this work. Young people have for a long time been actively involved in designing both projects and permanent activities, particularly in the area of traffic safety. In "Safely home for 50 kroner" and "Local transport" they have been active participants, and it is partly because of their contribution that the projects have been able to come up with options that young people need – and therefore make use of.

The "Senior Ride" project was established and carried out in close cooperation with senior citizen associations in the municipalities and the taxi industry. In this way, the project was tailored to meet local needs.

## 8. PROGRAMS DOCUMENTING THE FREQUENCY OF AND REASONS FOR INJURIES

As previously mentioned, an extensive registration of injuries requiring the attention of a physician was made throughout the county in the mid-90's, whereby a form developed by the Sogn og Fjordane Project and the National Institute of Public Health (Folkehelse) was used. The registration continued in three communities, and the County Municipality oversaw that injury profiles were made. However, it has been difficult to maintain a system based on a form that needs to be filled out manually. For some time, physicians were asked to perform their registration by means of special software; however, modules for such injury registration that are compatible with these programs have not been available or designed by the software developers.

Currently, registration at the county level is based on reports and records made by the police, insurance companies, and the Norwegian Public Roads Administration. Some communities



have their own registration procedures in schools as well as the health and social services sectors.

In Høyanger an excellent system for injury and accident registration has been developed, providing a comprehensive overview of unwanted incidents and what has caused them, to be used by the professional staff in these services.

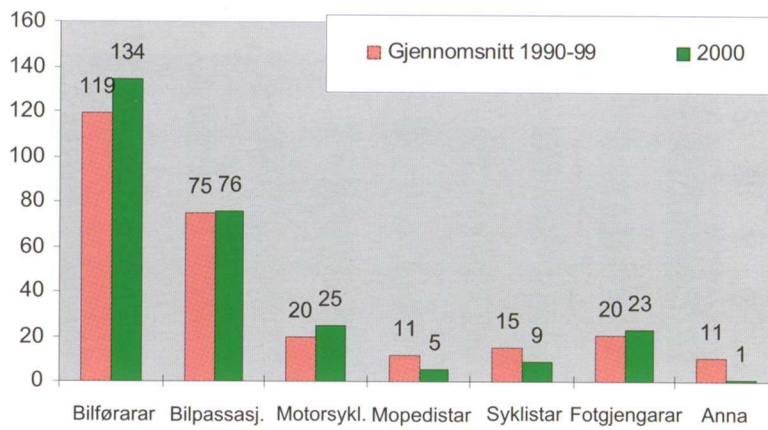
(Ill.. Number of injuries (green) and casualties (red) (1991-2000)

The most available data is the Norwegian Public Roads Administration's accident record, which contains all police reports for all traffic accidents involving personal injuries. We are aware that some types of accidents are not reported, and accidents involving bicycles and mopeds are less frequently reported than accidents in which other vehicles are involved. Also, the less serious the injury is the more likely it is that it will not be reported.

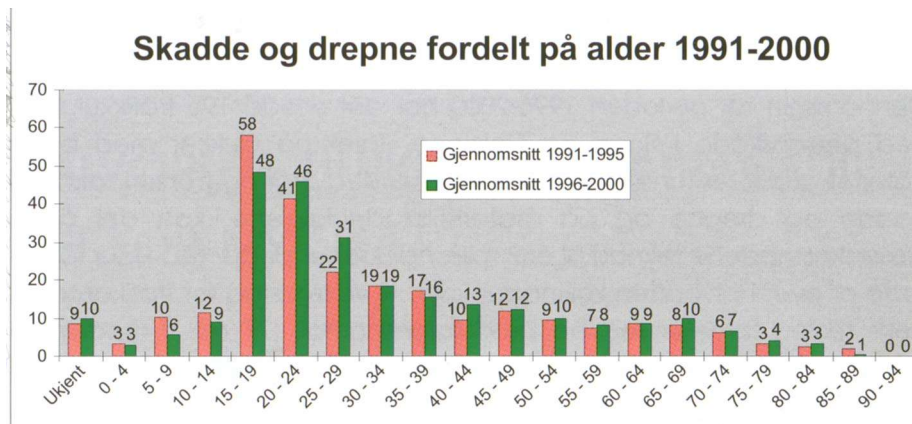
In spite of the shortcomings of the accident record, this is indeed the best source we have, and it is the only one indicating where the accident occurred. For that reason, it is a most valuable tool when considering measures to prevent traffic accidents.

The tables from 1991–2000 are taken from the County Traffic Safety Commission's action plan for the period 2002–2005 and show the number of traffic injuries and casualties, by road-user category (driver, passenger, pedestrian, etc) and age.

