

Interventions to improve road safety.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN TRAFFIC SAFETY

Summary

A lesson many countries are gradually learning is the need for community participation in improving traffic safety. Similar to other areas of public health, 'top down' intervention alone can have limited effectiveness, whereas community partnership promotes a sense of ownership, which has so often proven to be key to change.

Community is interpreted here as a local community (or part of one) that is represented by non-government organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs), as well as service and faith organisations. NGOs include those whose activities are not limited to traffic safety, such as UNICEF, as well as those that are dedicated primarily, if not solely, to traffic safety. Good examples of the latter are organisations that have developed from personal tragedy, such as Mothers Against Drink Driving (MADD).

"One person with a belief is a social power equal to the force of ninety-nine who have only interests"

- John Stuart Mill, 1806-73

This section reviews the need for community involvement, guidance on how to promote community participation, and examples of good practice in both high income countries (HIC) and low income countries (LIC). As funding will be a major constraint in developing local capacity, details of UK funding organisations with international grants programmes are provided.

Problems/Need

Community participation is needed for:

- Accurate understanding of the public's priorities and needs, especially at the local level
- Increasing public support for government's efforts
- Promoting effective service delivery
- Serving as a 'watchdog' or advocate for road safety.

Road safety priorities are traditionally based on crash data analysis. In LICs where there is limited data available, it is even more important that road users are consulted so that local knowledge helps ensure the correct problems and appropriate, acceptable solutions are identified.

Also, community groups may be in a better position to undertake a training programme or publicity campaign as they will be closer to the road users involved, both geographically and in terms of a working relationship. The public is also likely to be better aware and more supportive of government efforts to improve road safety if they have been consulted.

Community groups are also able to pressure governments into action, especially on local priorities. Governments will be faced with many different and competing demands, which cumulatively exceed their capacity. They will also be forced to compromise between different road users' needs and desires.

Difficulties arise in defining communities. Established CBOs will often include the influential and already vocal, and not usually vulnerable road users, i.e. pedestrians and cyclists, or the poor and women. Thus special efforts and monitoring will be required to ensure the most vulnerable are consulted and considered.

Attempts at involving communities have also suffered from a misunderstanding of their role and resources. For instance, few NGOs will have the capacity to undertake research studies, yet this task has often been assigned to them in a road safety action plan. Community participation should not be seen as a cheap option nor as a one-way process with the education of communities the sole end objective. On the contrary, community participation embodies a process of learning and reflection both by the community and facilitating decision-makers. Small NGOs, in their enthusiasm, often suffer from trying to do too much, and volunteer-based groups especially need to avoid 'burning-out'.

Solutions

Community participation in traffic safety can be promoted through:

- Consultation
- Coordination
- Funding and training
- Mainstreaming in transport planning & traffic management

Consultation

Consultation should involve regular membership on policy-making bodies. Organisations representing the public, i.e. road users, should be included in road safety councils. While it has been common practice for National Road Safety Councils (NRSC's) in LIC's to include representatives from the transport business sector, there are few examples where say vulnerable road users or victims are represented. India is one exception as the Institute for Road Traffic Education (IRTE) is a member of the NRSC.

At the local level, consultation can include surveys of neighbourhoods and 'town hall' meetings where public opinion on local road safety problems and/or proposed remedial measures can be voiced. Local communities should be included in a road safety audit to ensure proper understanding of local road use and the problems encountered. Consultation needs to start early, i.e. at the beginning of plan or project development, in order to benefit properly from community contributions and to avoid the risk of the community participation being only a token gesture. Authorities should also be aware that consultation can be time consuming, especially for groups which rely on volunteers, and community groups should not be used as a source of free advice (see subsequent section on funding).



Coordination

Coordination is needed not only between government departments (as much to share lessons as well as good practice) but also between community groups. There is thus a need for umbrella organisations and regular newsletters.

Coordination is also important between NGOs and road safety professionals. It is particularly relevant for survivor advocacy groups, i.e. those founded by road crash victims. The latter brings passion and dedication, often lifelong commitment, while professionals are able to provide the scientific basis for campaigns.

