VISIBILITY – TO BE SEEN OR NOT BEING SEEN –
THAT IS THE DIFFERENCE

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ABSTRACT
In Sweden the risk of being hit and killed by a car in darkness is 3 times bigger than in daylight. Between October and March, the days are short and the nights are long. 40% of all crashes where pedestrians are involved happen at night or dusk. Most accidents at night where pedestrians are injured and killed happen in urban areas where street lights are lit. And why? Because people believe that if they can see, they can also be seen. But street lights help you to see in the dark but it doesn’t make you visible. The human eye has difficulties to discern contrasts even in lighted streets.

With the visibility campaign: IF YOU ARE VISIBLE YOU EXIST the City of Malmö wants the cyclists and pedestrians to pay attention to that they are not to be seen if they don’t use reflectors and/or lamps in the dark. One week in early November for the last three years, the campaign has been conducted in terms of activities in the central parts of Malmö, in various cycle routes as well as newspaper advertisements, billboards and cinema advertising.

Evaluation shows that more than 70% of citizens felt that it was a good and credible campaign and it brought up an important topic. 40% said that they were affected by the campaign to use reflectors more often. More than 90% said that it’s a good thing that the city of Malmo conducts campaigns concerning road safety and traffic rules.

One thing that shows that the campaign is appreciated is the popularity of the reflector vests that are handed out to cyclists. With the message on the back: IF YOU ARE VISIBLE YOU EXIST, you see cyclists wear these vests a lot in Malmö.

The campaign has influenced other cities in Sweden to use the same message in similar campaigns.

The presentation will show how the campaign was conducted but will also try to inspire other countries to raise awareness of the importance of visibility.

1 BACKGROUND
Even in twilight the risk of being hit by a car increases if you are unlucky. An easy and inexpensive way to reduce the risk is to wear reflectors.

With a reflector you will be seen approximately 125 meters away in the dark if you meet a car with dipped headlights. This means that the driver has plenty of time to slow down or stop, if necessary. If you wear bright clothing you can be seen in a 60 meters range,
approximately. If you wear dark clothes and no reflectors, you will not be discovered until the
car is more than 20-30 meters from you is roughly the stopping distance for a car that drives
50 km/h. In winter conditions the braking distance is 2-4 times longer. Wet roadways also
prolong braking distances. When the road surface is wet, it becomes darker and this reduces
the street lighting effect.

If you travel by bike at night, you must by law have both lighting and reflectors on your
bike, white on the front and red on the back and reflectors in the wheels are white or
orange. However even though many people know all this, the use of reflectors in Sweden is
not very common.

The annual Traffic Safety survey, conducted by Statistiska Centralbyran, on behalf of the
Swedish Transport Administration has been asking the same question for more than 30 years:
“How often do you use reflectors when you are out walking in the dark where there is car
traffic?”

19% responded that they use reflectors on the roads or streets that are illuminated,
while 33% use reflectors if street lights are missing. Women use reflectors to a greater extent
than men regardless whether the roads or streets are illuminated or not. The use of reflectors
increases with age.

Until the mid-1990s, the proportion of people using reflectors were just over 20% in traffic
environments with lighting, and 30% where light was missing. During the years 2006-2011
the reflective use was higher and relatively stable. In 2012, the proportion of respondents who
always or almost always use reflectors, decreased. The results may have been influenced by
changes in alternative answers in the survey. Besides the people who always or almost always
use reflectors 16% responded that they quite often use reflectors on illuminated streets or
roads and 19% on streets or roads without street lights.
2 THE CAMPAIGN

The upper lines are the background as to why Malmö has conducted a visibility campaign for four years in a row. We would like cyclists and pedestrians to be aware that they will not be visible in the dark if they aren’t wearing reflectors and/or using lighting. The campaigns took place in the city at the beginning of November, where numerous events and other activities also took place, including newspaper advertisements and information on Malmö’s website.

