

Summary:

Accidents risk and traffic safety among immigrants

The purpose of this project has been to increase the knowledge about accident risk of immigrants and their relation to traffic safety in terms of knowledge, attitudes and behaviour. The project has been limited to concern:

- car drivers
- first generation immigrants, that is persons that are born abroad by two foreign parents (both born abroad)
- immigrants from non-western countries, here defined as Asia included Turkey, Africa, South- and Central America and East-Europe.

The project was based on three different studies that are built upon each other: 1) Analysis of accident statistics where the purpose was to have knowledge about accidents risk among car drivers born abroad, 2) A focus group interview study with car drivers born in a non-western country with a Norwegian driver licence, 3) A survey among car drivers, both Norwegians and immigrants from non-western countries. The purpose of the two latter studies was to have knowledge about both driver behaviour related to traffic safety and knowledge and attitudes towards traffic safety issues in order to explain potential differences in accidents risk among immigrants and Norwegians.

The study of accident risk is based on Norwegian accidents statistics, the Norwegian drivers licences register and the national register of the Norwegian population. Accidents risk is calculated for people with a Norwegian driver licence and is measured as involvement in accidents per driver licence. The main result from this study is that the accident risk is higher among immigrants from non-western countries than for Norwegians. Accidents risk is highest among drivers from the Middle East and Africa. Men from the Middle East and Africa have an accidents risk twice as high as Norwegian men. The accidents risk for women from the Middle East is twice as high as for Norwegian women.

The focus group interview study and the survey find no simple explanations for the differences in accidents risk among immigrants from non-western countries and Norwegians. The survey does not detect any differences in traffic safety related behaviour among drivers from non-western countries and drivers born in Norway. A major problem with the survey is the overrepresentation of immigrants with higher education and the low response rate among immigrants. However, apart from the traffic safety related behaviour, the survey reveals differences in regard to knowledge and attitudes toward traffic safety issues, as well as problems in regard to the Norwegian driver licence training among immigrants. In sum; the

focus groups interview and the survey reveals that the challenges in regard to immigrants and traffic safety is to be found on three dimensions:

- 1) That immigrants bring along knowledge and attitudes from their country of origin that are usually not favourable for safe behaviour in traffic. However, the knowledge and attitudes seem to change along with higher integration, measured as command of the Norwegian language.
- 2) That coming from another country with different driver- and traffic conditions makes it difficult to drive in Norway.
- 3) That language is a challenge for the Norwegian driver licence education.