Funding and training

Interest and commitment to road safety is not the same as experience or ability to improve. Community organisations will most likely need both financial and technical assistance. This would apply to all community efforts. One possible local source for funding is a Road Fund. In Ethiopia, the Road Fund Board has pledged to allocate 3 per cent of its earnings to road safety, and possible funding candidates include community groups. Examples of government road safety grants programmes to community participation are discussed in the next section.

Implementation

LIC's

Since its start in 1978, community participation has been one of the founding features of the World Health Organisation's Safe Communities Programme. It now has over 70 participating programmes, with members in South Africa, Bangladesh, China and Vietnam. Safe Communities members are required to meet the following six criteria:

1. An infrastructure based on partnership and collaborations, governed by a cross-sectional group that is responsible for safety promotion in their community;
2. Long-term, sustainable programs covering both genders and all ages, environments, and situations;
3. Programs that target high-risk groups and environments, and programs that promote safety for vulnerable groups;
4. Programs that document the frequency and causes of injuries;
5. Evaluation measures to assess their programs, processes and the effects of implementation;
6. Ongoing participation in national and international Safe Communities networks.

Concern was expressed that the Safe Communities approach, which was developed in Northern Europe, required different structures and was not appropriate for LICs (Mohan, 1995). While the majority of Safe Communities are

located in HICs, several LIC members do exist. The Centre for Peace Action in South Africa (www.unisa.ac.za/dept/ishs/new/index.htm) is the Safe Communities' Affiliate in Africa while the Institute for Child and Mother Health in Bangladesh (www.icmhbd.org) is the first Asian affiliate.

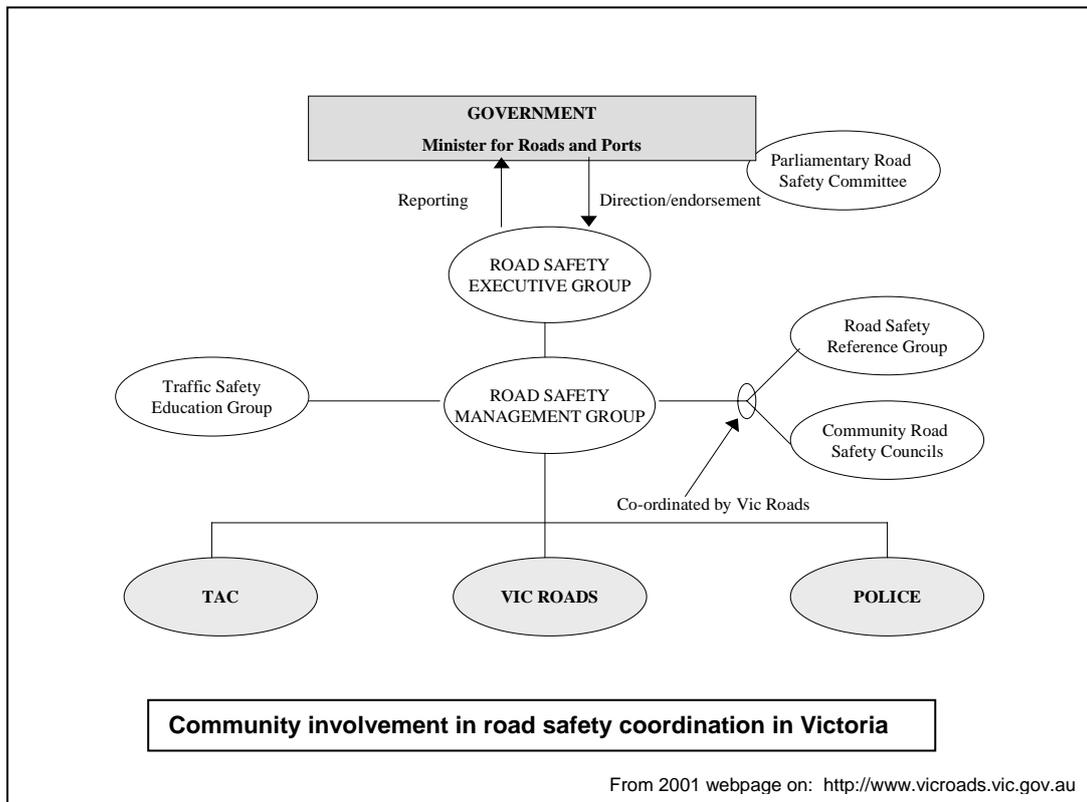
Many of the issues involved are general to NGOs and not specific to traffic safety. The Global Partnership is a collaboration between BRAC in Bangladesh, the Organisation of Rural Associations for Progress (ORAP) in Zimbabwe, and the School for International Training (SIT) in the US. The GP offers two academic programs for NGO leaders and managers: Postgraduate Diploma in NGO Leadership and Management and Master of International and Intercultural Management. Applicants from Asia and Oceania should contact tdbrac@bdmail.net and those from Africa should contact ozcgp@acacia.samara.co.zw.

