Zero Project Innovative Practice 2018 on Accessibility

# Making footpaths accessible for leisure and daily use

# Norway – Telemark County

## Summary:

### Telemark’s County Council County Governor, Road Administration and Trekking Association have stimulated upgrading of walking trails from central urban areas to surrounding areas in Telemark county (located in south-eastern Norway) to allow access for persons with various disabilities. Currently, 12 of the 18 municipalities have at least one footpath installed and there are plans for the other six.

## Problems Targeted:

### Uneven and poorly maintained footpaths can create serious obstacles for persons with mobility problems, preventing them from enjoying the outdoors, even in recreation areas that may be close to their homes.

## Solution, Innovation, and Impact:

### The project began by conducting a survey of how accessible the current walking routes were. Each municipality then chose one trail to upgrade, focussing on those that started in central urban areas so people could easily access them. The length of the footpath is usually a minimum of 2 kilometres, and there was a preference towards circular routes.

### An interdisciplinary project group consisting of the County Council, County Governor, Road Administration, Trekking Association and county councils for the elderly and for persons with disabilities was set-up to manage the process of upgrading the paths and to provide advice to the municipalities. Specific skills and expertise in the areas of public health, outdoor life, Universal Design, local development, transport, spatial planning, and cultural heritage were represented through the various participating organizations.

### The group set up guidance for the construction of the paths, including preferable textures that are firm and non-slip, maximum steepness of rises, opportunities for resting, and minimum width, as well as lighting, clear boundaries, simple directions, and other orientation solutions for persons with visual, hearing, or intellectual impairments.

### Since the project began in 2012, 12 of the 18 municipalities now have at least one accessible footpath, including walking trails into the forest, pavements in the town centre, and walkways through parks.

## Outlook, Transferability, and Finance:

### Of the remaining six municipalities without a completed accessible footpath, four have already created plans and are preparing to begin work and two are awaiting approval of their plans from the municipality administration. Further, there is now a target for each municipality to create more than one accessible path. Six of the 18 municipalities can already boast between two and four accessible footpaths.

### Each local municipality in the Telemark region is responsible for the development and funding of its own footpaths, and therefore the funding comes from a variety of sources, including the Telemark County Council, the Telemark County Governor (the Norwegian government), and a national development project on Universal Design funded for the first five years by the Norwegian Ministry for the Environment and later by the Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, and the Ministry of Children and Equality.

## About the Practice at a Glance:

### Name of Innovative Practice: Making footpaths accessible for leisure and daily use

### Organisation: Telemark County Governor and collaborators

### Country of Implementation: Norway

## Facts and Figures:

12 municipalities have at least one accessible footpath.

Six of these municipalities have two to four accessible footpaths.

Six more municipalities have plans for footpaths.

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## Links and further reading:

### [2013 Report of footpath progress](https://www.fylkesmannen.no/Documents/Dokument%20FMTE/Helse%20og%20omsorg/Folkehelse/Turveier_komp.pdf)

### [Hamaren Aktivitetspark Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/hamarenaktivitetspark/?fref=ts)

## Quote:

“Our vision is to establish footpaths for all, both in urban and rural areas, so that all citizens have the possibility to go for a walk near their home.”

— Mrs. Bjørg Inger Flatland, politician and leader of Telemark County’s Council for Persons with Disabilities.