Interreg

Danube Transnational Programme

RADAR

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D 2.2.2 Model article

MODEL ARTICLE ON THEMATIC AREA 4: ROAD SAFETY NEAR SCHOOLS (STAR RATING FOR SCHOOLS)

RADAR – Risk Assessment on Danube Area Roads

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Abbreviation list

Abbreviation	Explanation
EU	European Union
WHO	World Health Organisation
UN	United Nation
TA	Thematic Area
RSEG	Road Safety Expert Group
VRU	Vulnerable Road Users
RADAR	Risk Assessment on Danube Area Roads
SENSoR	South East Neighbourhood Safe Routes
SR4S	Star Rating for Schools

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Executive Summary

In RADAR project impacts a fundamental human right – safety, and in particular road safety. It enforces citizens' engagement that contributes to improving road safety and raises awareness about the risk that road infrastructure is hiding on streets around the schools. The project pilots assessment of the road safety around schools with active engagement of civil society – NGOs, pupils, their parents, and schoolteachers.

In many countries of the Danube area, the infrastructure safety provisions on the streets around schools are inexistent or of a poor quality. The schools are often situated on or near busy roads and routes to schools are unsafe.

In close cooperation through workshops and discussions with students/pupils, parents and schoolteachers, RADAR project seeks to find most used routes to and from schools and assess their safety for children.

Using the international Road Assessment Methodology, project identifies potentially dangerous sites or sections of roads and proposes to schools' representatives concept plans that help reducing the risks for pupils while going to and from school.

Project tackles all elements of safe routes to schools, having in mind children's, parents' and teachers' role, infrastructure alignment and surrounding traffic. It will encourage participation among the citizens to assess the road safety around schools and focus on their own journey to the school. The project pilot involves cooperation with relevant citizens groups to plan, propose and raise awareness on the effective solutions.

1. Introduction

The term 'vulnerable road user' is applied to those most at risk in traffic, i.e. those unprotected by an outside shield. This term is also used to describe road users whose mobility is in some way reduced or who face barriers to their movement. Pedestrians, pedal cyclists, and motorcyclists are considered vulnerable users since they sustain a higher risk of injury in any collision against a vehicle due to little or no external protective devices that would absorb energy in the event of a crash.

According to the latest global assessment of road safety, the World Health Organisation highlights that more than half of all road traffic fatalities concern vulnerable road users. Among vulnerable road users, there are some specific groups of road users such as the elderly, the disabled and children that could be considered more vulnerable than others. These groups often have less resilience to falls or collisions, limited mobility, and/ or reduced ability to understand the road environment and behave in a safe way when interacting with other, non-vulnerable, road users.

Especially for children, there are multiple risk factors that together lead to an increased risk for them in traffic, with either physical or behavioural nature. Firstly, children observe the road environment from a different perspective than adults due to their smaller stature, which makes it more difficult for them to see oncoming traffic. Because of their physical disadvantage, it is also harder for drivers to detect them and at proximity children may be invisible below the height of the vehicle, especially when standing between parked vehicles. Additionally, children often believe that, if they can see a car approaching them, then the driver is able to see them as well.

Besides physical disadvantages, major reasons of children's high involvement in road crashes are related to behavioural and cognitive factors. It is hard for children to judge speed accurately and it is not uncommon that, when crossing a road, children may let a slow vehicle pass but instead cross in front of a fast one. It is a quite frequent phenomenon for children to cross the road simultaneously with vehicles and not to use pedestrian crossings. Children often may exhibit unexpected behaviour while using the road network without considering the consequences of their actions. Also, they tend to focus only on things that interest them most and are easily distracted. Lastly, children often focus on what they think is the quickest route to reach their destination even if this route may be quite dangerous.

As a result, road traffic injury is currently the leading cause of death for children and young adults aged 5–29 years, signalling a need for a shift in the current child health agenda, which has largely neglected road safety.

Schools and the areas around them attract many children on a daily basis. Several research studies have been conducted on children's travel to their school and related safety over the years. The traffic environment around schools consists one of the most complex traffic environments regularly encountered by children. Children are not always equipped with the appropriate skills to deal with such an environment, resulting in an increased risk of road crash incidents. Consequently, safe, and accessible routes from home to school and vice versa are required.

1.1. About model article on TA4

Within the framework of RADAR Project (Risk Assessment on Danube Area Roads), this report is intended to be used as a template/ guide for RSEG TA 4 (RADAR Road Safety Expert Group -Thematic Area 4) members in/ for the preparation for the meeting, for discussion at the meeting and feedbacks, to enable TA-4 responsible project partner to design a final version of the RSEG Thematic Area 4 report.

The report focuses on presenting basic infrastructure engineering strategies that can potentially be implemented near schools to improve road safety in the vicinity of schools. Based on the selected case studies from EU countries and internationally are presented, serving as a best practice identification regarding safe roads around schools. Finally, RADAR project presents the methodology and results of a questionnaire survey performed within the Danube area countries and the RSEG countries regarding road safety around schools.

TA 4 – Road Safety near or in the Neigbourhood of Schools (Star Rating for Schools) assessing the most popular roads for students and children, focusing on where particular road crossing points pose high risk. By involving teachers, citizens and stakeholders RADAR has started with concept plans that test the effect on reducing risk in these sections with providing temporary speed limits, visual narrowing of the carriageway, gateways, or other countermeasures to protect pupils.

Keywords: SR4S, Star Rating for Schools, Safe System Approach, countermeasures, Vulnerable Road Users

2. More information

If you wish to publish an article in professional press or an article in national and/or local journal as well as magazines and need more information on this specific topic, find below the content suggestions along with instruction on how to write and disseminate such professional article.

Please note that the suggestions below are not a mere recommendation but are content-related reference with information on this thematic article. To write an article, you are obliged to first check what has been published and disseminated, secondly to consult with communications manager of the project and when the article is published, inform the project leader as well as communications manager to ensure the report of such great work.

- RADAR project RSEG Report on Road Safety near Schools – access **HERE**
- RADAR project application form for REGIOSTARS Award on Road Safety near Schools – **HERE**
- Communication Strategy plan for more information on how to write articles for professional press and articles in national/local journal and magazines – access **HERE**

For any additional information on this topic or request for publishing the article, please contact **Nina Petrič** at nina.petric@amzs.si.