HIC's

The Insurance Council of **British Columbia** (ICBC), the state regulator for third party insurance, driver and vehicle testing, has not limited its activities to loss prevention, but instead has for many years invested in road safety, including community programmes. ICBC operates the Autoplan Broker Road Safety Grant programme and an example of their grant application can be downloaded from the internet (but it is limited to BC projects – see www.icbc.com). This programme provides one year grants to recognised road safety issues and youth groups are particularly encouraged to apply.

ICBC also funds Speed Watch which is an educational programme where community volunteers are trained by the police to conduct speed checks. Portable radar equipment and an electronic digital board are used so drivers receive an instant readout of their speed. Speeding drivers are not fined or stopped but the data is sent to the police who will then decide on an appropriate course of action.

Community involvement in road safety has also been promoted for several years in **Australia** and **New Zealand**. In the State of Victoria, community road safety councils (CRSC) are used to identify local issues and develop action plans that complement the state programmes. Each CRSC receives support from a government funded Road Safety Officer. In 2001, the 23 CRSCs undertook around 150 community road safety programmes. In New South Wales, the Motor Accident Authority has a road safety grants programme to increase community ownership and participation in road safety and more information of the application process (NSW projects only) can be found



on its website (www.maa.nsw.gov.au).

In **New Zealand**, the Land Transport Safety Authority has also invested in Community road safety programmes. In 2002/2003, NZ\$2 million (10 per cent of the LTSA road safety programme budget) is to be allocated to promoting local participation. LTSA has also recently undertaken a review of its Community Road Safety Programme and has published the findings of the consultation with stakeholders over both the philosophy and the operations of the programme (see McAloon, 2000).

In the **United States**, the Department of Transportation (DOT) promotes Safe Communities (<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/safecommunities/ServiceCenter/default.htm>), a separate initiative to the World Health Organisation (WHO) programme, but one that also encourages community based solutions to injury problems, especially traffic related. The DOT Safe Communities programme has four main characteristics:

1. Injury data analysis and (where possible) data linkage
2. Expanded partnerships, especially with health care providers and businesses
3. Citizen involvement and input
4. An integrated and comprehensive injury control system

Launched in 1997, the Safe Communities Customer Service Centre is an interactive web-based initiative (<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/safecommunities/ServiceCenter/csc/csc.htm>) that catalogues information, resources and materials so new community coalitions can be linked with providers. A bi-monthly newsletter Building Safe Communities is also issued.

The **United Kingdom** Department for Transport recently introduced a Challenge Fund for organisations other than local authorities (but not individuals). At present, £200,000 is available for grants to community organisations for activities which complement but do not duplicate the Government's Road Safety Strategy. Grants are for projects which support the national strategy. Small grant applications, i.e. under £3,000, can be submitted at any time and larger grant applications are accepted in April and October (see: www.roads.dft.gov.uk/roadsafety/challenge/index.htm).

The Scottish Road Safety Campaign (www.srsc.org.uk) recently published 'A Safer Place to Live: Developing Community Based Initiatives to Promote Road Safety' which included advice and case studies, many of which targeted the most vulnerable.

Emerging Good Practice

LIC's

IRTE was established in 1991 with the vision of creating a positive attitude of road culture in society. It is represented on the Indian National Road Safety Council and has previously won the Prince Michael Award for Community Road Safety Initiatives. IRTE's key activities include:

- Developing enforcement technology systems such as the Interceptor programme
- Introducing traffic warden schemes (Student Traffic Volunteer Scholarship Scheme)
- Community involvement in roadside programme
- Imparting training to traffic police
- Analysis and research in road safety.