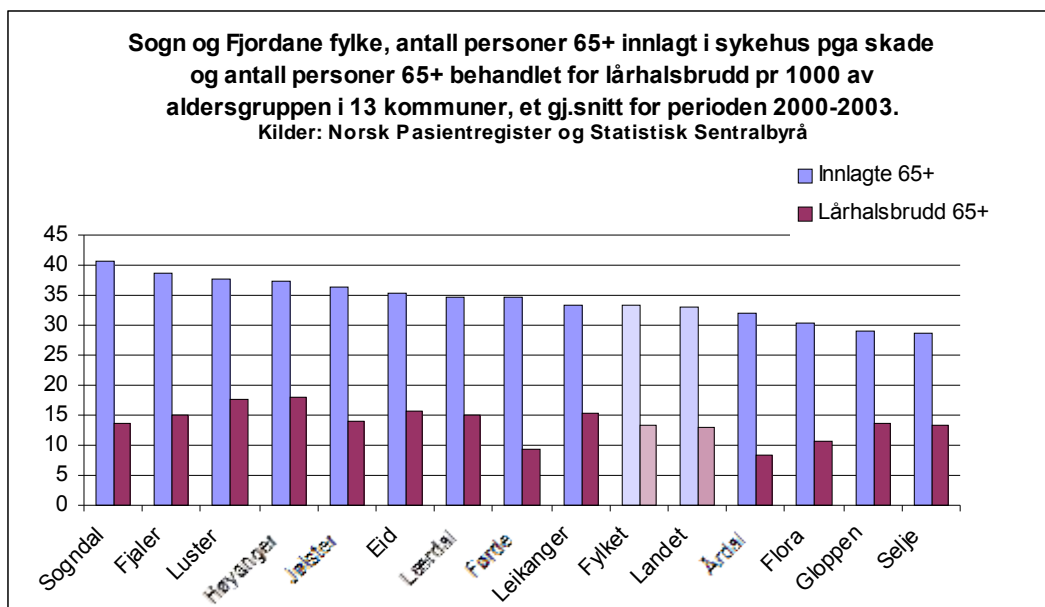
### Skadde og drepne fordelt på trafikantgrupper



### Skadde og drepne fordelt på alder 1991-2000



We have also systematized data pertaining to thigh bone fractures for persons older than 65 in the county for the years 2002-2003. They have been issued by Norwegian Patient Records and Statistics Norway, and it is leader of the project "Safe Senior Citizens" that has given us access to them.



We hope that in the future Helse F rde will provide injury and casualty data. We are aware that a project is under way at the national level to improve the registration in the health organizations by having them make use of both Chapter 19 and 20 in their ICD System, and not only Chapter 19, which is the case today. This will give us information about the external reasons for the injuries in addition to the diagnoses.

After having discussed the registration issue with the municipal physicians for years, it is clear to us that there is a demand, at the national level, to establish stable and long-range registration routines.

## 9. EVALUATION PRACTICES FOR OUR OWN PROGRAMS, PROCEDURES, AND THE EFFECT OF CHANGES

In 1997, the Institute for Public Health published an extensive report about the Sogn og Fjordane project and the Accident project, in which registration, intervention, research, accident registration, accident preventive groups, and the importance of municipal signs for the effect of local accident preventive work were analyzed. Risk behavior, health behavior, and life quality among 18-year-olds in the county and the parents' role in the prevention of accidents among small children (P l Kraft and Mitchell Loeb).

The evaluation of the traffic safety measures "Report it" and "Safely home for 50 kroner" made by the Institute of Transport Economics is mentioned in parts 6.2.1. and 6.2.2.

The County Municipality evaluates its programs— routines, performance, and contents—on an annual basis. There are well-established year-end evaluation procedures for the programs, and political leaders are informed about activity, goals, and compliance.

In addition, resources are set aside for the evaluation of procedures and results. All goals have been formulated in a way that they can be evaluated at the end of a 4-year County Plan period.

Evaluation criteria for each program have been identified. Indices of sustainability have also been incorporated, in cooperation with research staff at the Western Norway Research Institute (Vestlandsforskning).

As for some of the measures aimed at young people, the County Municipality has asked the Western Norway Research Institute to undertake a special and thorough evaluation of the program on a general basis and 4 projects in particular. Interviews and questionnaires have been an integral part of the work that has been accomplished. In three reports "Evaluation of 'Young in Sogn og Fjordane' sub report I" (VF Report 5/2004), "Evaluation of 'Young in Sogn og Fjordane' sub report II (VF Report 6/2004) and "Young People and Outlook on Life" sub report 3 (VF Report x/2003)

## 10. CONTINUOUS PARTICIPATION IN THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS OF SAFE COMMUNITIES



Ill.: The Sogn og Fjordane delegation at the Safe Sommunity Conference in Helsinki 2003 and its exhibition booth

The County Municipality of Sogn og Fjordane wants to make a positive contribution to the national network by providing information and the exchange of experiences. Activity in the county network will give inspiration for further work, but also provide valuable experiences and information on problems that should be brought to the national level.

As far as the international network is concerned, the County Municipality of Sogn og Fjordane has, for the last 4 years, invited municipalities and professionals to the Nordic conferences. Five individuals attended a conference in Iceland in 1999, thirteen in Vejle, Denmark, in 2001, and seventeen persons in Helsinki in 2003. Information materials profiling the municipalities and the injury and accident preventive work at the county level were created and distributed in addition to lectures about on-going measures and projects developed in this county.

The County Municipality of Sogn og Fjordane has employed an international relations coordinator, and a cross-divisional team for international matters has been established. Networks have been developed and cooperation initiated with other North Sea countries, the rest of Europe, as well as the United States. Together with the County Municipality of

Hordaland, we have recently opened an office in Brussels. Several of the upper secondary schools are active participants in the EU program "Leonardo" and have exchange programs with such nations as Scotland and Portugal.

The department for apprentice training in the public sector has recently signed an agreement of intent with Estonia on the exchange of teachers and instructors. An action plan for international work in upper secondary schools has just started.

The County Municipality will have safety work on the agenda when international contacts are made in the future, and we intend to establish closer cooperation with Estonia, a country that we were introduced to at the 5th Nordic Safe Community Conference in Helsinki. We saw that the work being done in Estonia in connection with the project "School Watch" (concerning safety in schools and in the community, in cooperation with the public, school administrators, the police, and authorities), could be linked to work being done in Sogn og Fjordane. It is our firm belief that cooperation could benefit both nations. Therefore, we will, as the first step, invite representatives from Estonia to the appointment conference.

The County Municipality of Sogn og Fjordane

January 2005

Nils R. Sandal  
Chairman of the County Council

Per Drageset  
Chief County Executive