Events in the City:

On Gustav Adolf Square, there was a large board with the text: IF YOU ARE VISIBLE YOU EXIST and a live cyclist. The cyclist was wearing a shining helmet and reflective vest. Staff standing below the billboard, who were wearing vests with the same message, distributed reflectors to people passing by. Even postcards and brochures were available.

Staff dressed in reflective vests and shining bicycle helmets went out on the various cycle routes and handed out vests with the same message to cyclists passing by. Pedestrians were
given hang reflectors marked with the web address: malmo.se. Cyclists who already were using both vests and helmets were given a cinema ticket as encouragement.

2.1 Marketing
• JCDecaux billboards with the text:
  IF YOU ARE VISIBLE YOU EXIST. Take care - Use reflectors.
• Ads in Sydsvenska Dagbladet. (Morning Newspaper)
• Ads in the City and Metro (Free newspapers)
• TV screen advertising in grocery stores in Malmö
• Advertising film in the cinemas in Malmö
From the advertising film in the cinemas

2,000 vests and more than 20,000 hang reflectors were handed out during each campaign.

3 RESULTS
The first campaign was in 2009 and was never evaluated.

The campaigns in 2010 and 2011 were quite similar. The report from 2011 we are referring to here, is compared with 2010 when possible. At present, we are waiting for the evaluation from the 2012 campaign.

3.1 Method
507 online surveys were answered. After the field work, data was processed by Ipsos computer consultants. The target group for this study were individuals 15-75 years living in the City of Malmö. The sample was randomly selected using Cint's Web panel. The survey was conducted during 26/11/2012 - 07/12/2012.

Examples of questions asked:
To what extent has the campaign attracted the attention of the citizens of Malmö?
How have you perceived the campaign?
Has the campaign changed the opinions and behaviour of the citizens of Malmö?

3.2 Attention
The total (spontaneous + reminder) is just over 6 out of 10 who have recognized IF YOU ARE VISIBLE YOU EXIST... No major differences in attention compared to previous measurements carried out at the same time in 2010.

The promotional channels most noticed were Billboards JDCaux and advertisements. Many mentioned the cyclists who were wearing the vests which were handed out during the campaign.
In 2012 there were more than 90,000 visitors in the cinemas during the four weeks that the IF YOU ARE VISIBLE YOU EXIST film was shown.

3.3 Use of Reflectors:
50% of the people of Malmö stated that they normally use reflectors. More women than men and more older people than younger people use reflectors.
50% say they have increased their use of reflectors since last year.

3.4 Opinions about the Campaign:
There is a positive attitude to the campaign and many have responded that it is a good reminder of how important it is to use reflectors. 78% found the campaign Good or Very Good (71%, 2010). Women were more positive than men. People found the campaign being important and it is perceived to be unique, relevant and credible.

3.5 Effect of Campaign:
Malmö residents have received and understood the message of the campaign. 47% answered that the campaign has affected their own use of reflectors and that they will use reflectors often.
The campaign slogan IF YOU ARE VISIBLE YOU EXIST was embraced by many who also thought that the campaign was easy to understand. 90% of the respondents thought that it is a good thing the city of Malmö is working with campaigns concerning road safety and traffic rules.

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4 CONCLUSIONS
Many of those aware of the campaign can reproduce the message/slogan and that indicates that the campaign reached the people of Malmö. A lot of respondents say that the campaign is likely to increase their use of reflectors, so this suggests that the campaign motivates to action. The campaign slogan has had a positive impact and many have memorized it.

The citizens of Malmö also saw the campaign as a good reminder, suggesting that the campaign has great relevance. About 50% of the people in Malmö normally use reflectors today compared to the figures from the annual survey. This shows that the citizens of Malmö use reflectors in much higher grade than the Swedes in general.

However there are still many people who aren’t using reflectors. If a similar campaign is planned again, it may be helpful to find a better understanding of why some choose not to use reflectors today, and what might make them reconsider. Despite effective campaigns, there is still a continued need to show people how important it is to be visible in traffic when it is dark. People seem to forget very quickly – one summer and it’s long gone...

But we do believe that reflectors are something useful and that many more countries should be aware of that. Hopefully this campaign might inspire.
REFERENCES