IRTE's unique scheme for participation of university students in traffic management and education now has a fully functional violation penalty. IRTE is currently assisting the Government of Goa to develop a positive road culture. In addition to the large range of IRTE programmes above, a new programme has been introduced in the Traffic Management and Accident Relief Programme. (www.irte.com)

BRAC, the largest NGO in **Bangladesh**, if not all LICs, has become active in promoting traffic safety in recent years. After realising the number of staff and village members being injured and killed in road crashes, BRAC developed an in-house road safety training programme. In addition to the staff training, BRAC's proposed Road Safety initiatives include:

- Review of road safety lessons in the non formal education curriculum and training for teachers
- Popular theatre for road use awareness of community
- Basic motor cycle riding training for women
- Publicity through community libraries
- Village organisation road safety awareness
- Human rights and legal education class for awareness of road safety laws
- NGO network for road safety.

While BRAC has already begun working on these initiatives, it has also requested donor funding to expand and improve its road safety efforts (see www.brac.net).

The recent Road Traffic Management Strategy in **South Africa** highlighted the need for 'community involvement in planning and implementing road traffic quality and safety projects'. Vermaak (1998) at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) has developed various participatory education technologies (ie. PET), which have been used in several community based safety projects and which is being expanded to other provinces. For further information, contact <http://www.csir.co.za>.

International Associations

Established in 1959 in Luxembourg, the international road safety organisation, la Prévention Routière Internationale (PRI) is a NGO, which promotes co-operation amongst national institutions of over fifty countries involved in road safety (www.lapri.org). The European Association of Road Traffic Victims (www.fevr.org) is formed by national associations of families of killed or disabled road traffic victims for the purpose of providing emotional, practical and legal support to road traffic victims. While primarily focused on Europe, it does have associate members in South Africa, Israel, Turkey, and Argentina and observer status on the United Nations Working Group on Road Safety.

The Association of Safe International Road Travel (ASIRT) is another NGO formed out of grief after the founder's son was killed in a road crash overseas (www.asirt.org). ASIRT has produced travel reports which alert travellers to the local road safety situation in countries they are visiting. ASIRT is developing a Bus Observations and Rating Directory (ABOARD), that will evaluate bus companies and their drivers on such key areas as speeding, reckless driving, failure to obey traffic regulations, overcrowding. Results of the evaluation will be compiled in a directory and made available to the public, travel agencies, and tour book companies. Bus companies will also receive a record of the evaluation results so that they can work to improve or maintain their current safety standards

ASIRT advises and serves as a model to many LIC road safety NGOs. In 2001, ASIRT conducted a workshop on Non-Governmental Organisations in Road Safety: "From Influence to Partnership: Lessons to be learned".

HIC's

Mothers Against Drink Driving (MADD) was voted the most popular non-profit cause in the **US** by a 1994 survey done by the Chronicle of Philanthropy. With over 600 chapters in the US, Canada, Puerto Rico and Guam and an annual budget of \$50 million, MADD is also very effective. Over 2,300 anti-drunk driving laws have been passed since its start in 1980. In addition to its campaigns to deter drink driving, MADD also promotes victims rights and under age drinking prevention.

In the **UK**, the Slower Speeds Initiative (SSI), a coalition of organisations concerned about speeding, has produced Killing Speed: A guide to Speed Management (www.slower-speeds.org.uk). SSI is active in challenging the government in court on actions that it considers are unsound.

TRL is also currently undertaking two DFID funded research projects which involve community participation. A scoping study is being conducted on how community participation can improve traffic policing projects and includes a review of the lessons from community policing initiatives (Contact: Amy Aeron-Thomas at aaeron-thomas@trl.co.uk). The second project is a full research study which is promoting road safety through community education programmes with IRTE and CSIR collaboration (Contact: Allan Quimby at aquimby@trl.co.uk).

Funding

Financial assistance is required and below are examples of four UK based funding options for road safety community efforts in low income countries.

The **Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund International Grants Programme** (www.info@memfund.org) is focused on assisting communities affected by landmines and other explosive remnants of war. However it will also sponsor projects involving advocacy, campaigning and awareness raising, and has previously given a grant to RoadPeace, the UK national charity for road traffic victims.

The **FIA Foundation** is a registered charity in the UK with an endowment of \$300 million made by the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA), the non-profit federation of motoring organisations and the governing body of world motor sport. The FIA Foundation supports an international programme of activities promoting safety, environment and sustainable mobility. The FIA Foundation will consider new applications regularly (see www.fiafoundation.com). It is currently supporting the WHO in developing injury data collection systems, trauma management and first aid training and road safety awareness raising.

Introduced in 1999, the **DFID Civil Society Challenge Fund (CSCF)** is aimed at empowering the poor by helping them to understand their rights (civil, economic, political and social). While applications must be made by a UK organisation, only those applications which have been developed with a LIC partner will be considered. The CSCF can provide 100 per cent funding for grants (£500,000) over a five year period. Guidelines on the funding application process are available from the CSCF website (www.dfid.gov.uk).

The **Community Fund** is the UK's biggest funder of charities and voluntary groups. It is responsible for allocating the money raised by the National Lottery (4.7 pence of every £1 lottery ticket goes to the Community Fund). Its International Grant programme is continuous and has a £16 million budget (6 per cent of the Community Fund). As with the CSCF, the Community Fund International Grants programme requires a UK partner. (www.community-fund.org.uk).

Further reading

DFID (2002). *The Civil Society Challenge Fund: Guidelines for Applicants*, London (www.dfid.gov.uk).

This contains information necessary to decide whether or not a proposed project meets the basic criteria of the CSCF, how to produce a project Concept Note and, if agreed, a subsequent full proposal.

IRTE (2002). *Role of Non-governmental Organisations and Institutions in Traffic Management*. IRTE, Delhi.

Institutions & NGOs that have instituted schemes & programs for building up infrastructure in promoting road safety & traffic management.

Lindquist K, T Timpka and L Schelp (2001). *Evaluation of inter-organisational traffic injury prevention in a WHO safe community*. *Accident Analysis and Prevention*, 33 (2001), 599-607, kenli@ihm.liu.se

The objective of the study was to examine the effect of a community-based injury prevention program on traffic injuries: pre- and post-implementation measurements in an intervention and a control area were used.

McAloon P (2000). *New Zealand's Community Road Safety Programme*, Presentation given at RoSPA's 65th Road Safety Congress, Birmingham, <http://www.rospa.org.uk/road/congress2000/proceedings/mcaloon.pdf> or see www.ltsa.govt.nz.

The New Zealand community programme is 10 years old and successfully empowers, encourages and involves the community. It will have a dedicated percentage of the road safety budget to fund its activities.

McDonald A (2002). *Review of the (New Zealand) Community Road Safety Programme: Stage One Response*: McDonald Management Consulting, Auckland NZ (<http://www.ltsa.govt.nz/crsp/stage1-response-rep.pdf>)

Involved gathering detailed information from stakeholders on the philosophy and operation of the CRSP with a view to identifying opportunities for enhancing the programme and for understanding any issues.

Mohan D (1995). 'Safe Communities in industrialised versus less industrialised countries: different models, similarities and differences', *International Journal for Consumer Safety*, vol 2., Buren (The Netherlands).

Concern expressed that the Safe Communities approach, which was developed in Northern Europe, required different structures and was not appropriate for developing countries.

NHTSA (2001). *Safe Communities: the First Six Months*, US Department of Transportation, Washington, DC, <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/safecommunities/SAFE%20COMM%20Html/index.html>.

Intended for concerned individuals and community groups who are committed to reducing the motor vehicle injury problem in their community - to serve as a guide to getting the process started and organizing effort.

Scottish Road Safety Campaign (2002). *A Safe Place to Live: Developing Community Based Initiatives to Promote Road Safety*, Scottish Executive, Edinburgh, www.srsc.org.uk.

Provides information and advice on ways local communities in partnership with a wide range of agencies - concerned with road safety, community safety or education and regeneration can work to make their neighbourhoods a safer place to live.

Vermaak, L (1998). *Participatory road safety educational technologies (PET): a community driven approach*. Proceedings of the South African Transport Conference. September 1998; Pretoria, South Africa.

Emphasises the importance of partnership and ownership of safety issues within the community by learning approaches, problem posing, access to data for mapping, matrix ranking, flow diagrams and other techniques.